

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Biblical Parenting

A Thesis Project Submitted to

Dr. Brent Kelly

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

By

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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Abstract

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT

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The goal of this Doctor of Ministry thesis project, Biblical Parenting, is to equip parents with tools that will enable them to conduct Bible study and family worship in an age-appropriate manner, so that their children will grow up understanding the Word of God and have a biblical worldview that will direct their daily decisions. Some of the parents at Calvary Baptist Church and Covenant Christian Academy appear not to be accomplishing their God-given task of evangelizing and discipling their children at home. Instead they have relegated that responsibility to the church. However, according to the Bible, parents are divinely mandated to train up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), which can only be effectively accomplished in the home environment with loving parents. The church's job is to come alongside of the parents to equip and support them. This 6-week pilot program will focus primarily on parents who still have young children at home, including single parents. The research data gathering tools will include surveys, questionnaires, pre/post assessments. When parents implement their new found knowledge at home, their children should be able to live out the Christian life by demonstrating it, proclaiming it, and defending it.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| <i>CBC</i> | <i>Calvary Baptist Church</i> |
| <i>CCA</i> | <i>Covenant Christian Academy</i> |
| <i>DMIN</i> | <i>Doctor of Ministry</i> |
| <i>LUSOD</i> | <i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i> |
| <i>YL</i> | <i>Young Life</i> |
| <i>YFC</i> | <i>Youth for Christ</i> |

Chapter 1

Introduction

In this day-and-age, in which God's Word is constantly under attack and the Christian faith is mocked, what follows is marriage, family, and biblical parenting are undermined and new philosophies motivated by non-Christian experts are being promoted. There was a time in America when every area of life, including marriage, family, parenting, politics, and education, were influenced by Christian ideals and biblical principles. However, what is currently being witnessed in this society is, the deterioration of biblical standards and the increase of anti-God ideologies.¹ Historian Tom Holland, in his book *Dominion: The Making of Western Civilization*, contends that Christian principles were so ingrained into the fabric of the American culture that this society could not be understood without it.² Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, on their book *How Now Shall We Live* also note, that at the birth of this nation, everyone, including the deists and skeptics embraced the basic biblical truths that undergirded American institutions and informed the nation's values.³ However, in recent years, anti-Christian philosophies, such as practical atheism and moral relativism that continue to undermine the Christian faith have dominated this society. For the past few decades America has clearly adopted not only a non-Christian but a distinctly anti-Christian stance and agenda, with the state often interfering on religious freedoms and instituting policies that are blatantly unbiblical.⁴ These ungodly influences are so powerful that they have contaminated every aspect of the culture. To make

¹ John MacArthur, *Nothing But The Truth: Upholding the Gospel in a Doubting Age* (Wheaton: Crossway, 199[last number digit missing]), Kindle, loc. 17.

² Tom Holland, *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (London: Little, Brown, 2019), 517.

³ Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999), Kindle, loc. 702.

⁴ MacArthur, *Nothing But The Truth*, 44.

matters worse, this departure from Christian identity is more noticeable among young Americans.⁵ John MacArthur notes that the church is currently experiencing a spiritual warfare against human ideologies and beliefs that are set up against God, and those can be successfully conquered only with the weapon of the Word of God (see 2 Cor. 10:3-5). True change of both individuals and societies can only occur by faithful preaching of the gospel.⁶

Christians in general, and parents in particular, must be biblically literate and think biblically. According to Romans 12:2, Christians are not to allow themselves to be patterned after the spirit of the age. Instead they must allow the Word of God to structure their minds, so that it can be applied to their hearts and minds by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the only way their thinking, wills, desires, affections, and living can be conformed to the image of Christ, which is the goal of every Christian.⁷ Knowledge of Scripture is absolutely essential, in order to become a mature Christian with a biblical worldview. When an individual, a family, a church, or a society suffers from biblical illiteracy or indifference to the Word of God, the effects will be apparent in the way they live. The apostle Paul indicted the Corinthians for drinking milk, remaining spiritually immature when they should be eating solid food or be mature and seasoned in the Word of God. Their spiritual ignorance is clearly seen in this statement. After being exposed to Scripture for this long, they had no excuse for being spiritually immature (see 1 Corinthians 3).⁸ In the same way, instead of spiritual growth, the church is currently witnessing a drastic spiritual decline that Al Mohler, an American theologian, refers to as a moral shift. He

⁵ Al Mohler, *The Gathering Storm* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2020), Kindle, loc, xiii.

⁶ MacArthur, *Nothing But the Truth*, 70.

⁷ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Romans* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), Kindle, loc. 3105-3139.

⁸ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), Kindle, loc. 1615.

says that there is a major collision, a war of worldviews. The church is faced with one of the most complex and challenging cultural contexts ever, and every day brings a confrontation with cultural messages, controversies, and products. Both adults and children are bombarded with advertisements, entertainments, and the chatter of the culture all around.⁹ As in times past, America has become the type of society where “everyone does what is right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25), where individuals and groups deny moral absolutes, that each man should decide for himself what is right or wrong, and that they should accept and support sinful activities.

This massive revolution to eradicate the Christian faith is evident in secular college campuses, but it starts with indoctrination of children as young as elementary age. Furthermore, this demand for a radical change is bleeding into every dimension of life and demanding total acceptance of its unbiblical claims and support of its ungodly agendas.¹⁰ Ever since his appearance in the garden, Satan has been on the quest to undermine God’s Word and sabotage God’s purposes for His special creation. Therefore, Christians are engaged in a fierce war against ungodly ideologies and philosophies motivated by the enemy himself (see 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Satan in his subtle ways, uses various means to desensitize people of all ages to his evil ways, and this covert campaign begins with young, unsuspecting children. Parents therefore are faced with a seemingly impossible situation. Not only are they dealing with the everyday challenges of child rearing, but they also have to contend with the abundance of ungodly views that attempt to undermine their authority of raising their children in a Christian atmosphere. To make matters worse, progressivist educators, who believe the experts, not parents, know what is best for

⁹ Albert Mohler, *Culture Shift* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2011), Kindle, loc. 96.

¹⁰ Al Mohler, *We Cannot Be Silent* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2015), Kindle, loc. 1, 73.

America's children, continue to develop textbooks, curricula, and school policies that are completely un-Christian.¹¹ Today's public education strongly promotes secular humanism, which is atheistic and teaches evolution across the curriculum. In addition, parents have no control of when and how certain topics, such as human sexuality, are introduced to their children. Furthermore, what they call sex-education also includes same sex relationships, which cause a great deal of confusion to young children and force parents to discuss it with their very young children. In addition, recent developments clearly reveal that public schools will soon be even more hostile to the convictions of many Christian families, proving that this current culture is not only anti-Christian but anti-families as well.¹² These current ungodly philosophies and ideologies with which this society is being bombarded are simply a part of Satan's strategy to destroy the plan of God for families, through which His truth is to be transmitted from one generation to the next.

The devastating effect of a society that has adapted to a pagan culture that has rejected biblical ideals, is then demonstrated as churches become careless about appointing qualified pastors according to biblical guidelines (Titus 1:5-9, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 1 Peter 5:1-4). The downward progression is as follows: These unqualified pastors are incapable of shepherding their congregations by being on guard for themselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. Nor are these pastors able to speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine (Acts 20:28; Titus 2:1), which leads to congregations not being taught the Word of God nor being disciplined to pursue holiness. Lack of qualified shepherds in the church leads to a downward spiral in which the older women in the church are not being Christian role

¹¹ Mohler, *We Cannot Be Silent*, 73

¹² Mohler, *Culture Shift*, 53-56.

models for the younger women, nor are the older men modeling biblical manhood to the younger men (see Titus 2:3-7). Lack of godly examples in the church produces young parents who are ill equipped to bring up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), which inevitably leads to many parents relinquishing that responsibility to the church. Sadly however, the church has failed to sufficiently provide the spiritual nurture these young people require. Since these young people are not armed with the Word of God, they are incapable of destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, nor can they take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). As a result, they naively accept any ideology that is presented to them, which leads to the abandonment of their faith. In addition, parents are being introduced to new ways of parenting by the so called “experts” of this age and are not following biblical guidelines to raise their children in the discipline and nurture of the Lord. Other priorities also keep parents from making the study of the Bible a regular part of their day. In keeping up with the culture, parents are busy with the various activities in which their children are engaged, such as academics, sports, and other activities. Essentially then parents are faced with challenges from both from the church and the culture.¹³

The role of the church should be to disciple parents and to equip and to support them in their endeavors of becoming the primary spiritual shepherds of their children. The church’s main purpose regarding parents must be, to ensure that they clearly understand their key role in shaping godly children.¹⁴ However, studies show that only one out of every five parents of children under 13 years of age has ever been approached by a church leader regarding their involvement in the spiritual life and development of their children. Parents are often expected to

¹³ Voddie Baucham, *Family Driven Faith* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), Kindle, loc. 153.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

do with their children what they are not equipped to do, as they have never been disciplined themselves. Lack of knowledge of what the Bible says regarding parenting and the absence of a model to follow have conspired against family discipleship in most Christian households.¹⁵

The church must then do a better job in its efforts at discipling and equipping parents, particularly fathers, to become the primary providers of biblical truth to their children. Due to ignorance of biblical principles of parenting, many fathers wrongly believe that child rearing and the spiritual development of children is the wife's task. Clearly they need to be taught that fathers are the spiritual leaders of their families and that it is their responsibility to raise up a godly generation by teaching their children biblical truth diligently (Deuteronomy 6:7-9, 20-25). In fact most of the biblical commands regarding parenting are aimed at fathers. Thus, when fathers relinquish that responsibility to their wives or the church, they have failed in their divine mandate.¹⁶

Ultimately, failure of parental involvement in the spiritual development of children is believed by many to be the underlying cause of these devastating trends this thesis project addressed.¹⁷ According to McGary, nine out of ten parents of children under the age of 13 do believe that they have the primary responsibility for teaching their children about religious beliefs and spiritual matters. However, further research reveals that majority of parents do not spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials

¹⁵ Michael McGary, *A Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry* (Nashville: Randall House Publications, 2019), Kindle, loc. 8.

¹⁶ Steven Cole, *The Christian Home: A Refuge of Love* (No Publisher Information, 2019), Kindle, loc. 2589-2592.

¹⁷ McGary, *A Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry*, 7.

with their children.¹⁸ This parental neglect will eventually lead these children to abandon their faith. Several studies also show that not every child who grew up attending church remains in church. In fact, many young people are falling away from the faith and walking away from the church as they grow older. A recent survey conducted by the Barna Group found that less than 1% of the young adult population that they surveyed has a biblical worldview. Even more shocking, the data shows that less than one half of 1% of Christians between the ages of 18 and 23 has a biblical worldview.¹⁹ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins also note that most young people lack a deep understanding of their faith, in that, they embrace beliefs that are Christian on the surface, but upon further investigation, what they believe is actually unbiblical.²⁰ Researchers famously label the religion of today's young Americans as "moralistic therapeutic deism." This philosophy has five core beliefs:

A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth; God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions; The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself; God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem; and good people go to heaven when they die.²¹

Clearly then these studies reveal the devastating predicament that today's young people are facing growing up in this post Christian culture. If this continues, the next generation may be in danger of not knowing who God is and what He has done, as it only takes one generation to lose a godly legacy (see Judges 2:10). MacArthur asserts,

¹⁸ Christian Smith and Melina Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford University Press, 2005) Kindle, 7.

¹⁹ Os Guinness, *Why are So Many Young People Falling Away from the Faith* accessed March 18, 2020 <https://www.gotquestions.org/falling-away.html>

²⁰ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), Kindle, loc. 1735-1740.

²¹ Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 162-63.

The idea that the Christian message should be kept pliable and ambiguous seems especially attractive to young people who are in tune with the culture and in love with the spirit of the age and can't stand to have authoritative biblical truth applied with precision as a corrective to worldly lifestyles, unholy minds, and ungodly behavior. And the poison of this perspective is being increasingly injected into the evangelical church body. But that is not authentic Christianity. Not knowing what you believe (especially on a matter as essential to Christianity as the gospel) is by definition a kind of unbelief.²²

In light of these disturbing trends then, this Doctor of Ministry thesis project problem statement is as follows: Some Christian parents at Calvary Baptist Church and Covenant Christian Academy appear not to be accomplishing their God given task of evangelizing and discipling their children at home. Therefore, the purpose of this Doctor of Ministry thesis project is to train parents at Calvary Baptist Church and Covenant Christian Academy in biblical principles of parenting. The thesis statement argues, if Christian parents at CBC and CCA are taught biblical principles of parenting and are equipped with tools that will enable them to conduct Bible study and family worship in an age-appropriate manner, then their children will grow up understanding the Word of God and have a biblical worldview that will direct their daily decisions. In this regard McGary, based on Jesus' very words on Matthew 28, asserts that evangelism is about making disciples. Therefore, the most effective way to make disciples of children is to make disciples of their parents and to teach them to do what God commands. This includes evangelizing and discipling their children.²³

Ministry Context

Calvary Baptist Church

Calvary Baptist church, located on 1600 Harvey Street, McAllen, Texas began in the summer of 1957. CBS's mission statement: CBC exists to make disciple makers for the glory of

²² John MacArthur, *The Truth War* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), Kindle, loc. 84-91.

²³ McGary, *A Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry*, 88.

