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Healthy Church Multiplication in Modern Churches

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HEALTHY CHURCH MULTIPLICATION IN MODERN CHURCHES

PRESENTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
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BY

WILLIAM JASON BURNS

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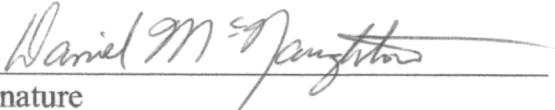
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under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Committee and approved by all members of the Committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Divinity in the Barnett College of Ministry and Theology at Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

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Abstract

Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19 leaves no room for interpretation. The role of the followers of Jesus and of the church is decidedly clear. We are called to make disciples of all nations. An honest assessment of my local ministry context, Access Church, reveals that we, as a church, have fallen short of Jesus' Great Commission.

The intention of this research project is to understand the biblical mandate to make disciples as taught throughout Scripture, study Jesus' discipleship methods in the book of Matthew, and, ultimately, create a new rubric to help Access Church—and other churches—understand how to measure its effectiveness.

Chapter One is an overview of the entire project and research plan. Chapter Two provides a theological framework and current literature review on discipleship. Chapter Three is an in-depth look at the cross-sectional quantitative methodology and survey used to research Access Church members. Chapter Four provides a detailed look at the survey results and growth. Chapter Five presents a conclusion, contextual changes we are making at Access Church, and suggestions for churches who want to multiply in discipleship in a way that is healthy and sustainable.

Dedication

To my radiant wife, Lis, and our incredible kids,
Joey, Gavin, and Ella. It is the great joy
of my life to serve Jesus alongside you.

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Thank you, Dr. Daniel McNaughton. I've never met anyone who has intentionally pursued Jesus like you do. You inspire me to become more like him. The highlight of this doctoral program was undoubtedly connecting with you.

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Thank you to my parents for consistently modeling the heart of disciples of Jesus in every season of life. Your love for others is nothing short of inspiring.

Thank you to my incredible church staff and leaders. You make pastoring a joy. I love ministry with you.

Finally, thank you, Access Church, for taking steps closer to Jesus with me. It is an honor to be your pastor.

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Chapter One

The Project Introduced

After Jesus' resurrection, Matthew's gospel described Jesus giving his disciples one command in the Great Commission: "Make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).¹ By definition, Jesus' command was not a suggestion. Making disciples was intended to be the primary task of a disciple. Alan Hirsch said, "The movement that Jesus initiated was an organic people movement; it was never meant to be a religious institution. We must allow this new-yet-ancient systems story to seep into our imaginations and reinform all our practices."²

The first church exploded in growth and became known for extravagant generosity, love, and sacrifice. If there had not been discipleship in the early church, there might be no present-day church. The world was never the same because early disciples chose to obey Jesus' command. More than two thousand years later, the contemporary American church does not seem to embody the same value of discipleship. Part of the difference may be a problem with the current definition of discipleship. What is discipleship? For most churches, discipleship functions as a ministry or program of the church but is not the primary task. What is the relationship between evangelism and discipleship? For most churches, evangelism and discipleship are two different ministries. A cursory overview of American churches indicates that many seem to think evangelism

1. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the *New International Version*.

2. Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016), 48.

and discipleship are situated at opposite ends of a church continuum. Is that perspective biblically accurate or merely a false dichotomy? Such a dichotomy did not appear to exist in the early church. As the lead pastor of Access Church, I desire to explore how the congregation can take Jesus' command to "make disciples" seriously by incarnationally engaging the culture around us, making disciples, and maintaining the evangelistic focus required to grow. Discipleship author Bill Hull asked, "Why does the church insist on trying to evangelize the world without making disciples?"³ There has to be a better, healthier way to facilitate this effort.⁴

The intention of this dissertation research project is two-fold. First, I will survey the congregation of Access Church to evaluate the current level of effectiveness in discipleship. Second, based on those results, I will launch a church-wide discipleship initiative to help church members grow closer to Christ. The long-term intention of this project is to better equip churches to live out the command of Jesus.

Relationship to the Ministry of the Researcher

Access Church started as a college Bible study in March of 2007 when 15 people gathered in my living room. What started as an organic, small gathering quickly turned into a large-format service. By the end of the first year, over 150 young adults were attending. We quickly realized that our Bible study had become a church for those

3. Bill Hull and Renaut van der Riet, *The Disciple-Making Church: Leading a Body of Believers on the Journey of Faith*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 11.

4. Jason Burns, "Comprehensive Paper Submitted to Dr. Daniel McNaughton," April 2019.

attending, so we officially became a church in 2009. Since then, Access Church has seen tremendous growth, year after year, in almost every measurable metric. While I am grateful for our start, we have had to retrofit many systems to accommodate our growth. We did not set out to be a church from day one, so many systems were not yet in place when we began growing. In many ways, our team feels like we are behind the curve, trying to catch up more often than not.

In 2012, we adopted the “attractional” ministry model from the Association of Related Churches (ARC).⁵ The model is intentionally simple, portable, and reproducible. We celebrate that as a church, we only do four things: weekend worship services, small groups, next steps classes, and serving in and through the church. The ARC model is undoubtedly slanted toward evangelism, potentially at the expense of discipleship. The founder of ARC, Billy Hornsby, affirmed this notion in his book *The Attractional Church*.⁶ In this model, Sunday mornings are compared to a car dealership showroom. In every dealership, the showroom showcases the best features of new cars. Even though dealerships have a service department, when attempting to sell a new car, they do not parade customers to see where the vehicles are repaired. Why? They want to offer the best buying experience. Hornsby argued that this experience reflects how Sunday services should operate in a local church.⁷ Everything that is done should paint a

5. “Church Planting - Learn About ARC | ARC Churches,” n.d., accessed January 7, 2020, <https://www.arcchurches.com/>.

6. Billy Hornsby, *The Attractional Church: Growth Through a Refreshing, Relational, and Relevant Church Experience*, 1st ed. (New York: FaithWords, 2011).

7. *Ibid.*, 22.

beautiful picture of following Jesus. In the ARC model, discipleship is accomplished predominantly through small groups and a course called Growth Track, which has essentially replaced the older model of discipleship, Sunday School. ARC adopted a model of groups, popularized by Pastor Ted Haggard from New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, called “Free Market Groups.” In this format, every group of people that “does life” with one another has the potential to be a small group, as long as ministry happens in that group.⁸ The Growth Track discipleship model is intended to be a four-step process, modeled after Rick Warren’s 101, 201, 301, and 401 series popularized in the early 2000s. The ARC Growth Track is different from Rick Warren’s model in that it requires a much shorter time commitment (6 hours instead of 12 hours) and it reflects a Pentecostal theology, including an emphasis on spiritual gifts.

Access Church has now executed this system for seven years. Our small groups, called Access Groups, have been nominally successful in producing sincere disciples of Jesus. Our Growth Track, now called Next Steps Class, serves as a cursory overview of the church, with the intended goal of moving people toward membership and serving. Our current metrics indicate that, on an average Sunday, Access Church now has around 1,000 people in attendance (800 adults and 200 children). It is estimated that between 1,800 and 2,000 people call Access their home church, attending at least once per month. Between 250 and 300 individuals serve at the church each month. Approximately 40% of Sunday adult attendees are involved in a serving capacity, which is certainly a part of becoming a disciple. The church usually averages 30 to 40 Access Groups per semester. Consequently, only around 300 people are involved in a group. Even if every group is

8. Hornsby, *The Attractional Church*, 53.

effectively discipling, Access is underperforming in practicing effective discipleship.

As a church, we have allowed our misaligned values to model an incorrect definition of discipleship. We have implied that joining the church, belonging to a group, serving on Sundays, giving financially, serving outside of the church occasionally on “serve days,” going on missional trips, and being involved in other church activities are representative of discipleship. This downfall should not be misinterpreted; Access Church is full of incredible people. While the aforementioned activities may be inherently positive, I am convinced we are missing something. In 2018, I personally counselled 21 couples who were walking through infidelity, dozens of couples walking through relational struggles, and many individuals struggling with addictions. These symptoms are not indicative of a thriving, discipling church. We have unintentionally drifted and become a church that treats discipleship like a program instead of a pathway for all Christians. We must make changes to help people become more like Jesus.⁹

Contextual Scope and Limitations

The scope of my research is limited to voluntary participants at Access Church. In June and July of 2019, Access Church implemented a church-wide discipleship campaign based on the book *Follow* by Dr. Daniel McNaughton.¹⁰ We surveyed church members who participated in the series to evaluate how differing factors played a role in their level of life-change. The self-assessment survey measured the impact of church attendance,

9. Burns, “Comprehensive Paper Submitted to Dr. Daniel McNaughton.”

10. Bryan Koch and Daniel McNaughton, *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Spring City, PA: Morning Joy Media, 2010).

small group attendance, personal quiet time with Jesus, and one-on-one mentoring according to seven attributes of a fully devoted follower of Jesus.

For the sake of this project, all research will be directly tied to Access Church in Lakeland, Florida. We will not interview church members of other congregations. We will not interview pastors of other churches. In the future, our hope is to create an online self-assessment survey tool that churches can use to learn more about the spiritual well-being of their congregation, which can serve as a tool to raise awareness of the attributes that accompany following Jesus. No attendee of Access Church will be required to take the survey. There will be no effort to influence their answers in any way to create better results for the church. There will be a disclaimer at the beginning of the survey asking participants to be as truthful as possible. Transparency is what will benefit them and will provide us the most accurate results.

In an attempt to gain participation, we will select five random winners who will win a \$100 gift card. We will not require participants to provide personal information, such as name, phone number, or email address. The participant's email address will be collected after the survey, kept separate from the participant's answers, and will be completely optional. We will collect basic demographic information only, such as age range, gender, relationship status, and level of involvement at Access Church. The goal of the survey is to create a predictive model based on the responses received.

Project Goals and Objectives

As a result of our church's current lack of a clear discipleship system, combined with the deficiencies I see in other similar churches around the country, my project aims

to identify the key elements of a healthy discipling church, develop the processes to carry them out in our specific context, and find objective measurable outcomes. I will explore the biblical texts focusing on discipleship, while also studying current available literature, to discover and build a strong, reproduceable model.¹¹

The first stated goal of this project is to identify key elements of a healthy discipling church, which starts by developing a clear definition of discipleship. To understand this better, I will start with an exhaustive look at the relationship of Jesus and his disciples from the four gospels. What did Jesus model with his disciples that modern churches must do in order to create an effective pathway to discipleship? Answering this question is critical. Access Church cannot effectively disciple people if we maintain inconsistent definitions and conceptions of discipleship. Second, using Dr. McNaughton's seven attributes of a disciple from the book *Follow*, I will create a self-assessment survey tool to help church members objectively evaluate how they are doing. One of the most noteworthy challenges a person becoming a disciple of Jesus faces is objectivity. There is no scoreboard to following Jesus; there is also no finish line. As J. Oswald Sanders famously said, "We are as close to God as we choose to be."¹² If the goal is to help people move from their subjective assumptions about their closeness to Jesus to objectively knowing their closeness, we must begin with a rubric. For this, I have chosen to use Dr. Daniel McNaughton's *Follow* book and supplementary Discipleship Balance

11. Burns, "Comprehensive Paper Submitted to Dr. Daniel McNaughton."

12. J. Oswald Sanders, *Enjoying Intimacy with God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 2001), 19–20.

Wheel assessment,¹³ included below.

Discipleship Balance Wheel

Dr. Daniel McNaughton
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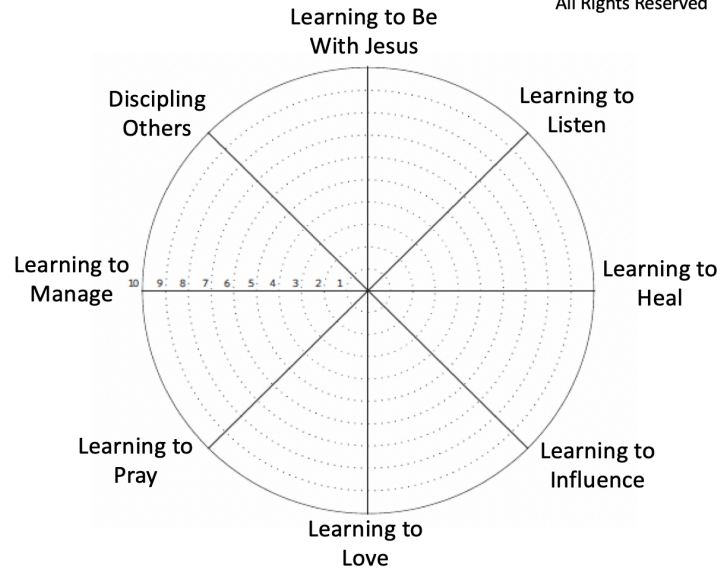


Figure 1. Discipleship Balance Wheel.

The method for a self-assessment using this rubric is simple. In one color of pen, participants will plot on the circle's concentric lines how they subjectively feel they are doing in each of these eight categories: learning to be with Jesus, learning to listen, learning to heal, learning to influence, learning to love, learning to pray, learning to manage, and discipling others. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, how does the participant think he/she is doing?

The next eight pages of the assessment consist of a deeper, more objective dive into each of the categories (see Appendix A). The goal is that we add handles to each

13. Daniel McNaughton and Jane Abbate, *The Spiritual Coaching Toolkit* (Spring City, PA: Morning Joy Media, 2014), 82.

category for the sake of objectifying the feeling. Once participants have completed each page, they will take the average score from each category and plot it on the first page in a different color of pen to visualize the difference between their perception and the more objective reality.

In the summer of 2019, we initiated this plan of discipleship to our church, but in the months leading up to our churchwide plan, we chose to use the plan with our church staff as a pilot program. On February 24, 2019, we held an all-staff meeting at my house, during which I asked 24 church employees and spouses to take the assessment. The anonymous results are available in Appendix B. There were many clarifying moments during the assessment; many staff members assumed they would score higher in certain categories than they actually scored. A major example is in the category “Learning to Love.” Most Christians should rightfully assume that they are learning to be more like Jesus by learning to love others well. However, when the assessment was completed objectively, there was an audible groan through the room when someone blurted out, “Oh man, loving and praying for my enemies.” Without awareness, loving and praying for one’s enemies feels counterintuitive. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44-45a, “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” To be honest, this verse does not accompany my first thoughts during my quiet time every morning, but Jesus commanded it and added a promise. We are commanded to pray for our adversaries, and the result is that we may be children of our heavenly Father.

Another major takeaway was found in the “Learning to be with Jesus” category. Anecdotally, pastors and ministers should be the best at this practice. We are paid to be

professional Christians, and spending time with Jesus is what good Christians do. There was a 16% gap between perceived score and actual score in the results. One person assumed they were a seven in the category and scored at just a two.

There is one additional category beyond the original seven worth noting called: “Discipling Others.” It is assumed that this practice will be the result of a person becoming more like Jesus. Overall, it was our lowest assessed and lowest scored category. Our team self-assessed at an average of 5.7 out of 10 and objectively scored at 5.1 out of 10, and I would argue that the numbers were skewed by a couple of people who have a gifting in this area. When I presented to the team that our next season as a church would focus on two major areas, leadership development and discipleship, and then paired it with the results from the test, the research backed my vision for the future. You could feel the shift in the room shift from “we are not doing this well” to “we can do this.” The single greatest overarching experience for my team was a crisis of awareness. I have heard from almost all of them in the weeks since this assessment that simply the awareness of areas in which they can strive to become more like Jesus has been a blessing. They have been reminded to pray for their enemies, to look for opportunities to give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, and to pray more specifically for the things that Jesus cared about.¹⁴

I have an assumption that Access Church’s struggles with discipleship are not an isolated struggle. Many of my pastor friends identify discipleship as their greatest challenge. I am exclusively studying Access Church with a long-term hope to help

14. Burns, “Comprehensive Paper Submitted to Dr. Daniel McNaughton.”

pastors of modern churches move forward in discipleship.

Theological and Biblical Dimensions

The significance of and call to discipleship is clear throughout Scripture. The root of the word “discipleship” is the same as in the words “discipline” and “disciple.” Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples.¹⁵ The word “disciple” occurs 269 times in the New Testament and was reserved almost exclusively for those who followed Jesus. Conversely, the word “Christian” is found just three times. There is an emphatic directive to make disciples. The Greek verb *μαθητευω* means “to be a pupil,” and secondly, “to cause one to be a pupil, teach.” The Greek noun *μαθητης* means “one who engages in learning through instruction from another, pupil, apprentice,” and “one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views, disciple, adherent.”¹⁶ Interestingly, Acts 9:36 uses a feminine version of the same root word when referring to Tabitha. In a culture that perpetually disrespected women, it is not coincidental that Luke connected the heart of becoming a disciple to a woman. Everyone is welcome to follow Jesus closely.

In the gospel of Matthew alone, there are 76 verses that use the word “disciple” or its root. This dissertation project will look at discipleship holistically throughout the entire Old and New Testaments. As a case study, I plotted every verse to find the context,

15. Matt. 28:19

16. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed. Edited by Frederick Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 609.

type of passage, and teaching method used to determine themes in Jesus' approach. What stood out most is that Jesus treated every moment as an opportunity to disciple. The majority of the verses depict him teaching the twelve disciples directly and allowing them to observe indirectly. In Matthew 11:1, Jesus shows a unique priority: "When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities." He disciplined the twelve before preaching to the larger groups. By Matthew 16:24, Jesus moves discipleship from a group setting to a personal challenge: "Then Jesus told His disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.'"

Jesus' discipleship methods were as varied as the people he disciplined. Sometimes he taught, other times he had the disciples watch him do a miracle, sometimes he involved the disciples in the miracles, and yet other times he rebuked the team. He was visionary (Matthew 9:37), authoritative (Matthew 10:1), full of grace (Matthew 11:29), correcting (Matthew 19:14), and, ultimately, present (Matthew 26:17-30) even in the middle of great challenges. Jesus was the master of everything. A study of his life proves that discipleship happens best up close, not from a distance.¹⁷

Disciples are followers of Jesus who believe that "choosing to follow Jesus will change everything."¹⁸ They follow closely to become like him. Alan Hirsch added color to the definition: "Essentially, this (discipleship) involves the irreplaceable and lifelong

17. Burns, "Comprehensive Paper Submitted to Dr. Daniel McNaughton."

18. Bryan Koch and Daniel McNaughton, *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Morning Joy Media, 2016), Kindle 269.

task of becoming like Jesus by embodying his message.”¹⁹ One cannot read the Great Commission and assume that Jesus’ desire is anything less than for us to make disciples.

Bill Hull noted,

Despite Jesus’ clear command to “make disciples,” many, like the man who claimed disciple making was not for everyone, have tried to invalidate that call by arguing that the Greek word *mathetes*, translated “disciple,” does not appear in the Bible after Acts 21, so the church does not need to focus on disciple making.²⁰

There is an underlying assumption in Scripture that followers of Jesus should be growing in their faith. In the same way newborn babies grow and mature, so should followers of Jesus. Sadly, many Christians see no connection between the gift of salvation and the ongoing commitment to being formed into the image of Christ. Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary professor Chris Shirley wrote, “The longer we perpetuate the myth that disciple is a secondary identity reserved for the elite, the more we will continue to produce ‘bar-code Christians’ who are following after a ‘non-discipleship Christianity.’”²¹ There are not different levels of Christians; there are only followers of Jesus. Every follower remains in the process of becoming like Jesus. Attempting to separate the idea of a Christian and a disciple is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. “And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians” (Acts 11:26). Jesus’ twelve disciples were *literally* followers. Jesus is often incorrectly referred

19. Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 12.

20. Hull and Riet, *The Disciple-Making Church*, 23.

21. Chris Shirley, “It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple: An Integrative Model of Discipleship for the Local Church,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 50 (n.d.): 210.

to as a first-century Jewish rabbi. He was actually called a *κύριος*, meaning “Lord” or “teacher.” As was common in his day, Jesus’ disciples followed closely everywhere their leader went. They were up-close-and-personal when he taught, healed, and performed miracles. The goal of a first-century disciple was to move beyond the transfer of knowledge. The goal was transformation, not just information; Jesus modeled this. K. H. Rengstorf summarized this principle, saying, “Jesus does not seek to impart information but to awaken commitment to himself.”²²

Issues from Related Contemporary Literature

Many current church growth studies spell out doom and gloom for the future of the American church. A 2015 Pew Research Center research initiative, “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,” stated: “In the United States, Christians will decline from more than three-quarters of the population in 2010 to two-thirds in 2050, and Judaism will no longer be the largest non-Christian religion.”²³ Globally, there is a decline in those who are less affiliated with a particular religious group, but in America, we are seeing a shift away from Christianity.²⁴ My parents’ generation believed that students may drift away from church when they entered college

22. K. H. Rengstorf, “μαθηται.” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, Edited by Gerhard Kittel, et al., 551-563. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985.

23. “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,” Pew Research Center, last modified April 2, 2015, accessed November 29, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>.

24. “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections.”

and young adulthood, but the general assumption was that they would come back to church. This trend may have been true for previous generations, but my parents' generation stopped returning. There is a notable exit from the American local church, especially from young adults.²⁵

The American church is declining in attendance and hemorrhaging in denominational affiliated church attendance.²⁶ Thousands of churches are closing annually,²⁷ and the devastating list continues. The proposed solutions tend to be stronger leadership, improved service experiences, and innovative preaching. Are those potentially helpful and even good? Certainly. Are they the answer? No. A recent LifeWay Research survey of 1,000 pastors echoed these concerns:

The survey found 79 percent of pastors say weekly worship attendance at their church will increase in the next five years. But looking at the last five years, only 36 percent of pastors say worship attendance growth increased, while two-thirds say attendance stayed the same or declined (27 percent decreased, 37 percent stayed the same).²⁸

25. David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith*, Reprint edition. (Baker Books, 2011), 22.

26. "Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics," Pew Research Center, n.d., accessed April 23, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>; "Statistics and Reasons for Church Decline," accessed April 23, 2019, <http://www.churchleadership.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=42346>.