God among the nations. As a historically Baptist congregation, Calvary is not a “creedal” church. CBC has chosen not to impose a humanly written statement of faith on its congregation. CBC does not believe that in order to have a genuine relationship with God individuals must agree with every single point of doctrine. According to the 1963 *Baptist Faith and Message*, Baptists are a people who profess a living faith. This faith is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Therefore, the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. A living faith must experience a growing understanding of truth and must be continually interpreted and related to the needs of each new generation. Throughout their history Baptist bodies, both large and small, have issued statements of faith which comprise a consensus of their beliefs. Such statements have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority. With this understanding of the nature of a statement of faith, Calvary Baptist Church has chosen the 1963 *Baptist Faith and Message*.²⁴

To date, five pastors have pastored this church. Aside from the many volunteers and deacons, the church’s leadership includes Julio Guarneri, Lead Pastor, Susan Sosebee, Pastor for Families with Children, Marcus Rodriguez, Pastor for Families with Students, Chad Mason, Pastor for Mobilization & Global Impact., Elizabeth Zamora, Community Ministries Associate, and Julio Varela, Interim Associate.²⁵ CBC is an international church comprised of several nationalities, including Mexicans, Colombians, Ghanaians, Cameroonians, Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, Anglos, Nigerians, Eritreans, and African Americans. Roughly 50% of the

²⁴ Calvary Baptist Church, <http://www.calvarymcallen.org/?i=14603&mid=2>

²⁵ Ibid.

congregation is Hispanic and Latino Americans. The other 50% is comprised of the above mentioned nationalities. CBS has 1597 members. However, 4229 members and nonmembers attend CBC. The following breakdown includes all 4229 attendees. There are 1503 women older than 26, 902 men older than 26, 662 children (0 - 12), 594 youth (13 - 18), and 568 young adults (19 - 25). There are two paid youth workers, a pastor and a ministry assistant. Approximately 115 youth attend youth group on Wednesday. Some of them also attend Sunday school and corporate worship with their parents. Some only show up on Wednesday.²⁶

McAllen is located in the Rio Grande Valley, which is a small area of the southern tip of Texas. The Rio Grande Valley is made up of 4 counties, Wilacy, Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr. The largest city is Brownsville at close to 190,000 persons living there. McAllen is next with 140,000. The next three are Harlingen, Edinburg, and Mission. There are only about 68,000 born again Christians in the Rio Grande Valley. Therefore, Calvary partners with several other Baptist churches to bring the gospel to the residents in this area. Missions is a crucial component of the church. In observance of Matthew 28:19, both the leadership and congregation believe that they were created to enjoy God's grace in a relationship with Him, so that they may extend His glory locally, regionally, and globally. Calvary has ongoing partnerships with missionaries that are making disciples all over the world, as well as partners serving closer to home. Each year a significant number the Calvary family participates in mission trips and serves their community.²⁷

CBC is engaged in several ministries, not only to preach the Word but also to meet people's physical needs. Such ministry efforts include the Bread of Life Market, which provides food assistance to approximately 170 families every second Saturday of each month. Another

²⁶ Information received from Alma Escobar, Calvary Baptist Church's former Office Assistant, March 21, 2020, alma@calvarymcallen.org

²⁷ Ibid.

ministry, Starfish, is dedicated to help foster families with physical resources to house their foster children. In addition, the Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association has long been a part of Calvary's local partnerships. The RGVBA helps 132 RGV Baptist Churches network in the areas of missions, Church Planting, and Pastoral Development.²⁸

Globally, Calvary Missions, in partnership with different pastors and ministries abroad, provides both pastoral training and finances to aid in improving people's lives in those countries. For example, Calvary and a number of RGV organizations have started a sustainable water project among the Massai people of Kenya's Rift Valley. This project brings water to 50,000 people and over 1 million livestock animals. In addition, through the CARPO International Ministry, Calvary supports pastors working among the Muslims in the northern part of Nigeria. Calvary also sends missionaries to train and mobilize over 100 Pastors in the Visayas region of the Philippines. CBS's mission statement: CBC exists to make disciple makers for the glory of God among the nations.²⁹

The Children's ministry at Calvary exists to serve alongside families in the spiritual development of their children. The idea is to nurture future Christ followers. This program is designed to serve children from birth through sixth grade.³⁰ Student Bible fellowship meets twice on Sunday morning and on Wednesday evenings. Students meet in a multipurpose room for food, fellowship, and Bible study according to school grade. CBC young adults meet twice on Sunday mornings in the student center for food, fellowship, and Bible study. They also have

²⁸ "Calvary Baptist Church," accessed March 21, 2020
<http://www.calvarymcallen.org/?i=14603&mid=1000&id=511104>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

home group Bible fellowship once a month.³¹ There are various adult ministry at Calvary. Every adult is encouraged to build Christ-centered community with others through Adult Bible Fellowships. These groups are a key venue to get to know others and to be known as well. The idea of these groups is to encourage people to celebrate together, grieve together, and sharpen each other through transformational Bible study. These groups meet weekly each Sunday morning, at three different times and locations around campus. Calvary also offers small group home Bible studies Monday through Saturday.³²

There are three different services on Sunday morning, including the traditional, contemporary, and Spanish language worship corporate worship services. The music in the traditional worship consists of a choir, and a band that plays keyboards, orchestral instruments, drums, bass and acoustic guitars and any other capable instrumentalists that God brings us. Some players in this band depend on sheet music while others play by chord charts and lead sheets. The band for the “Contemporary” worship services is made up of acoustic guitar, lead electric guitar, bass, drums, keyboards, vocalists and any other instrumentalists who can enhance contemporary worship and play by ear using chord charts.³³

Covenant Christian Academy

Covenant Christian Academy located on 4201 North Ware Road, McAllen, Texas, is a private nondenominational Christian school. The founders of Covenant Christian Academy, Dr. and Mrs. Pedro Alonso, embarked on their vision of a private Christian school in McAllen, Texas in 1995. Along with other parents seeking the same vision of a Christian education for their children, they raised funds, rented an admissions office, set up a temporary campus, ordered

³¹ “Calvary Baptist Church.”

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

navy and red plaid uniforms and began planning for a permanent campus. The goal was to open with 100 students grades K-3 through 6th in the fall of 1995. They exceeded that number by enrolling 106 students their charter year! The campus was constructed on land purchased by donated funds and through fundraising efforts. In the early years, the campus consisted of modular classrooms and an open-air pavilion. Covenant grew quickly. By CCA's second year, seventh grade was added. By the third year, with the addition of eighth grade, CCA had outgrown its campus. Fourth through eighth grade students were temporarily housed at Calvary Baptist Church for the next two years. After those two years, students no longer attended the Calvary Baptist facility and all students were housed at the Ware Road campus. CCA was blessed with a donation of land in 1997. Originally it was intended to build a permanent campus there but was later sold and the money used to purchase land closer to the Ware Road campus and to help in building a gymnasium. The gym was completed in 2008, and it includes a cafeteria, stage, office, science lab, computer lab, and seven classrooms. It was dedicated and named in honor of our beloved principal, Cheri Sarver, who was killed in an automobile accident in the summer of 2007. In 2004, a mobile home was donated to CCA and was converted into three large classrooms which helped in accommodating our growing population of students. The year 2014 reflected a request from parents to add a 2-year-old program. That year 23 students enrolled in the first class of that age group.³⁴

Covenant Christian Academy is non-denominational in its enrollment policies, ministering to all families regardless of race or denominational affiliation. Covenant's purpose is to provide an education of academic excellence from a distinctly Christian perspective. Starting

³⁴ Information received from Milton Louis Gonzalez, Covenant Christian Academy Principal, <https://ccamcallen.com/about-2/>

with the belief that God is the source of all truth and knowledge, education becomes the exciting task of learning the truths of God's creation, appropriating those truths in the building of character, and implementing this knowledge in the activities of daily life.³⁵ Covenant Christian Academy believes the admonition to "train up a child in the way he should go..." (Proverbs 22:6). The leaders of Covenant Christian Academy believe that Christianity is the governing factor in all subjects, for only in Christ can a person realize the meaning of life and his place in God's creation. It is their express purpose to teach every subject from a Biblical perspective so that every student might live a life glorifying to God and be able to confront confidently and with clarity the problems and challenges that they will surely face.³⁶ Covenant maintains this fundamental philosophy and beliefs today. CCA's vision statement is, "Using biblical principles to produce excellence in every area of life." Many parents enroll their children at CCA because it is a Christian school, however, some are not members of a local church at all. In fact, many expect the school to be the primary spiritual trainer of their children. Therefore, CCA's mission is to partner with parents to equip their children to become men and women of character, who excel academically, morally, and spiritually in every area of life and society.³⁷

In keeping with both CBC's and CCA's missions, the training that will take place, "Biblical Principles of Parenting," is consistent with making disciples to make disciples. It carries the idea of multiplication as mandated by Christ Himself on Matthew 28:19. For parents, the mission field is the home, however the church has a big role to play in equipping parents to succeed at being the primary disciplers of their children. To say that either the church or the

³⁵ "Covenant Christian Academy," accessed February 10, 2021 <https://ccamcallen.com/about-2/>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

parents are responsible to evangelize the emerging generations is neither helpful nor wise. Instead, churches who are committed to families must consistently and clearly call parents to disciple their children while providing the resources and supports necessary to equip the parents to fulfill their God given duty. Therefore, instead of assigning the responsibility to each other, the church and the home must work in harmony.³⁸

Problem Presented

The problem this Doctor of Ministry thesis project will address is that some Christian parents at Calvary Baptist Church and Covenant Christian Academy appear to not be accomplishing their God given task of evangelizing and discipling their children at home. Many young adults, in these institutions, who grew up in Christian homes and who attended both Sunday school and youth group, are abandoning the Christian faith post high school. This is a problem that is evident in many churches across the United States.³⁹ Even during their teen years, some have completely stopped attending corporate worship on Sundays and only come to youth group during midweek youth group sessions. In an attempt to retain these young people, CBC and many churches across America spend a large amount of money building state-of-the-art youth centers that are detached from the main building, which include cafés, basketball courts, recreation rooms, etc. In addition, they hire youth pastors, who provide “age-appropriate” Bible lessons, to these young people, both midweek and on Sundays, which means these young people do not attend Sunday services with the adults. Alvin Reid, author of *Raising the Bar*, while attending youth pastors’ conferences observed that youth ministers are told to keep their

³⁸ McGarry, *A Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry*, 14.

³⁹ Barna Research, accessed February 10, 2021, <https://www.barna.com/research/resilient-disciples/>

messages short since today's youth are not able to focus for more than 17 minutes.⁴⁰ Much emphasis is put on music and entertainment but not much on Bible teaching, which produces young people who are biblically illiterate. It is not possible to make a lasting impact on these young people if all the spiritual education they are receiving consists of short devotionals in a segregated environment, separated from adult role models. Reid adds, "The church today has not taken seriously the need to equip students theologically. This failure has led to under-challenged and under-trained youth."⁴¹ The problem is so serious and deep that these temporary fixes attempting to retain the youth by the church are not helping the situation at all. The epidemic that is currently infecting these churches is just a symptom of a bigger issue and it will take more than just temporary fixes to remedy the problem.

Ken Ham, founder of *Answers in Genesis*, and statistician and market researcher Britt Beemer, who co-authored a book entitled *Already Gone*, argue that this placebo effect, becoming culturally relevant, may appear helpful for a while however it is nothing but a Band-Aid for a much deeper wound.⁴² Simply making the services more attractive to the younger generation, may give the appearance of success temporarily, but it's doing nothing to solve the core issue of the epidemic. All it does is sacrifice eternal truth for short-term attractiveness, and it turns a church into an organization that is driven by the felt needs of its young consumers.⁴³ Paul Washer, a Christian missionary, author, and conference speaker, who focuses on the family and biblical manhood and womanhood, says that regardless of the denomination, many churches are

⁴⁰ Alvin Reid, *Raising the Bar* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), Kindle, loc. 503.

⁴¹ Reid, *Raising the Bar*, 508.

⁴² Ken Ham, Britt Beemer, and Todd Hillard, *Already Gone* (Forest: Master Books, 2009), Kindle, loc. 109.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 109.

spending millions of dollars on Sunday school material, on conferences, on teaching teachers how to teach children and youth, and on doing everything in the book to promote age segregated classes. However, not much money or manpower is invested on equipping parents, particularly fathers, how to provide spiritual training to their children.⁴⁴ Scott T. Brown, author, pastor, and family expert, adds, “Most churches are spending substantial sums of money on Christian youth activities, but the majority of our young people seem to be abandoning early professions of faith and assimilating into the culture of the unbelievers. Despite millions of dollars, dedicated staff, and decades of work invested in reaching youth through age-segregated ministries, the youth of the professing church look, act, and think like the world and know very little Scripture but can talk and gesture like popular entertainers.”⁴⁵

Philip Le Clerc, a Christian film maker, went across the country conducting research on youth ministry for his documentary, *Divided*. He was on a quest to find out why young people are leaving the church. In his research, he interviewed Sunday school/youth teachers, pastors, youth experts, researchers, statisticians, social commentators, and young people. He began his documentary by interviewing former youth ministry members about their thoughts regarding youth ministry. To his dismay he discovered that many young people who grew up attending youth group, consider the Bible archaic and irrelevant. Some believe that it is possible that God could have directed evolution to advance society. Yet others believe that it does not matter whether the Bible is figurative or literal, but what matters is that Jesus died on the cross for

⁴⁴ Paul Washer, *Ten Indictments Against the Modern Church* (Pensacola: Chapel Library, 2008), Kindle, loc. 683-686.

⁴⁵ Scott T. Brown, *A Weed in the Church* (Merchant Adventures, 2010), Kindle, loc. 307-310.

them.⁴⁶ During the interview it was abundantly clear that none of those who were interviewed were able to articulate their faith clearly.

If young people are not receiving sound doctrine that addresses the heart, the superficial and shallow presentation of what many churches call “Bible lessons,” is unhelpful to transform the hearts of these young people. These presentations are shallow because they avoid the hard truth such as, God’s holiness and wrath, man’s sin, the need for repentance, and holy living. A study of different Christian denominations was conducted by the National Study of Youth and Religion, which included in-depth interviews with at least 3,300 American teenagers between ages 13 and 17. The study reveals that most American teens who called themselves Christian were indifferent and inarticulate about their faith. The study also found that three out of four American teenagers claim to be Christian, however, fewer than half practice their faith and only half consider it important, and most are unable to coherently talk about their beliefs, the study found.⁴⁷

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry thesis project is to train parents at Calvary Baptist Church and Covenant Christian Academy in biblical principles of parenting. Biblically parents have the primary responsibility of “Bringing up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” (Ephesians 6:4).⁴⁸ This type of training is only possible in the home environment, with loving parents, who will provide both formal and informal biblical training, and model those

⁴⁶ Philip LeClrec, “Divided,” September 11, 2012, YouTube Video, 6:56, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J18BP4Abtpl>.

⁴⁷ Mark Holmen, *Impress Faith on Your Kids* (Nashville: Randall House, 2011), Kindle, loc. 549-553.

⁴⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the *New American Standard Version*.

principles. Parents must also hold children accountable and discipline them when they fail to abide by those instructions. Such training cannot be sufficiently accomplished in other settings such as youth group sessions or Sunday school, as the youth pastors or Sunday school teachers do not have the liberty to apply proper discipline when the children or youth misbehave.

According to MacArthur, “Discipline has to do with the overall training of children, including punishment. *Paideia* (discipline) comes from the word *pais* (child) and refers to the systematic training of children. It includes the idea of correction for wrongdoing, as seen in the well-known proverb, ‘He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently,’ (Proverbs 13:24).”⁴⁹ Voddie Baucham believes that Christian parents are looking for answers in all the wrong places. Their children are not falling away because the church is doing a poor job, although that is undoubtedly a factor, but because they are asking the church to do what God designed the family to accomplish, which is to provide instruction, modeling, and discipline.⁵⁰ Baucham also believes that the home is where discipleship and multi-generational faithfulness begin and end. The church is to play a supporting role as it “equips the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12).⁵¹

Basic Assumptions

This project accepts, as its premise, the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. Therefore, according to the Bible, parents have the primary responsibility of training up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Proverbs 22:6 asserts that a person’s moral and spiritual character is developed at an early age. In addition, the Bible contains all the

⁴⁹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), Kindle, loc. 320.

⁵⁰ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 9.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 9.

instructions and guidelines necessary for parents to be successful at raising godly offspring and leaving a legacy of faith (see Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:1-9; Psalms 127:3-5; Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:6; 23:13; 29:17; Ephesians 6:4). The type of training the Bible requires of parents cannot be effectively accomplished in any other setting but the home. Both the church and Christian schools can only provide supplemental training to add to the foundation that is already laid by the parents. Unless parents step up and claim this divine mandate, many young people will continue to drift away from the church and from the faith.

Definitions

Biblical literacy refers to studying the Bible, understanding its meaning and how it all fits together. It also has to do with believing what it says and obeying it, and being able to explain its contents to others. It means to read the Bible with sufficient understanding so that they can explain its basic meaning, having sufficient knowledge and skill to use resources that enable them to discern the basic meaning of a biblical text. It includes the ability to apply this discerned meaning to daily life. Biblical literacy only attains its full potential when scriptural truth is applied in daily life.⁵² Jerry Bridges says that godliness is a proper response to the things of God, which produces obedience and righteous living.⁵³ Jesus for example was the embodiment of pure godliness, which led Him to lay down His life for unworthy sinners (John 10:18) because He was completely committed to the glory of the Father, and He always did what pleased Him (John 8:29). Therefore, a true Christian, who is on a journey toward Christlikeness, will strive to live his life entirely for the glory of God.