27. Simon G. Brauer, "How Many Congregations Are There? Updating a Survey-Based Estimate," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 56, no. 2 (June 2017): 438–448, accessed April 23, 2019, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&b=a9h&AN=124846518&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

28. "Pastors Optimistic About Church's Future, Regardless of Past Struggles," *LifeWay Research*, February 13, 2019, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/02/13/pastors-optimistic-about-churchs-future-regardless-of-past-struggles/>.

In essence, most pastors are deceiving themselves into believing that their church will actually grow. The reasons seem to be found in their concerns. The top two concerns for the future include: reaching the next generation and lacking in discipleship. Leonard Sweet wrote:

The crisis of the church today has little to do with dwindling numbers, aging congregations, outdated facilities, financial crises, and lace-by-day/leather-by-night priests. Today's church crisis stems from one thing: Jesus Deficit Disorder."²⁹ Dallas Willard adds this, "Most problems in contemporary churches can be explained by the fact that members have never decided to follow Christ."³⁰

For the global church, and more specifically for Access Church, to fulfill its mission, we must become disciple-making churches!

Research Methodology

This study utilized a cross-sectional quantitative design to collect survey data to aid in individual understanding and organizational analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. In this specific study, the research consultant developed an assessment survey by operationalizing the ideas articulated by Koch and McNaughton. The assessment survey provided an opportunity for individuals to reflect on their

29. Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 22.

30. Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, Reprint edition. (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2006), 5.

awareness and “practice of the step-by step development of each attribute.”³¹ The assessment survey was piloted in this study.

Research Site

The research site in this study was Access Church, located in central Florida. Access Church currently meets in the city of Lakeland. The church is approximately 12 years old, and approximately 1,000 people attend on a given weekend. The research site was selected because the lead pastor wanted to provide the church attendees with a practical understanding of the steps necessary to following Jesus; the book *Follow* would be used because this particular text was determined to be the best method to complete that goal. The church participated in an eight-week sermon series based on the book *Follow* in Summer 2019. Attendees also had the opportunity to purchase and read the book, participate in a small group for further discussion, understand the seven attributes, and meet with a spiritual coach.

Participants and Sampling Procedures

The potential participants in this study were the adult attendees of Access Church. Church attendees were invited to take the assessment at the conclusion of the sermon series. The sampling procedures utilized in this study included purposeful, convenience, and random sampling. The sampling was purposeful, as each of the potential participants was exposed to the seven aspects of *Follow* during Summer 2019. Only those who

31. Koch and McNaughton, *Follow*, vii.

participated were asked to complete the assessment. Second, the sampling procedures were convenient as the lead pastor is utilizing the information from the study for his doctoral dissertation. Also, the research consultant and one of the book authors are members of Access Church. Finally, the sampling procedures were also random as all those who participated in the *Follow* series would be asked to complete the assessment, but only some of those invited would actually complete the assessment.

Data Collection

Data was collected at Access Church at the conclusion of the *Follow* series in Summer 2019, specifically in late July. Access Church attendees were invited to participate in the Follow Assessment (see Appendix C). The lead pastor presented the opportunity to take the assessment during a Sunday morning service. The assessment was available via a web link to Survey Monkey. The assessment consisted of three sections: demographics, reporting on each of aspect of *Follow* before the sermon series, and reporting on each aspect of *Follow* currently. Questions were randomized for each participant. Participation in the assessment was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Any incomplete surveys were not utilized; participants were able to stop taking the assessment at any time before completing the assessment and their responses were not utilized. However, the church offered an incentive for five participants to win a \$100 Amazon gift card. In order to participate in the drawing, participants needed to share their email addresses, as winners were notified via email. Participants had the opportunity to receive an email report of their results after the completion of the survey. Receiving the email report was also an optional aspect of completing the Follow Assessment. The email

report included an average of their self-reported scores on each of the steps aligned with one of the aspects of *Follow*. For the lowest three attributes of *Follow* for each individual, recommendations for growth in those areas were included.³²

Evaluation

There were three aspects of the data analysis in this project. First, each individual was able to choose the option to receive a report of their scores on the steps for each of the seven aspects of *Follow*. The research consultant calculated the average for each of the corresponding seven aspects but did not have access to the participants' email addresses or any other identifying information. Each participant was assigned a random number corresponding to their email address, which was kept in another file. After the average of each of the seven aspects of *Follow* was calculated for the individual, the three lowest attributes for that individual were identified. The research consultant compiled this information in a report and provided the report to the lead pastor's assistant so that the email reports could be sent to the appropriate individuals.

The second aspect of the data evaluation was an analysis of the overall sample. The research consultant utilized descriptive statistics to note the means and standard deviations on each of the variables. The research consultant utilized inferential statistics, such as t-tests and ANOVAs, to determine whether there were statistically significant results by gender and age. The research consultant also utilized linear regression to

32. Jennifer Carter, "Research Methodology Proposal for Access Church: Assessing Follow," June 25, 2019.

determine whether there were any statistically significant predictors of each of the seven *Follow* attributes.

The final aspect of data analysis was of the research assessment itself. Since the assessment was being piloted in this study, the assessment tool needed to be analyzed for reliability and validity. Also, potential factor scales for each of the seven aspects will possibly be developed.³³

33. Carter, “Research Methodology Proposal for Access Church: Assessing Follow.”

Chapter Two

The Project in Perspective

How do modern churches effectively measure discipleship in a healthy way? If the church is to be the fulfillment of the Great Commission, one must know how measure its success. The intention of this research project is to create a rubric that effectively measures discipleship.

For the purposes of this project, the term *modern* will be used to refer to churches that started after the year 2000. The term does not necessitate a certain style of worship, denomination or network affiliation, or age of the senior pastor.

The term *multiplying* will refer to churches that are leading “pre-Christians” to Christ. The practice of multiplication demonstrates real, effective church growth. William Chadwick argued that the church has moved away from true conversion growth to focus on growth at any cost. “Make no mistake about it. The church growth movement had one focus: conversion growth.”³⁴ *Multiplying* could refer to any church that is growing numerically, whether by adding services, adding campuses, growing teams, or growing in a host of other capacities.

Healthy is the most difficult term to define. Peter Scazzero is known for his efforts to lead people to emotionally healthy spirituality and leadership. In *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Scazzero said, “The overall health of any church or ministry depends primarily on the emotional and spiritual health of its leadership. In fact,

34. William Chadwick, *Stealing Sheep: The Church’s Hidden Problems of Transfer Growth* (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 128.

the key to successful spiritual leadership has much more to do with the leader's internal life than with the leader's expertise, gifts, or experience."³⁵ C. Peter Wagner added that "In America, the primary catalytic factor for growth in a local church is the pastor. In every growing, dynamic church I have studied, I have found a key person whom God is using to make it happen."³⁶ For the sake of this project, the term *healthy* will refer to the inner life of a leader being well ordered, which should reproduce itself in the lives of those he or she is discipling.

What is the Problem?

Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 leaves no room for interpretation. The mission of the church is to make disciples, not grow a church by offering better services that attract congregants from other local churches. "Church growth is interested in disciple-making. It is not merely a number-counting emphasis. While evangelism, in the sense of making converts, is of vital interest, the heart of church growth is to see those new Christians develop into fruit-bearing disciples of Jesus Christ."³⁷ Transfer growth is when church attenders move from one church to another for any reason.³⁸ This transfer of membership happens in every church in America. Many growing churches are

35. Peter Scazzero, Leighton Ford, and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church, Updated and Expanded Edition: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives*, Enlarged edition. (Zondervan, 2015), 20.

36. C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001), 60.

37. Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth* (Nashville, Tenn: B&H Academic, 1998), 20.

38. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth*, 22.

not effectively multiplying, but instead are growing by attracting members from other churches. Disciple-making churches lead people to Christ. Jesus commands the Church to reach the entire world. This command assumes that churches will grow and advance, and that Christians will live on mission and spread the Gospel. Statistically, this outreach is not currently happening.

Many current church growth studies today spell out doom-and-gloom for the future of the American church. A 2015 Pew Research Center research initiative, “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,” stated: “In the United States, Christians will decline from more than three-quarters of the population in 2010 to two-thirds in 2050, and Judaism will no longer be the largest non-Christian religion.”³⁹ Globally, there is a decline in those who are less affiliated with a particular religious group, but in America, there is a shift away from Christianity.⁴⁰ My parents’ generation believed that students may drift away from church when they entered college and young adulthood, but the general assumption was that they would come back to church. This trend may have held true throughout previous generations, but then, my parents’ generation stopped coming back. The country is seeing a significant exit from

39. “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,” Pew Research Center, April 2, 2015, accessed November 20, 2017, <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>

40. Ibid.

the American local church, especially from young adults.⁴¹ The follow-up 2019 report indicated that the speed of decline is happening at an even faster rate.⁴²

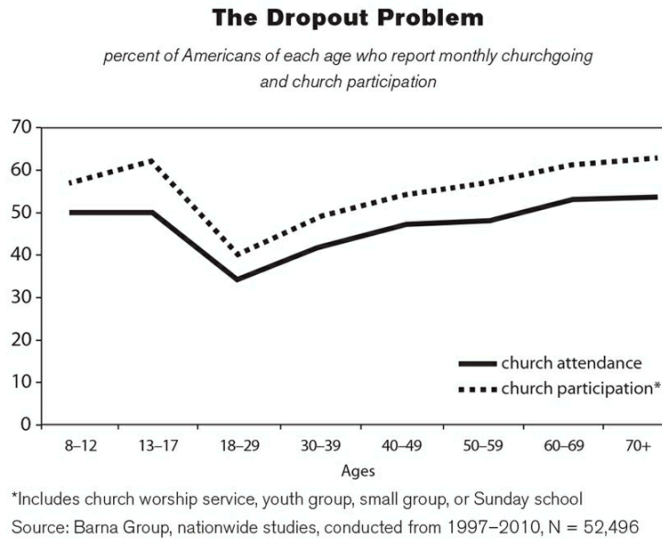


Figure 2. The Dropout Problem.

The words that now define the up-and-coming generation are not “unchurched” or “de-churched,” and are less frequently the words “atheist” or “agnostic.” Instead, the defining labels are “post-Christian,” “ex-Christian,” and “nones” – individuals who identify as nothing (none) religious.⁴³ The Barna Research Group said “It is clear that the faith realm is in turmoil. In 2005, two-thirds of American adults said their religious faith

41. Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 22.

42. “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” *Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project*, October 17, 2019, accessed October 29, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.

43. Roger E. Olson, “How Seriously Should We Take the Phenomenon of ‘The Nones?’,” *Roger E. Olson*, May 19, 2015, accessed November 29, 2017, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2015/05/how-seriously-should-we-take-the-phenomenon-of-the-nones/>.

was very important to them. Just ten years later that had slipped to only half.”⁴⁴

Multiplying churches are those reaching people who do not yet identify as a Christian.

Leonard Sweet asserted, “The crisis of the church today has little to do with dwindling numbers, aging congregations, outdated facilities, financial crises, and lace-by-day/leather-by-night priests. Today’s church crisis stems from one thing: Jesus Deficit Disorder.”⁴⁵ Dallas Willard added, “Most problems in contemporary churches can be explained by the fact that members have never decided to follow Christ.”⁴⁶

Current State of Discipleship in America

If one were to read the Bible cover-to-cover for the very first time, with no bias or presupposition, what would he/she expect from a local church? Pastor and popular speaker Francis Chan frames it well: “You have no experience with Christianity whatsoever, and all you know about the church will come from your reading of the Bible. How would you imagine a church to function?”⁴⁷ One could argue about style, worship, or the way financial giving is handled, but regardless of any stylistic details, there would likely be a clear expectation – discipleship. If Jesus’ final command in Matthew 28 to

44. George Barna, *America at the Crossroads: Explosive Trends Shaping America’s Future and What You Can Do About It* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016). Kindle 274.; Originally written for Dr. Alan Ehler’s “Theory and Practice of Ministry”

45. Sweet, *So Beautiful*, 22.

46. Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, Reprint edition. (HarperOne, 2014), 5.

47. Francis Chan, *Letters to the Church* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: David C. Cook, 2018), 9.

make disciples is the intended outcome, every church should be intentionally focused on discipleship.

David Kinnaman and George Barna researched American millennials and came back with the following critique:

Most people in America, when they are exposed to the Christian faith, are not being transformed. They take one step into the door, and the journey ends. They are not being allowed, encouraged, or equipped to love or to think like Christ. Yet in many ways a focus on spiritual formation fits what a new generation is really seeking. Transformation is a process, a journey, not a one-time decision.⁴⁸

Bill Hull, in his book *The Disciple Making Church*, made the case that a normal church is a discipling church.⁴⁹ A cursory overview of the American church would demonstrate that this practice is not normal. The churches we celebrate nationally often have highly charismatic leaders, are attractional in nature, and lean heavily toward Sunday services being evangelistic in nature. These attractional characteristics are all too often emphasized at the expense of discipleship. I recently asked a nationally known pastor to identify churches in America that are, to borrow the colloquialism, “killing it” in both evangelism (church growth) and discipleship (spiritual growth). He looked dumbfounded as he thought through his circle of friends and leadership. Success in both areas is not normal, though Bill Hull states that it should be. Dallas Willard argued that there is a significant cost to not discipling. “In short, nondiscipleship costs exactly that abundance

48. David Kinnaman, Gabe Lyons, and George Barna, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity...and Why It Matters*, Reprint edition. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2012), 82.

49. Hull and Riet, *The Disciple-Making Church*, 16.

of life Jesus said he came to bring (John 10:10).”⁵⁰

Evangelism and discipleship are often treated as mutually exclusive. Evangelism is portrayed as passionate, while discipleship is seen as deep. Bill Hull and Bobby Harrington summarized:

Evangelism and discipleship are tied together; one leads to the other. In evangelism, we lead people to be disciples. In discipleship, we lead people back to evangelism and disciple making. Our gospel is holistic, and it calls for a covenant-making commitment, where people become disciples and disciples become points of light that illuminate the society and point people to the gospel as the hope of the world. The church’s mission is to make, empower and release an increasing number of disciples.⁵¹

This call is a *both/and* proposition, not *either/or*. To treat the mission of the church as exclusively evangelistic misses the heart of God and undermines Jesus’ command. Jesus commanded us to make disciples, not just to be disciples. How are we, the “capital-C” Church, getting this wrong? Researcher Ed Stetzer argues that there are five reasons the American church is missing the mark on discipleship:⁵²

1. We equate discipleship with religious knowledge.
2. We try to program discipleship.
3. We equate discipleship with our preaching.
4. We think that we will grow without effort.
5. We do not offer practical steps.

A leading voice in the movement toward a more Jesus-focused, discipling church

50. Willard, *The Great Omission*, 9.

51. Bill Hull and Bobby Harrington, “Evangelism or Discipleship” (n.d.): 31.

52. Ed Stetzer, “Better Discipleship,” *The Exchange with Ed Stetzer*, August 7, 2013, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2013/august/better-discipleship.html>

is Francis Chan. He has become a polarizing, lightning rod figure within many pastoral leadership circles. Chan rose to fame as an amazing communicator who pastored a growing megachurch in Simi Valley, California. He shocked his church in 2010 by resigning with seemingly no plan. When asked about why he left, Chan said, “A lot of it is personal. A lot of it is when I look at the Scriptures, I see this commitment, this devotion, this hardcore ‘we will follow, we’ll do anything, we’re all about going out and making disciples.’”⁵³ Chan is the pastor of the We Are Church house church network in northern California. This house church network is the model he prescribes to be the correct, most biblical option.

Chan authored a book entitled *Letters to the Church*. The whole book has the undertone of a modern-day epistle. The heart of the book is so evident, yet it falls short in practical contextualization. Chan’s plea throughout is that the church of America should return to the practices of the early church. He advocates a clear divergence from the “Attractional Church” model: “The early church didn’t need the energetic music, great videos, attractive leaders, or elaborate lighting to be excited about being a part of God’s body. The pure gospel was enough to put them in a place of awe.”⁵⁴ There is a common refrain throughout the book that whichever gimmick is used to get people to church will then be required to keep them in church. He argues that this model detracts from the

53. Lillian Kwon and Christian Post, “Pastors Challenge Francis Chan over Decision to Leave Megachurch,” *Christian Today*, September 3, 2010, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/pastors.challenge.francis.chan.over.decision.to.leave.megachurch/26629.htm>

54. Chan, *Letters to the Church*, 44.

ability to be biblically sound, but these characteristics are not mutually exclusive.

There are many wonderful challenges throughout *Letters to the Church*, but the overarching premise is flawed. Chan believes that “House Churches” are the most biblical, and therefore the only appropriate, model. He confuses the early existence of house churches for a biblical command. His experiences overseas have overtly shaped his vantage point. I would argue that there is a reason that house churches work better in parts of the world other than America. He compares the modern church to Blockbuster Video, the failed video rental giant which collapsed because it refused to adapt to a changing world.

Chan’s book is highly descriptive of what he believes the future of the American church should look and feel like. Bill Hull’s *The Disciple Making Church* was highly prescriptive; it gave helpful suggestions regarding how to disciple well in a changing world. I have since read everything I can find about discipleship written by Hull. Over and over, Hull has challenged his audience to disciple the way Jesus did, which was up-close-and-personal, not from a distance. The endgame is to get that disciple to pour himself or herself out into the lives of other disciples, up-close-and-personally. Hull summarized: “Unless the church makes making disciples its main agenda, world evangelism is a fantasy. There is no way to reproduce, multiply, and decentralize people and the gospel without first diligently making disciples.”⁵⁵ A significant cadence in Hull’s *The Disciple Making Church* is the need for decentralization. Paul implored the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 4 to shift its thinking. The church will come to life when, and only when, the ministry of the church shifts into the hands of the laity, not just the

55. Hull and Riet, *The Disciple-Making Church*, 18.

clergy. In Acts 4:32-34, ministry happened when *all* (emphasis added) of the people were “in one heart and mind” and were empowered to give and serve accordingly.⁵⁶

The Goal of Discipleship

There is both a micro and a macro goal in discipleship. The two goals are uniquely intertwined and immeasurably inseparable. The macro view of discipleship is that a disciple will make more disciples. In this multiplication, we measure and define success not by church attendance or financial giving numbers, but by how many disciples are actually making more disciples. On the micro level, the goal of discipleship seems clear; it is about closeness to Jesus. As one studies the life of Jesus, there arises a clear pattern to the way people followed him and the way he subsequently discipled. While I believe discipleship is inherently relational and not a checklist, Jesus mastered the tension; he was highly relational and highly systematic. Dr. Robert Crosby wrote about Jesus’ discipleship in his latest book, *The One Jesus Loves*.⁵⁷ Crosby identified six circles of influence that Jesus had in the lives of his followers. As each concentric circle got closer and closer to Jesus, the responsibility increased, the intimacy heightened, and ultimately the follower became more devoted. The six circles he identified are:

1. The Crowds. “The Crowds represent those who follow Jesus to the places of watching and listening.”⁵⁸ These crowds were the multitudes interested in seeing if the rumors they heard about Jesus were true. Could he actually heal?

56. Originally written for Dr. Daniel McNaughton’s “Contextual Engagement II.”

57. Robert Crosby, *The One Jesus Loves: Grace Is Unconditionally Given, Intimacy Must Be Relentlessly Pursued* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2014).

58. Crosby, *The One Jesus Loves*, 13.

What would he do next? While it might be easy to vilify someone on the outskirts of faith, Crosby asserted that it was the initial pique of curiosity that caused the crowds to take a step closer. Every follower of Jesus experienced a moment when they were a part of the crowds and were drawn in by something about Jesus.

2. The Five Thousand. “The Five Thousand represent those who follow Jesus to the places of feeding and healing.”⁵⁹ This group identifies those who moved out of the crowds as a spectator to become recipients of the blessing of Jesus. This group is represented in the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 (or more accurately 5,000 men, not including women and children). The group was there to get something from Jesus.
3. The Seventy. “The Seventy represent those who follow Jesus to the places of working and serving.”⁶⁰ This step is significant in the discipleship process, as it is a step into ministry. This smaller group moved from observing Jesus’ ministry to participating with him in it. They did what they saw Jesus doing. Discipleship is equal parts taught and caught; the seventy stayed so close that they caught onto what Jesus was doing and then participated based on what they had seen.
4. The Twelve. “The Twelve represent those who walk with Jesus to the places of leaving all and following him.”⁶¹ We commonly refer to the twelve as Jesus’ disciples. These young men, probably teenagers, left everything—home, family, and security—to follow closely after Jesus.
5. The Three. “The Three represent those who follow Jesus to the places of glory and suffering.”⁶² From within the twelve disciples rose three that were even closer. Peter, James, and John saw, heard, and experienced more because they were significantly closer.
6. The One. “Ultimately only one person bears the distinction of having been the closest person to Christ during his earthly ministry. I like to think of this person as the One, the closest One.”⁶³ The apostle John self-identified as “the one Jesus loved.” He was the closest to Jesus. “The One followed Christ to at least one place no other among the Twelve would go.”⁶⁴

59. Crosby, *The One Jesus Loves*, 13.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., 14.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid., 14–15.

64. Ibid., 15.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote, “We are as close to God as we choose to be.”⁶⁵ The operative word here is “we.” We get to choose how close we want to get. Jesus’ promise of life with abundance in John 10:10 is available to us.

How Does One Make a Disciple?

Jesus was the master at disciple-making. The way Jesus disciplined must directly influence the way we plan, disciple, and evaluate the effectiveness of our discipleship pathways. Like Jesus, we must see every moment as an opportunity to disciple. Jesus incorporated effective discipling moments for groups through his teaching and preaching. Preaching is a part of the discipleship plan. Jesus had massive influence in his small group of twelve disciples. Arguably, the reason the church exists today is because of his investment in the small group, not his teaching of the multitudes. He was often seen prioritizing the small group over the larger crowds. We must reorient our groups to better facilitate spiritual growth. Finally, Jesus made time for individuals. The best discipleship happens within closer, more intimate relationships. All three of these environments—large group, small group, and one-on-one mentoring relationships—are dependent on the disciple choosing the path of personal discipline. We must create an urgency for individuals to pursue their own spiritual growth through spending time alone with God.