⁵² Larry Perkins, "What is Biblical Theology and Why is it Important," accessed March 29, 2020 <http://biblicalliteracy.nbseminary.ca/what-is-biblical-literacy-and-why-is-it-important/>

⁵³ Jerry Bridges, "What is the Mystery of Godliness." Accessed March 2020. <https://www.gotquestions.org/mystery-of-godliness.html>.

Desensitization, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, means to cause someone or something to react less to or be less affected by something; to cause someone or something to be less sensitive.⁵⁴ When it comes to culture, desensitization is the constant exposure to sinful words, objects, and ways of life that it fails to produce any aversion and becomes the norm. When children or even adults are constantly being bombarded with ungodly things that are accepted by the culture through the internet, television, and social media, they slowly but surely become a part of the things that are accepted by Christians as well.⁵⁵ A Worldview is a conceptual scheme by which individuals consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which they interpret and judge reality.⁵⁶

Limitations

A timely limitation that caused some complications for this research was the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent social distancing mandate. Due to this safety protocol, this training had to be conducted through a virtual learning platform.⁵⁷ The result of this limitation was that the sample size was very small, as many of the parents had various challenges that prevented from being able to participate in this research. Additionally, those who were willing to participate were not always able to join the live sessions consistently as they had their young children to tend to at home. Some also did not have the proper tools such as computers and Wi-Fi, and/or were not computer literate enough to be able to utilize online resources. Despite the

⁵⁴ Cambridge Dictionary, “Desensitization,” accessed February 21, 2021
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/desensitization>

⁵⁵ Mohler, *The Gathering Storm*, 20.

⁵⁶ Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), Kindle, loc. 16.

⁵⁷ Coronavirus Disease 2019-(COVID-19) accessed June
<https://www.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/case-definition/2020/>

small quantity of participants however, the available data to measure the success of the parent training program was sufficient.

Another limitation in light of the current situation was that the researcher was not able to conduct the interview questions or explain the study in person. The survey questions and questionnaires had to be emailed to the congregation, and the majority chose to ignore it. Therefore, the inability to personally make the announcement regarding this study presented many challenges for this researcher.

Another limitation was that these parents have never been confronted or challenged regarding their parenting styles. Many are satisfied with the way things are and were not receptive to enrolling in this training program, which would imply that some changes in how they parent would need to take place.

Another significant complication was that there are many Spanish speaking parents who were interested in the training, however due to the language barrier they chose not to enroll. These are but a few of the challenges that have presented some complication to this research.

Delimitations

This six week program focused primarily on parents who still have young children at home. Specifically, this training was designed to train Christian parents to evangelize and disciple their young children based on Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Proverbs 6:22, and Ephesians 6:4. This study was limited to parents who have children ten years of age and younger at home. There are many parents who have teenage children at Calvary and CCA, however this training had to be geared toward parents with younger children in order to provide focused training for maximum growth and success. It was also predicted that parents with younger children would attend such training more consistently as their children are not yet engaged in too many

extracurricular activities. Such training is biblically supported by passages such as Proverbs 22:6, which states, “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” This verse is axiomatic, in that making sure children who develop good habits at a young age do tend to stay on the right path. At times however, despite the parents’ best effort, children will choose to reject the Word of God. Younger parents are typically more receptive to such training than older parents who are more set in their ways.

As much as possible, it would be ideal to select young parents who are new to the faith, as they will not have any preconceived ideas that will distract them from embracing these biblical principles. These training sessions will then focus both on the essentials of the Christian faith to benefit the new believers. Once these godly character-building sessions were taught, then the “why” and the “how” of biblical principles of parenting were easier to grasp. Due to the COVID19 social distancing mandate, training had to be conducted via a live remote learning avenue, namely Zoom. Additionally, for those parents who were unable to attend the live sessions, recorded video and PDF PowerPoint were offered to help the participants keep up with the sessions. Various online tools, e-books, videos, and other resources were also recommended.

Thesis Statement

If Christian parents at Calvary Baptist Church and Covenant Christian Academy are taught biblical principles of parenting, then those children should be able to live out the Christian life by demonstrating it, proclaiming it, and defending it. Many parents are not conducting family Bible study at home for various reasons. Some say that they never knew that it was the responsibility of parents. Some admit that they simply cannot find the time to do it. Therefore, the consequence of such monumental neglect produces young people who lack knowledge about

their faith and the lifestyle that Christianity demands.⁵⁸ These young people are living in a postmodern culture, in which everything is relative, there are ultimately no moral absolutes, no authority to decide if any action is right or wrong, and tolerance has become the noblest virtue. As such, everyone pretty much does what is right in his own eyes. In this atmosphere, these young people are encouraged to accept different religions and unbiblical worldviews without question. Because they are not receiving answers at home or at church, when faced with tough issues, they are looking for answers in all the wrong places. Therefore, since they are not being equipped with a biblical worldview that enables them to discern error and false teaching, they are “tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine,” (Ephesians 4:14) as soon as they leave home.⁵⁹ Hence the predicament the church is currently facing.

⁵⁸ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 9-13.

⁵⁹ John MacArthur, “*Tolerance is the Noblest Virtue.*” accessed February 23, 2020 <https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B180221/tolerance-is-the-noblest-virtue#!>

Chapter 2

Literature Review

From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures reveal God's character and attributes, which are unchanging. The decrees that He established with Adam and Eve are timeless and relevant for any age. His laws are fixed and His standards are rock solid. The Bible also repeatedly demonstrates that God's plan, when obeyed, brings blessing. Therefore, everything that is documented in the pages of Scripture is for humanity's good and for God's glory.

Sufficiency of Scripture

The family was God's idea. He created parents to pass down the legacy of faith from one generation to the next. According to the Bible, parents have the primary responsibility of evangelizing and discipling their children and they have been called to be the authority in their children's lives. Therefore, they are to act on God's behalf and not theirs. They do not exercise rule over their jurisdiction, but over God's. They discharge a duty that He has given and may not try to shape the lives of their children as pleases them, but as pleases Him.⁶⁰ Baucham clarifies God's purpose for families by noting,

The key to understanding the role of the family in discipling children is understanding the purpose of the Fifth Commandment. This commandment was not given for the sake of the individual child as much as it was given for the sake of the community. The Fifth Commandment was the foundation upon which the concept of multigenerational faithfulness is built. God designed the family to disciple children and insure the faithfulness and perpetuation of the community of faith throughout the ages. In other words, God says to us (through the Fifth Commandment), "If you want to continue to exist as the people of God in the midst of the pagan land that I am about to give you, you will have to do so by training and discipling your children."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ted Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Walpwallopen: Shepherd Press, 2005), Kindle, loc. 505.

⁶¹ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 120.

Recognizing the sufficiency and authority of Scripture, Josh Niemi points out that the first detail 2 Timothy 3:16-17 provides is that all Scripture is inspired by God. It is so significant that Paul highlighted this from the outset because it is the source of Scripture that lends itself to the authority of Scripture, and the authority of Scripture must be the first thing that Christian parents must affirm.⁶² Paul Renfro and his associates also note that Scripture is relevant as it speaks to all people about all issues, and God has called the whole church to be involved in calling members to embrace the whole counsel of God.⁶³ Since parenting is God's mandate for His creation, He has supplied them with ample tools to ensure the successful completion of this divine task. As Baucham indicates, the Bible is the home training manual for every aspect of the human life, as in it God has provided everything necessary for life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3), including sufficient instruction for parents to train their children.⁶⁴ In agreement, Niemi finds that submitting to Scripture will immediately prepare a person for life. He is not suggesting that long-term study is unnecessary, or that a surface-level reading instantly makes for a mature believer, however, when a biblical principle is properly and thoroughly understood, there is no further spiritual enlightenment or advancement required. Christians can rest assured that if God has planned good works for His church to perform in this lifetime (which He has), then the church would not have to come to the end before possessing the spiritual ability to perform it.⁶⁵ Regarding God's pattern for parenting, Jonathan Williams argues that Christian homes are to be homes founded upon the Word of God and Christian families are to be

⁶² Josh Niemi, *Expository Parenting* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace Publishers, 2017), Kindle, loc.18.

⁶³ Paul Renfro, "Family Integrated Ministry," in *Perspectives on Family Ministry* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), Kindle, loc.72.

⁶⁴ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 98.

⁶⁵ Niemi, *Expository Preaching*, 30.

families that grow daily. He maintains that their mornings, afternoons, and evenings are to be spent teaching the Gospel, living the Gospel, modeling the Gospel, and proclaiming the Gospel.⁶⁶ MacArthur recognizes the difficult task of parenting, that it is a serious and challenging responsibility that requires a great deal of time and personal sacrifice. Young children require constant attention and care, but even as they grow older and more independent, they still need parental oversight and involvement in their education and activities.⁶⁷ Baucham recognizes the critical role the book of Deuteronomy plays, as both Jesus and the apostles quoted from it often. He also notes that in Ephesians 6, Paul is referring to Deuteronomy 5 as he instructs Christian parents on raising children, which proves that the Bible does give specific instructions to parents.⁶⁸ Baucham adds that at least three distinct phases of preparation for parenting can be extrapolated from this passage of Scripture: discipline, catechism, and discipleship phases.⁶⁹

Shedding light on biblical parenting, MacArthur notes that there are certainly other common-sense parenting principles that parents might find useful for training up their children, however, this one instruction found on Ephesians 6:4, provides a master guideline for everything that parents do. Every aspect of the children's development is affected by how carefully and faithfully parents apply Ephesians 6:4 to their lives.⁷⁰ In explaining Deuteronomy 6:7-9, Steven Cole says, to teach "diligently" in Hebrew means literally to sharpen or whet. Therefore, the teaching should penetrate the child deeply so that it has an effect on him. Parents must come at it

⁶⁶ Jonathan Williams, *Gospel Family: Cultivating Family Discipleship, Family Worship, & Family Mission* (Houston: Lucid Books, 2015), Kindle, 14-15.

⁶⁷ John MacArthur, *Brave Dad* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2014), Kindle, loc. 26.

⁶⁸ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 110.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁷⁰ MacArthur, *Brave Dad*, 26.

from every angle and in every situation, because the idea is to make God’s commandments central to every area of life so that they are thinking about them all the time. This is an outflow of the parents’ own walk with God. If God’s Word is on their hearts continually, then they will be talking about it constantly with their kids, applying it to real life situations.⁷¹ In His attempt to ensure that parents truly grasp this biblical mandate of Deuteronomy 6, Cole contends that everything a Christian parent thinks and does, from the home to the business world, should be permeated with God’s Word. Parents need to teach their children how the Word of God applies to every area of their lives as they live in a godly manner before their children.⁷²

History of Youth Ministry

Before addressing the flaws and short comings of youth ministry, we must first understand its origin. In the 1940s, Jim Rayburn began a ministry to reach teens at the local high school, which became Young Life (YL). The mission of young life to this day is to evangelize and disciple teens. The idea was for some caring adults to befriend these teens, so they are more willing to listen as the gospel is preached to them.⁷³ At the same time, Youth for Christ (YFC) was born when Jack Wyrzten held evangelical protestant rallies for teenagers. These rallies were held in Canada, England, and the United States. Youth for Christ also quickly organized a national movement that turned to Bible clubs in the late 50s and 60s, shifting the focus from rallies that emphasized proclamation evangelism to relevant, relational evangelism to unchurched youth.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Cole, *The Christian Home*, 2576-2584.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 2606.

⁷³ Dave Wright, “A Brief History of Youth Ministry,” *The Gospel Coalition*, April 2, 2012, accessed February 23, 2021 <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/a-brief-history-of-youth-ministry/>

⁷⁴ “The Story of Youth for Christ,” accessed February 24, 2021 <https://yfc.org/about/>

Overtime, churches began to consider these specialized ministries for teens a necessary part of their evangelism plan. Therefore, by the early 70s, they began hiring youth pastors, who were former staff members from YL and YFC. The new relational strategy of the parachurch movement was then imported into the church. At this time also, youth pastors who were attempting to reach large numbers of youth for the gospel, began to implement a more attractional model in which gatherings with food and live music were employed to draw a massive crowd. It was then discovered that when churches use more attraction-oriented programs, there was a larger youth group and the larger the youth group then the bigger the congregation.⁷⁵ Dave Wright adds,

By the 80s the emergence of MTV and a media-driven generation meant church youth ministry became more entertainment-driven than ever. Youth pastors felt the need to feature live bands, video production, and elaborate sound and lighting in order to reach this audience. No longer could a pile of burgers or pizzas draw a crowd. By the end of the decade the youth group meeting was being creatively inspired by MTV and game shows on Nickelodeon. The message had been simplified and shortened to fit the entertainment-saturated youth culture. By the start of the 21st century, we discovered many youths were no longer interested in the show that we put on or the oversimplified message. Christianity was no different from the world around them. Some youth ministries intensified their effort combining massive hype with strong messages that inspired youth but did not translate to everyday life. We realized we were faced with a generation whose faith was unsustainable.⁷⁶

The result was that churches began to conduct age-segregated youth ministry by separating the youth from the rest of the congregation. The youth in many churches no longer engaged with the adults in the congregation as they were relegated to the youth room. Therefore, after they graduated from high school, they had no place to go but to the adult church, which was not acceptable to them because they simply could not fit in.⁷⁷ The church then developed another

⁷⁵ Wright, "A Brief History."

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

category for post high school students and labeled it “student ministry,” which most of the time includes college and careers. So instead of these young adults joining the adult worship service, the church had to create yet another subculture to accommodate them.⁷⁸

Failure of Youth Ministry

Failure of youth ministries have been recognized not only by those who oppose them but also by those who are attempting to reform them. Whether they are trying to retain or abolish youth ministry, it is clear to everyone that something is drastically wrong with the current system. Mark Yaconelli, a leader in the youth ministry movement who is trying to reform it, asserts, “The curtain must be pulled back if we are to keep young people involved in the church and if we are to renew our congregations, we first must acknowledge that many of our current forms of youth ministry are destructive.”⁷⁹ So the current approaches are not only ineffective but are also harmful. Rodger Dudley, another youth ministry reformer, adds,

Our current focus of social philosophy since Plato’s republic has been the threat posed by the possibility that the young might not adopt to the essential wisdom and values of that society. If a society is to continue its existence beyond one generation, the members must transmit what they consider to be necessary knowledge and values. The continuity of a social system by definition requires transmission between generations. Applying this to institutional religion, churches, and other religious communities must be vitally concerned with retaining the children from member families--in other words, preventing youth dropout is a major consideration for any religious group that desires a future.⁸⁰

When individuals and churches deviate from the Word of God, chaos ensues and heresy and error become the norm. Ted Tripp, perceiving the devastating results of such departure, says

⁷⁸ Voddie Baucham, “Youth Ministry,” accessed February 24, 2021
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jx_JWN8NUVU&pbjreload=101

⁷⁹ Mark Yaconelli, “Youth Ministry a Contemplative Approach,” accessed February 25, 2021
<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2011-12/youth-ministry-contemplative-approach>

⁸⁰ Roger L. Dudley, “Indicators of Commitment to the Church: A Longitudinal Study of Church-Affiliated Youth,” *Adolescence*, 28, No. 109, 1993; <http://www.questia.com/>.

that it is due to the church's attempt to integrate biblical and nonbiblical thought forms to answer the questions of parenting and such synthesis can only produce bitter fruit.⁸¹ The manifestation of such bitter fruit is the mass exodus of young people from the church post high school. Evidently then, failure to abide by God's pattern of parenting, evangelism, and discipleship has caused a great deal of damage to the family unit and the church as a whole. Instead of equipping parents to be responsible for the spiritual development of their children, the church has gladly accepted that responsibility, which was the birth of youth ministry. Timothy Paul Jones admits that the unspoken message has been that the task of discipleship is best left to trained professionals. As schoolteachers are perceived as the persons responsible to grow the children's minds and coaches are employed to train children's bodies, specialized ministers at church ought to develop their souls. Designating specialized coaches and school teachers may not present a problem to a child, however, when it comes to Christian formation, this unbiblical approach is highly problematic. God specifically calls not only the community of faith but also the parents to engage personally in the Christian formation of children.⁸²

Any time the Word of God is modified, it affects how the church functions. Because of this deviation, the church claimed the parental role to evangelize and disciple children and allowed husbands and fathers to go free. The church also allowed the abundance of programs to fragment families instead of unifying them. This is clearly a result of leaning toward human pragmatism as opposed to a robust dependence on the sufficiency and authority of Scripture.⁸³

⁸¹ Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, 245.

⁸² Timothy P. Jones, *Family Ministry Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), Kindle, 83-84.

⁸³ Renfro, "Family Integrated Ministry," 2-4.

Adapting to these market driven man-centered methodologies of youth ministries, has produced young people who are biblically illiterate and unable to articulate their faith. These are the young people who end up abandoning the Christian faith. In regard to the current youth ministry model, Kinnaman and Hawkins argue that the church has a mass-production approach to faith development. Taking their cues from public education, among other sectors of society, pastors and youth ministers have created a conveyor belt of development that industrializes the soul formation of young people, who eventually become adults with inch-deep, mile-wide faith, thus producing adults who were not transformed by their faith as children, as teens, or as young adults. They cannot possibly be expected to be strong and faithful Christians after they turn forty.⁸⁴ Renfro explains the origin of this messy situation,

In the past couple of centuries, church programs have usurped a responsibility that Scripture and church history place first and foremost at the feet of parents. In the decades following the Second World War, Young Life, Youth for Christ, and similar ministries relied increasingly on professional youth workers to attract high-school students. By the 1960s and 1970s, local churches were imitating these parachurch ministries, hiring professional youth ministers whose primary purpose was to engage adolescents. By the end of the twentieth century, these patterns of ministry had become so widespread that they had reshaped not only youth ministry but also ministries to children and preschoolers. Therefore, ever-increasing percentages of parents released responsibility for their children's spiritual formation to professional ministers.⁸⁵

Karla Powel and Chap Clark note that the harsh reality parents and churches are waking up to is that more young people are continuing to abandon the Christian faith than previously predicted. The board of the National Association of Evangelicals, an umbrella group representing sixty denominations and dozens of ministries, has passed a resolution deploring “the epidemic of young people leaving the evangelical church.”⁸⁶ According to Powel and Clark, 40 to 50% of kids

⁸⁴ Kinnaman, Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, loc. 1868-1871.

⁸⁵ Renfro, “Family Integrated Ministry,” 21-35.

⁸⁶ Karla E. Powel and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), Kindle, loc. 15.

who graduate from a church or youth group fail to stick with their faith in college. Another alarming statistic reveals that, only 20% of college students who leave the faith planned to do so during high school. The remaining 80% intended to stick with their faith but did not.⁸⁷

Since the issue of youth exodus has become a great concern for the church, it has attempted to create some quick fixes as crisis intervention. Scott Brown indicates that there exists a hunger for relevancy and attractiveness in the church, which has driven youth ministry into various forms of hipster idolatry. This need for relevancy has made youth ministry look more like a rock concert, coffee bar, or club rather than the holy people of God. This makeover has twisted the church into a mangled caricature of her real nature as a bride, family, body, pillar, and building.⁸⁸ As Renfro notes, although churches are offering more youth camps, conferences, Christian music, sophisticated technology, books, and trained leaders than ever before, a significant number of children fail to make the transition from youth ministry to mature, Christian adulthood. This only proves that adding more church programs, or reading more books that are occupying Christian bookstores, cannot solve this problem.⁸⁹

Brown experienced a paradigm shift as he finally saw the flaws of modern youth ministry. He realized that he was blind to the clear patterns of youth discipleship revealed in Scripture, until he began to observe the church's constant practice of separating families into different sub-groups, which was tearing the fabric of the family and the church. It eventually dawned on him that the church was losing the youth. Despite their involvement in youth groups, they were worldly, immature, and dishonoring to their parents and other authorities in their lives.

⁸⁷ Powel and Clark, *Sticky Faith*, 16.

⁸⁸ Scott T. Brown, *A Weed in the Church* (Merchant Adventures, 1010), Kindle, loc. 179.

⁸⁹ Renfro, "Family Integrated Ministry," 2.

He says that it was the pain in families and the worldliness of the youth that initially got his attention.⁹⁰ Brown progressively realized that modern youth ministry had largely developed from traditions, cultural preferences, statistical surveys, and the opinions of creative leaders, rather than biblical principles. He was humbled to learn that God's vision for training young people is powerful, profound, and comprehensive, standing in sharp contrast to the man-centered, culture-bound model he once advocated.⁹¹

Baucham, who is not a fan of youth ministry, recognizes that despite the abundance of books and innovative approaches, these recent attempts to reform youth ministry do not appear to be working. He believes that the paradigm itself is broken as the church has established systems designed to meet the wrong needs and is attacking the wrong problems.⁹² Addressing the current misconceptions regarding youth ministry, Baucham argues that it is not the job of the youth pastor to evangelize, disciple, equip, or to send out his child to engage the world, it is the parents' job.⁹³ As McGary notes, although the majority of well-respected textbooks used in classrooms to prepare the next generation of youth workers in college or seminary settings have an emphasis on the importance of partnering with parents, it is rarely integrated into the DNA and framework of the youth ministry's programs and teachings because it is so difficult to accomplish. God never gave youth workers the responsibility for making disciples of other people's kids.⁹⁴ Reid concurs by stating, "The failure of parenting, and of marriages for that

⁹⁰ Brown, *A Weed in the Church*, 99.

⁹¹ Ibid. 113-119.

⁹² Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 177.

⁹³ Ibid., 179.

⁹⁴ McGary, *A Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry*, 12-13.

matter, has had a serious, negative impact on millions of youth. But if many of the problems facing youth begin with parents, the solution can begin there as well. And many children want their parents to make that change.”⁹⁵ For Joel Beeke, an advocate of family worship, the lack of regular family worship in the home is what is driving adolescents to become nominal members of the church, with mere notional faith or abandon evangelical truth for unbiblical doctrine and modes of worship. Consequently, many children grow up with no experience or impression of Christian faith and worship as a daily reality.⁹⁶ To remedy the damage that has been done to the youth, both by parents and the church, a return to the mandate of Scripture is a crucial step. In this regard, Mark Fox admonishes anyone who has the privilege of working with youth, to make their primary focus to turn their hearts toward the Lord and toward their fathers and mothers. He discourages the church from undermining the family in the name of “building a youth group.” God will not bless it, and the church will suffer as a result.⁹⁷

Biblical Parenting

Chap Bettis considers parenting both an awesome privilege and a tremendous responsibility, as children are image-bearers of God and were created to glorify Him and enjoy an eternity with Jesus Christ. What God has entrusted to parents is not just a baby, but a person who will spend eternity in heaven or hell.⁹⁸ Since children are one of the greatest gifts God has given to parents (Psalm 127:3-5), as with every other gift, parents are expected to be faithful stewards (Matthew 25:14-20) and take care of them to the best of their abilities. This includes

⁹⁵ Reid, *Raising the Bar*, 1531.

⁹⁶ Joel R. Beeke, *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009), Kindle, loc. 49-52.

⁹⁷ Mark J. Fox, *Family Integrated Church* (Elon: Antioch Church. CC, 2006), Kindle.

⁹⁸ Chap Bettis, *The Disciple Making Parent: A Comprehensive Guide for Raising Your Children to Love and Follow Jesus Christ* (Shelton: Diamond Hill Publishing, 2016), Kindle, loc. 4.

loving them, nurturing them, and providing for their basic needs. While all of this is quite important, there is a provision of even greater importance...helping children develop faith in Christ.⁹⁹ Unfortunately many parents today are clueless about biblical principles of parenting and are following the latest methodologies and trends in an attempt to raise well-behaved children. Bettis however cautions parents not to blindly follow any parenting approaches offered in the bookstores. Instead, be wise and discerning as they look for extra biblical resources, even if they claim to be Christian. Many so-called Christian authors are presenting unbiblical, behavioristic, deterministic worldviews, in their parenting books.¹⁰⁰ Christians in general and parents in particular, must sift everything they read in light of the Word of God. Most parenting books guide parents to focus on behavior modification but are never concerned about the heart. Bettis notes that parents often assume, if they give their children the right ingredients, keep out the wrong ingredients, and put them in the right environment for the right amount of time, positive results are guaranteed, which never works.¹⁰¹ Adding to their confusion, the current culture promotes a child-centered parenting model that leads parents to indulge every cry and cater to every demand. Due to the abundance of activities in which they allow their children to participate, many parents destroy their marriages and lose their peace. Through it all, not many of them question the problem of this chaotic existence. When it comes to their children's future, the ultimate goal for many parents is "good, educated, and well-adjusted children." Sadly, this confusion has spilled over into the church and there seems to be no distinction between Christian

⁹⁹ Brian Dembowczyk, *A Catechism for Children: Anchoring God's Word in Your Child's Heart* (2014), Kindle., loc. 30.

¹⁰⁰ Bettis, *The Disciple Making Parent*, 149.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 149.

and non-Christian parenting in their goals and values.¹⁰² John Rosemond, describing the current trends of parenting says,

There was a time in America, and not so long ago at that, when everyone “spoke” the same child-rearing “language.” Mothers and fathers, grandparents, teachers, neighbors, and shopkeepers were of one point of view when it came to children. Everyone was on the same page. This cultural consensus was slowly shattered as the Tower of Parent-Babble rose higher and higher into the sky, eventually blocking out the light and truth of the scriptural point of view. Where there had been one standard by which children were raised, there were now dozens of standards, each a variation on the theme of individual differences. Today’s kids are rarely seen as simply children; rather, they are regarded through the filters of their supposed unique needs. Symptomatic of this is the way people use new child-rearing terminologies.¹⁰³

Several studies have revealed that many Christian parents have handed over their children’s spiritual development to the church. In fact, Jones personally oversaw two research projects that looked at the habits of Christian parents in shaping their children’s souls. These studies revealed that the majority of the parents, particularly fathers, were not actively engaged in evangelizing or discipling their children. Even more shocking was that all of the parents involved in this study attended church on a regular basis, professed to be Christians, and were actively engaged in small group Bible studies. Even their teenagers are regular attendees and rarely missed their small group Bible studies and Sunday school classes. Yet, upon a closer look, family prayer was infrequent at best and family devotions or Bible studies ranged from rare to nonexistent. Jones notes that this seems to be the typical mode of operation in many families that faithfully attend church every week and serve in the church’s ministries.¹⁰⁴ The two main reasons why parents are not discipling their children, according to Jones, are that they have never been

¹⁰²Bettis, *The Disciple Making Parent*, 4.

¹⁰³ John Rosemond, *Parenting by the Book* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), Kindle, loc. 96-97.

¹⁰⁴ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 28-29.

shown how and the churches have given parents the impression that discipling children at home is optional.¹⁰⁵

Regarding biblical parenting, Baucham affirms that basic practices, such as parents reading the Bible to their children, have an impact on the children's faith commitment. Parents can impact their child's faith-life by reading and teaching the Bible at home. God has entrusted and commissioned parents (not the youth minister or the Sunday school teacher) with this awesome task. God has also given them everything they need to accomplish this task. Parents do not have to be seminary-trained theologians to read the Bible and talk about what it means. Besides, God would not have given this the responsibility unless He knew they could handle it.¹⁰⁶ Rosemond contends that God's mandate to parents is clear. He has told them in Deuteronomy that they are the primary influence in their children's lives, and not just when their children are young, but through the teen years. It is not possible for parents to "impress" themselves and their values upon children under any other circumstances. Sadly, this is not the norm in our culture today. Instead, many parents have allowed other influences, such as their children's peers, teachers, coaches, television, music, video games, the Internet, etc., in their children's lives.¹⁰⁷

According to Brown, effective parenting requires a high view of Scripture, understanding that God's Word alone is sufficient for faith and practice. Parents then must make the Bible the exclusive foundation for their daily practices, including discipling their children (see Deuteronomy 4:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).¹⁰⁸ Niemi suggests that parents devote

¹⁰⁵ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 82-83.

¹⁰⁶ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 95.

¹⁰⁷ Rosemond, *Parenting by the Book*, 137.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, *A Weed in the Church*, 111.

themselves to the ministry of the Word in the lives of their children as a pastor would his congregation.¹⁰⁹ While examining the Scriptures, Renfro discovered that neither the temple, nor the synagogue, nor professional ministers, bore the first responsibility for training children to be followers of God. The home provided a primary context for discipleship, and parents were expected to serve as primary disciple-makers.¹¹⁰ Renfro explains Paul's model of parenting in this way,

Paul spoke directly to fathers, exhorting them to train up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. These New Testament admonitions were echoes of such Old Testament texts as Deuteronomy 6 and the seventy-eighth psalm. In family-integrated churches the father's role as spiritual leader is not an empty title. It is a serious, sacred task that the church equips him to pursue and holds him accountable to fulfill. In the home, parents have constant opportunities to train their children to obey God's commands. When a child disobeys, parents can immediately discipline and instruct them in the way of Christ. Who is better able to discern the condition of their children's hearts and to know if true repentance has occurred than those who live with them every day? The home is the best context for discipleship, and the family is also the best context for the evangelism of persons outside the church. That's how the apostle Paul evangelized in the first century AD.¹¹¹

Cole also has a clear paradigm of biblical parenting and reminds parents that their overall goal is to make sure that their children are growing in love for God and for others as they grow in joyous submission to the lordship of Christ. He advises parents to stay focused on the objective, which is, to see their children grow up to love God with all their hearts, and to love others as they live daily by submitting their thoughts, words, and deeds to the Lord Jesus Christ. The components of this goal are, seek to bring children to genuine conversion to Christ, help them to

¹⁰⁹ Niemi, *Expository Parenting* 14.

¹¹⁰ Renfro, "Family Integrated Ministry," 19.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

grow in godliness, help them cultivate godly relationships, and train them in life's responsibilities.¹¹²

The Church's Role

According to Jones, there is a huge gap between the way the church is currently operating and how it should operate. Despite the Scriptural mandate to train their children in the faith and to nurture their children's souls (Deut. 6:4–9; Eph. 6:4), few parents are actively involved in this task.¹¹³ The problem is that for decades, the church has been following a flawed ministry model that relied on man-made traditions and pragmatism, and that perpetuated an atmosphere of age-segregation and usurpation of parental responsibility. The church has clearly failed to call parents to embrace their role as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives, and instead has encouraged this parental abdication by relentlessly promoting and developing ministry models that failed to call parents to embrace their role as primary faith developers of their children.¹¹⁴

Jay Strothers adds,

The church had tacitly encouraged this parental abdication by relentlessly promoting benefits and life changes that would accompany increased participation in ministry activities. As a result, the church and families were being split spiritually; most of the youth and the young adults struggled to live their faith in their everyday lives; their knowledge of biblical truth was shallow; and many young ladies and young men have serious inner spiritual identity issues that leads to difficulties with diets, dress, and dating. However, since this has been the ministry approach of the church for decades, the parents of these youth also had the same struggles with deeper faith, authentic spirituality, and Christ-centered identity.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Cole, *The Christian Home*, 1929-1946.