As stated earlier, the American church has fallen short in its efforts to effectively disciple. Churches have substituted classes and seminars for discipleship. George Barna stated, “We have assumed that if a church provides consistent events, biblical

65. J. Oswald Sanders, *Enjoying Intimacy with God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 2000), 19–20.

information, and appealing programs for people, and the people consume those offerings, then the users will grow.”⁶⁶ Discipleship is not merely a transfer of information; it is a transformation of the heart. There is a simple progression in Jesus’ discipleship approach: come, hear, and do. This process starts with proximity, shifts to learning, and then ends with equipping. The first step, *come*, requires a significant investment of time.

In John 1:39, Jesus offers this simple, yet profound invitation: “Come and see.” These three words were loaded with potential. His invitation was to closeness. There is nothing wrong with learning information, but Jesus’ invitation was not to learn; it was an invitation to experience. Some things are better caught than taught. Dave Ferguson summarized the time Jesus spent with his disciples this way: “From the time Jesus told the Twelve that he’d teach them to multiply (‘I will send you out to fish for people,’ Matt. 4:19) until his death, Jesus spent 73% of His time with the Twelve. That’s forty-six events with the few, compared with seventeen events with the masses. The ratio of time Jesus spent with the few versus time he spent with the many was almost three to one.”⁶⁷ Jesus spent the majority of his three years of ministry with the twelve disciples. John 3:22 says, “After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them.” He was constantly investing in them. The key to this kind of investment is proximity. This investment cannot arise from policies and procedure manuals; it must happen in an up-close and personal way. “The word for ‘spend time’ in

66. George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, Colo: WaterBrook, 2001), 88–89.

67. Dave Ferguson and Warren Bird, *Hero Maker: Five Essential Practices for Leaders to Multiply Leaders* (Zondervan, 2018).

Greek is διατρίβω (transliterated diatribo). Dia means ‘against,’ and tribo means ‘to rub.’ So διατρίβω literally means ‘to rub against’ or ‘to rub off.’ It means ‘to spend time together rubbing off on each other.’”⁶⁸ Jesus knew that his disciples would do greater things as a result of his investment in them.

In Matthew 4:19, Jesus said he would spend his time investing in the disciples, “diatribo’ing” them, so they could be sent out to “fish for people.” This kind of investment begs a shift in the way we think. Real ministry happens behind the scenes with a few people, who will multiply themselves in a few people, which continues over and over. It could be argued that Jesus’ most important ministry did not happen amongst the thousands, but with the twelve disciples. They carried the message on after his ascension, through their ministry, writing, and teaching.

After making the investment of time, Jesus then began to instruct. His instruction in Luke 6:46-49 was that they not only hear, but also obey his words. We observe Jesus modeling this instruction in Matthew 10-12, as he sent his disciples out. Before they were released to ministry, he gave them a list of instruction. In Luke 10, Jesus sent out the 72 for ministry, but before sending them out, he instructed them regarding what to do and what not to do. Jesus placed a high value on obedience. In John 14, he repeated the refrain “If you love me, keep my commands” four times. 1 John 5:3 adds, “In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands.” There is a direct correlation between love and obedience. Jesus’ ministry even seemed to value obedience and faithfulness over results

68. Ferguson and Bird, *Hero Maker*, 115.

and fruitfulness. The reason for this valuation may simply be that all obedience, whether successful or unsuccessful, provides an opportunity for reflection and growth.

There is a repeating cycle throughout all of Scripture that plays a significant role in the discipleship growth process.⁶⁹ We sin. We experience judgment.⁷⁰ We receive the grace of God.⁷¹ People grow where they experience grace. From Adam and Eve in the garden until today, sin has always been a part of the human experience. God showed up in the Garden of Eden and asked three penetrating questions: First, he asked, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9); second, “Who told you that you were naked?” (Gen. 3:11); finally, “What is this that you have done?” (Gen. 3:13). Adam and Eve sinned, received the judgment of God, and then were covered by his grace. He covered them in animal skin (Gen. 3:21), foreshadowing the ultimate covering of God’s grace experienced at the cross of Jesus.

In Luke 22, Peter denied Jesus three times, thus sinning. Yet, shortly after, on a seashore, he experienced the grace of Jesus. Jesus put Peter back into the ministry when he said in John 21:17, “Feed my sheep” three times—once for every time he denied Jesus. Jesus did not sideline Peter for his sin; instead, he showed him grace through the process and then restored him to ministry.

69. Examples include Gen. 1-11, Deut. 27-28, Is. 40-66, Jer. 31-34.

70. William A. Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (IVP Academic, 2009), Kindle 1127-1135.

71. *Ibid.*, Kindle 1306-1314.; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (IVP Academic, 2012), 383.

In Acts 15, Paul and John Mark had a similar experience in Perga. John Mark turned back; then, when Paul went on his second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul would not take him. Evidently, there had to be a relational falling-out for Paul to refuse taking John Mark. Then, at the end of Paul's life, in 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul referenced John Mark's ministry. At some point, there had to be reconciliation, and grace is always present in reconciliation. There is no better example than the story of Jesus stepping into the world to bring grace to humanity. Paul says in Romans 5:20, "The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more."

The model of discipleship involved a place where you could experience God in community, with someone who would stay with you, help you experience grace, and then redeploy you into ministry. This model exemplifies the importance of spiritual coaching. People need someone to walk with them through their issues and to be a voice of the grace of God on the other side of sin and forgiveness. When people can be honest about their issues, and then experience grace and a person loving them through their issues, they change. Grace stays. Through pain, through betrayal, and through heartbreak, grace stays in relationship.

Paul states emphatically in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." A full theology of discipleship must start with salvation, which is unequivocally a gift from God. Salvation is unearnable, not based on merit, and entirely rooted in the very nature of God's love. I find myself often admonishing my church congregation to stop striving to earn a gift that was given. Such striving is no

different than a child promising to repay their parents every penny that a Christmas gift costs. We cannot earn or repay God for the salvation we have through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. His salvation is a gift of grace: "Grace is opposed to earning, not to effort. And it is well-directed, decisive, and sustained effort that is the key to the keys of the Kingdom and to the life of restful power in ministry and life that those keys open to us."⁷²

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul's tone shifted: "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." *Handiwork*, in other English translations, also reads "workmanship" or "masterpiece." The Greek word utilized here is *ποίημα*. The word *ποίημα* is defined as the "highest level of poetic writing," but this word is reserved for God's divine work.⁷³ In essence, humanity is God's greatest creation and is an integral part of the poetic story he is penning in the world. In *ποίημα*, one finds part of their intrinsic identity. Humanity is created by God, valued by God, and finds a purpose in him. Dr. Daniel McNaughton said, "There is no higher calling in life than Jesus' call to be with him. You may do great things for him. You may help many people learn to follow him and that's great, but your primary calling is just to be with him."⁷⁴

The second half of verse 10 is about our mission. We are created in Christ Jesus

72. Willard, *The Great Omission*, 34.

73. "Strong's #4161: Poiema - Greek/Hebrew Definitions - Bible Tools," accessed April 23, 2019, <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G4161/poiema.htm>.

74. Koch and McNaughton, *Follow*, Kindle 336.

(our identity), to do good works (our mission and ministry). Salvation is both a gift and a command; it is so much more than a “Get out of Hell” card. Greg Ogden stated that a “cause of the low estate of discipleship is that we have reduced the gospel to the eternal benefits we get from Jesus, rather than living as his students.”⁷⁵ What, then, is this work? This process is the hard work of discipleship, which leads to becoming more like Jesus. One could argue that the work referenced in verse 10 is about ministering to others or loving well, but I submit that everything that God has for us is available to us as we become more like Jesus, so that we may effectively disciple others.

Paul wrote in Colossians 2:6-7, “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” Paul uses the growth analogy to call the church in Colossae to continued training and growth. Spiritual growth does not occur on accident. There is a marked difference between *trying* and *training*. If you were to ask a random person to run a marathon today, there is virtually no chance that they could complete it. It would not matter how much the person wanted to, or how hard they tried. If they are not already trained for marathon running, completing the race will not happen. However, if given several months for extensive training, many people could likely become distance runners. Paul used this analogy in 1 Timothy 4:7-8: “Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”⁷⁶ How many

75. Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship* (InterVarsity Press, 2016), 47.

76. Originally submitted to Dr. Daniel McNaughton in “Contextual Engagement II”

Christians spend their lives *trying* to become more like Jesus instead of *training*? There is a direct correlation between discipline and discipleship. Discipline, in any art or craft, takes a personal amount of desire and drive to accomplish. Dallas Willard said,

In the heart of a disciple there is a desire, and there is a decision or settled intent. Having come to some understanding of what it means, and thus having “counted up the costs,” the disciple of Christ desires above all else to be like him. Thus, “it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher” (Matthew 10:25). And moreover, “everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher” (Luke 6:40).⁷⁷

The final, critical step in the discipleship process is reproduction. True discipleship can be identified when one who has been discipled becomes the teacher and, in turn, begins discipling someone else. Author Bill Hull gave a practical framework when he wrote, “Disciple making included introducing people to Christ, building them up in faith, and sending them into the harvest field. This process can be summarized by what I call the three D’s of disciple making: deliver them, develop them, and deploy them.”⁷⁸ Churches completely undermine the principle when they assume that discipleship is simply a one-time course or a series of classes. Discipleship is not about the dissemination of information; it is about life transformation. Discipleship was never about just gaining more knowledge; it was always about getting closer to Jesus. When we reduce discipleship to a class, or series of classes, we completely miss the point.

When the focus of discipleship properly shifts to investing deeply in a few other people, it changes how we assess our ministries. Disciple multipliers prioritize sending

77. Willard, *The Great Omission*, 7.

78. Hull and Riet, *The Disciple-Making Church*, 26.

capacity over seating capacity.⁷⁹ This mental shift has caused me to evaluate the way I lead and preach differently. As a result of dissemination, I am potentially preaching to hundreds of thousands of people through the hundreds of people who attend my church on a regular basis. When I invest deeply in a leader, I am investing in dozens of people through them. I now see that the most important things I do for our church are to invest deeply in my staff, to empower them to empower others, and to preach through my church.

Ferguson and Bird offer practical handles on how to effectively multiply disciples, called the *Five Steps of Apprenticeship*.⁸⁰

1. I do. You watch. We talk.
2. I do. You help. We talk.
3. You do. I help. We talk.
4. You do. I watch. We talk.
5. You do. Someone else watches.

It is important to notice the intentionality in these steps. Some of them start with “me” doing the work, but intentionally shift to the apprentice doing the work. The key in the first four steps is not who does the work or how the work gets done, but rather the fact that after each step, we talk. Talking is the key to disciple multiplying; we have to talk. For disciple multiplication to happen, we must be close.

79. Ferguson and Bird, *Hero Maker*, 117.

80. Ferguson and Bird, *Hero Maker*, 131–134.

How Does One Measure Discipleship?

In his book, *Growing True Disciples*, Barna argued that there is no real way to measure spiritual growth.⁸¹ His research found that six out of ten believers had no sense of what they wanted to achieve or become,⁸² and three out of ten born-again adults did not have any plan or process by which they intended to fulfill their spiritual goals.⁸³ Barna later said churches that are growing in discipleship have internally developed a tool:

When it comes to evaluating how well people are doing in their efforts to emulate Christ, the truly effective churches go beyond collecting and reciting affirming anecdotes. Each of these churches uses specific tools—most developed in-house—to provide a sense of what is happening spiritually in people’s lives. These tools include knowledge measurements, behavioral assessments, gift inventories, attitudinal and behavioral surveys, and goal statements and measurements.⁸⁴

To effectively help people grow, we must create measurable outcomes. Unfortunately, many churches only measure attendance, salvation, baptisms, and number of people serving. I contend that this mindset has hurt the church in its mission to effectively disciple believers. Perhaps discipleship is more of a trajectory than a set of measurable activities. This proposition raises two key questions: First, how would one measure a trajectory? Second, is it possible for a church to create an environment that encourages a trajectory that develops multiplying disciples? If we could discover the essential elements

81. Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 36.

82. Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 36.

83. *Ibid.*, 37.

84. *Ibid.*, 110–111.

of disciple-making and develop an environment in the church with similar characteristics, could we expect similar results to the ones Jesus obtained? Beyond that, in our lifetime, could we turn the tide in the American church in order to make progress toward making disciples of all nations?

Project Limitations and Rationale

That which is spiritual is not necessarily measurable. The goal of this project is to identify Jesus' discipleship strategies and patterns in order to create a rubric with which to assess other believers. We will primarily be using the beginning elements of discipleship, as seen in Matthew 4:19-7:29. There is one key assumption made in this study: the Gospels accurately teach us what Jesus said and did.

- Premise 1: Jesus was and is the ultimate disciple-maker. He is our example.
- Premise 2: If we discover the principles with which he disciplined his followers, we could potentially apply those again and see positive results.
- Premise 3: Since Jesus is part of the Godhead, and since God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, we can expect God to have disciplined people similarly throughout Scripture.

Approach

We must determine how we can help people effectively grow spiritually and how they can determine whether they are succeeding. Jesus modeled seven measurable attributes that every Christ-follower can utilize in order to grow closer to him. Dr. Daniel McNaughton's research from the book *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*⁸⁵ identified the

85. Koch and McNaughton, *Follow*.

aforementioned seven measurable attributes of followers of Jesus found in Matthew's Gospels:

1. Learn to be with Jesus (Matt. 4:19ff)
2. Learn to listen (Matt. 4:23ff)
3. Learn to heal (Matt. 4:23ff)
4. Learn to influence (Matt. 5:13-16ff)
5. Learn to love (Matt. 5:43ff)
6. Learn to pray (Matt. 6:5ff)
7. Learn to manage (Matt. 6:19-34ff)

Matthew was written as a discipleship manual for the early church at Antioch or to Greek-speaking Jews.⁸⁶ The structure of the book of Matthew indicates an emphasis on the teaching of Jesus. There are five main teaching sections in Matthew: chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, and 23-25. After the initial invitation of Jesus to "Follow me" in Matthew 4:19, Chapters 5-7 function as the best starting point for discipleship.

Utilizing the seven attributes, I will identify significant Old and New Testament examples of each attribute and then, in the research stage, measure them in correlation to the four different environments Jesus discipled in: large crowds,⁸⁷ small groups,⁸⁸ one-on-one spiritual mentoring,⁸⁹ and personal quiet time.⁹⁰ These environments are key for every believer who hopes to grow in the seven attributes of becoming a disciple.

86. Stephen D. Eyre and Jacalyn Eyre, *Matthew: Being Discipled by Jesus* (InterVarsity Press, 2000), 5.

87. Matt. 4:25; 5:1; 7:28; 8:1; 9:36; 13:2; 14:15; 15:30; 19:2; 21:9, 11; 22:33; 23:1

88. Matt. 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 13:36; 20:17; 26:20

89. Matt. 4:19; 18:16

90. Matt. 6:6; 26:36; Lk. 5:16

Theology of Discipleship

Discipleship has always uniquely woven into the DNA of God's design for humanity. He, however, did not call it "discipleship." In Genesis 1, God blessed his creation and then gave five commands to the newly formed human beings: be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over it (Gen. 1:28).⁹¹ We are designed to aggressively pursue these commands. In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, God instructed parents to impress these commandments on the hearts of their children.

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut. 6:6-9)

Discipleship did not start with Jesus in the New Testament. God embedded discipleship into the systems of humans' lives from the very beginning of time. From Genesis to Revelation, there is a consistent cadence of God reinforcing these principles to his people. Since discipleship was always God's intention, even from the beginning of creation, I will also highlight the connection between God's plan in the Garden of Eden and discipleship in the creation narrative of Genesis 1-3.

91. *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (London: Collins, 2012).

Attribute One: Learn to be with Jesus

God created humanity for relationship. He wanted relationship with us, and he wanted us to experience relationship with each other. God's desire reveals that he is a relational God and he cares about his creation. God placed Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden. Dr. Lisa Schachter said, "As each detail builds on the previous one, a complex scene emerges. Eden is not only a lush garden but also a sacred space, sharing characteristics with other mountain-top shrines found throughout the ancient Near East. The parallels between the Garden of Eden, the desert Tabernacle and the later Holy Temple in Jerusalem and other Near Eastern sanctuaries are striking."⁹² The intent was that the garden would be a holy place where God would dwell, similar to how he would dwell in the Tabernacle and the Temple. One way we see God dwelling in the garden is that he would walk with the man and woman in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8).

Throughout the Old Testament are reminders that God wanted to be in the midst of his people. The Tabernacle (מִשְׁכָּן) was the dwelling place of God. "God created the whole world in six days, but he used forty to instruct Moses about the tabernacle. Little over one chapter was needed to describe the structure of the world, but six were used for the tabernacle."⁹³ In Exodus 25:8, God gives instruction to the people of Israel: "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them." In Numbers 2:17,

92. Lifsa Schachter, "The Garden of Eden as God's First Sanctuary," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 74, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=86063916&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

93. Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 547.

there were clear instructions that the sanctuary was to be set up in the center of the camp. Why was there so much attention to detail? This was where God would dwell. The attention to detail is symbolic of God's intention. In the same way that the people of Israel built their campsites around the Tabernacle, God invites us to intentionally center our lives around him. The Temple that was built later had the same ideal, and the presence of God came after the people completed the work. Completing that project was the center of everything. 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 says that the tangible presence of the Lord was so strong in the Temple that the priests could not fulfill their priestly duties. The glory of God filled the Temple.

God has always longed to be with his people. his longing started in the garden, was furthered in the Tabernacle, was made apparent again in the Temple, was personified in the life of Jesus, and now dwells in his people, the church. In Ezekiel 8-11, the presence of God left the people because of their wickedness and sin. One could say that without the presence of God, there was nothing, or no one, for the people to center their lives around; the nation fell into despair.

In the New Testament, the simple, but ever so challenging, invitation of Jesus to Peter and Andrew was simply to follow. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matt. 4:19). "There is no higher calling in life than Jesus' call to be with him. You may do great things for him. You may help many people learn to follow him and that's great, but your primary calling is just to be with him."⁹⁴

94. Koch and McNaughton, *Follow*, Kindle 336.

Jesus saw potential in average young men who were working traditional, non-spiritual jobs. He certainly could have chosen the best and the brightest to follow him, yet he saw potential where others only saw what seemed common.

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” *At once* they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and *immediately* they left the boat and their father and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-22, emphasis added)

It is fascinating how quickly the disciples chose to leave the security of their jobs to follow him. Notice the words used in verses 20 and 22; Peter and Andrew left their fishing business *at once*. James and John left their father in the boat to follow Jesus *immediately*. There is something alluring about someone believing in you. Such belief will cause a person to serve in irrational, over-the-top ways. Faithful disciples learn to simply be with Jesus.⁹⁵ There is no substitute for time spent close to him. His response is priceless. He will be with us until the end of the age (Matt. 28:20).

Attribute Two: Learn to Listen

Learning to listen is about deciding to relinquish the final say in one’s life to God, a process which started in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 1:29-30, God said “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with

95. See also: Gen. 5:22 Enoch walked with God, Gen. 6:9 Noah walked with God, Gen. 39:21, The Lord was with Joseph (also Gen. 29:23), Josh. 1:5, As I was with Moses, so I will be with you (1:17; 6:27), 1 Sam. 3:19, The Lord was with Samuel, 1 Sam. 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5:10 The Lord was with David, 2 Kings 18:5, Hezekiah.

seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.”⁹⁶ In Genesis 3:1, the serpent tempted Eve with a simple question: “Did God *really* say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (emphasis added). Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation, did not listen to the instruction of God, and humanity eclipsed into sin. Their first sin was not eating the fruit. Their first sin was actually wanting to be God without listening to God. This Garden narrative actually shines a light on God’s heart for instruction. Notice that he gave nearly limitless permission before he ever gave restriction. They were allowed and encouraged to eat from any tree in the garden, except one. Disciples believe that God’s Word is for our good and not for limitation.

Immediately after Adam and Eve’s story, in Genesis 4:7, God gives this warning to Cain: “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” The message of God to Cain was that he did not have to sin.

There are many negative examples of individuals who chose not to listen to the word of God. King Saul had the kingship stripped away from his lineage for a lack of hearing and obedience. His successor, King David, exclaimed in Psalm 119:11, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” This sentiment affirmed the authority of the Word of God in David’s life. However, there were many times in

96. See also: Gen. 5:22 Enoch walked with God, Gen. 6:9 Noah walked with God, Gen. 39:21, The Lord was with Joseph (also Gen. 29:23), Josh. 1:5, As I was with Moses, so I will be with you (1:17; 6:27), 1 Sam. 3:19, The Lord was with Samuel, 1 Sam. 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5:10 The Lord was with David, 2 Kings 18:5, Hezekiah.

David's life when he did not live as though that statement guided his reality. Most notably, in 2 Samuel 11, David sinned in adultery with Bathsheba, murdered her husband, Uriah, and then lied to cover his own sin.

True disciples learn to hear God's word and obey it. Many Christians are more educated than they are obedient. Disciples have accepted the fact that God's Word is their final authority. James 1:22-25 emphasizes this truth so clearly:

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.⁹⁷

In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus said:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

In other words, Jesus' intention on earth was to establish the Word and to fully achieve everything that was written. Paul says in Romans 10:4 that "Christ is the culmination of

97. See also: Gen. 5:22 Enoch walked with God, Gen. 6:9 Noah walked with God, Gen. 39:21, The Lord was with Joseph (also Gen. 29:23), Josh. 1:5, As I was with Moses, so I will be with you (1:17; 6:27), 1 Sam. 3:19, The Lord was with Samuel, 1 Sam. 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5:10 The Lord was with David, 2 Kings 18:5, Hezekiah.

the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”⁹⁸ Jesus pointed back to the Word of God as authoritative. Paul affirmed the authority of the Word of God in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”⁹⁹ God gave us his Word. Disciples realize that God is always speaking, even when they cannot hear his voice. An open Bible is an open line of communication from God directly to his followers.