¹¹³ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 16.

¹¹⁴ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 180

¹¹⁵ Jay Strothers, "Family Equipping Ministry: Church and Home as Co-Champions" in *Perspectives on Family Ministry* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), Kindle, loc. 163-164.

Evidently, models that promote systematic age-segregated ministries not only ignore parents but even work against them, which makes them inadequate to further the multigenerational discipleship commanded in Scripture (Deuteronomy 6:2). Additionally, they produce a collection of people who are disconnected, biblically and theologically illiterate, and unable to articulate or live out the Christian faith. According to Scripture however, parents and not the church are given the primary responsibility for calling the next generation to hope in God. The church's role is to equip parents to take on the responsibility of discipling their children. The church serves a supplementary role, reinforcing the biblical nurture that is occurring in the home.¹¹⁶ It is the role of the church to teach families to do what the Bible commands them to do and to hold them accountable for it. The job of the church is to equip the saints to do their jobs, instead of doing it on their behalf.¹¹⁷ Renfro points out that churches that train and expect parents to disciple their children, will produce maturing believers who are passionate about taking the gospel to the darkest corners of the world. That is the true character of a Spirit-led, Scripture-regulated, Christ-centered, family-integrated church. The goal then is to partner with parents to raise not just a youth group but a generation that loves God with heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:28–34).¹¹⁸ In regard to supporting families, McGary cautions, “In this post-Christian culture, the overwhelming majority of committed Christians have never been intentionally disciplined or mentored. As in the days of the Reformation, calling parents to family discipleship only adds a burden around their neck, because they do not know how to carry

¹¹⁶ Bettis, *The Disciple Making Parent*, 14.

¹¹⁷ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 186.

¹¹⁸ Renfro, “Family Integrated Ministry,” 124-145.

out that calling. The church must not only call parents to family discipleship, but practically equip and empower them for the task.”¹¹⁹

Expressing his vision for a family integrated church, Renfro asserts that family ministry is necessary and significant because the church is a family. He longs to see a new climate sweep through churches; a climate where families are drawn together, where dads are equipped to lead, where parents embrace the primary responsibility of discipling their children, where children’s hearts are turned toward their mothers and fathers, where the hearts of mothers and fathers are turned toward their children, where the people of God make a place for single moms and shattered families and teenagers who come without parents. All of this is significant because, according to Scripture, the church is a family and every believer in Jesus Christ has “received the Spirit of adoption” (Rom 8:15). God is the heavenly Father (Matt 6:9) who disciplines them like children (Heb 12:5–11). The church is the family of God, and family relationships represent a divinely ordained paradigm for God’s church, which is why it is so important that relationships in the family and in the church reflect God’s ideal.¹²⁰

Therefore, the solution to this flawed ministry model and its devastating effects is not to reform the current system as some have suggested, but to completely abandon it and pursue a radically different paradigm.¹²¹ The broken system of age-segregated church must be replaced with a family integrated church model, which according to Renfro has three distinctive commitments: (1) A commitment to age-integrated ministry. The most obvious distinctive of a family-integrated church is age-integrated ministry, which means there is no age-segregated

¹¹⁹ McGary, *A Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry*, 83.

¹²⁰ Renfro, “Family Integrated Ministry,” 2-3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

Sunday school, youth group, or children’s ministry and different generations worship together, learn together, serve together, and fellowship together. Family-integrated churches follow the biblical pattern of intergenerational worship and learning (Deuteronomy 29:10–11; Joshua 8:35; 2 Chronicles 20:13; Joel 2:16). Age-integration creates a network of meaningful multigenerational relationships.¹²² The apostle Paul specifically stated that mentoring relationships ought to occur between older and younger believers (Titus 2:1–8). Such integration allows godly men to mentor the sons of single mothers or the sons of mothers with husbands who are not yet believers. A biblical example of this pattern can be seen in the relationship of Paul with Timothy (Acts 16:1; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2). Integration also allows godly widows and more mature women to mentor young mothers, and it allows grandparents to develop relationships with younger families. Age integration promotes maturity.¹²³ (2) Commitment to evangelism and discipleship in and through the home is the second distinctive of family-integrated church that Renfro highlights. Family-integrated churches are committed to evangelism and discipleship in and through the home. Scripture clearly states that parents should be primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives (Eph 6:1–4), as Paul spoke directly to fathers, exhorting them to train up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. These New Testament admonitions were echoes of such Old Testament texts as Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78.¹²⁴ In family-integrated churches the father’s role as spiritual leader is not an empty title but a serious, sacred task that the church equips him to pursue and holds him accountable to fulfill. In the home, parents have constant opportunities to train their children to obey God’s commands

¹²² Renfro, “Family Integrated Ministry,” 69.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 70.

and when they disobey, parents can immediately discipline and instruct them in the way of Christ. Only parents are able to discern the condition of their children's hearts and to know if true repentance has occurred. Therefore, the home is the best context for discipleship, and the family is also the best context for the evangelism of people outside the church.¹²⁵ (3)

Commitment to biblical leadership is the third distinctive of a family-integrated church. Renfro asserts that family-integrated congregations are committed to biblically qualified leadership as Scripture clearly teaches that pastors must be more than great orators or skilled administrators; they must shepherd their families in ways that glorify God. The apostle Paul exhorted members of the Philippian church to imitate him (Phil 4:9) and every church leader must provide an example that his flock can imitate. That is why, according to texts such as 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, elders or pastors must possess two skills in addition to issues of character: the ability to teach and the ability to manage their households well (1 Tim 3:4; Titus 1:6), since the home is the ideal training ground for church leadership.¹²⁶

Renfro then concluded by stating that the family-integrated church is an evangelistic church, committed to the Great Commission and whose leadership proclaims Christ to all people and equips members to do the same. It believes that the home is one effective place to invite unbelievers and to witness to them. Yet family-integrated churches do not limit evangelism to homes. Every church member is responsible to share the message of Jesus Christ with lost friends and neighbors throughout the week. Family-integrated churches can and do actively engage in evangelism.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Renfro, "Family Integrated Ministry," 71.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 73.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 74.

Bible Study Basics

As parents are being trained on the steps of family devotions, they need to be reminded to be selective regarding the abundance of resources that are available in their local bookstores. Whereas many children's devotional books focus on Bible stories and moral lessons, Nancy Guthrie recommends books and resources that present the Bible as the big picture of what God is doing in the world and his purposes and plans in creating and redeeming the world. Interwoven in these discussions should be God's attributes, and various doctrinal truths and themes, such as justification, redemption, substitution, and sanctification. Not only should parents be taught how to teach these essentials but they must equip their children with tools to be able to articulate their faith.¹²⁸ According to Sarah M. Wells, approaching the Bible as a narrative, by reading books such as *The Child's Story Bible*, written by Catherine F. Vos¹²⁹ and the *Adventure Bible for Early Readers* by Zinderkidz,¹³⁰ which includes instructions for parents, will help parents and their children explore stories that show God's character by observing His dealings with various individuals in redemptive history. It will also demonstrate that the Bible is about real people who experience real life situations, as it unfolds God's promises and requirements in action. Through these stories God's holiness, faithfulness, mercy, and love will be evident. Therefore, the value and relevance of God's Word will be on display.¹³¹ Wells also suggests that parents use discussion and reflection questions to spark conversation about and to develop a knowledge base of the biblical stories that form the narrative of the Christian faith. In order to keep the children

¹²⁸ Nancy Guthrie, *One Year of Dinner Table Devotions* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 200), Kindle, loc. VI.

¹²⁹ Catherine F. Vos, *The Child's Story Bible* (Grand Rapids: Erdman Publishing, 2000).

¹³⁰ *The Adventure Bible for Early Readers*, New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zonderkidz).

¹³¹ Sarah M. Wells, *The Family Bible Devotional: Stories from the Bible to Help Children & Parents Engage and Love Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 2018), Kindle, 10.

engaged, parents should not read to their kids but to read with their kids. They should encourage their children (even the youngest ones) to take turns reading the Bible passages. To develop interest and love for Scripture, parents should evaluate their children's attention span and adjust their expectations. In addition, parents should not skip the activities that correspond with the lessons as incorporating the Bible passages with the activities will help them see how the Bible is relevant in their lives. Parents should also move at a pace that is appropriate for their families and to have fun as they conduct these family devotions.¹³² Using catechism books such as *The Children's Shorter Catechism*,¹³³ written by Matthew C. McMahan, is also helpful in teaching children theology and doctrine.

Because the most important goal of Christian parents is the salvation and sanctification of their children, they must teach the gospel in its context. Children must understand God's holiness, man's depravity, and God's plan of salvation. Although the age appropriate gospel is presented, the gospel message must be taught in its entirety, and must be understood. Parents have to make sure that they do not present a watered-down version of gospel truths.¹³⁴ A great resource for leading children to Christ is a children's book entitled, *I Believe in Jesus*, written by John MacArthur.¹³⁵ In addition, Norman Geisler, discerning the spirit of the age, says that in this post-Christian world of skepticism, agnosticism, and cultism, all Christians, including parents, are admonished to be ready to answer the questions that are asked. Therefore, they must know

¹³² Wells, *The Family Bible Devotional*, 13-14.

¹³³ Matthew McMahan, *Children's Shorter Catechism* (Coconut Creek: Puritan Publications).

¹³⁴ Martha Peace and Stuart W. Scott, *The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising A Family* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2010), Kindle, loc.183.

¹³⁵ John MacArthur, *I Believe in Jesus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999).

what they believe, why they believe it, and must be willing and able to explain it to others, including their children in a winsome manner. Furthermore, parents need to teach their children to do the same.¹³⁶

A Gap in the Literature: Apologetics

Most of the resources above address and provide guidance in evangelism and discipleship of children. They talk about preaching the gospel to the children and leading them to Christ. They also emphasize the necessity of godly living. However, for various reasons, the idea of apologetics is not mentioned much. It could be that it is assumed to be a part of the church's biblical training. The problem the church is facing today is that believers are not being thoroughly trained in the essentials of the faith, which includes defending it. Therefore, in addition to holy living, all Christians must learn to clearly articulate their faith and be able to battle against false doctrines (see Jude 1:3; 1 Peter 3:15). According to Baucham, thorough knowledge of the Bible is an absolute necessity as all the effective and authoritative answers to any objections about the Word of God are provided by divinely selected authors, who were enabled to document God's mind, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Prov. 30:5; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Just as all Christians must present these arguments in a clear, concise manner, all Christian parents must learn to answer their children's biblical questions in an age-appropriate manner.¹³⁷

According to Nancy Pearcey, when young people are not given a robust biblical foundation, they will be pulled down by the currents of powerful cultural trends, superficial

¹³⁶ Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler, *Who Made God?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), Kindle, loc. 105.

¹³⁷ Voddie Baucham, *Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), Kindle, loc. 608.

emotion-based teaching that she refers to as “heart religion” that will not be strong enough to counter the lure of attractive but dangerous ideas. Young believers also need a “brain religion,” training in worldview and apologetics, so they can be equipped to analyze and critique the competing worldviews they will encounter when they leave home.¹³⁸ Pearcey believes that if these young people are warned about all the false ideologies they will encounter and are given the tools to be able to confront and engage them, they will at least have a fighting chance when they find themselves a minority of one among their classmates or work colleagues. Therefore, teaching them to have a Christian worldview is part of their necessary survival equipment.¹³⁹

A well-rounded biblical instruction must include verbal teaching of how to study the Bible, a model of how to live according to those principles, and how to proclaim and defend it. Both biblical and systematic theologies are essential components of thorough biblical knowledge, as they give depth and breadth to a person’s understanding as he accurately handles the word of truth (see 2 Timothy 2:15). The apostle Peter admonishes Christians to “Make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). Jude also pleads with believers to “Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints,” (Jude 1:3). Many young people, even those strong in their faith, are unable to articulate the why behind what they believe. Apologetics must be taught diligently, so young people can be adequately equipped to answer all the questions presented by both skeptics and atheists. Ham et al., argue that this society in which Christians find themselves, is immersed in secularism therefore, it is absolutely essential that they learn to defend the Bible

¹³⁸ Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), Kindle, loc. 19.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

and the Christian faith for the sake of their faith and their children's faith. Believers must evangelize a society that has a highly diminished understanding of biblical truth.¹⁴⁰

Baucham also stresses the necessity of worldview training. He cites George Barna as he suggests that people do not get a biblical worldview simply by regularly attending church. A biblical worldview must be both taught and caught. It has to be explained and modeled.¹⁴¹ According to Baucham, a person's worldview is what shapes the way he think but learning and memorizing the Scriptures determine what he think. A child with a biblical worldview, for example, may understand the inherent dignity of his parents as human beings created in the image of God, However, a child with biblical instruction also knows that the God who created his parents says, "Honor your mother and father." Therefore, it is not an either/or proposition but a both/and mandate. Children must be given both a biblical worldview and the Word of God. They must go together to form a sound biblical worldview.¹⁴² There are two main approaches to worldview, the worldview elements and the worldview metanarrative.

Worldview Elements

According to Baucham, the five most basic elements of worldview are a person's view of God, man, truth, knowledge, and ethics. Teaching children these five areas will help establish a foundation for biblical thinking in their lives.¹⁴³ It is also important to note that, there is an ongoing conflict in the culture between secular humanism and Christian theism. Secular humanism is the most popular worldview in the culture today and many Christians in this society

¹⁴⁰ Ham et al., *Already Gone*, 113.

¹⁴¹ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 73.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 78.

identify more readily with elements of secular humanism than they do with Christian theism. The structural elements and core components of secular humanism explain a great deal of the current cultural conflict. The following figure (figure 1) illustrates the differences in worldview.¹⁴⁴

| | SECULAR HUMANISM | CHRISTIAN THEISM |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| VIEW OF GOD | ATHEISM | THEISM |
| VIEW OF MAN | EVOLUTION | SPECIAL CREATION |
| VIEW OF TRUTH | RELATIVE | ABSOLUTE |
| VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE | SCIENTIFIC/ MATERIALISM/ NATURALISM | SCIENTIFIC/ GENERAL /NATURAL REVELATION |
| VIEW OF ETHICS | CULTURAL | ABSOLUTE |

Table 2.1: Secular Humanism Vs. Christian Theism

Basic Elements of Worldview:¹⁴⁵

What is the nature of God? Secular humanism (the dominant worldview in this culture) argues that there is no God, although many secular humanists will claim to believe in God in some form. Some argue that there must be some “higher power” or “guiding force” in the universe, but they fall short of declaring a belief in the God of the Bible. Christian theism, on the other hand, believes in a personal God who created, rules, and interacts with the world. The God of the Bible is personal. The God of the Bible is not a force or an idea; He is a person. The God

¹⁴⁴ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 79.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 78-90.

of the Bible is rational, relational, communicative, and emotional. The God of the Bible speaks to and through His prophets. He calls His people to Himself. He redeems lost sinners and judges the unrepentant. The God of the Bible is sovereign. He knows every hair on your head, every blade of grass, every sparrow that flies, and every autumn leaf that falls. The God of the Bible never slumbers or sleeps. He is never caught off guard or surprised. The God of the Bible knows the end from the beginning. He knew all of our days before we were born. The God of the Bible is holy. He cannot sin. He is the very source of truth and righteousness. There is no shadow in Him. God's very nature is good. God makes no mistakes and can do no wrong. The God of the Bible is the Creator of the world.