Attribute Three: Learn to Heal

Healing is directly connected to the aforementioned pattern of sin, to judgment, and to grace. When we stray away from God’s path and sin becomes routine, pain follows. This is where the healing grace of God becomes evident. God is concerned with the wellbeing of his children. He cares about our physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental health.

In the Garden of Eden, God came to Adam and Eve after they sinned. He pursued them. There were consequences and pain that ensued, but God pursued and covered¹⁰⁰ them, nonetheless. Imagine the pain they walked through when Cain killed Abel. The

98. *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2011).

99. See also: Gen. 5:22 Enoch walked with God, Gen. 6:9 Noah walked with God, Gen. 39:21, The Lord was with Joseph (also Gen. 29:23), Josh. 1:5, As I was with Moses, so I will be with you (1:17; 6:27), 1 Sam. 3:19, The Lord was with Samuel, 1 Sam. 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5:10 The Lord was with David, 2 Kings 18:5, Hezekiah.

100. Gen. 3:17-19; Gen. 3:21

healing grace of God was there, too, in that he gave them another son, Seth.¹⁰¹ Even Seth's name is symbolic; it means *granted*. This son represented healing to Adam and Eve, and from Seth's genealogy¹⁰² ultimately came Jesus, who brought healing to humanity.

The story of Leah is a wonderful story of healing. Genesis 29:17 tells us that “Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful.” The simple translation is that Rachel was beautiful while Leah was far less desirable. Jacob fell in love with the younger, more beautiful sister. Anyone who has experienced the broken heartedness of feeling passed over, not being good enough, or not measuring up can understand Leah's pain. There is an easy-to-miss phrase that leads into Genesis 29:3: “When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive.” In narrative literature, when the author says, “the Lord saw,” the phrase should be given much attention. This phrase reveals the heart of God. Very rarely throughout Scripture are the actual emotions of God expressed, but in this story, he was moved with compassion and stepped into the situation as a result. God sees, he cares, and he has a plan. The first three children that Leah bore were given disparaging names. Leah had a misdirected view of where her inner healing would come from. She thought that if she bore children, Jacob might actually love her. By the time she bore her fourth son, Judah, she realized that her healing came from God and God alone. Her declaration at Judah's birth was “This time I will praise the Lord.” Ultimately, it was through Leah's lineage that Jesus would be born.

101. Gen. 4:25

102. Lk. 3:38

Romans 8:28 declares that God works all things together for our good. The Old Testament stories about Seth and Leah as the genealogical forerunners to Jesus remind us that God has a plan for our inner pain. In the story of Joseph, his brothers, who sold him into slavery, found themselves face-to-face with Joseph, fearful for the retaliation he might try to bring. Instead, Joseph responded with, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today” (Gen. 50:20). Think of the emotional woundedness he carried from the betrayal by his brothers. Joseph spent thirteen years in prison, never knowing that he eventually would ascend to power.

There are twenty-six recorded healings of Jesus in the New Testament, not including over ten times when he is recorded healing the multitudes, great multitudes, or various other groups of people. John reminds us that these instances are just a short highlight reel of Jesus’ full ministry. “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (Jn. 21:25). “Nearly one-fifth of the Gospel accounts is devoted to Jesus’ healing ministry, including the circumstances, the methods used and the effects on the patients and those who were onlookers. Out of 3,779 verses in the four Gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical and mental illness and the resurrection of the dead.”¹⁰³

1. The Nobleman’s Son (Jn. 4:46)
2. The Man with an Unclean Spirit (Mk. 1:21, Lk. 4:31)
3. Simon Peter’s Mother-in-Law (Matt. 8:14, Mk. 1:29, Lk. 4:38)
4. The Healing of the Leper (Matt. 8:1, Mk. 1:40, Lk. 5:12)

103. “Healing in the Gospels,” accessed October 30, 2019, <http://www.voiceofhealing.info/02history/gospels.html>.

5. The Healing of the Paralytic (Matt. 9:1, Mk. 2:1, Lk. 5:17)
6. The Man at Bethesda pool (Jn. 5:2)
7. The Man with the Withered Hand (Matt. 12:9, Mk. 3:1, Lk. 6:6)
8. The Centurion's Servant (Matt. 8:5; Lk. 7:2)
9. Widow's Deceased Son (Lk. 7:11)
10. Demoniacs at Gadara (Matt. 8:28; Mk. 5:1; Lk. 8:26)
11. Woman with the Issue of Blood (Matt. 9:20; Mk. 5:25; Lk. 8:43)
12. Jairus's Deceased Daughter (Matt. 9:18; Mk. 5:21; Lk. 8:40)
13. Two Blind Men (Matt. 9:27)
14. Mute, Possessed Man (Matt. 9:32)
15. Daughter of Canaanite (Matt. 15:21; Mk. 4:24)
16. Deaf Man with Impediment (Mk. 7:32)
17. Blind Man at Bethsaida (Mk. 8:22)
18. Epileptic Boy (Matt. 17:14; Mk. 9:14; Lk. 9:37)
19. Man Born Blind (Jn. 9:1)
20. Man, Blind, Dumb, Possessed (Matt. 12:22; Lk. 11:14)
21. Woman Bent Double (Lk. 13:10)
22. Man with Dropsy (Edema) (Lk. 14:1)
23. Lazarus (Jn. 11:11)
24. Ten Lepers (Lk. 17:11)
25. Blind Bartimaeus (Matt. 20:29; Mk. 10:45; Lk. 18:35)
26. Malchus (Lk. 22:50)

In John 5, Jesus stepped over many sick and infirmed people and asked what appears to be one of the stranger questions in the Bible: "Do you want to get well?" Jesus asked this question to a man lying by the Pool of Bethesda, hoping for a miracle. He had been disabled for thirty-eight years and Jesus asked him if he wanted to be made well. On the surface level, everyone would assume that this man would want to be healed. However, some people would rather remain in their current state, secure in the comfort of not changing, than risk the implications of change. Jesus' question was loaded. He was asking the man if he wanted an entirely new life. Jesus physically healed the man. In verse 14, Jesus ran into the man somewhere in town and confronted him. "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you" (Jn. 5:14). Jesus healed physically and then showed grace by caring about the man's soul.

In Matthew 8:1-4, Jesus healed a man with leprosy.¹⁰⁴ More specifically, verse 3 says that Jesus touched the man. In Jesus' culture, a diagnosis of leprosy was a death sentence that involved severe emotional distress. A person with leprosy would have been cast out of the city, probably never to be touched by another person again for fear of the disease spreading. It would have been devastating to a person's soul to endure the crushing weight of the physical diagnosis, only to be further decimated internally knowing that they would never touch their loved ones again. And even still, Jesus touched him. I contend that the healing was much more significant than merely ridding the man of leprosy; Jesus' healing made this man whole.

God cares about all of your being. A disciple realizes that God wants to heal his or her body *and* soul. David said in Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Disciples realize that pain is a part of the human experience. Disciples are not called to carry that through life, but instead they live in the process of healing.¹⁰⁵

104. Also recorded in Mk 1:40, Lk 5:12

105. See also:

- Exod. 15:26, "I am the Lord, who heals you."
- 2 Kgs. 20, Is. 38, Hezekiah's healing
- 2 Chron. 7:14, Heal their land
- Ps. 30:2, "I called to you for help and you healed me."
- Ps. 147:3, He heals the brokenhearted...
- Ps. 103, Heals all our diseases
- Is. 53:5, Sign of the messiah, by his stripes we are healed
- Ezek. 47:12, Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.
- Lk. 10:9, "Heal the sick who are there..."
- Acts 4:9ff, Peter and John
- Acts 9:34, "Jesus Christ heals you."
- Acts 28:8, sick father was healed
- 1 Cor. 12:9, 30, "gifts of healing"
- Jas. 5:16, Confess and pray, anoint

Attribute Four: Learn to Influence

Genesis 1:26-28 says that mankind is created in the image of God. The Hebrew word used in this verse, *צלם*, is fascinating; it translates to “image,” but also to “idol.” The word implies that we are representatives for God and it also confirms relationship with him. Genesis 2-3 builds upon this and furthers our understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God, as found in Genesis 1:27.¹⁰⁶ The definition serves as more of a job description than anything else. It means that everywhere we go, and in everything we do, we are representing God to the world around us. This serves as a descriptive way to say that we need to look like God to the world because we have spent so much time with him. An interesting observation is that God designed Adam and Eve to be representatives to the world, before there were people in the world for them to influence. God was setting the precedent from the beginning. By Genesis 12, God had renewed his vision for all of humanity to be blessed (or influenced) through his people. Proverbs 1:8 offers this refrain on influence: “Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.” The Hebrew word for “influence,” *מוֹסֵר*, carries with it a strong tone that is easy to miss in English. Solomon was teaching parents to not let their children discover their own way, but instead to strongly imprint upon them the right ways to live. Influence is to be relational, and that influence starts in the household.

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- Rev. 22:2, Leaves of the tree are the healing of the nations.

106. Koch and McNaughton, *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*, Kindle 336.

In Isaiah 49:16, God said through Isaiah, “I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” Israel was always intended to influence the world. This idea is referenced in Isaiah 42:6, Isaiah 52:10, Isaiah 60:3, Acts 13:47, and Acts 26:2. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14-16, he calls his followers the light of the world.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Hebrew word for “light” is $\phi\omega\varsigma$. Light is catalytic; it forces darkness to run. Where there is light, darkness cannot exist. A Jesus-follower should literally and figuratively change the atmosphere. Instead of condemning the darkness for being dark, a tactic to which many Christians resort, Jesus invites his followers to simply be $\phi\omega\varsigma$. Jesus’ instruction is that light (or influence) should start in our homes and then spread to the rest of the world.

In John 4, on a seemingly chance encounter, Jesus ran into a Samaritan woman getting water at a well at midday. Jewish people did not intentionally interact with Samaritans, but Jesus was no ordinary Jewish man. He asked for a drink of water, which was a simple yet complicated request, given the unique socio-cultural strain between the two nationalities. After learning that the one she was talking to was the Messiah, who both knew her past shame and had the power to forgive her sins, the woman’s response was incredible.

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (John 4:28-42).

Jesus restored order in the life of a woman who was nothing like him. Her life could certainly be categorized as chaotic, as she had been married five times and was with another man at the time. When Jesus forgave her and brought order to the chaos in her heart, her response was to immediately go and tell her friends. Verse 28 says that in her excitement to share about her encounter, she left her water jar at the well. This is a seemingly innocuous detail, but it shows the gravity of this moment. A close modern equivalent would be to have experienced such an incredible encounter with someone that you would willingly leave your cell phone, tablet, or laptop computer behind for anyone to take.

The Samaritan woman shared her story, many people came to hear Jesus, and many became believers. She had spent her life running from shame before her encounter with Jesus. Instead of running from her problems, she decided to run to tell others of the Savior. Her mess ultimately became her message. Evangelism is the byproduct of a changed, restored life. Tommy Barnett teaches that soul-winning is not a gift of the Spirit.¹⁰⁷ The greatest witnessing tool that a person has is his or her own story.

107. Tommy Barnett, *Multiplication: Unlock the Biblical Factors to Multiply Your Effectiveness in Ministry & Business* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2002), 77.

Bryan Koch and Daniel McNaughton shared these four vital reasons on the importance of sharing our faith:

First, it helps people around you know why your life is changing. Second, it brings honor to God. Although you are an important person in your story, God is really the hero. Only God can change a life. Third, it gives people hope that God can change their lives as well. Fourth, it is difficult for anyone to argue with your experience.¹⁰⁸

Disciples know that God is in the people-restoration business. The natural response of a person whose life has been restored is to share. Restoration out of brokenness brings a testimony that showcases God's strength. We are most powerful when we are restored.

A cursory reading of the book of Acts demonstrates the same kind of catalytic impact that a Spirit-led, Spirit-empowered church should have on a city. The church explodes in growth from such an impact (Acts 2:47; 5:13–14; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21, 24; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20). Thousands of people are saved and thousands of people are baptized as a result of a church being led by the Holy Spirit and squarely on mission, regardless of impending personal risk. Alan Hirsch added this thought about the courage of the first century church: “Presumably, if one is willing to die for their faith, one has moved beyond easy believism [sic] into the realms of authentic trust in, and love for, God as he is revealed in Christ.”¹⁰⁹ The kind of courage identified by Hirsch is the mark of a church with the potential to multiply. But it did not multiply.

108. Bryan Koch and Daniel McNaughton, *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*, 114.

109. Alan Hirsch, Jeff Vanderstelt, and Ed Stetzer, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016), 91.

Throughout the first seven chapters of Acts, the church in Jerusalem was growing, but not beyond the walls of Jerusalem. Before Jesus' departure, he had commanded the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Obedience to Jesus' words resulted in establishing the church at Pentecost alongside representatives from the ends of the earth.¹¹⁰ By the end of Acts 7, the followers of Jesus were all still huddled in Jerusalem. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told his disciples that when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, as a result, they would become witnesses in Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. However, they had become stagnant. "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). God leveraged persecution to fulfill Jesus' earlier promise.

Pastor Tim Keller wrote, "The lesson comes true again and again: God uses the persecution and suffering of his people to spread the truth of Christ and to bless the world."¹¹¹ If it were not for God allowing persecution, the local church may have stayed within the city limits of Jerusalem. God is serious about multiplication. By the end of Paul's life and ministry, there was a marked shift away from personally doing the work of the Lord and toward developing and empowering others to do the work. "You then, my

110. Bertram L Melbourne, "Acts 1:8 Re-Examined: Is Acts 8 Its Fulfillment?," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 57–58, no. 2-1–2 (2001): 7, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&b=rh&AN=ATLA0001510707&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

111. "Spreading Power Through Persecution," *Desiring God*, last modified May 5, 1991, accessed November 16, 2017, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/spreading-power-through-persecution>.

son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:1-2). It is important to pay attention to the language in the preceding verses. Paul began by calling Timothy a son, which was a new, generational perspective in Paul’s writing. His personal ministry transitioned from leading to fathering. Then, he referenced the “many witnesses” who heard his words. The language shifted from fathering to multiplying. Paul’s leadership was adding to the work of the Lord, but since many witnesses encountered his teaching, his influence increased exponentially.

Finally, Paul referenced the “others” who would be taught as a result of his spiritual son, Timothy, and the “many witnesses.” One could easily argue that these “others” who had experienced the love of God would continue to spread the good news. In the preceding verses, there are four ascending generations of multiplication. Paul had encountered Jesus for himself, and he then taught Timothy. Paul and Timothy influenced “many witnesses,” who then taught “others.” Each generation of influence and impact proved larger than the previous.

How did Paul get to that place? The gravitational pull in leadership was toward selfishness and personal gain, yet Paul somehow multiplied himself in others. In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul expressed his desire to see a church where everyone was participating. Using the analogy of the church as the body of Christ, Paul declared that every person has a function, a purpose, and a place. In theory, there does not even need to be a leader when a church is functioning in this way. In the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, Paul spent time addressing the factions tearing the church apart. There was

squabbling from within the church regarding which leader different groups should be following. Some claimed to follow Paul, others Apollos, and others followed Cephas (1 Cor. 1:11-12; 3:4). Paul addressed the issue head on, challenging the church to not look around at leadership models from their culture.

The ultimate problem was that this church, like many modern churches, was more characterized by chaos than order. The church in Corinth had an overwhelming amount of issues. It certainly looked more like its surrounding culture than it reflected Christ. Paul specifically called out these issues throughout the two Corinthian epistles. In the pastoral epistles, Paul had realized that church cannot be a “free-for-all.” There had to be godly leadership in place. For the generational leadership that he modeled in 2 Timothy 2 to occur, there needed to be order and structure, leading them to experience generational multiplication. For there to be successive generations of multiplying churches, there must be a Christian commitment to the downstream of leadership.

In many of his books, Paul invited his readers to be imitators of Christ, God, and at times, even himself. The word “imitators” is rarely used throughout the Bible. The word is found eleven times in total, eight of which are in the Pauline corpus.¹¹² Paul publicly praised the Thessalonian church when he saw that they had imitated him (1 Thess. 1:6). Paul understood that for the church to multiply, it would require excellent spiritual leadership. One of the greatest tasks of a spiritual leader is to move people from

112. Andrew D Clarke, “‘Be Imitators of Me’: Paul’s Model of Leadership,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 49, no. 2 (1998): 329, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001590087&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

where they are to where God wants them to be.¹¹³ In this practice, the focus shifts from leaders praying that God will bless their efforts to asking God to bless the leaders who are being released into ministry. This step requires leaders to not just put people in ministry positions for the sake of filling roles, but rather to discover the gifts and intrinsic spiritual gifts within a leader.

Once again, Jesus serves as the perfect example of this principle in action. In Matthew 28:16-20, he told his disciples, I have all authority and I will use it through you as you step into your leadership role. In Matthew 16, Jesus asked a unique question and then made a statement that must have felt preposterous to his disciples:

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock *I will build my church*, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:13-18, emphasis added).

To a first century audience, the fact that Jesus was leading his disciples to Caesarea Philippi would be disconcerting at best. Sitting 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee and at the base of Mt. Hermon, Caesarea Philippi was known for its hedonistic society, pagan worship of a half-goat god, Pan, and a giant rock known as the “Rock of the gods.” No good, God-honoring Jewish boy would ever be caught in Caesarea Philippi, the closest modern equivalents of which would be the Red-Light District in the Netherlands or the

113. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches That Multiply* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2016), 383.

Las Vegas strip. God-fearing people would simply avoid going to those places. Somewhere along that journey, Jesus asked Peter what was being said about him. He then made the question more personal by asking Peter directly, “Who do you say I am?” This question is one that every person who encounters Jesus will have to answer for themselves; it is the catalytic question to the beginning of a movement that is multiplying. Jesus then marched his disciples to a rock, possibly the Rock of the gods, and declared that he was going to establish a new kind of community. The context for that declaration is important. Jesus was standing on a rock that was known to have natural gasses flowing from it. Many referred to it as the gates of Hades, as it was a place where they believed demons would enter and exit the world. Surrounding the rock were large statues of Pan, the half-goat god, a large phallic statue worshipped as a god of fertility, and potentially other pagan gods. Standing in that place, on that rock, Jesus declared that he would start a movement, a multiplying gathering of followers so strong that nothing, not even the gates of Hades, could stand against it. Jesus was foreshadowing what the church would become.

In a clever play on words, Jesus used Peter’s nickname to connect his declaration to what was to come. The cornerstone, or foundation, for this new entity called the church would be the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.¹¹⁴ Often, the element of this story that is focused on is Jesus declaring that he would build his church. While building the church is arguably the main point of the story, there is a subversive undertone to this story. Jesus, specifically and intentionally, called out Peter. He saw

114. Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), Kindle 586-588.

something in Peter that Peter could not see in himself. He saw potential in Peter that no one else saw. Peter went on to live what was arguably one of the most influential lives in the New Testament. When we see potential in people, the way Jesus saw potential in Peter, there are massive ramifications. Jesus' influence in Peter's life led to Peter's historical influence. In Revelation 7:9, John foresaw "every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." Disciples see every relationship as a potential to leverage influence. Everyone has influence, but disciples are learning to use that influence for God's work.

Attribute Five: Learn to Love

Genesis 2:22-25 provides a picture of love that points to God's love for humanity. After Eve was created from Adam, he woke up, saw his wife, and poetically proclaimed:

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The phrase "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" is a Hebraic colloquialism for loyalty.¹¹⁵ The phrase represents a commitment bond of unconditional love that has moved away from the love of a mother and father and has been forever united to the

115. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis (New International Commentary on the Old Testament Series) 18-50*, 1st ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1995), 180.

spouse. Even the act of sexual intimacy is a reflection of this commitment. For a moment, two people are united, and the hope of committed intimacy is to be vulnerable without feeling shame.

By the end of Genesis 3, after God rebuked Adam and Eve for their sin, he again demonstrated love by coming back to them, reestablishing relationship, and then offering clothing of animal skin, which served as a temporary way to cover their shame. The animal skin covering in Genesis 3:21 foreshadows the greatest act of love humanity has ever known. The covering of Adam and Eve was a precursor to how God would eventually show love to his creation by returning to those who have sinned, ultimately covering their sins with the blood of his Son and welcoming them back into relationship.

After God led the Israelites out of slavery in Exodus 15:13, a poetic picture was painted of his love for his people: “In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.” This song declared the beautiful love of God for his people.¹¹⁶ Throughout the Old Testament, God is described as “slow to anger and abounding in love” (Exod. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:5, 15; 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). There is no greater picture of love than that of Jesus. Love is only love when demonstrated. Paul declared in Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” John 15:13 emphatically states, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

116. Unfailing love is also referenced in Ps. 6:4; 13:5; 21:5; 31:16; 32:10; 33:5, 18, 22; 36:7; 44:26; 48:9; 51:1; 52:8; 77:8; 85:7; 90:14; 107:8, 15, 21, 31; 119:41, 76; 130:7; 143:8, 12; 147:11; Lam. 3:32.

In Matthew 22:37¹¹⁷ a Pharisee who was described as an “expert in the law” approached Jesus and asked:

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

When cornered with this challenging question, Jesus was forced to reduce over 600 commands in the Old Testament to one, singular, most important law. When challenged, Jesus responded masterfully by reaching back to Moses’ words in Deuteronomy 6:5.¹¹⁸ All love has to start vertically. Jesus challenged his audience to start by loving God with every ounce of their being. To a first-century Jewish audience, the heart was the seat of all emotions. The soul was the whole aggregate of a person. The mind was that which controlled everything on the inside. Jesus challenged his hearers to love God in that way, with all of their heart, soul, and mind. Then, Jesus confounded the listeners. He was asked to provide the greatest singular commandment, not the two greatest.