What is the nature of man? Secular humanism views man as the end result of random evolutionary processes, as such, he has no inherent worth, value, or dignity. Ultimately man is merely a cosmic accident. According to Christian theism however, man as a special creation made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Therefore, as God's image-bearer, man has inherent dignity and value. Although man was created in the image of God to bring God glory, because of sin he does not do what he was created to do (Romans 3:10-12, 23; Ephesians 2:1-3). Apart from the intervention of Christ, man would remain in his sins. Christian theism has an answer to man's dilemma, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)," (Ephesians 2:4-5). Contrary to the biblical worldview about man's condition, other worldviews seem to suggest that man is basically good. However, in regard to man's dilemma, other worldviews or religions believe that, all one must do to be righteous is have a religious experience, then try to do more good deeds than bad and hope for the best in the end.

What is the Nature of Truth? Secular humanism believes truth is relative. In other words, what's true for one is not necessarily true for another. Christian theism sees truth as objective and absolute. Truth is defined as that which corresponds to reality; it identifies things as they actually are; it can never fail, diminish, change, or be extinguished; it must be able to be expressed in propositional statements, and it is sourced in the God of the Bible who is the author of all truth.

What is the nature of Knowledge? The fourth major question our worldview must answer is how do people know what they know? Secular humanism (and its component, naturalistic materialism) is based on the assumption that nature is a closed system, and therefore all knowledge is derived from the study of this closed system through reason and the scientific method. Christian theism, on the other hand, holds that God created the world and everything in it; therefore, our pursuit of knowledge must balance reason and revelation. This is not to say that Christian theism is anti-science. On the contrary, it was Christian theism that gave rise to science. Scientists such as Galileo and Copernicus believed in an intelligent, orderly Creator whose creation could and must be studied in an orderly fashion.

What is the nature of Ethics? The final question a worldview must answer is how are right and wrong determined? Secular humanism views ethics as cultural and negotiable. In other words, what is ethical in America in the twenty-first century was not necessarily ethical in Germany in the twentieth century or in ancient Rome in the first century. Thus, many history professors are unwilling to call what Hitler, Mussolini, Pol Pot, or Nero did unethical. Those rulers were merely acting in accordance with the ethics of their time and circumstances. Humanism begins with man as its starting point and works its way out from there. The humanistic view of ethics begins with what works for me. This has led to pragmatism (the view

that results, rather than theories and principles, determine proper action) and utilitarianism (the view that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the criterion of the virtue of action). Christian theism, however, views ethics as timeless and absolute. God determines what is right and what is wrong. God's Word gives us clear instruction on ethics (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4). God has revealed who He is, His requirements, and His promises in His Word. God has granted man the information necessary to live ethically. Ethics therefore transcend time and culture. Truth knows no boundaries or borders. Biblical ethical principles can be applied universally.

Worldview Metanarrative

David P. Teague, in his book *Understand the Bible: The Biblical Metanarrative Approach*, defines metanarrative as a story that explains other stories, the master story that helps everything to make sense. The metanarrative approach to Bible study will reveal its unifying themes, such as the holiness of God, the love of God, the justice of God, the redemptive purpose of God, to name a few. Braiding these many strands together then shows that God is constantly revealing and disclosing himself to the world for its redemption and that this self-revelation of God always happens in the covenant walk that God has with a people he has chosen.¹⁴⁶

Answers to life's ultimate questions from Secular Humanist Perspective¹⁴⁷

Who am I? Man is an accident. Man is the result of random evolutionary processes. There is no purpose for his existence. Therefore, human beings have no value.

¹⁴⁶ David P. Teague, *Understand the Bible: The Biblical Metanarrative Approach* (Trinity Discipleship Ministry Publishers, 2016), Kindle, loc. 44.

¹⁴⁷ Voddie Baucham, "Biblical Worldview," February 27, 2021, YouTube Video, 29:00, [youtube.com/watch?v=q3B9WqLLOU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3B9WqLLOU)

Why am I here? Man is here to consume and to enjoy. He exists to make the best of his stay on earth.

What is wrong with the world? People are either insufficiently educated or insufficiently governed. People either don't know enough information or they're not being watched enough.

How can what is wrong be made right? The solution is more education and more government. When people are given more information and/or receive therapy to help them adjust to life, things will be right. For example, AIDS is combated through AIDS awareness, racism is combated through anti-hate classes. Combat anger through anger-management classes. Once everyone's thinking has been ordered rightly as a result of education and therapy, utopia can be achieved.

Answers to Life's Ultimate Questions Form the Bible¹⁴⁸

Who am I? Man cannot figure out who he is until he first discover who Jesus Christ is. Jesus "is the image of the invisible God.... by him all things were created...all things were created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:15-16). He is the exact representation of God. He is the picture of God in human flesh. He is God on this earth. He is God with us, God among us. The Bible says that man is created by God—in his image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). The Bible says that man is the crowning glory of the creation of God, and as a result has an inherent dignity, worth, and value.

Why am I here? "All things were created through him and for him.... that in everything he might be preeminent" (Colossians 1:16b-18). The ultimate purpose of all things is to bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ, therefore man exists for God's glory.

¹⁴⁸ Baucham, "Biblical Worldview," YouTube Video 35:30.

What is wrong with the world? Man is what is wrong with the world. Despite the fact that he is the crowning glory of the creation of God, created to live and bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ, he is instead hostile and disobedient toward the One by whom and for whom he was created. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-every one-to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). The Bible calls this disobedience toward God “sin”, and it says that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). In short, sin is what’s wrong with the world.

How can what is wrong be made right? What is wrong can only be made right by the substitutionary, atoning death of Christ. “He [Jesus] has now reconciled you in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and beyond reproach before him” (Colossians 1:22). There is no other means by which we can be made right with God. “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The Bible says, “For our sake God made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). There was nothing else that could have been done that would have allowed God to be righteous and also the one who makes us right. In the mercy of God the Father he punished his Son in our place in order to satisfy his righteous wrath against sin. Our only hope is to believe in Jesus who was crucified for us and rose again (1 Corinthians 1:23; 15:3-4). The sinless Lamb of God gave his life to pay a debt that he did not owe on behalf of sinners who could never pay him back! The only way that what is wrong man’s life can be made right is for him to believe what the Bible says. Believe that Jesus took the punishment for his sins by dying on the cross as a substitute for him and that he rose from the dead three days later, showing that God had accepted his death on the cross as the payment for the sin-debt that man owed to God. If a person believes this to be

true, repent of (completely turn from) his sinful patterns of life, and place his faith completely in Jesus Christ, he is saved. God promises “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Conclusion

In this day-and-age, despite the abundance of Bibles and Bible study tools available on podcasts, YouTube videos, Christian bookstores, and cell phone apps, studies continue to show that many professing Christians are either biblically illiterate or have a very shallow and superficial understanding of the Bible. Many ‘Christians’ do not possess an adequate knowledge that is necessary for faith and practice and are therefore susceptible to deception and error. Consequently, they continue to live according to the culture, not according to Scripture. Many parents are a part of this mix. They feel inadequate to evangelize and disciple their own children, so they relinquish the responsibility to the church. In any type of ministry, the Word of God must be the blueprint. Scripture is the ultimate and sufficient standard for how ministry should be done, as Scripture is not simply one more source of authority alongside other sources offered by the experts of this culture. The Word of God is embodied in Jesus Christ, whose identity is impeccably revealed to us in the pages of Holy Scripture, must provide the regulative template for Christian faith and practice.¹⁴⁹

As noted, the family is God’s idea and parents are to pass down His truth from one generation to the next. As such, parents have the primary responsibility to evangelize and disciple their children. The church is to come alongside the parents to equip and empower. As churches disciple parents, it is important to teach the essentials of the Christian faith that include what Christians believe, why they believe it, how they are to live according to those principles,

¹⁴⁹ Cole, *The Christian Home*, 46.

and how they are to share and defend it. They should also be encouraged to read the Bible for themselves. A well-rounded knowledge of both the essentials and an understanding of the biblical narrative should help Christian parents articulate the fundamental doctrines of their faith to their children. God's Word stands by itself and doesn't need defending, but, practically, in this post Christian culture, Christians must be able to answer the skeptical questions and uphold the Word and proclaim why they can believe in the Bible's life-giving historical and scientific authority. That means they need to not only know the Bible, but they need to know about the Bible and why it is worthy of their complete faith.¹⁵⁰ For Charles Stanley, leaving a legacy means that Christians dare to demonstrate their faith in Christ by living worthy of their calling (Ephesians 4:1), by leaving a weighty imprint in their walk of faith. They are to walk with purpose, intending to leave a deep imprint on the lives of all they touch, and especially on their children. This imprint is to be “weighty” and lasting, and they are to leave a permanent imprint upon their children. Finally, this weighty imprint is to be one that is directly related to their calling, which is to live for the glory of God.¹⁵¹

Theological Foundations

2 Timothy 3 is one passage that distinctly emphasizes the authority, sufficiency, and necessity of Scripture. In it Paul highlights Scripture’s immeasurable value by reminding Timothy to “continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction,

¹⁵⁰ Ham, *Already Gone*, 116.

¹⁵¹ Charles Stanley, *Leaving a Godly Legacy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), Kindle, loc. 3-4.

for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work,” (2 Timothy 3:14-17). This passage points out that God has spoken and has clearly and comprehensively revealed His truth in this very book.

The Work of the Word

The contents of Scripture provide wisdom that lead to salvation and are of benefit in every stage of Spiritual growth. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture is a revelation of God’s divine plan and purpose for humanity. Not only does the Word of God bring the sinner to justification (being declared not guilty) in Christ through repentance of sin and faith in Him, but the Word also unleashes the sanctifying (the ongoing growth process) power of the Holy Spirit so that believers might live. That's why Paul tells Timothy that the Word of God is sufficient for "training in righteousness.”¹⁵²

Psalms 11:7-9 is another passage that affirms the power and sufficiency of Scripture, “The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.” This passage refers to the Word of God as the law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear, and judgments of the Lord, and as such, it is perfect, sure, right, clear, clean, and true. And the six benefits of the Word... it restores the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, endures forever, and produces comprehensive righteousness.¹⁵³ Therefore, not only does the Word transform a person, but it also gives practical wisdom and discernment in daily living. When the Word of God is

¹⁵² Ham et al., *Already Gone*, 45-58.

¹⁵³ John MacArthur, *The Character of Scripture*, accessed April 4, 2020
<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-250/the-character-of-scripture-part-1>

properly understood and obeyed, it will enable believers to lead victorious Christian lives in every facet of life, including parenting. Paul again reiterates this truth by asserting, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect,” (Romans 12:2). Christians are to reject the wisdom, philosophies, ideologies, and approaches of the culture, and instead embrace divine truth that is able to transform them from the inside out and lead them into a life of godliness. They are then to continue in the Word by studying it, living it, sharing it, and defending it. It is to saturate them personally and how they function in within their families.

The Message of Deuteronomy 6:1-9

God in His infinite wisdom and grace has revealed His attributes, His requirements, and promises in this all sufficient and comprehensive Word. As He renews His covenant with Israel, He makes His instructions and standards very clear. In Deuteronomy 6, God establishes a holy people by instructing them in holy living. This nation is to be set apart in order to represent Him among the unbelieving nations. Moses says to them, “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded *me* to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it,” (Deuteronomy 6:1). First and foremost, by hearing the Word of God, they are to be transformed from the inside out so that they would individually and collectively be a God honoring people both in their attitudes and behaviors. Then “you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged,” (Deuteronomy 6:2). Cole notes that God’s idea of success is completely different than the world’s in that God views success in terms of godly, loving family relationships, and not only does He tell them how to raise up godly children, but also godly

grandchildren. The goal of Christian parenting then should be that they raise godly children so that their children will in turn raise godly children, which is the principle of 2 Timothy 2:2, which states, “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” This is a multi-generational discipleship process in action.¹⁵⁴ The result of obedience is described in Deuteronomy 6:3, “O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do *it*, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, *in* a land flowing with milk and honey,” (Deuteronomy 6:3). Obedience to the Lord always produces many blessings, which includes multiplication of generations.

Moses then proceeds to the Sh'ma (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). In his book *Parenting: The Shema*, Sonny Childs notes that, for the Hebrew, no other scripture represents the “ancient paths” more vividly than the words of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). In fact, to this day the passage is faithfully quoted as both the morning and evening prayer and is considered by many to be the most essential prayer of Judaism. In addition, it is recited as the final prayer of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, and is often prayed as the last words before death, which makes the Shema central to the Jewish worldview.¹⁵⁵ Irene Lipson, author of *The Greatest Commandment* adds,

All the Jewish traditions agree on this one matter: that the Sh'ma (Hear, O Isra'el...) occupies the supreme place in Jewish thought, tradition, and theology. Maimonides, the great mediaeval philosopher, expresses in this, the first of his principles of faith, the primal and fundamental declaration of Isra'el's faith. There is a God; he is unique; this God alone is the cause and fount of all Creation. The Sh'ma's importance is reinforced by the fact that the Talmud itself opens with the question: “From what time may one recite the Sh'ma in the evening?” (Ber. 1:2a). The rabbis have taught that the opening sentence of the Sh'ma occupies the central place in Jewish religious thought. Everything else in Judaism springs from these words. Every belief, every practice, revolves around the hub

¹⁵⁴ Cole, *The Christian Home*, 2500.

¹⁵⁵ Sonny Childs, *Parenting: The Shema* (Paragould: Sonny Childs, 2019), Kindle, loc. 67-70.

of this proclamation that God is the Lord, that he has a special relationship with Isra'el, and that he is unique. This credal statement is not only words for us to accept and believe. We are to speak those words—aloud. The opening sentence is the earliest prayer learned by infants, the last confession of the dying. It has been the watchword and rallying-cry of a hundred generations in Israel. The rabbis have taught that a man is diminished if he fails to observe the commandment concerning the Sh'ma.¹⁵⁶

To ensure Israel's undivided loyalty to Him, God begins with a proposition, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart," (Deuteronomy 6:4-6). They were to be so immersed in these commands that they would be the driving motivation behind every thought, action, and word. They are to adopt these words as their worldview and let their lifestyle be characterized by these words from God Himself. They are to live in such a way that they have put the imprint of His Words on how they live daily. They are also to use these Words to instruct their children constantly, as handing off the baton to the next generation is not a onetime thing, it must be done repeatedly in hopes that they hold on to what parents hand off.¹⁵⁷ These words then are to be so interwoven into every area of daily life, that this pattern is to be emulated by all the succeeding generations. Christian parents then must know and live the Word before attempting to teach it to their children, as it is not possible to live or teach principles that one does not know.

After admonishing them about their personal holiness, Moses reminds them about their parental responsibility and highlights God's pattern of parenting by stating,

You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your

¹⁵⁶ Irene Lipson, *The Greatest Commandment* (Clarksville: Messianic Jews Publishers, 2007), Kindle, loc. 223-233.