Jesus started the second commandment with the conjunction “and.” In doing so, he implied that these two commands are of equal importance. Vertical love is only vertical love if it is expressed horizontally. Simply said, one will know they love God by the way that they love others. The two commands are forever joined as one. Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors, which was a reference to Moses’ writing in

117. See parallels in Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 10:25-28.

118. Oscar S Brooks, “The Function of the Double Love Command in Matthew 22:34-40,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 36, no. 1 (1998): 8.

Leviticus 19:15. Oscar Brooks summarized Jesus' words in this way: "Love, then, is not an empty command, but rather a command to act in a specific way towards one's neighbor. It assumes that 'you' of the commands can perceive of herself/himself as both the subject and object, actor and recipient, of the commands."¹¹⁹ Who, then, is our neighbor? Jesus simplified this concept in Luke 10. Through telling the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus showed that a day is coming when our neighbors will potentially look, act, or feel nothing like us. Our neighbors are not confined to a particular religious group, gender, or ethnicity, but to anyone who is in need of kindness.¹²⁰ We are commanded to love them the way Christ has loved us. Jesus ended the second half of his command with the interesting, dangling phrase, "as yourself." Scholars have argued over the significance of these two words. I contend that Jesus is suggesting one cannot fully love others until he/she has first developed a healthy understanding of loving himself/herself. He then ends the conversation by stating that all of the Law and the Prophets hinge on those two commands. All 613 Old Testament commands are dependent upon vertical and horizontal love for God and our neighbors.

In John 13:34-35, Jesus makes these commands clear: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." He uncomplicated, clarified, and raised the bar all in one breath. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). The way the world will know that we love God is by the way we express love to those around us. The

119. Brooks, "The Function of the Double Love Command in Matthew 22," 34-40.

120. Brooks, "The Function of the Double Love Command in Matthew 22," 17.

remainder of the New Testament is simply an extension of this command.¹²¹ 1 John 4:7-21 emphatically declared that God is love. The insistence that disciples should grow in love is found in 1 John 4:8: “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” An identifying mark of a disciple is that they are learning to love in the way that they have received love.

Attribute Six: Learn to Pray

God created humanity for relationship. Relationships are built on communication. In Genesis 3:8-9, God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. This occurred after they had sinned and were hiding, but the implication is that walking and talking with God was a part of their normal routine. After sin entered the equation, God returned and talked to them. Prayer is a two-way street of communication. Even after the fall, God pursued them. He enabled them to talk to him even after their sin. He kept the line of communication open. God’s discipling questions prompted them to talk to him. Interestingly, while the serpent prompted them to sin with a question, God prompted them to pray with a question. Adam and Eve were hiding and did not want to talk, but a question opened the lines of prayer communication. There is a powerful implication in this narrative for church leaders: a person does not need to have it all together to come to God. Churches that understand this invite unbelievers to belong before they believe, because they know that God wants to talk to people who do not have it all together.

121. Originally written for Dr. Alan Ehler’s “Theory and Practice of Ministry.”

The story of Noah proves an interesting study in prayer. God instructed Noah to put extra animals on the ark to serve as sacrificial elements for after the flood.¹²² In Genesis 8:20, “Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.” It is evident that God’s intention was to keep the lines of communication open. Prayer happened through an altar and sacrifice. God wanted Noah to have what was needed to keep prayer alive.

Abram, later renamed Abraham, set up four altars.¹²³ The altars were mainly built to take possession of different lands. The second altar in Genesis 12 became an altar of prayer; Abram “built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.” There is a direct correlation between the extraordinary life of Abraham and his prayer connection to God.

What happens when people do not pray? In Joshua 6, God miraculously delivered the walled city of Jericho to the hands of Joshua and the Israelites, which happened as a result of the people listening to God’s voice. By Joshua 7, sin had entered the equation and the Israelites were defeated in a tiny city, Ai, which means “place of ruins.” This example exemplifies what goes wrong when God’s people do not pray. Israel shifted away from listening to God. Genesis 9:14 says that Israel “did not inquire of the Lord.”

122. Gen. 7:2-3

123. Gen. 12:5-7, Gen. 12:8, Gen 13:3-4, and Gen. 13:17-18

The book of Psalms is essentially a book of prayer, often poetically written in song form. Douglas Stuart identified seven types of psalm prayers in his book *Read the Bible for All Its Worth*.¹²⁴ The seven psalm prayers are:

1. Psalms of Laments¹²⁵
2. Psalms of Thanksgiving¹²⁶
3. Hymns of Praise¹²⁷
4. Salvation-History Psalms¹²⁸
5. Psalms of Celebration and Affirmation¹²⁹
6. Wisdom Psalms¹³⁰
7. Songs of Trust¹³¹

Stuart noted that the book of Psalms is widely revered for its breadth of styles of communication. It contains everything from sorrow to joy, pain to healing, hopelessness to hope, fear to praise, and much more. Psalms is the compendium of human emotion tied up in one collection of prayers. What it should say to Christians is that a disciple of Jesus

124. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. (Zondervan Academic, 2014), 212–222.

125. Individual examples: Ps. 3; 22; 31; 39; 42; 57; 71; 88; 120; 139; and 142. Corporate examples: Ps. 12; 44; 80; 94; and 137.

126. Individual psalms of thanksgiving: Ps. 18; 30; 32; 34; 40; 66; 92; 116; 118; and 138. Group psalms of thanksgiving: Ps. 65; 67; 75; 107; 124; and 136.

127. Ps. 8; 19; 33; 66; 100; 103; 104; 111; 113; 114; 117; and 145-149

128. Ps. 78; 105; 106; 135; and 136

129. Ps. 50; 81; 89; and 132

130. Ps. 36; 37; 49; 73; 112; 127; 128; and 133

131. Ps. 11; 16; 23; 27; 62; 63; 91; 121; 125; and 131

understands that all of life was intended to be shared with God through prayer. Take all of your moments to him: the good, bad, ugly, and everything in between.

Jesus modeled prayer for his people. The Lord's Prayer is found in two of the Gospels, Matthew and Luke. Interestingly, Matthew's account in Matthew 6:7-13 feels like a prescriptive model. Jesus said in verse 9, "This, then, is how you should pray." In the Luke account (Lk 11:2-4), Jesus said, "When you pray, say....," which feels as if Jesus is inviting his people to repeat the shorter prayer over and over.

The Lord's Prayer as a model is an incredibly effective way to teach disciples how to pray. Even Jesus' disciples needed help learning to pray. My personal template for prayer, based on the Lord's Prayer, looks like this:

- Honor God and establish his authority in my heart
- Declare that his will is what matters more than my will
- Ask for provision
- Practice forgiveness so that I can live in freedom
- Give me strength for right living

Prayer does not have to be pretty, poetic, and perfect. God invites us into conversation with him. Paul wrote several key thoughts on prayer in Philippians 4:4-7. It is important to remember the context of this situation. Paul was chained to a Roman guard, potentially facing execution any day. From that post, he challenged us to not be anxious. He gave us a new lens through which to look at prayer: "In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Phil 4:6)." First, we are encouraged to pray in *every* situation. He reiterated this challenge in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." When we see prayer as a constant conversation with God, it changes

how we pray. In Philippians 4:6, Paul challenged us to present our requests to God. This invitation serves to move prayer from surface level praying to actually revealing our hearts. We must learn to pray at the level of our insecurities. Essentially, when we pray, we must tell God why the situations we are praying about matter to us. His promise is that when we have revealed our hearts in this transparent way, then the peace of God will flood our hearts and minds. Disciples see prayer as a non-negotiable element of following Jesus. To know him, one must live in conversation with him.

Attribute Seven: Learn to Manage

The Garden of Eden reminds us that *everything* belongs to God. He created it. He owns it. Genesis 2:15 says, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Why was Adam instructed to work it and take care of it? The garden was not his. From the beginning, we are reminded that everything belongs to God, and we are invited to steward that which belongs to him. David reiterated this in Psalm 24:1: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” Learning to follow God is learning to manage what is His. What do we possess that is God’s? Our time, abilities, and possessions belong to God. The question that Christ-followers must answer is: “What am I doing with what I have been entrusted?” God owns it all; we get to steward it.

Nehemiah offers a fascinating story about learning to manage. It starts with Nehemiah first hearing the voice of God, which is paramount to becoming a disciple. Second, Nehemiah had to see his job as another opportunity to steward what God had given him. Nehemiah 1:11 ends the chapter with a unique, hanging sentence. Nehemiah

wrapped up a prayer and then added this innocuous detail: “I was cupbearer to the king.” He was strategically positioned as a slave in a place of great trust. He had an audience with the king regularly. This divine opportunity was a moment to steward. God burned a vision in his heart to rebuild the walls of the city. Before Nehemiah approached the king, he first had to count the cost. When given the opportunity to present his vision to King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah knew the details, cost, and time required to accomplish the dream.

God taught Joseph how to manage. What seems like the beginning of a tragic story when Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers in Genesis 37 is actually a masterful stroke of artistry on God’s part. Throughout his life, Joseph would have to manage for others, and God used this experience as preparation, for Joseph would eventually manage the entire kingdom for Pharaoh.

God taught David how to manage. David started by managing sheep in his father’s pasture. He certainly could never have imagined life as a king, yet God conspired differently. The lessons David learned in the fields with the sheep led to principles that would be applied throughout his kingship. Psalm 78:72 says, “And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.” Even as king, David was still shepherding; he just shifted from leading sheep to leading the nation of Israel.

Followers of Jesus learn the principle that God must be first in every area of their lives. Often the most difficult area to trust God in is the area of personal finances. Throughout Scripture, tithing is the system God used to allow for everyone to contribute at an equal percentage of sacrifice. When Jesus came, he did not abolish tithing. Rather, he added to it, affirming the heart of God. In Matthew 6:21, Jesus directly connected our bank accounts to our hearts. He said that where our treasure is, there our heart will also

be. We tend to think that whatever has our heart has our money, but Jesus claimed the opposite. What has our money ultimately has our hearts, and God is interested in our hearts.

Throughout the Old Testament, God had his own system of welfare. He commanded people to tithe, giving him the first ten percent (Num. 18:26-28; Dt. 12:6-17; 14; 26; Mal. 3:8-10). Debts were occasionally to be forgiven (Lev. 25:8ff; Dt. 15). Then, they were to give freely to those in need (Dt. 15:10). Farmers were to leave the corners of their fields unpicked, so that those less fortunate could glean, or take as needed (Lev. 19:9-10). If you were picking fruit or vegetables and dropped a piece of produce, you were to leave it for those in need. All of this was a reminder to God's people that everything is His. The land is His, the produce is His, and even the energy to work the fields came from him. God reminded those with resources that their blessings belonged to him, and he reminded those without resources that he cared for them.

Disciples learn to live openhandedly with all of their resources. Time is the only commodity that one cannot obtain more of. Talent is to be exercised and grown. Treasure is to be invested in something that will make an eternal difference. Learning to manage is a measurable metric for followers of Jesus.

The Result of Discipleship

There is actually an eighth attribute of followers of Jesus. This is the ultimate measuring tool for every believer. Disciples reproduce themselves in other believers.

Jesus made the expectations clear:

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

First, Jesus established that he has all authority. Second, he commanded, not suggested, that we make disciples of all nations. Reproduction of ourselves into other believers is a command, not a suggestion. The cadence of the disciple-making life is *going*, then *baptizing*, and then *teaching*. He ends with the beautiful promise that he will be with us always, to the very end of the age. The promise of Jesus is that he will be with his followers in the midst of the chaos of this world. There is a significant challenge followed by a significant promise of relationship.

To summarize, Jesus started discipleship with invitation to relationship (“Follow Me”) and promise of life transformation (“I will make you”). He initially discipled followers around seven attributes and discipled them in four contexts. Jesus emphasized that his disciples should come, hear, and do, and his command was to make other disciples of all nations. This pathway is still working two thousand years later. We are to help people grow in the seven attributes, invest significant time, be in close proximity, offer grace, instruct in ministry, give opportunities to minister, reflect on that ministry, repeat, and, ultimately, reproduce.

Chapter Three

The Project Methodology

Methodology Introduction

The purpose of this study is to develop an assessment tool to help individuals report their awareness, understanding, and practice of seven attributes associated with spiritual growth. The seven attributes of spiritual growth are taken from the book *Follow* by Koch and McNaughton.¹³² These attributes, as articulated in *Follow*, are taken from the Gospel of Matthew and are intended to be “a simple, practical guide for those who want to learn to follow Jesus.”¹³³ From the information gathered from the assessment tool, individuals will have the opportunity to note their perceived areas of strength and areas of potential growth for each of these seven attributes. This research proposal discusses the research design, research site, potential participants, data collection, and data.

Research Design

This study utilized a cross-sectional quantitative design to collect survey data to aid in individual understanding and organizational analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. Specifically, in this study, the research consultant developed an assessment survey by operationalizing the ideas articulated by Koch and McNaughton.

132. Bryan Koch and Daniel McNaughton, *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*.

133. *Ibid.*, 7.

The assessment survey is an opportunity for individuals to reflect on their awareness and “practice of the step-by step development of each attribute.”¹³⁴ The assessment survey was piloted in this study.

Research Site

The research site in this study is Access Church, located in central Florida. Access Church meets in Lakeland. The church is approximately 12 years old and a total of approximately 1,000 people attend the two campuses on a given weekend. The research site was selected because the lead pastor wants to provide the church attendees with a practical understanding and steps to following Jesus; the principles in the book *Follow* were determined to be the best method to complete that goal. The church participated in an eight-week sermon series based on the book *Follow* in Summer 2019. Attendees also had the opportunity to purchase and read the book, participate in a small group for further discussion and understanding of the seven attributes, and meet with a spiritual coach. The lead pastor is also completing his Doctor of Ministry degree at Southeastern University.

134. Koch and McNaughton, *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*.

Participants and Sampling Procedures

The potential participants in this study were the adult attendees of Access Church. All church attendees were invited to take the assessment at the conclusion of the sermon series. The sampling procedures utilized in this study included purposeful, convenience, and random sampling. The sampling was purposeful in that each of the potential participants were exposed to the seven aspects of *Follow* during Summer 2019. Only those who participated were asked to complete the assessment. Second, the sampling procedures were convenient, as the lead pastor utilized the information from the study for his doctoral dissertation. Also, the research consultant and one of the book authors are members of Access Church. Finally, the sampling procedures were random, as all those who participated in the Follow series were asked to complete the assessment, but only some of those invited actually completed the assessment.

After the survey was closed, raw data indicated that 287 individuals had started the survey. Data was reviewed and it was noted that 64 respondents stopped after the initial demographic and participation questions, so listwise deletion was utilized to handle the missing data, reducing the sample to 223. Then, descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the extent of any further missing data. Results indicated that data was missing on several variables at less than 5%, so listwise was again utilized so that the final sample would have missing data on all items. This second listwise deletion resulted in a final sample of 194 respondents.

Data Collection

Data was collected at Access Church at the conclusion of the Follow series during Summer 2019, specifically in August, after the lead pastor and primary researcher received IRB approval. Access Church attendees were invited to participate in the Follow Assessment (see Appendix C). The lead pastor presented the opportunity to take the assessment during a Sunday morning service and also recruited participants via his social media accounts. The assessment was available via a web link to Survey Monkey and is included in Appendix C. The assessment has three sections: demographics, reporting on each of aspect of Follow before the sermon series, and reporting on each aspect of Follow currently. Questions were randomized for each participant. Participation in the assessment was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Any incomplete surveys were not utilized, as participants were able to stop taking the assessment at any time before completing the assessment and their responses were not utilized. However, the church offered an incentive for five participants to win a \$100 Amazon gift card. In order to participate in the drawing, participants had to share their email address, as winners were notified via email. Participants also had the opportunity to receive an email report of their results after the completion of the survey. Receiving the email report was also an optional aspect of completing the Follow assessment. The email report included an average of participants' self-reported scores on each of the steps aligned with one of the aspects of *Follow*. For the lowest three attributes of *Follow* for each individual, recommendations for growth in those areas were included in the email report.

Data Analysis

There are three aspects of the data analysis in this project. First, there is data for each individual who selected the option to receive a report of their scores on each of the seven aspects of *Follow*. The research consultant averaged scores for each of the corresponding seven aspects but did not have access to the participants' email addresses or any other identifying information, as this information was hidden. After the average of each of the seven aspects of *Follow* was calculated for the individual, the three lowest attributes for that individual were identified. The research consultant compiled this information in a report and provided the report to the lead pastor's assistant so that the email reports were sent to the appropriate individuals. This portion of the data analysis was completed in Microsoft Excel.

The second aspect of the data analysis was analysis of the overall sample. SPSS 26.0 was utilized for the final two portions of data analysis. The research consultant utilized descriptive statistics to note the means and standard deviations of each of the variables. The research consultant utilized inferential statistics, including t-tests and ANOVAs, to see if there were statistically significant results by gender and age. The research consultant also utilized linear regression to determine whether there were any statistically significant predictors of each of the seven *Follow* attributes.

The final aspect of data analysis is the research assessment itself. Since the assessment was piloted in this study, the assessment tool was analyzed for reliability and validity. Also, factor scales for each of the seven aspects were developed. After the statistical significance of each of the variables was analyzed, the research consultant reviewed the *Follow* variables to determine whether factor constructs could be created.

She utilized Exploratory Factor Analysis to review the internal reliability on the Cronbach's alpha scores of each of the proposed factors. The alpha scores ranged from .78 to .95 on each of the fourteen proposed factors, which indicates a strong internal reliability. She created the factors in SPSS 26 and utilized the factors in other analyses. See Table 2 for the internal reliability ratings on the factor scales.

Table 2

Internal Reliability for Factor Scales

Factor Scale	Internal Reliability
Before-Learning to Be with Jesus	.87
Before-Learn to Listen	.88
Before-Learn to Heal	.92
Before-Learn to Influence	.86
Before-Learn to Love	.90
Before-Learn to Pray	.78
Before-Learn to Manage	.87
After-Learning to Be with Jesus	.93
After-Learn to Listen	.91
After-Learn to Heal	.94
After-Learn to Influence	.89
After-Learn to Love	.95
After-Learn to Pray	.82
After-Learn to Manage	.90

Chapter Four

The Project Evaluated

This summary contains the results of the data analysis conducted in Summer and Fall 2019 for Access Church in Lakeland, FL. During Summer 2019, the research consultant designed an assessment tool to help individuals to report their awareness, understanding, and practice of seven attributes associated with spiritual growth. From the information gathered from the assessment tool, individuals had the opportunity to note their strong areas and areas of growth. The seven attributes of spiritual growth were taken from the book *Follow*¹³⁵ by Koch and McNaughton. These attributes, as articulated in *Follow*, are taken from the Gospel of Matthew and are intended to be “a simple, practical guide for those who want to learn to follow Jesus.”¹³⁶

The research questions guiding this analysis are as follows:

- 1.) Is there a statistically significant difference between the individuals’ self-reported score on the 35-question assessment before they participated in the Follow summer series at Access Church and their self-reported scores after participating in the series?
- 2.) Are the 7 attributes of following Jesus as presented in *Follow* statistically correlated to construct factors via Confirmatory Factor Analysis?
- 3.) How do the results of the *Follow* factors vary by gender, age, relationship status, involvement level in the local church, and participation level in various spiritual discipline activities during the summer series?
- 4.) What are the predictors of each *Follow* attribute?

135. Bryan Koch and Daniel McNaughton, *Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus*.

136. *Ibid.*, 7.

There are a few significant items to note. First, there was growth on each survey item between May and August. Although initial assumptions were that individuals would report a decrease as they gained awareness of each item, they actually reported growth as they learned more and reported that they took this time as an opportunity to “train” for spiritual growth. Second, within the various activities the church provided, the “Learning to Influence” aspect of the Follow series was statistically significant or had meaningful results for all activities. “Learning to Influence” and “Learning to Manage” were also meaningful areas in most of the activities in the “before” category, meaning that individuals noted not only change, but growth in these aspect from *Follow*. Interestingly, Access Church emphasizes influencing others for Christ and a spirit of generosity throughout many aspects of church life, but still individuals saw opportunities to go further in these areas. Finally, those in the 55-64 age group had meaningful differences from their peers throughout most aspects of *Follow*. Also, those who participate in Team Access reported higher levels on the before, after, and overall growth in each aspect of *Follow* in comparison to others who only occasionally attend Access and those who regularly attend but are not involved in serving at Access Church.

RQ #1-Results of Individuals’ Change Levels from May to August

The first analysis conducted inquired whether there was a meaningful difference in the change between the individuals’ self-reported levels of change on each aspect of *Follow*, as each participant answered questions on where they were on the aspect of *Follow* in May and where they were in August. The participants’ reported levels of change were statistically meaningful for each survey item. Results are presented in Table

1. The largest reported growth is noted on the variables *giving healing away, enjoying God's peace, and managing your time.*

RQ #2-Follow Factor Constructs

After the statistical significance of each of the variables was analyzed, the research consultant reviewed the *Follow* variables to see if factor constructs could be created. Factor Constructs are statistically meaningful collaborations of like variables. The research consultant utilized the appropriate statistical techniques to calculate the factors. Results indicated that the research consultant could create reliable factors on each of the seven aspects of *Follow*, so she created factors indicating where individuals were in each aspect of *Follow* in May and where they were in August, resulting in 14 total factors. She then utilized these factors in the later statistical calculations. The factors are listed in Table 2.