¹⁵⁷ Brian Webster, "The Shema: Parenting, Church, and Society," March 3, 2021, YouTube Video, 11:58, [youtube.com/watch?v=-DqrZ6nBnrKZ4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DqrZ6nBnrKZ4)

forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).

According to this passage parenting is a daily responsibility that will require a lifetime of commitment. Joseph Mattera recognizes the impossibility of part-time parenting and says that this task requires the full-time attention, love, care, discipline, effort, and excellence of the parents. Too often though, parents try to squeeze their responsibility into a rushed, stressed schedule of work, recreation, personal development, entertainment, and overlapping activities. However, parents must recognize that this responsibility rooted in God's truth is a precious legacy and will create a sweet taste and a hunger for God.¹⁵⁸

When taught diligently, godly instruction should impact the child so profoundly that it produces change and influences every situation. If lasting change is to occur, however, these godly instructions must take place at every opportunity, and have to be woven into every activity in or outside of the home. These teachable moments should always lead parents to both talk about and model behaviors that glorify God both in the beginning and ending of the day. God's truth should be communicated by attitudes, words, and behaviors.¹⁵⁹ In regard to this passage Cole concludes, "Moses preached Deuteronomy 6 to Israel as they prepared to enter the land of Canaan. They would face many temptations in the land and would be surrounded by pagans. His goal was to raise up godly generations who love God fervently, teach their children diligently, and live in the world carefully, then it will be 'well with you' (Deut. 6:3) under God's blessing."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Joseph Mattera, *Walking in Generational Blessings* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 2012), Kindle, loc. 55.

¹⁵⁹ Cole, *The Christian Home*, 2578.

¹⁶⁰ Cole, *The Christian Home*, 2504.

The Message of Proverbs: Train Up a Child

The Proverbs are full of wisdom and admonition in godly living and have much to say about biblical principles of parenting. King Solomon exhorts parents to “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,” (Proverbs 22:6). As noted above this type of training must necessarily begin with the all sufficient Word. In fact, Solomon himself recognized that, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding,” (Proverbs 9:10). MacArthur notes that the message of Proverbs 22:2 is not a guarantee that, given a godly environment, all children will turn out to be godly, as the salvation of a sinner depends on the sovereignty of God. It does however mean that early childhood training is effective in developing godly habits in children. As much as they may try, parents are not able to save their children.¹⁶¹ Therefore, the parents’ responsibility is to raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord, guard them from the sinful influences and temptations of the world, and expose them to others who know and love God. In the end however, their repentance and faith cannot be inherited or manufactured because salvation is God’s work. At the same time, raising children is a responsibility that God Himself has assigned to parents therefore they cannot delegate it to schoolteachers, Sunday school teachers, child-care workers, or other people outside the family, as it is simply wrong for parents to attempt to unload that responsibility to others and shift the blame when things go wrong.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ John MacArthur, “What Influence Do You Have On Your Children,” accessed March 4, 2020 <https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B150504>

¹⁶² MacArthur, “What Influence.”

The Rod of Correction

Spiritual training of children necessarily includes discipline and cannot be effectively done outside the home. Many modern day experts consider physical discipline wrong. However, Scripture does prescribe the rod of discipline as a necessary aspect of parenting, flatly contradicting modern opponents of corporal punishment, "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly" (Proverbs 13:24); "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15); "You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:14; see also 10:13; 19:18). Therefore, Christian parents should reject the expert advice of the world and embrace the wisdom of God's Word, because Scripture itself prescribes corporal discipline and cautions parents not to abandon the use of the rod, and in the end, the facts will be found to agree with the Word of God.¹⁶³

The Message of Ephesians 6:4

There are a plethora of books written by popular authors and experts that attempt to offer parents new ways and approaches to raising their children. In desperation, many parents flock to these books and attend parenting seminars to find the answers. Unfortunately many of these so called new approaches are quickly replaced by a whole new set of trends and techniques, causing further confusion and uncertainty. This is just another devastating effect of biblical illiteracy. The Bible is sufficient in providing the guidelines that are necessary for successful parenting. One such guideline is found on Ephesians 6. The book of Ephesians goes into the greatest depth about Christian living, God's pattern for marriage, family life, and even offers a remarkably simple exhortation for parents. In fact, the apostle Paul summarized the essence of all parenting

¹⁶³ John MacArthur, Parenting in an Anti-Spanking Culture, accessed April 4, 2020
<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A216/parenting-in-an-antspanking-culture>

efforts in just one statement: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” (Ephesians 6:4).¹⁶⁴

Provoking Children to Anger (Ephesians 6:4a)

In order for this biblical principle of parenting to be successful parents must develop a loving relationship with their children. There are many ways parents can provoke children into anger, some of which include excessive discipline, inconsistent discipline, unkindness, favoritism, overindulgence, overprotection, and pressure to achieve. According to Colossians 3:21, which is a parallel passage to Ephesians 6:4, parents can also provoke their children to discouragement by neglect, constant criticism, condescension, indifference, detachment, cruelty, hypocrisy, a lack of fairness, or deliberate humiliation.¹⁶⁵

Bringing Them Up in the Discipline and Instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4b)

In the first part of this verse Paul is not suggesting that parents refrain from having rules and developing boundaries and limits for their children. In fact, the opposite is true as the entire book of Ephesians reminds Christians of their identity in Christ, that they are called to be a distinct people, separated for the Lord’s use.¹⁶⁶ Just as Israel, God’s chosen nation was given rules and regulations to live by, so Christians are called to live in a manner worthy of their calling. Christians are set apart for the Lord, to represent Him in this ungodly culture. MacArthur asserts that this life of walking by the Spirit calls believers not to conform to the world but to be imitators of God, who walk in wisdom, and those who live in accordance with God’s will. Believers are to maintain this lifestyle by putting on the whole armor of God so they can be

¹⁶⁴ MacArthur, *Brave Dad*, 25-26.

¹⁶⁵ MacArthur, *Ephesians*, 315-319.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 72-77.

equipped to protect themselves from the enemy of their souls.¹⁶⁷ This pattern of living is then to reflect the way individuals and families are to conduct themselves. Parents are to be the shaping influence, evangelizers, and disciplers of their children so they too will be adequately equipped to carry out good works. MacArthur then says that every aspect of the children's development is affected by how carefully and faithfully Christian parents apply Ephesians 6:4 to their lives. This does not mean that parenting is a simple task, but it is a privilege and a serious and challenging responsibility that requires a great deal of time, personal sacrifice, and significant cost. When children are little, they require constant attention and care, and as they grow older and more independent, they still need parental oversight and involvement in their academics, daily activities, and spiritual nurture.¹⁶⁸ Christian parents then should embrace this divine mandate both as a gift from God and an opportunity to pass the baton of righteousness to the next generation.

Departure from Scripture

When the pattern set up by God in His special revelation is altered, twisted, added to, subtracted from, or is ignored, theological and doctrinal confusion follow. The result, either a generation who does not know God, a confused generation who has created various false gods, or a generation who practices syncretism by blending God's Word with worldly ideologies and philosophies. As noted repeatedly, many young people are leaving not only the church but the Christian faith altogether.

A major contributing factor to this youth crisis is that fathers are no longer the spiritual leaders of their families. MacArthur says that over the course of 150 years, from the mid-

¹⁶⁷ MacArthur, *Brave Dad*, 26.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, American men have abandoned their God-given responsibility for moral and spiritual leadership in the homes, schools, and Sunday schools of the nation, and the groundwork for the 20th-century fatherless home was set. This then led to society's acceptance of fatherless homes.¹⁶⁹ To remedy the unscriptural means of parenting, the church also adopted a worldly methodology to ministry. Brown calls this approach a "novel, experimental, and sandy foundation" – the wisdom of man. The church began separating families and segregating the young, which contributed to the youth issues it is facing today.¹⁷⁰

Theoretical Foundations

Although there are a multitude of child training theories, when it comes to spiritual nurture of children it is important to follow biblical guidelines. Christian parents are not to follow the approaches and philosophies of this age but are to be led by the all-sufficient Word, which has supplied all they need. According to Psalm 127:3, children are a gift of the LORD, but God did not just give parents the gift. He also gave them the instructions on how to take care of that precious gift. To raise them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord does not mean to raise a well behaved, polite, respectful child. The ultimate goal of parenting is the salvation and sanctification of their children. Therefore, the foremost priority for parents is to cultivate in their children a healthy fear of God, a humble understanding of their own guilt, and a sense of their need for Christ as their Savior. Then follows the instruction to live by the truth of Scripture, encourage their love of God, and steer them in a righteous direction so that they might grow to spiritual maturity. However, according to Deuteronomy 6:7, this is an ongoing endeavor and

¹⁶⁹ MacArthur, *Brave Dad*, 3.

¹⁷⁰ Brown, *A Weed in the Church*, 144.

parents are to talk about the Lord with their children day in and day out, when they sit down and when they rise up.¹⁷¹ When parents have a high view of God and His Word, everything they do will be directed by the Word of God.

Spiritual Formation of Children

Mimi L. Larson and Robert J. Keeley, child training experts, assert that spiritual formation in all ages involves all dimensions of a person, which includes interpersonal, intrapersonal, and the interaction of the human spirit with God's Spirit. It is more than just knowing the Bible or the practice of spiritual disciplines. The apostle Paul addresses his aim for the people of the church of Galatia by saying that he is in the "pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). Spiritual formation is the process of Christ being formed within his followers. It is a trinitarian process in which a person encounters the living God through the enabling of the Holy Spirit to become more like Jesus Christ. It is also an intentional, communal process in that believers need each other for this kind of growth to happen.¹⁷²

When considering spiritual formation, history must be taken into account. There are significant cultural factors that affect all of life, including how people interact, communicate, parent, and worship. Historical context also influences the ways discipleship and Christian formation happen.¹⁷³ The Book of Deuteronomy provides a brief history of formation, especially chapters 4 through 11, in which Moses describes ways children are to learn about God and his laws: in natural, informal ways in every aspect of life. Centuries later, during the exile, the process of passing on faith in the one true God became more formalized through synagogue

¹⁷¹ MacArthur, *Brave Dad*, 95.

¹⁷² Mimi L. Larson, and Robert J. Keeley, *Children's Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), Kindle, loc. 21.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 22.

schools, requiring considerable memorization in order to recall God’s commands and obey them. Subsequent to the establishment of the early church, catechetical schools arose for more systematized courses of study.¹⁷⁴ Then in 1780, in Gloucester, England, Robert Raikes began a movement called Sunday school, and through his publishing resources these schools for boys, which began in the kitchens of a few women, accomplished much in helping children know about God as they learned to read. Within a few years, over one million children in England attended Sunday school. Soon, Sunday schools began to appear in North American churches.¹⁷⁵ Then, in the late 1800s, Uniform Lesson Plans, published by Standard Publishing in Ohio, were made widely available so that most churches were teaching the same Bible passage every Sunday. These lesson plans enabled adult students to study the entire Bible in just a few years.¹⁷⁶

Ways Children Learn

John Westerhoff, author of *Will Our Children Have Faith*, implemented models to describe ways children are perceived to learn: a production model; a garden model; and a “life” model. In the production model, children, being incomplete and non-productive, need the help of adults in order to become disciples. Therefore, things were done *to* children to encourage that process. The garden model is the period in which adults did all they could *for* children to enable them to thrive and grow—as in, “bloom where they are planted.” The main idea was that learning should be pleasant and enjoyable so that growth can happen naturally. There is validity in these two perceptions of the child, but the limitations are significant. The life model is a period in which learning takes place as a partnership *with* the child. The relationship between the

¹⁷⁴ Larson, et al, 22.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 23.

adult and child is key in this period. Along with the differing prepositions, a pedagogical difference is also evident. The first period focused on the content. The goal was to make sure the content was learned. The second period was student-focused, making sure the child was enjoying the lesson and the learning experience. The final period emphasized the process by which learning takes place—that it requires holistic engagement by the learner in order to be formational. These delineations are tendencies, not clear absolute distinctions.¹⁷⁷

A Legacy of Faith

It has been evident throughout history, that failure to pass down truth to the next generation will result in “everyone doing what is right in their own eye,” (Judges 17:6). According to Judges 2:7-11, God’s people served him for as long as Joshua and his elders were alive. Once Joshua and the elders died, however, there arose another generation who, tragically, did not know the Lord. How is this possible? Believers are all just one generation away from unbelief. It is the parents’ responsibility to pass the truth along to their children. This is no area in which they should drop the baton.¹⁷⁸ In order for a legacy of faith to be passed down to the next generation successfully, parents must necessarily saturate both themselves and their children with the uncontaminated Word of God that provides for them everything they need for faith and practice.

¹⁷⁷ John H. Westerhoff III, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 3rd ed. (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2012), 102–103.

¹⁷⁸ Williams, *Gospel Family*, 44.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Based on the literature review, the current trends reveal that in churches nationwide, many parents are unaware of their divine mandate to evangelize and disciple their children at home. As a result, they have abdicated this responsibility to the church by way of Sunday School and youth ministries, which have proved ineffective in preparing these young people for a life of faith. Many Christian parents do not understand that the greatest need for their children is not physical comforts but spiritual health. Though ensuring their child's temporal wellbeing is necessary and noble, they need to be made aware that their ultimate goal as parents should be to provide spiritual nourishment that will lead their child to eternity with Christ. Whether or not this training will lead to salvation, depends on the sovereignty of God. However, it is the parents' job to sow the seed, and leave the convincing and convicting to the Holy Spirit.

In this post-Christian society in which Christian values are no longer the norm, it is crucial that Christian parents affirm in word and deed that children are a gift and a "heritage from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3), that disciple-making begins in the home, and that no greater investment can be made than that they would raise godly children who will live for Christ. Therefore, churches must train parents to become their children's spiritual trainers.¹⁷⁹ Once equipping young parents to disciple their own children becomes the standard, and segregating families in the form of children and youth ministries has been eliminated from the church, the result will be that family-integrated churches where both the family and the church work together closely to create the optimal setting for raising up children in the way they should go and training young men and women for Christ. The Bible clearly reveals that God chose the family to pass

¹⁷⁹ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 205.

down His righteousness from one generation to the next. The church's attention should be to encourage fathers to train up godly children, and to encourage mothers to nurture their young both physically and spiritually. Equipping fathers to evangelize and disciple their children and giving them a vision for leading their families in pursuing the knowledge of God, should be one of the primary goals of the church.¹⁸⁰ Then the multigenerational view of Titus 2 principle will begin to take effect, in which the young people will be delivered from the corrupting effects of peer-inspired youth culture. Instead, the church will provide what young people so desperately need: mature adults who will be their examples and their teachers.¹⁸¹

The problem this thesis project is addressing is that many Christian parents, who attend various churches in the Rio Grande Valley, failed to accomplish their God given task of evangelizing and discipling their children at home. The result, as the literature review indicated, is that many young adults in these churches, who grew up in Christian homes and attended both Sunday school and youth group, are abandoning both the church and the Christian faith post high school. Therefore, this six-week program provided training in biblical parenting principles to parents who attend CBC and parents whose children attended CCA (representing 5 churches in the McAllen area). Specifically, the goal of this six week training program was to provide training to equip parents with tools that would enable them to conduct Bible study and family worship in an age-appropriate manner, so that their children would grow up understanding the Word of God and have a biblical worldview that would direct their daily decisions.

¹⁸⁰ Fox, *Family Integrated Church*, 73.

¹⁸¹ Brown, *A Weed in the Church*, 3731.