RQ #3-Response Variation by Activity

The next set of analyses that the research consultant completed were to determine whether there were meaningful differences based on participation in certain activities during the summer series. Access Church offered four optional activities to any individual who wanted to gain more exposure to the seven aspects of *Follow*. These activities included reading the book *Follow*, reading an excerpt of that book titled *First Steps*, participating in a small group (also known as an Access Group) that discussed one attribute a week for eight weeks, and participating in spiritual coaching with a spiritual coach. Appropriate statistical techniques were utilized. Results are included in Tables 3,

4, 5, and 6. Results are included on each of the fourteen factor scales: seven scales regarding daily practice in May, before the summer series, and seven scales regarding daily behavior in August, after the summer series.

Responses on 14 Factors by Reading the Book Follow

The analysis indicated meaningful results on two of the “before” variables for those who elected to read the *Follow* book, specifically how individuals self-reported their daily practice on “Learning to be with Jesus” and “Learning to Influence.”

Regarding the “after” aspects of *Follow* (how individuals self-reported their activity in August), there were meaningful results found in six of the seven factors. See Table 3 for results.

Responses on 14 Factors by Reading the Booklet First Steps

Regarding results for those who read the *First Steps* booklet and those who did not, the analysis indicated meaningful results on three of the “before” variables: “Learn to be with Listen,” “Learn to Influence,” and “Learn to Pray.” These findings mean that those who used the booklet had a different response to these three items in comparison to those who did not read the booklet. Regarding the “after” variables (how individuals self-reported their activity in August), results were statistically significant for six of the seven factors. See Table 4 for results.

Responses on 14 Factors by Participation in an Access Group

The next step of analysis conducted examined the responses to determine whether there was meaningful connection between those who participated in an Access Group in Summer 2019 and those who did not participate. The analysis indicated meaningful differences between three of the “before” variables: “Learn to be with Heal,” “Learn to Influence,” and “Learn to Manage.” Regarding the “after” variables (how individuals self-reported their activity in August), results were statistically significant amongst six of the seven factors. See Table 5 for results.

Responses on 14 Factors by Meeting with a Spiritual Coach

The next set of analyses examined results between those who met with a spiritual coach during Summer 2019 and those who did not. The analysis indicated meaningful scores amongst four of the “before” variables” “Learn to be with Heal,” “Learn to Influence,” “Learn to Love,” and “Learn to Manage,” meaning that meeting with a spiritual coach made a meaningful difference in each of these four aspects. Regarding the “after” variables (how individuals self-reported their current activity in August), results were statistically significant for three of the seven factors: “Heal,” “Pray,” and “Manage.” See Table 6 for results.

RQ #3 Part B-Responses by Various Groups

The next set of analyses seeks to determine whether there were meaningful results based on various groups, age, and participation level at Access Church.

Responses by Age Group

There were meaningful differences between all age groups on the variable “Before-Learn to Listen.” There were statistically significant differences between the 65+ age group and most groups on the variable “Before-Learn to Heal,” all groups on the variable “Before-Learn to Love,” and most groups on the variable “Before-Learn to Pray.” The results are included in Tables 15-21 for the “after” variables. With the “after” variables, individuals reported statistically significant differences amongst all age groups except 55-64 on “Learn to Heal.” Statistically significant differences were also noted between some groups on the “Learn to Love” and “Learn to Manage” variables. See Tables 15-21 for results.

Predictors of Follow

The final set of analyses conducted for this project were multiple regressions to explore which input variables and experiences predicted the seven attributes of *Follow* after completing the Summer 2019 Follow series at Access Church. Results are included in Tables 36-41. The effect size of all models is low, indicating that there are more components to following Jesus than the elements included in the assessment instrument. The purpose of this study was to understand what factors contributed to individuals’ self-reported scores of their daily habits of each of the seven attributes. The low effect sizes indicate that further research needs to be conducted to better understand what predicts the seven attributes of *Follow* and, ultimately, spiritual growth. Notable results include that being 65 years of age or older significantly contributes to the model on most variables, as does serving on Team Access, having read *Follow*, and having a spiritual coach. Certain

younger age groups had a negative or indirect correlation with particular *Follow* attributes whereas there was positive correlation for the same age group for other *Follow* attributes. Also, in most instances, being 35-44 years old negatively contributed to the model, so there are opportunities to further explore what will positively contribute to this age group's spiritual growth.

Data Tables

Table 1

Results of Individuals' Self-Reported Levels of Follow in May 2019 and August 2019

Follow Step	May <i>M</i>	May <i>SD</i>	August	August	<i>t</i> value
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Remain in Him	5.13	1.94	6.49	1.91	10.87*
Recognize Fruit	4.62	1.96	6.06	1.96	11.28*
Read Scripture	4.89	2.13	6.32	2.16	11.01*
With Him in Prayer	5.76	2.33	6.88	1.96	8.83*
In Him Affects Others	5.48	2.08	6.68	2.00	9.86*
Approved by God	5.37	2.29	6.81	1.98	9.11*
Scripture as Foundation	5.23	2.2	6.39	2.15	9.20*
Jesus in Scripture	5.54	2.20	6.63	2.11	9.02*
Overcome Temptation	5.73	2.10	6.93	1.80	9.97*

Being Good Soil	5.47	2.02	6.68	2.00	9.14*
Areas That Need Healing	5.07	2.16	6.57	2.10	10.09*
Jesus' Authority	5.32	2.31	6.76	2.06	10.61*
Healing is God's Idea	5.51	2.52	6.98	2.10	10.01*
Asking in Faith for	5.32	2.48	6.97	2.16	11.66*
Healing	4.11	2.27	5.97	2.26	12.54*
Giving Healing Away					
	4.37	2.12	5.69	2.16	10.88*
Inviting People to Jesus	4.54	2.23	6.03	2.32	12.15*
Sharing Your Story	7.09	1.94	7.74	1.92	6.55*
Being a Genuine Friend	5.74	2.41	6.71	2.27	8.11*
Speak Openly and Directly	6.64	2.36	7.53	2.17	7.60*
Serving People	4.89	2.22	6.03	2.23	8.98*
Studying and Thinking					
	5.93	2.20	7.08	1.97	8.90*
Trusting God w/	5.49	2.26	6.79	2.11	9.45*
Forgiveness	5.68	2.56	7.13	2.06	10.38*
Seeking God's Approval	5.50	2.38	7.02	2.01	11.39*
Enjoying God's	5.66	2.33	7.18	1.99	12.39*
Acceptance					
Partnering w/God to	4.95	2.57	6.52	2.34	9.21*
Change	3.88	2.25	5.34	2.28	11.40*

Enjoying God's Peace	5.69	2.41	6.84	2.08	9.44*
	4.79	2.42	6.40	2.26	11.35*
Not Praying Bad Prayers					
Praying the Disciples'	5.30	2.16	6.82	1.91	12.03*
Prayer	6.11	2.44	7.27	2.13	9.94*
Praying Through Pain	5.71	2.23	6.87	2.03	9.55*
Learning Spiritual Warfare	5.49	2.20	6.98	1.98	11.18*
	5.35	1.93	6.86	1.82	12.57*
Managing Your Mind					
Managing Your Finances					
Managing Your Body					
Managing Your Words					
Managing Your Time					

Note: * $p < .05$, $n = 194$.

Table 2

Internal Reliability for Factor Scales

Factor Scale	Internal Reliability
Before-Learning to Be with Jesus	.87
Before-Learn to Listen	.88
Before-Learn to Heal	.92
Before-Learn to Influence	.86
Before-Learn to Love	.90
Before-Learn to Pray	.78

Before-Learn to Manage	.87
After-Learning to Be with Jesus	.93
After-Learn to Listen	.91
After-Learn to Heal	.94
After-Learn to Influence	.89
After-Learn to Love	.95
After-Learn to Pray	.82
After-Learn to Manage	.90

Table 3

t-test Results on Reading Follow Book

Follow Factor	Read Book (<i>n</i> = 62)	Did Not Read Book (<i>n</i> = 132)	<i>t</i> value
Before-Learning to Be with Jesus	5.62 (1.61)	4.97 (1.69)	2.58*
Before-Learn to Listen	5.78 (1.75)	5.31 (1.77)	1.74
Before-Learn to Heal	5.43 (2.24)	4.89 (1.92)	1.72
Before-Learn to Influence	6.03 (1.66)	5.30 (1.68)	2.79*
Before-Learn to Love	5.07 (1.99)	5.52 (1.98)	1.30
Before-Learn to Pray	5.06 (2.05)	4.71 (1.77)	1.24
Before-Learn to Manage	5.67 (1.75)	5.55 (1.80)	.47
After-Learning to Be with Jesus	7.22 (1.50)	6.14 (1.79)	4.14*
After-Learn to Listen	7.32 (1.47)	6.39 (1.75)	3.60*
After-Learn to Heal	7.25 (1.56)	6.37 (2.00)	3.02*

After-Learn to Influence	7.13 (1.53)	6.38 (1.81)	2.84*
After-Learn to Love	7.59 (1.41)	6.78 (1.96)	2.94*
After-Learn to Pray	6.93 (1.59)	5.96 (1.82)	3.62*
After-Learn to Manage	7.49 (1.51)	6.71 (1.70)	3.09*

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 4

t-test Results on Reading First Steps

Follow Factor	Read Book ($n = 92$)	Did Not Read Book ($n = 102$)	<i>t value</i>
Before-Learning to Be with Jesus	5.40 (1.73)	4.98 (1.63)	1.73
Before-Learn to Listen	5.73 (1.82)	5.23 (1.68)	2.00*
Before-Learn to Heal	5.33 (2.12)	4.82 (1.95)	1.77
Before-Learn to Influence	5.95 (1.70)	5.17 (1.63)	3.27*
Before-Learn to Love	5.84 (2.01)	5.47 (1.97)	1.29
Before-Learn to Pray	5.20 (1.99)	4.48 (1.69)	2.73*
Before-Learn to Manage	5.81 (1.80)	5.38 (1.79)	1.70
After-Learning to Be with Jesus	6.95 (1.64)	6.07 (1.78)	4.14*
After-Learn to Listen	7.17 (1.54)	6.26 (1.76)	3.60*
After-Learn to Heal	7.15 (1.65)	6.20 (2.02)	3.54*
After-Learn to Influence	7.29 (1.45)	6.02 (1.80)	2.84*
After-Learn to Love	7.42 (1.69)	6.69 (1.90)	2.94*
After-Learn to Pray	6.90 (1.70)	5.70 (1.72)	3.62*

After-Learn to Manage	7.55 (1.51)	6.42 (1.66)	3.09*
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Note: * p < .05

Table 5

t-test Results on Access Group Participation

Follow Factor	Did Participate (n = 111)	Did Not Participate (n = 83)	t value
Before-Learning to Be with Jesus	5.38 (1.64)	4.90 (1.72)	1.94
Before-Learn to Listen	5.72 (1.78)	5.13 (1.72)	2.30*
Before-Learn to Heal	5.25 (2.03)	4.82 (2.04)	1.48
Before-Learn to Influence	5.93 (2.03)	5.17 (1.63)	3.87*
Before-Learn to Love	5.88 (2.03)	5.34 (1.96)	1.85
Before-Learn to Pray	4.97 (1.60)	4.62 (1.83)	1.29
Before-Learn to Manage	5.93 (1.66)	5.13 (1.84)	3.14*
After-Learning to Be with Jesus	6.83 (1.57)	6.02 (1.92)	3.25*
After-Learn to Listen	7.10 (1.48)	6.02 (1.92)	3.91*
After-Learn to Heal	7.06 (1.63)	6.11 (2.12)	3.54*
After-Learn to Influence	7.07 (1.49)	6.02 (1.93)	4.28*
After-Learn to Love	7.34 (1.66)	6.65 (2.00)	2.61
After-Learn to Pray	6.67 (1.50)	5.70 (2.05)	3.65*
After-Learn to Manage	7.45 (1.36)	6.42 (1.84)	5.07*

Note: * p < .05

Table 6*t-test Results on Meeting with a Spiritual Coach*

Follow Factor	Did Participate (<i>n</i> = 15)	Did Not Participate (<i>n</i> = 179)	<i>t</i> value
Before-Learning to Be with Jesus	5.92 (1.19)	5.11 (1.71)	1.78
Before-Learn to Listen	6.16 (1.78)	5.41 (1.77)	1.58
Before-Learn to Heal	6.45 (1.71)	4.95 (2.03)	2.78*
Before-Learn to Influence	6.79 (1.57)	5.43 (1.68)	3.02*
Before-Learn to Love	6.64 (1.55)	5.57 (2.01)	2.02*
Before-Learn to Pray	6.46 (1.41)	4.69 (1.84)	3.65
Before-Learn to Manage	6.71 (1.66)	5.50 (1.79)	2.56*
After-Learning to Be with Jesus	7.04 (1.70)	6.44 (1.77)	1.26
After-Learn to Listen	7.19 (1.71)	6.65 (1.71)	1.16
After-Learn to Heal	7.47 (1.74)	6.58 (2.03)	2.78*
After-Learn to Influence	7.63 (1.75)	6.53 (1.74)	1.87
After-Learn to Love	7.37 (1.86)	7.01 (1.84)	.73
After-Learn to Pray	7.33 (1.71)	6.18 (1.79)	2.39*
After-Learn to Manage	8.09 (1.08)	6.87 (1.69)	2.76*

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 7*Before-Learning to Be with Jesus by Age Group*

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	5.29	1.85	3.23
25-34	75	5.30	1.62	
35-44	61	4.81	1.38	
45-54	20	5.04	2.23	
55-64	6	5.00	1.18	
65 plus	5	7.76	1.37	

*Note: *p < .05*

Table 8*Before-Learning to Listen by Age Group*

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	5.65	1.63	3.21
25-34	75	5.61	1.81	
35-44	61	5.11	1.43	
45-54	20	5.28	2.40	
55-64	6	4.83	1.44	
65 plus	5	8.08	1.00	

Note: All groups were statistically significant p < .05

Table 9*Before-Learn to Heal by Age Group*

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	4.80	.48	3.50
25-34	75	5.30	.23	
35-44	61	4.69	.21	
45-54	20	4.86	.49	
55-64	6	5.03	.79	
65 plus	5	8.32	.87	

Note: Bolded values are statistically significant ($p < .05$) with the 65 plus age group.

Table 10*Before-Learn to Influence by Age Group*

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	6.11	1.71	2.89
25-34	75	5.66	1.68	
35-44	61	5.19	1.58	
45-54	20	5.09	1.82	
55-64	6	4.89	1.69	
65 plus	5	7.33	1.42	

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 11

Before-Learn to Love by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	5.88	2.03	2.85
25-34	75	5.64	2.07	
35-44	61	5.41	1.55	
45-54	20	5.59	2.67	
55-64	6	4.77	1.22	
65 plus	5	8.64	1.17	

Note: All groups were statistically significant $p < .05$

Table 12

Before-Learn to Pray by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	5.07	2.18	2.80
25-34	75	4.96	1.91	
35-44	61	4.54	1.63	
45-54	20	4.31	1.77	
55-64	6	4.62	1.02	

65 plus	5	7.40	1.33
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Note: Bolded values are statistically significant ($p < .05$) with the 65 plus age group.

Table 13

Before-Learn to Manage by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	6.10	1.74	2.84
25-34	75	5.80	1.83	
35-44	61	5.28	1.51	
45-54	20	5.06	2.17	
55-64	6	4.40	.97	
65 plus	5	7.16	1.49	

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 14

After-Learning to Be with Jesus by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	6.91	1.65	2.65
25-34	75	6.71	1.67	
35-44	61	6.06	1.58	
45-54	20	6.13	2.46	

55-64	6	5.80	1.41
65 plus	5	8.20	1.70

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 15

After-Learning to Listen by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	6.87	1.74	2.34
25-34	75	6.90	1.63	
35-44	61	6.37	1.53	
45-54	20	6.41	2.33	
55-64	6	5.97	1.50	
65 plus	5	8.60	1.22	

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 16

After-Learn to Heal by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	6.64	.48	2.72
25-34	75	7.06	.23	
35-44	61	6.19	.21	

45-54	20	6.23	.49
55-64	6	6.67	.79
65 plus	5	8.48	.87

Note: Bolded values are statistically significant ($p < .05$) with the 65 plus age group

Table 17

After-Learn to Influence by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	7.11	1.52	2.75
25-34	75	6.84	1.70	
35-44	61	6.29	1.61	
45-54	20	5.83	2.24	
55-64	6	6.50	1.97	
65 plus	5	8.13	1.10	

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 18

After-Learn to Love by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	7.36	1.91	2.64
25-34	75	7.29	1.72	

35-44	61	6.62	1.50
45-54	20	6.61	2.67
55-64	6	6.50	1.97
65 plus	5	9	.96

Note: Bolded values are statistically significant ($p < .05$) with the 65 plus age group.

Table 19

After-Learn to Pray by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	6.53	1.75	2.10
25-34	75	6.57	1.64	
35-44	61	5.85	1.77	
45-54	20	5.83	2.22	
55-64	6	5.91	2.27	
65 plus	5	7.70	1.75	

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 20

After-Learn to Manage by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value
18-24	27	7.22	1.54	3.26

25-34	75	7.34	1.54
35-44	61	6.53	1.42
45-54	20	6.43	2.52
55-64	6	5.97	1.93
65 plus	5	8.24	.93

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 21

Before-Learning to Be with Jesus by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	4.88	1.65	3.23
Regularly Attend	86	4.77	1.58	
Team Access	98	5.57	1.71	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 22

Before-Learn to Listen by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.14	1.43	3.12
Regularly Attend	86	5.00	1.73	
Team Access	98	5.91	1.77	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 23

Before-Learn to Heal by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.14	1.75	2.24
Regularly Attend	86	4.93	1.95	
Team Access	98	5.17	2.15	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 24

Before-Learn to Influence by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.43	1.34	1.23
Regularly Attend	86	5.00	1.68	
Team Access	98	6.02	1.62	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 25*Before-Learn to Love by Church Involvement Level*

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.04	1.43	.83
Regularly Attend	86	5.34	1.89	
Team Access	98	5.98	2.09	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 26*Before-Learn to Pray by Church Involvement Level*

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.25	2.24	1.36
Regularly Attend	86	4.49	1.60	
Team Access	98	5.07	2.00	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 27*Before-Learn to Manage by Church Involvement Level*

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
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Occasionally Attend	10	5.58	1.16	1.36
Regularly Attend	86	4.98	1.72	
Team Access	98	6.13	1.72	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 28

After-Learning to Be with Jesus by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.64	1.78	.31
Regularly Attend	86	6.15	1.78	
Team Access	98	6.86	1.75	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 29

After-Learn to Listen with Jesus by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.60	1.52	.57
Regularly Attend	86	6.31	1.70	
Team Access	98	7.13	1.72	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 30*After-Learn to Heal with Jesus by Church Involvement Level*

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.54	1.62	2.24
Regularly Attend	86	6.50	1.95	
Team Access	98	6.89	1.86	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 31*After-Learn to Influence with Jesus by Church Involvement Level*

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.65	1.51	3.23
Regularly Attend	86	6.12	1.87	
Team Access	98	7.15	1.52	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 32*After-Learn to Love with Jesus by Church Involvement Level*

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
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Occasionally Attend	10	5.84	1.47	3.23
Regularly Attend	86	6.76	1.94	
Team Access	98	7.40	1.68	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 33

After-Learn to Pray with Jesus by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	5.57	2.18	3.23
Regularly Attend	86	6.09	1.85	
Team Access	98	6.50	1.72	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 34

After-Learn to Manage with Jesus by Church Involvement Level

Church Involvement Level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>F</i> value
Occasionally Attend	10	6.34	1.45	3.23
Regularly Attend	86	6.55	1.76	
Team Access	98	7.38	1.54	

Note: Bolded values indicate $p < .05$ between these two groups.

Table 35*Predictors of Learning to be with Jesus August 2019*

Variables Entered	Unstandardized Beta	Coefficient	Standardized Beta
First Steps	.48	.26	1.83
Follow Book	.59	.28	2.08*
Access Group	.56	.28	.91
Spiritual Coach	.50	.46	1.10
Age 18-24	.21	.38	-.56
Age 35-44	-.58	.29	-1.98*
Age 45-54	-.21	.43	-.49
Age 55-64	-.54	.72	-.75
Age 65	1.35	.77	1.75*
Occasionally Attend	-.57	.57	-1.00
Team Access	-.36	.27	1.34

*Note: r²= 7%, * p < .05***Table 36***Predictors of Learn to Listen with Jesus August 2019*

Variables Entered	Unstandardized Beta	Coefficient	Standardized Beta
First Steps	-.54	.25	.16*

Follow Book	-.33	.27	.9
Access Group	-.41	.27	.12
Spiritual Coach	-.43	.44	.07
Age 18-24	.00	.37	.00
Age 35-44	.44	.28	-.12
Age 45-54	.07	.43	-.01
Age 55-64	.41	.72	-.05
Age 65	-1.65	.77	.15
Occasionally Attend	-.72	.55	-.09
Team Access	.52	.25	.15*

Note: $r^2 = 3\%$, * $p < .05$

Table 37

Predictors of Learn to Heal with Jesus August 2019

Variables Entered	Unstandardized Beta	Coefficient	Standardized Beta
First Steps	.31	.31	.08
Follow Book	.16	.33	.04
Access Group	.09	.33	.02
Spiritual Coach	1.51	.54	.20*
Age 18-24	-.41	.45	.91
Age 35-44	-.59	.35	-.07

Age 45-54	-.23	.51	-.13
Age 55-64	-.04	.85	.00
Age 65	3.10	.92	.25*
Occasionally Attend	-.04	.68	-.01
Team Access	.10	.31	.03

Note: $r^2 = 3\%$, * $p < .05$

Table 38

Predictors of Learn to Influence with Jesus August 2019

Variables Entered	Unstandardized Beta	Coefficient	Standardized Beta
First Steps	.98	.25	.28*
Follow Book	-.11	.27	-.03
Access Group	.39	.27	.11
Spiritual Coach	1.04	.43	.16
Age 18-24	.33	.45	.06
Age 35-44	.46	.36	-.12
Age 45-54	.51	.41	.09
Age 55-64	.13	.67	.01
Age 65	1.35	.73	.12
Occasionally Attend	-.67	.53	-.09

Team Access	.72	.25	.20*
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*Note: r²= 3%, * p < .05*

Table 39

Predictors of Learn to Love with Jesus August 2019

Variables Entered	Unstandardized Beta	Coefficient	Standardized Beta
First Steps	.42	.28	.11
Follow Book	.32	.30	.08
Access Group	.21	.30	.05
Spiritual Coach	.37	.48	.05
Age 18-24	.04	.40	-.01
Age 35-44	-.66	.31	-.17*
Age 45-54	-.44	.46	-.08
Age 55-64	-.42	.76	-.04
Age 65	1.57	.82	.14
Occasionally Attend	-1.06	.60	-.13
Team Access	.35	.28	.10

*Note: r²= 3%, * p < .05*

Table 40*Predictors of Learn to Pray with Jesus August 2019*

Variables Entered	Unstandardized Beta	Coefficient	Standardized Beta
First Steps	.86	.27	.24*
Follow Book	.36	.28	.09
Access Group	.35	.29	.10
Spiritual Coach	1.0	.46	.15*
Age 18-24	.09	.38	.02
Age 35-44	-.65	.30	-.17*
Age 45-54	-.38	.44	-.06
Age 55-64	-.29	1.0	-.03
Age 65	1.11	.78	1.0
Occasionally Attend	-.68	.58	-.08
Team Access	.03	.27	.01

*Note: r²= 1%, * p < .05***Table 41***Predictors of Learn to Pray with Jesus August 2019*

Variables Entered	Unstandardized Beta	Coefficient	Standardized Beta
First Steps	.79	.24	.23

Follow Book	.04	.25	.01
Access Group	.54	.25	.16
Spiritual Coach	1.05	.41	.17
Age 18-24	.01	.34	.02
Age 35-44	-.68	.27	-.19
Age 45-54	-.43	.39	-.08
Age 55-64	-.77	.65	-.08
Age 65	1.02	.70	1.0
Occasionally Attend	-.42	.51	-.06
Team Access	.46	.24	.14

Note: $r^2 = 4\%$, * $p < .05$

Chapter Five

The Project Conclusions

The goal of this project was to identify key elements of a healthy discipling church and then to create a way to measure the effectiveness of the assessment. Going into this project, I wondered if we would see people indicate that they had taken a step closer to Jesus. I speculated that some people might think that they were closer to begin with, and, when faced with an actual measuring rubric, might realize they were wrong in their self-assessment. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that across the board, we saw marked growth.

The two areas that are noted with the most growth over the summer series are “Learn to Influence” and “Learn to Manage.” With “Learn to Influence,” participants indicated growth in all areas, especially with establishing a regular habit of sharing their own story with the Lord with others. The mean score of 4.54 in May demonstrates that most participants were not regularly sharing their stories, but in August the mean score of 6.03 demonstrates that participants were moving toward establishing sharing their story as a regular habit. Also, part of “Learn to Influence” is leading people to Jesus. In this area, participants’ mean score was 4.34 in May and grew to 5.69 in August. Again, participants moved from being aware of this idea, but not having it as a regular habit, to making this aspect of following Jesus a more regular practice. With “Learn to Manage,” participants reported significant growth in all areas, most notably with managing their time and managing their words. Participants shared that in May they averaged 5.35 with

managing their time and grew to 6.86 out of 10 by August, indicating that individuals grew in stewarding their time unto the Lord as more of a daily habit. Another noteworthy aspect of “Learning to Manage” is the reported growth in managing one’s mind. Based on where they were in May, participants reported an average of 5.30, which increased to 6.82 in August. Again, they moved from occasionally practicing this aspect of following Jesus to practicing this habit regularly.

Another significant discovery from the research was the direct correlation between serving and spiritual growth; those who already serve regularly in the church self-reported more spiritual growth than those who do not regularly serve. The correlation does not prove causation, but it does show that the two are related. It is possible that both serving and an openness to spiritual growth are linked to a person’s heart condition. It could be that the heart of an individual who is open to serving and then regularly serves in their local church is also the same heart condition of a person who pursues spiritual growth.

Contextual Changes

The mission statement of Access Church is: “We help people take the next step in their relationship with Jesus.” The beauty of this statement is that everyone can take a step closer to Jesus. A person who has followed Jesus for over fifty years has a next step and does the person who is just exploring faith for the first time. This is the heart of discipleship: helping people take steps closer to Jesus.

Using Dr. McNaughton’s four environments in which every Christian needs to grow, we will focus our efforts on all four contexts. First, every Christian needs to find

belonging, meaning, and family in a large group setting. For us, the large group format happens primarily on Sunday mornings. As the main preacher and communicator, I am reevaluating and asking questions about my preaching. Most attractional churches tend to follow a similar preaching pattern. In growth seasons, attractional churches preach felt-need series on topics like marriage, relationships, family, money, and other similar topics. There is certainly a place for this. It is my expectation and hope that the sermon series at Access Church will help Christians effectively move people closer to Jesus. Our church must help Christians become self-feeders of the Word of God. Our church must assume that people are very busy, and coincidentally, their relationship with God may drift. We must ask if our teaching series actually helped. Last year, in a premarital counseling session, I asked the soon-to-be-married couple what their plan for growing closer to Jesus was. Their response shocked me: “Well, whatever you are teaching, I guess.” To this point, their spiritual growth was dependent solely upon whichever message series I would be preaching. Every message and message series should move people closer to Jesus in at least one of the seven attributes.

Ed Stetzer challenges pastors to push back from the notion that good preaching is enough to promote true discipleship. His research for LifeWay states that “56% of pastors surveyed believe that their weekly sermon, or another one of their teaching times such as Sunday evenings or Wednesday evenings, was the most important discipling ministry in the church. While it is great to see the recent renaissance of Bible-based preaching, along with it we have to jettison the idea that ‘If people just listen to my sermons, they will

grow spiritually.’”¹³⁷ This is only partially true.

Some of my most profound moments of personal and spiritual growth resulted from a sermon. Edgar Dale’s “Cone of Experience” research shows that after three days, people will remember only about 10% of a lecture, 10% of what they have read, 65% of what they have seen and talked about, and 70% of what they have participated in (role plays, case studies, and practice).¹³⁸ The average listener will retain some information they have heard or read, but it is futile to believe this preaching alone is enough to account for effective discipleship.

A small shift I intend to make is to move from strictly topical preaching to incorporating a light version of expository teaching. Instead of jumping around the Bible, risking proof texting, I will attempt to speak more sequentially to allow the Scripture to speak more for itself. A key component to the way I preach is an awareness and inclusion of seekers. It does not imply that we water-down messages or avoid hard-hitting truths; it just means that we assume there are people with less biblical knowledge in the room and we clearly teach in a way that includes them. This does not have to change, and I would add, should not change. Everyone needs a seat at the table.

To be clear, this does not imply a shift to merely “heady” preaching. Plenty of churches have theologically rich content, but no life in the Spirit. There is nothing inherently wrong with knowledge. Paul cautions the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians

137. Ed Stetzer, “Better Discipleship,” *The Exchange | A Blog by Ed Stetzer*, accessed April 23, 2019, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2013/august/better-discipleship.html>.

138. Raymond V. Wiman, Wesley C. Meierhenry, and Walter K. Beggs, *Educational Media: Theory into Practice* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1971).

8:1 to be careful because knowledge can “puff up,” but the context is relevant to the maturity of the Corinthian believers.

The second environment is the small group. This area has the potential for a marked shift for our church. Our marketing language for small groups promotes community, not spiritual growth or discipleship. We use lines like, “Meet your new best friends” or “Circles are better than rows.” We teach that small groups are the modern version of what Sunday School was in my church upbringing. Small groups have the potential to be a discipleship tool, but they are not effectively working for us. A cursory survey of many of my pastor friends reveals the same insight. Groups are good, but they are not effectively working for everyone.

As a result, we are considering changing the way we do small groups. We will divide group offerings into three categories: Connect Groups, Grow Groups, and Go Groups. Connect Groups are exactly what the name implies: relational groups. We need community. There is a place for this, but it cannot be where we stop. Secondly, Grow Groups open us up to more of a true Sunday School replacement. The goal is that these groups dig deeply into the Bible. These groups can take Sunday messages and have practical conversation about how they apply to their lives. Another door this opens for us is the possibility of offering Bible classes. This is something we have previously resisted because it did not fit perfectly into our small group strategy. Grow groups will provide solid biblical teaching for those who want to grow, and they create a new opportunity for those gifted to teach. The real goal of all groups moves people from connection to action. The Go Groups will focus on getting out and doing something to serve or bless others.

The research confirmed what we predicted, that nothing grows a new follower of

Jesus faster than getting them involved in ministry and serving others. This means we have to move beyond Sunday church service opportunities. We are more like Jesus when we serve others, so the goal is to get the Go Groups actually serving regularly, and for every group to do at least one project together that serves others. Church cannot be a buffet we pull up to and proceed to over-indulge in. We must exercise our faith in the way we serve.

A pastor friend recently told me, “There are only two types of churches. There are the type of churches that look at people and ask ‘How can you fit into our system?’ Those are the churches that will chew people up, spit them out and do not represent the Lord well. The other churches exist to say, ‘What has God equipped you to do and how can we help you accomplish it? Let us help you discover what it is that God has uniquely called you to do.’” The heart of Go Groups is that every believer has an opportunity to discover their specific giftings and passions and then utilize them to meet needs.

The third environment is quiet time for devotions and prayer. This is something we have not strongly emphasized as a church, yet I know it is significant. Some of my greatest moments of revelation came through moments of silence, solitude, and prayer before anyone in my family had woken up. We need to develop a system that empowers people to become self-feeders. Jesus modeled this. Luke 15:16 says that Jesus frequently withdrew to pray. If Jesus needed it, it is safe to assume we do, too. We will look for creative ways to empower people. Every year, we do three weeks of prayer emphasis, called “21 Days of Prayer.” The idea is to get people praying, but even more importantly, to encourage the formation of a prayer habit. Other ideas that we have floated with the team include an app for smart phones that has a daily devotional, printed daily devotional

books, and regularly publishing interactive social media content encouraging prayer.

The final environment poses the greatest challenge and opportunity. We must find a way to train people to become mentors and then develop a system to pair mentors and those needing one-on-one coaching. After the staff assessment, I have asked every staff member to read *Follow* and intentionally seek out three individuals to walk through this discipleship plan. We will then identify leaders within the church and ask them to do the same thing. The greatest challenge for people is overcoming the hurried and busy mentality. We make time for what matters most to us. Discipleship is not an addition to your life; it is an intentional investment. This principle is evident in the life of Jesus. He spent the majority of his three years of ministry up-close-and-personal with the twelve disciples. John 3:22 describes this: “After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them.” He was constantly investing in their lives. The key is nearness. This does not happen from a stage or a small group video curriculum. It happens in an up-close-and-personal way.

Our hope is to raise awareness through the message series, utilize small groups to give practical application, encourage and resource individuals to have a quiet time, and then slowly roll out the plan of mentoring. The end result of someone becoming a disciple is that they disciple another person. This is a self-correcting opportunity for us. As we disciple better, our church will disciple.

On a larger scale, I plan to take Dr. McNaughton’s research and create a digital tool to facilitate discipleship and spiritual growth mentoring. I foresee it serving two purposes. The first is awareness building and training. How often do people fail to change because they do not even know where to start? A digital version of the Discipleship

Balance Wheel would provide a personalized scorecard and curated ideas to facilitate growth based on the individual's needs. Secondly, if the individual is paired with a mentor, there could be a consent form to allow for a mentor to receive the results to provide more individualized attention.

Personal Application

The only effective church vision is one that revolves around discipling. For a church to be effective in fulfilling Jesus' command to make disciples, it must pursue two concurrent objectives. First, churches must create a leadership pipeline that discovers, develops, and empowers leaders. I pursued this throughout the first year of this doctoral program, and subsequently, it has changed so much for our church. Helping our team to stop thinking as the "doers" and to start thinking as the "equippers" was a simple shift that has paid huge dividends. Enabling people to see where they are on a staff and volunteer flow chart, and then visualizing the number, or lack thereof, of people serving underneath them was eye-opening. Leadership development without spiritual development, however, felt incomplete. Leadership development without discipleship may produce great leaders, but ultimately creates poor followers of Jesus.

Most pastors I know feel the strain between trying to be evangelistic and discipling those who are in the church. The greatest shift in my thinking through this process centered around one idea. If you strictly evangelize, you will reach people, but not really grow them. If you disciple people, they will grow, and the result is that they will reach and grow many others. Evangelism is a byproduct of discipleship, but it is not necessarily true in reverse. Jesus' command in the context of Matthew exposes our false

dichotomy between evangelism and discipleship. Discipleship is not optional for Christians. Jesus said to “follow him.” At Access Church, we have decided to become a discipling church that never takes its foot off of the gas in reaching people for Jesus.¹³⁹

Questions for the Global Church

Churches must adjust their scoreboards. If discipleship is the ultimate goal, we must measure how people are growing. Dr. Daniel McNaughton’s discipleship attributes are a fantastic measuring tool. In the future, I intend to develop this research into a tool to help churches across the country measure and remeasure how effective discipleship is in their congregations.

As churches wrestle with this idea, several questions have emerged that should be asked to spark meaningful conversation among church leaders. The initial questions are personal and then shift to ministry.

Personal Leadership Questions

1. How much time are you personally spending with Jesus?
2. How often do you read the Bible for personal growth?
3. How is your faith growing as it relates to healing and faith?
4. Who do you spend time with on a regular basis that is not yet a follower of Jesus?
5. What needs to change in your life so you are a clearer representation of Jesus to others?

139. Originally written for Dr. Daniel McNaughton’s “Contextual Engagement II.”

6. Do you feel totally loved, completely forgiven, fully pleasing, totally accepted by God and complete in Christ?
7. How is your relationship with your spouse and children?
8. What is your plan for growing in prayer this year?
9. How are you managing your time, finances, body, and words?
10. Who are you coaching and discipling personally right now?

Church Ministry Questions

1. Are we organized around a common mission and vision?
2. How do we discover and equip potential leaders and get them involved in ministry?
3. Who are we called to reach and how do we meet their needs in a way that attracts people to Jesus?
4. How many people made a decision to follow Jesus and were baptized in our services last year?
5. What roles do preaching and worship play in your discipleship system?
6. How many invitational message series and events did you have last year?
7. Why are people not inviting people to the church?
8. How do we better equip people to pray for the lost?
9. How do our groups help people follow Jesus?
10. How many spiritual coaches do we have and how can we facilitate more?

Emotionally Healthy Discipleship Questions

Beyond the personal and ministry questions, there must be an emphasis on health. If a leader burns out for any reason, the potential of future discipleship burns out with them. I recently had lunch with a megachurch pastor in Dallas who was visibly having a bad day. It did not take much prodding to discover that he was frustrated with a staff quarrel; the church was carrying a significant financial burden, and ministry was decidedly not fun for him in this season. As the conversation progressed, it became even more clear that this was not just a bad day, but he was in a dangerous place. He said something that has stuck with me since our conversation. “Ministry is the only job designed to care for the souls of others at the utter neglect of your own.” He then listed off a handful of well-known, highly influential ministers who had recently fallen into sin, anecdotally backing his point.

A church will only be as healthy as its leaders. Peter Scazzero’s book, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, advocates strongly for the emotional, inner health of those in leadership. He states: “The emotionally unhealthy leader is someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a “being with God” sufficient to sustain their “doing for God.”¹⁴⁰ If not careful, pastors and leaders will get very busy *doing* things for God, at the neglect of simply *being* with him.

Scazzero added,

Spiritual deficits typically reveal themselves in too much activity. Unhealthy leaders engage in more activities than their combined spiritual, physical, and

140. Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015), 25.

emotional reserves can sustain. They give out for God more than they receive from him. They serve others in order to share the joy of Christ, but that joy remains elusive to themselves. The demands and pressures of leadership make it nearly impossible for them to establish a consistent and sustainable rhythm of life.¹⁴¹

John Ortberg once interviewed the brilliant theologian Dallas Willard. He asked him to name the single most important thing a person could do to intentionally grow in their relationship with God. Willard's answer was startling: "You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life."¹⁴²

Leaders seem to do everything in a hurry. It is easy to become enslaved to the tyranny of the urgent, constantly striving for the approval of others. Yet, nothing of significance happens in a hurry. Still, we struggle to slow down. How do leaders find rest in an increasingly frenzied world? Scazzero gave a simple framework for how to intentionally slow down for the sake of rest. "Sabbath is a twenty-four-hour block of time in which we *stop* work, *enjoy* rest, *practice* delight, and *contemplate* God."¹⁴³

We put this into practice at our church. One can only minister effectively from a place of rest and wholeness. In 2019, I introduced a new idea to our church staff, called "God Day." Every first Wednesday, our church staff take a day out of the office, but not off of work. On these days, the work is exclusively and intentionally about connecting with God. It is provided for my team to stop, enjoy, practice, and contemplate. We do not minister, disciple others, and work hard to rest. We do all of those activities from a place

141. Ibid., 25–26.

142. John Ortberg, "Ruthlessly Eliminate Hurry," *CT Pastors*, accessed January 20, 2018, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2002/july-online-only/cln20704.html>.

143. Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 146.

of rest. Discipleship is a lifelong marathon of us growing closer to Jesus and discipling others along the journey.

Conclusion

Discipleship is at the heart of God. It is present in creation, visible throughout all of Scripture, and decidedly evident in the life of Jesus. If it is the heart of God, it must become the singular greatest focus of our churches. When discipleship is executed God's way, it is healthy and life-giving to all.

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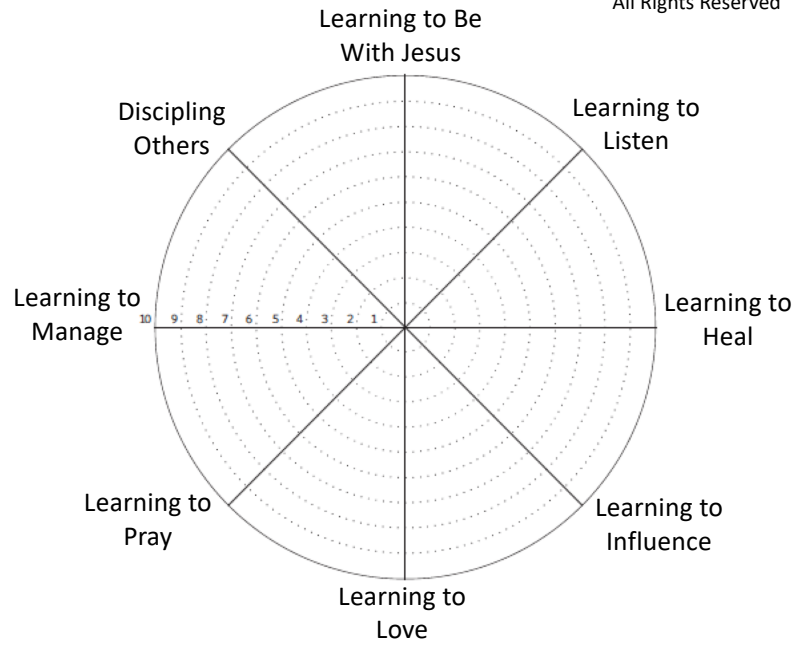
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Appendix A

Subjective Assessment¹⁴⁴

Discipleship Balance Wheel

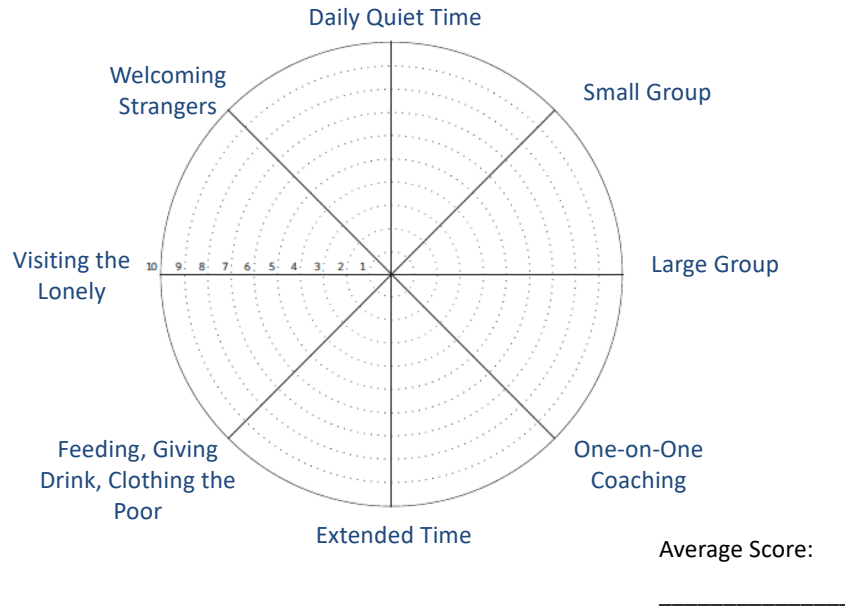
Dr. Daniel McNaughton
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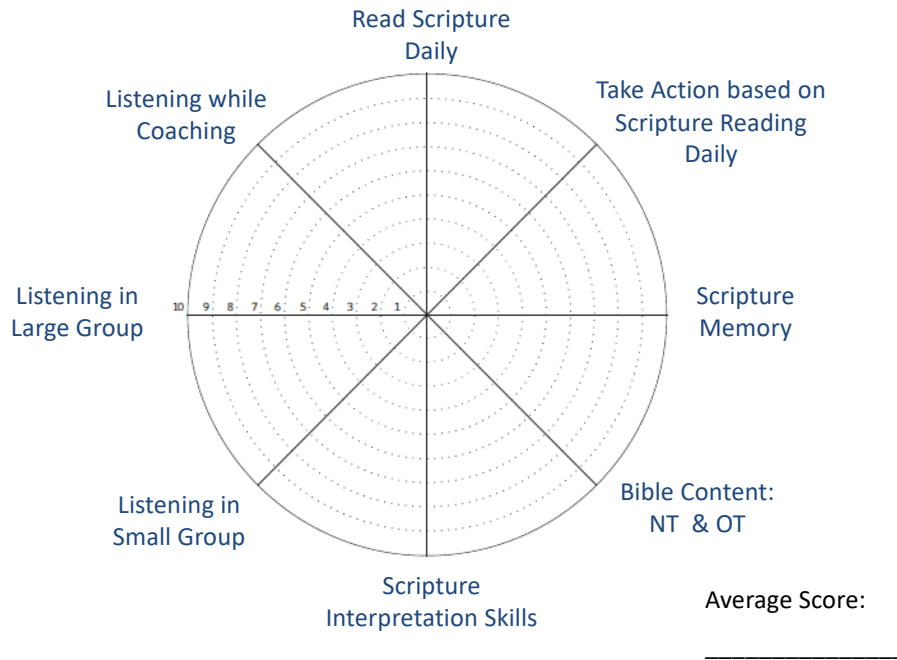
144. Daniel McNaughton and Jane Abbate, *The Spiritual Coaching Toolkit* (Spring City, PA: Morning Joy Media, 2014), 82.

Objective Assessments

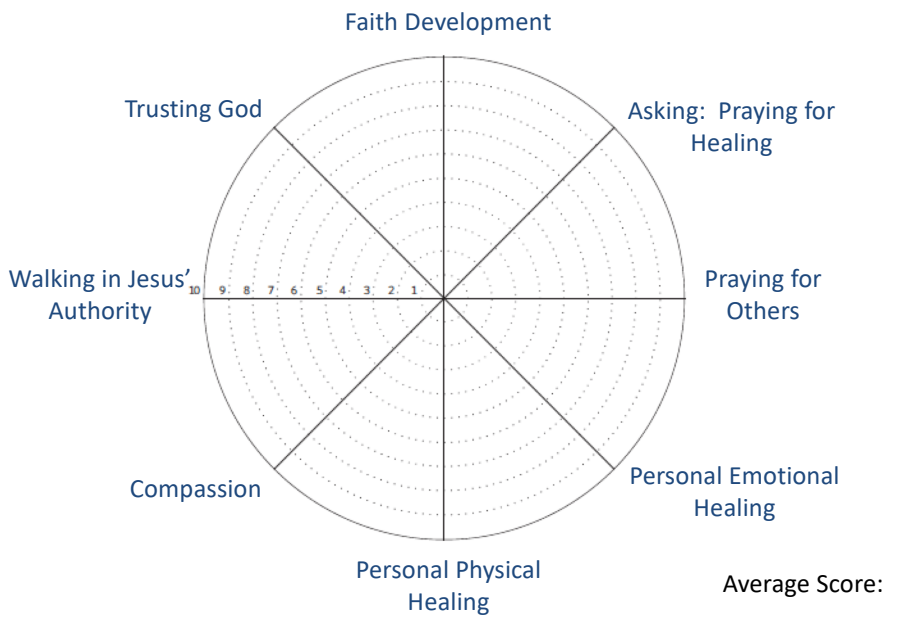
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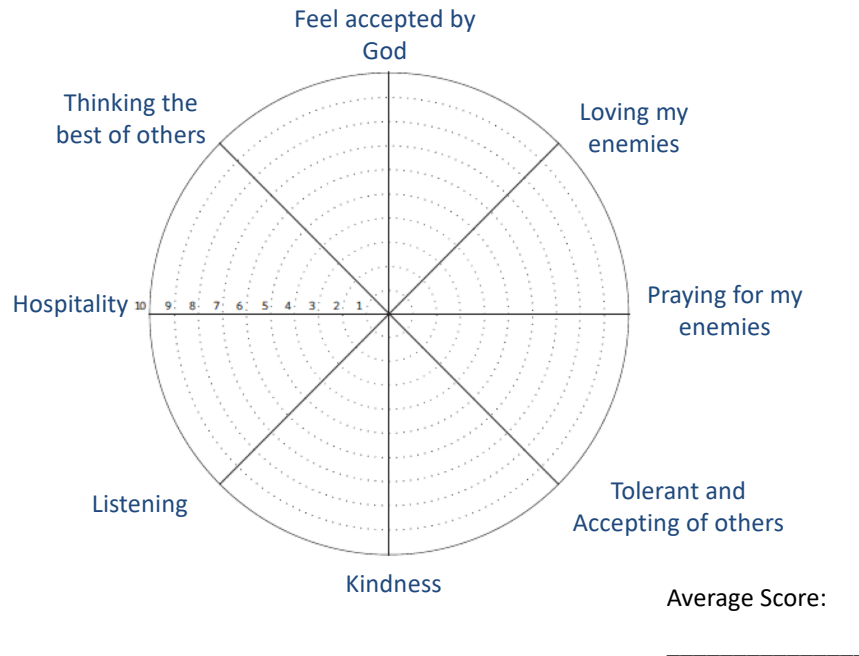
Learning to Listen



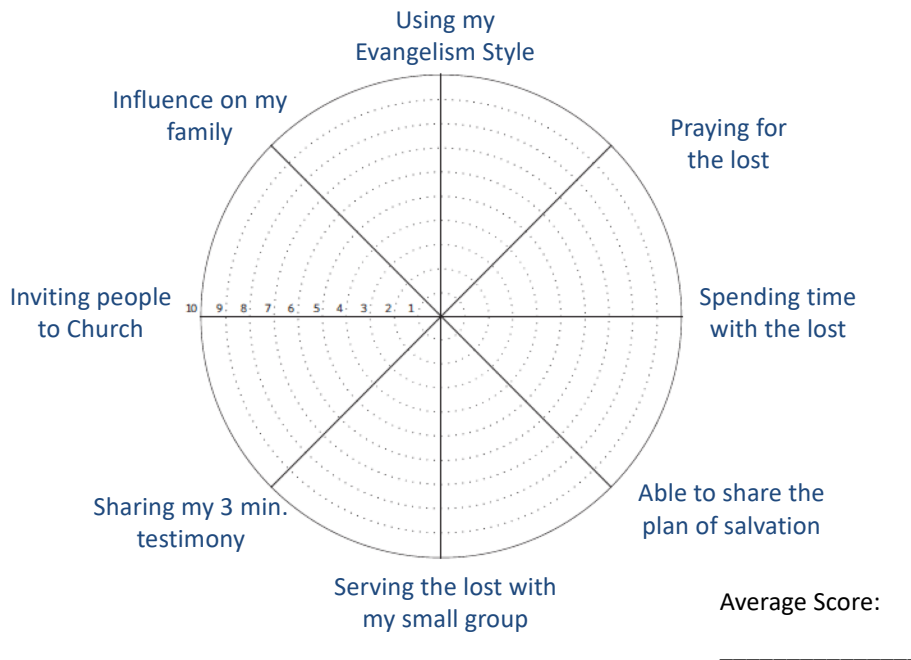
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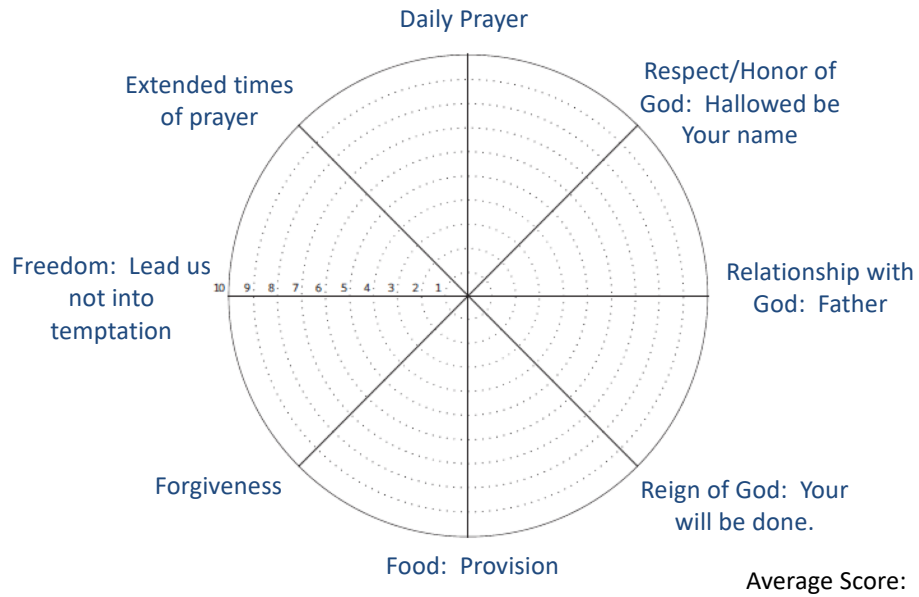
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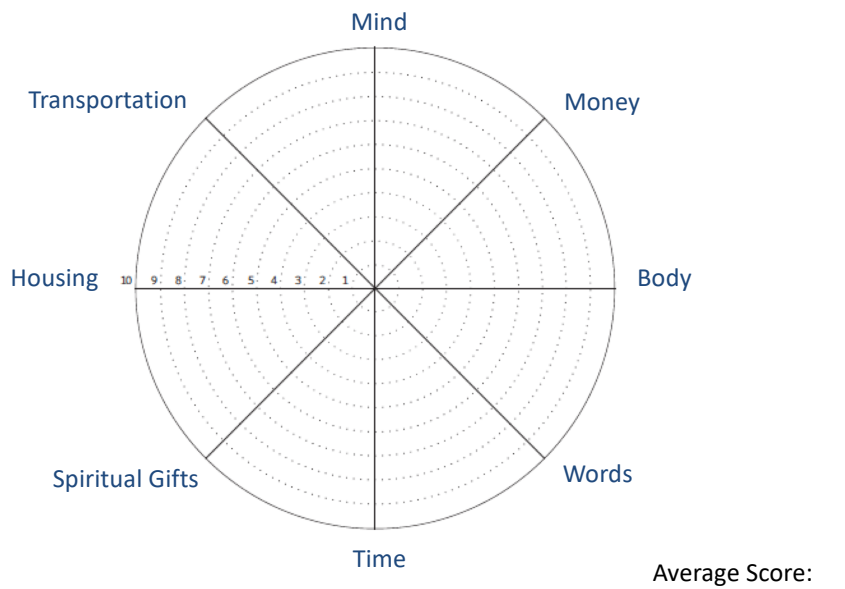
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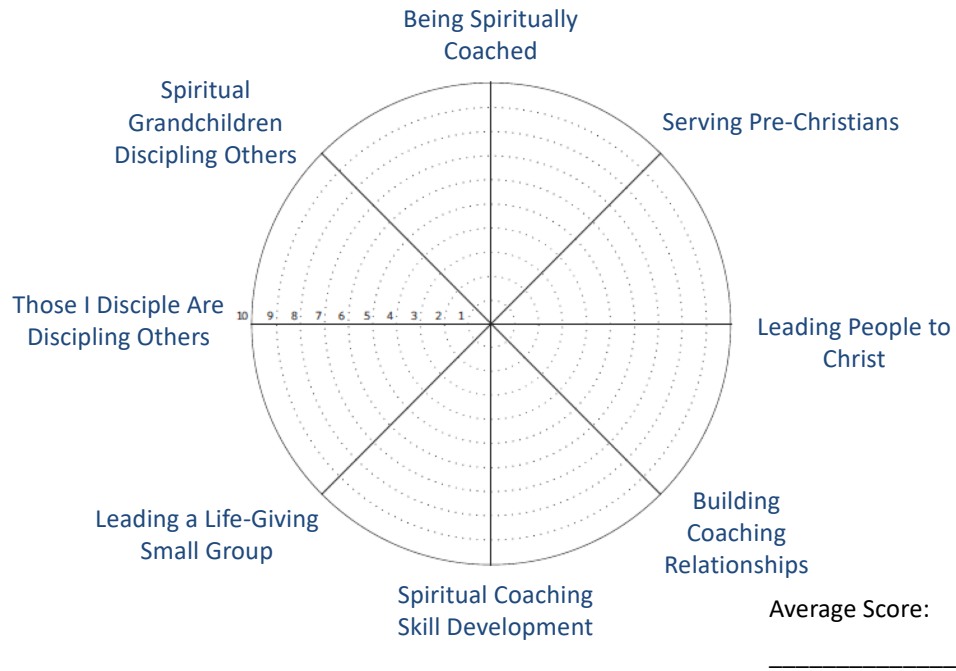
Learning to Pray



Learning to Manage



Discipling Others



Appendix B

	Participant 1		Participant 2		Participant 3		Participant 4	
	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result
Learning to be with Jesus	7.5	7	6	8	6.5	5.5	8	6
Learning to Listen	7	9.5	7	8	7	6.5	9	4
Learning to Heal	6	7	8	8	8	7	7	7
Learning to Influence	9.5	8.5	7	7	9	7.5	7	6
Learning to Love	9.5	6.5	8	8	9	6.5	9	9
Learning to Pray	7.5	7.5	8	8	7	7	6	8
Learning to Manage	7	7.5	8	8	7	7	4	5
Discipling Others	9	6.5	5	4	6	6	6	3
	Participant 5		Participant 6		Participant 7		Participant 8	
	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result
Learning to be with Jesus	4	4	8	5.5	9	7.5	7	6.5
Learning to Listen	5	5.5	7	6.5	10	7.5	7	6.5
Learning to Heal	5	6	7	6.5	9	8	8	7
Learning to Influence	6	6.5	7	6.5	10	5.5	7	6
Learning to Love	6	7.5	7	7.5	5	7.5	6	7
Learning to Pray	7	6.6	6	7	7	8.5	5	7.5
Learning to Manage	5	6	7	8	10	9	5	8.5
Discipling Others	5	6.5	6	7	9	6	5	8
	Participant 9		Participant 10		Participant 11		Participant 12	
	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result
Learning to be with Jesus	5	6	3	3.5	5	4	7	6.5
Learning to Listen	6	5	5	6.5	4	2.5	7	6.5
Learning to Heal	6	5	6	5	8	4.5	8	7
Learning to Influence	7	3.5	8	3.5	8	2.5	7	6
Learning to Love	7	6.5	8	5.5	8	5	6	7
Learning to Pray	6	6.5	7	4.5	4	5	5	7.5
Learning to Manage	7	7	5	4.5	5	4	5	8.5
Discipling Others	2	3.5	6	3.5	9	7	3	8
	Participant 13		Participant 14		Participant 15		Participant 16	
	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result
Learning to be with Jesus	7	2	7	6.5	7	6.5	7	3.5
Learning to Listen	8	4	7	9	9	6	8	5
Learning to Heal	7	6	8	6	6	7	10	8
Learning to Influence	7	7	6	5.5	6	6	3	5.5
Learning to Love	9	8	7	7	6	7	10	8.5
Learning to Pray	7	7	6	6	7	8	5	5.5
Learning to Manage	7	7	5	5	7	6	4	7.5
Discipling Others	6	6	7	7	7	6	4	4
	Participant 17		Participant 18		Participant 19		Participant 20	
	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result
Learning to be with Jesus	7	6	6	5	4	2.5	7	6.5
Learning to Listen	7	6	6	5	2	4	8	7.5
Learning to Heal	8	7	3	8	8	4.5	5	7.5
Learning to Influence	7	6	5	5.5	6	5.5	7	6.5
Learning to Love	8	8	5	5.5	8	8	8	8
Learning to Pray	7	8	6	7	4	5	7	7.5
Learning to Manage	6	8	5	5.5	5	5	7	6.5
Discipling Others	6	5	5	2	4	3.3	7	5.5

	Participant 21		Participant 22		Participant 23		Participant 24	
	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result	Perception	Result
Learning to be with Jesus	7	6.5	7	6.5	6	6	5	6
Learning to Listen	8	7	7	7	6	6	7	4
Learning to Heal	7	7	5	7	3	6	8	9
Learning to Influence	8	6	8	7	7	5	6	5
Learning to Love	8	6	9	7.5	8	7	9	9.5
Learning to Pray	6	6.5	6	6.5	5	6	6	8
Learning to Manage	7	6.5	7	8	5	5	6	8
Discipling Others	7	6.5	5	6.5	7	4.5	4	2

Appendix C

Follow Assessment

Demographic and Introductory Questions

What is your gender?

-Male

-Female

What age group do you fit in?

-18-24

-25-34

-35-44

-45-54

-65 plus

What is your relationship status?

-Single

-In a relationship, but not married

-Married

-Divorced

-Widowed/Widow

How involved are you in Access Church?

-Occasionally attend Sunday Service

-Regular attend Sunday Service

-On Team Access and regularly serve as part of the Access Community

Follow Opportunities

How many of the regular Sunday services did you attend during the Follow series?

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Besides attending Sunday services, what other opportunities did you participate in during our Follow series?

-Read the book *Follow*

-Participated in an Access Group

-Spiritual Coaching

Follow Attributes Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment Scale

1-Not Aware

2-

3-Aware and occasionally put into practice

4-

5-Aware and sometimes put into practice

6

7-Aware and daily putting into practice as a new habit.

8-

9-

10-Aware, putting into daily practice, and this practice is an established habit.

Participant will be asked to rate themselves on each aspect of *Follow* twice.

First, they will be asked each question, in a random order: “Please rate yourself on each aspect of *Follow* BEFORE we started the series this summer: where were you with practicing each aspect of *Follow* in May?”

Second, they will be asked to rate themselves on the Self-Assessment scale currently in another section. Please see questions below.

BEFORE - How much were you putting into practice, learning to remain in him?

CURRENT - How much are you putting into practice, learning to remain in him?

BEFORE Questions

Attribute-Learning to be with Jesus

How much were you putting into practice, learning to remain in him?

How much were you putting into practice, learning to recognize fruit?

How much were you putting into practice, learning to be with him as you read Scripture?

How much were you putting into practice, learning to be with Christ in prayer?

How much were you putting into practice, learning how to remain in Christ affects others?

Attribute-Learning to Listen

How much were you putting into practice, learning to be blessed, understanding that you are approved by God?

How much were you putting into practice, learning to go to the source, Scripture, and using Scripture as the foundation for your life?

How much were you putting into practice, learning to see Jesus in Scripture?

How much were you putting into practice, learning to overcome temptation?

How much were you putting into practice, learning to be productive, being good soil?

Attribute-Learning to Heal

How much were you putting into practice, opening yourself up to Jesus' touch on the areas of your life that need healing?

How much were you putting into practice, recognizing Jesus' authority over illness, hurt,

and afflictions?

How much were you putting into practice, understanding that healing is God's idea?

How much were you putting into practice, asking in faith for healing?

How much were you putting into practice, giving healing away?

Attribute-Learning to Influence

How much were you putting into practice, inviting people to Jesus?

How much were you putting into practice, sharing your story?

How much were you putting into practice, being a genuine friend?

How much were you putting into practice, speaking directly and openly about what God has done in your life?

How much were you putting into practice, serving people?

How much were you putting into practice, making sense by studying and thinking, even debating?

Attribute-Learning to Love

How much were you putting into practice, trusting God with forgiveness?

How much were you putting into practice, seeking God's approval?

How much were you putting into practice, enjoying God's acceptance?

How much were you putting into practice, partnering with God to change you?

How much were you putting into practice, enjoying God's peace?

Attribute-Learning to Pray

How much were you putting into practice, deciding not to pray bad prayers?

How much were you putting into practice, praying the disciples' prayer?

How much were you putting into practice, praying through pain?

How much were you putting into practice, learning spiritual warfare through pain?

Attribute-Learning to Manage

How much were you putting into practice, managing your mind?

How much were you putting into practice, managing your finances?

How much were you putting into practice, managing your body?

How much were you putting into practice, managing your words?

How much were you putting into practice, managing your time?

CURRENT Questions

Attribute-Learning to be with Jesus

How much are you putting into practice, learning to remain in him?

How much are you putting into practice, learning to recognize fruit?

How much are you putting into practice, learning to be with him as you read Scripture?

How much are you putting into practice, learning to be with Christ in prayer?

How much are you putting into practice, learning how to remain in Christ affects others?

Attribute-Learning to Listen

How much are you putting into practice, learning to be blessed, understanding that you are approved by God?

How much are you putting into practice, learning to go to the source, Scripture, and using Scripture as the foundation for your life?

How much are you putting into practice, learning to see Jesus in Scripture?

How much are you putting into practice, learning to overcome temptation?

How much are you putting into practice, learning to be productive, being good soil?

Attribute-Learning to Heal

How much are you putting into practice, opening yourself up to Jesus' touch on the areas of your life that need healing?

How much are you putting into practice, recognizing Jesus' authority over illness, hurt, and afflictions?

How much are you putting into practice, understanding that healing is God's idea?

How much are you putting into practice, asking in faith for healing?

How much are you putting into practice, giving healing away?

Attribute-Learning to Influence

How much are you putting into practice, inviting people to Jesus?

How much are you putting into practice, sharing your story?

How much are you putting into practice, being a genuine friend?

How much are you putting into practice, speaking directly and openly about what God

has done in your life?

How much are you putting into practice, serving people?

How much are you putting into practice, making sense by studying and thinking, even debating?

Attribute-Learning to Love

How much are you putting into practice, trusting God with forgiveness?

How much are you putting into practice, seeking God's approval?

How much are you putting into practice, enjoying God's acceptance?

How much are you putting into practice, partnering with God to change you?

How much are you putting into practice, enjoying God's peace?

Attribute-Learning to Pray

How much are you putting into practice, deciding not to pray bad prayers?

How much are you putting into practice, praying the disciples' prayer?

How much are you putting into practice, praying through pain?

How much are you putting into practice, learning spiritual warfare through pain?

Attribute-Learning to Manage

How much are you putting into practice, managing your mind?

How much are you putting into practice, managing your finances?

How much are you putting into practice, managing your body?

How much are you putting into practice, managing your words?

How much are you putting into practice, managing your time?