Research Design and Methodology

A mixed methods approach to data collection was utilized in this research. According to John W. Creswell, both qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches, when used separately, have their limitations. Therefore, the mixed methods approach provided more insight into the problem that was addressed in this research.¹⁸² This mixed methods research took place in two phases. The surveys provided the numeric or quantitative data generated from the trends, attitudes, and opinions of the single-group sample population, while the open-ended interviews/questionnaires, pre/post assessments provided the qualitative data.¹⁸³ The dependent variable in this training is the ability of the parents to raise children with a biblical worldview that will guide their daily decision. This will then cause a reduction of the amount of young people leaving the Christian faith post high school, as a result of their ability to understand what they believe, why they believe it, how to live according to those principles, and to be able to share it and defend it. The independent variable was equipping Christian parents to be the primary spiritual shepherds of their children (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4), by providing training in biblical principles of parenting (represented by the six week training).¹⁸⁴

Population

The participants consisted of parents who have children ten years old or younger at home. The sample in this study consisted of (N = 16), minimally represented parents from CBC and CCA. According to Sensing, when it comes to sample size that will represent the population that

¹⁸² John W. Creswell; J. David Creswell. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc., 2020), Kindle. Loc. 235.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁸⁴ See Appendix C for breakdown of the Training Sessions.

is being studied, quality is more important than quantity.¹⁸⁵ In this study, the population comprised of a two-parent home (mother and father). According to the demographic survey, out of 16 participants, 93.3% were women and 6.3% were men. The age range was that 3 (18.8%) were between 26-35; 10 (63%) were between 36-45; and 3 (18.8%) were between 46-55. The age range of the participants' children was 2 (0-35) months; 2 (3-6); and 16 (7-10). All of these parents are members of various churches in the McAllen Area. However, they do not all attend church on a regular basis. 75% (12) attend 4+ times a month, 6% (1) attend 3 times a month, 6% (1) attend 2 times a month, 13% (2) attend once a month, while 13% (2) do not attend at all.

Sampling Challenges

As soon as the IRB approval was secured, this researcher met with the CBC church planning committee, which was comprised of all the pastoral staff, to formulate an implementation plan. At that point, the Pastor for Families with Children supplied the contact information of potential candidates for this training program. Prior to emailing the recruitment letters however, the pastor sent out emails to the entire congregation to inform them about the upcoming training. Out of 800+ members and attendees, only four showed interest. Most of the potential candidates that were on the list supplied by the Pastor of Families with Children did not have emails, therefore, these families had to be contacted via phone calls. Although some were willing to provide their emails, in order to receive further information, most of the parents did not want to participate for various reasons. Some blamed the language barrier as a reason not to attend. Around 60% of those contacted were Spanish speaking. Since they were not fluent in English, they did not believe that they would benefit from the training. Some simply did not want to add another church related zoom training/Bible study to their repertoire. Yet others blamed the

¹⁸⁵ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research* (Eugene: WIPF & Stock, 2011), Kindle, loc. 85.

COVID-19 pandemic for their unwillingness/inability to attend. Since they had their children at home all day, they did not have the privacy nor the time to focus on such an in-depth training at this time. Most of them stated that they would consider committing to such training in the future when things go back to normal. Out of the four parents who showed initial interest, only two decided to participate. The recruitment emails were sent to those with emails, however, after two weeks, only two of them responded.

An alternative plan had to be sought. An invitation for this training was extended to parents whose children attended CCA, a non-denominational Christian school, which is another ministry setting for this researcher. After meeting with the leadership of this Christian institution and presenting the goal of this research project, an approval for conducting training was obtained. Once a list of potential candidates was received, the screening survey was emailed. It was later discovered that some of these parents do occasionally attend CBC, however they are currently members of five different churches in the McAllen area. Aside from adding this new setting, the recruitment criteria remained the same. Even with this new list however, the recruitment survey that was sent out to 160 parents only yielded a response of 10%, which is a reflection of the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the candidates were identified, the request letter that included the consent letter, the 16-question survey, and the legacy of faith questionnaire were emailed to the candidates. When the completed surveys were received, the weekly training sessions were scheduled.

Intervention Design

The stated purpose of this DMIN action research thesis is to train parents at Calvary Baptist Church and Covenant Christian Academy in biblical principles of parenting. These training sessions focused both on the essentials of the Christian faith and principles of biblical

parenting simultaneously. A survey of sixteen questions and a questionnaire of ten open-ended questions were the primary research tools for this project. These questions determined whether Christian parents at CBC and CCA understood their God given mandate. Specifically, the first eight questions determined parental perceptions of their responsibility as the primary spiritual trainers of their children. The second eight questions determined parental practices in evangelizing and discipling their children. The questionnaire was utilized to ascertain how the participants' background influenced the way they currently parent their children.

This six week program focused primarily on parents who still have young children at home, including single parents. This study was limited to parents who have children ten years old and younger. Due to the COVID-19 social distancing mandate, training was conducted via Zoom. In addition, for those parents who were unable to attend the live sessions, recorded videos and PDF PowerPoint documented sessions were offered. Various online tools, e-books, and other resources were also recommended.¹⁸⁶ Since the parents at CBC and CCA are taught biblical principles of parenting, then their children should be able to live out the Christian life by demonstrating it, proclaiming it, and defending it. It is hoped that this training would trigger a paradigm shift in the minds of these parents, as "Faith comes by hearing," (Romans 10:17). Whether they grew up in Christian homes or not, exposure to such information both should add to their existing knowledge and lead to a newfound awareness of their responsibility as Christian parents.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Prior to the first session, participants were asked to complete a pre-training assessment in order to evaluate whether or not the training was effective. True measure of growth was

¹⁸⁶ Refer to Appendix E (Resource Materials).

determined by comparing the pre to the post assessment. The first session briefly introduced participants to the program and laid out guidelines and expectations. They were provided information regarding extra resources and tools that would help them succeed. All the subsequent sessions followed the same format, in which the session began with an overview of the topic to be covered and all the key points that supported and illustrated the main topic. Multimedia and hands-on tools were utilized to ensure an effective grasp of the subject matter. These sessions were interactive to allow the participants the opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts and experiences. To evaluate the effectiveness of the training, at the end of the six weeks, a post training assessment was given to the participants who attended. The questions on the post assessment were identical as the pre assessment, except, two questions were added at the end to elicit the participants' thoughts on the effectiveness of this training and whether they had made what they learned a part of their routine. The measure of effectiveness of the training was determined by whether this new-found knowledge has become a regular part of the parents' discipleship routine at home.

The curriculum was divided into six weekly sessions. In these sessions, an exposition of Deuteronomy 6:1-9 was conducted. The parents were trained how to raise godly children both by understanding biblical principles of parenting and the developmental stages of their children. To be shaping influencers of their children however, parents were encouraged to be students of the Word themselves, in order to glean the wisdom it offers for every area of life, including parenting. In this training, parents also learned about the three phases of preparation in order to provide age-appropriate biblical education for their children. These three phases include, [Phase 1] The discipline and training phase: In this phase parents are to teach children not only to obey but also to honor their parents, elders, and authority. Children are taught to do what they are told,

to do it when they are told, and to do it with a respectful attitude (see Deuteronomy. 5:1-6; Ephesians 6:1-3; and Colossians 3:20). [Phase 2] The Catechism phase: The goal of catechism is to impart biblical theology. In this stage parents are to teach their children to believe and behave like Christians (see Ephesians 6:4). [Phase 3] The Discipleship phase: In this stage parents are to teach their children to apply what they have learned in the previous two stages. Parents will continue to both give verbal instruction and modeling as they hold their children accountable for emulating them (see Proverbs 22:6).¹⁸⁷

Although becoming a godly parent is a lifetime endeavor, and cannot be attained overnight, a fair trial period to evaluate the success of this program would be at the end of the six weeks. Each session was loaded with details of practical Christian living and principles of godly parenting. By the end of the six sessions, the parents received sufficient training in how to be a disciple, how to evangelize their children and how to be a genuine follower of Christ. Throughout this training they had the opportunity to study, meditate upon, and practice these biblical principles of parenting gleaned from the Word of God. For some it was a review and a reminder, but for others it was a completely new routine. Either way, the success of this training was determined by the daily application of what was taught. At the end of the six weeks, the parents learned how to do family worship, evangelism, discipleship, and how to make it their daily routine and regular habit. Progress in both knowledge and practice was monitored via weekly discussion questions.

Throughout this training program, they had the opportunity to take inventory of their walk with God and their task as parents. They learned that a godly parent whose desire is to raise godly children must first be a diligent student of the Word himself. A person cannot live by

¹⁸⁷ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 110-130.

principles he/she does not know and cannot give what they don't have. They learned that godly parenting is more than just providing for physical provision and managing behavior. Godly parenting includes providing a sanctifying environment for children. This can only occur by the combination of verbal training, discipline, and demonstration. They were made aware that, once the Holy Spirit through His Word begins to govern every area of their lives, they will progressively begin to claim their God given roles as both a privilege and a huge responsibility. As a result, implementing these new principles into their daily lives would become second nature to them. (See Appendix C for the breakdown of the training session).¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Paul Bucknell and Linda Bucknell, *Biblical Parenting: Raising Godly Children* (Pittsburgh: FoundationsForFreedom,2015), Kindle, loc. 168-177.

Chapter 4

Results

The goal of this training was to equip parents to become the spiritual shepherds of their children. Specifically, this training helped Christian parents embrace the pattern God has set in His Word for the way a family is to function and the role of parents within the family unit. According to Deuteronomy 6, proper evangelism and discipleship of children requires three fundamental steps: (1) Parents must have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, (2) Parents must live according to the principles laid out in Scripture, so they can teach their children by example, (3) Parents must teach the truth to their children both formally and informally.

This project used a mixed-methods approach of data collection, which included quantitative survey and qualitative open-ended questionnaires. By combining methods, the researcher was able to ensure that fundamental biases resulting from the use of a single method or a single observer were eliminated. Additionally, combining methods increased the credibility and validity of research findings.¹⁸⁹ Both the survey and the interview/questionnaires were used to glean a deeper insight into parental perceptions and practices regarding their duty as the spiritual shepherds of their children in the home. The open-ended questionnaire, consisting of the participants' upbringing, helped clarify the various events that contributed to the current mind set of the participants. Some multiple-answer questions were included as they are more effective in digging deeper into the underlying cause of the problem this study addressed. Both sets of data

¹⁸⁹ Helen Noble and Roberta Heale, *Triangulation in Research with Examples*, accessed May 2, 2020 <https://ebn.bmj.com/content/22/3/67>

revealed the direct responses of the participants. Upon reception of the data, some common themes were identified, and a category system was developed.

The quantitative survey made up of sixteen questions identified the parental perception and practices of biblical principles of parenting. This survey took less than ten minutes to complete. Part one of the survey questions, which dealt with parents' beliefs regarding their role in the spiritual development of their children, the responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Part two had to do with the actual practice of family worship or Bible study, and the responses ranged from seven or more times a week to never, (see Appendix A for specific survey questions).¹⁹⁰

Survey Results

Although a small sample, the results of these surveys were consistent with what the studies have revealed in the literature review. The lack of biblical literacy in the parents and of the failure of the church to equip parents to become the primary spiritual trainers of their children, which led to the mass youth exodus that is being witnessed, was apparent both in these surveys and in the discussions that took place during the training with the participants. The first part of the study explored the perceptions of parents regarding their responsibility to spiritually nurture their children.

Parental Perception Survey¹⁹¹

Question of Priorities

According to the Bible, parents are the primary spiritual shepherds of their children. However, when the clear mandate of Scripture is not followed, things start to deteriorate, as is

¹⁹⁰ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 216-217.

¹⁹¹ See Appendix A for Survey Questions.

evidenced by the various studies cited in this research. The survey confirmed that 63% of those who were surveyed prioritized family devotion in the home. However, upon further investigation, it was clear that many of these parents did not understand what family devotions or Bible study entails. In addition, during the training it was discovered that many of these parents did not grow up in homes where family devotions were practiced. Therefore, the lack of spiritual progress in the children is a result of parental ignorance of Scripture.

Desire to Conduct Family Worship

According to the survey, 43% of the participants expressed the desire to conduct family worship, however, they blame their failure on a lack of time. This is consistent with what the literature review indicated that the majority of parents do believe that they have the primary responsibility of discipling their children, however, not many take the time to even have a conversation on spiritual matters. According to a research conducted by the Barna Group, close to nine out of ten parents of children under age 13 (85%) believe they have the primary responsibility for teaching their children about religious beliefs and spiritual matters. Related research, however, revealed that a majority of parents do not spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials with their children.¹⁹²

Who is Responsible?

The survey revealed that 19% of the parents somewhat agreed that the church has the primary responsibility to teach biblical truth to their children, while 44% disagreed. Even so, many of these parents have yet to accept their divine mandate. The church is clearly on damage control mode, trying to provide the necessary spiritual nourishment to these children, who

¹⁹² Barna Research, accessed January 10, 2021 <https://www.barna.com/research/parents-accept-responsibility-for-their-childrens-spiritual-development-but-struggle-with-effectiveness/>

otherwise would be lost. However, instead of doing it for them, the church needs to equip them and provide the necessary supports and resources to help them succeed.

Answering Biblical/Theological Questions

The next question on the survey asked whether parents feel comfortable answering biblical questions and if they'd prefer someone else to answer those questions. 69% strongly disagreed that their child's questions should be answered by someone else, while 31% somewhat disagreed. The main concern in this situation is that the parents may attempt to answer their child's questions, however, if they themselves lack biblical knowledge the answers they give will only cause more confusion or lead to error. Therefore, the church must be intentional in discipling and equipping parents so they can grow spiritually, and at the same time provide training in biblical worldview training so they will be prepared to answer their children's tough questions.

Activity Vs. Quality Time

In addition to the above questions, this survey also asked whether the parents are willing to forgo eating meals with their children in order to ensure they are engaged in various activities that contribute to their future success. 63% of the parents strongly disagreed, while 25% somewhat disagreed. However, upon observation and discussions it is clear that both parents and children are under pressure to conform to societal norms of overactivity, which leaves no room for quality time. Concerning the cultural pressures that parents face, Baucham notes that when parents compare biblical mandate with societal norms, they feel as though something is missing and somehow they are depriving their children. Therefore, they dismiss the biblical standards and embrace what the experts of the day recommend, and they begin to blend into the culture.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 20.

Parents/Fathers must Disciple Children

Concerning the spiritual nurture of children, 100% of the participants strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that parents, particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage in a discipleship process with each of their children. 81% strongly agreed, while 19% somewhat agreed. However, mental ascent of this responsibility is not sufficient. According to research, most fathers have handed over this responsibility to their wives and most parents are part time parents at best. In fact, Jones notes, “The overwhelming majority of Christian parents are not actively engaged in any sort of battle for their children's souls. When it comes to the process of discipling their progeny, most Christian parents, especially fathers have abandoned the field.”¹⁹⁴

Is the Church Responsible?

To the question of whether church leaders are responsible for discipling children and teaching them to share the gospel, 75% of the participants strongly disagreed, 19% somewhat disagreed, while 6% somewhat agreed. As noted, the role of the church should be to equip parents and to provide supplemental training to the children. However, according to the literature review and upon observation, it is clear that these parents are not equipped to evangelize and disciple their children and have handed that responsibility to the church. They may claim that the responsibility should go to the parents, however, this has not been the case for many Christian parents.

Is Church Helpful?

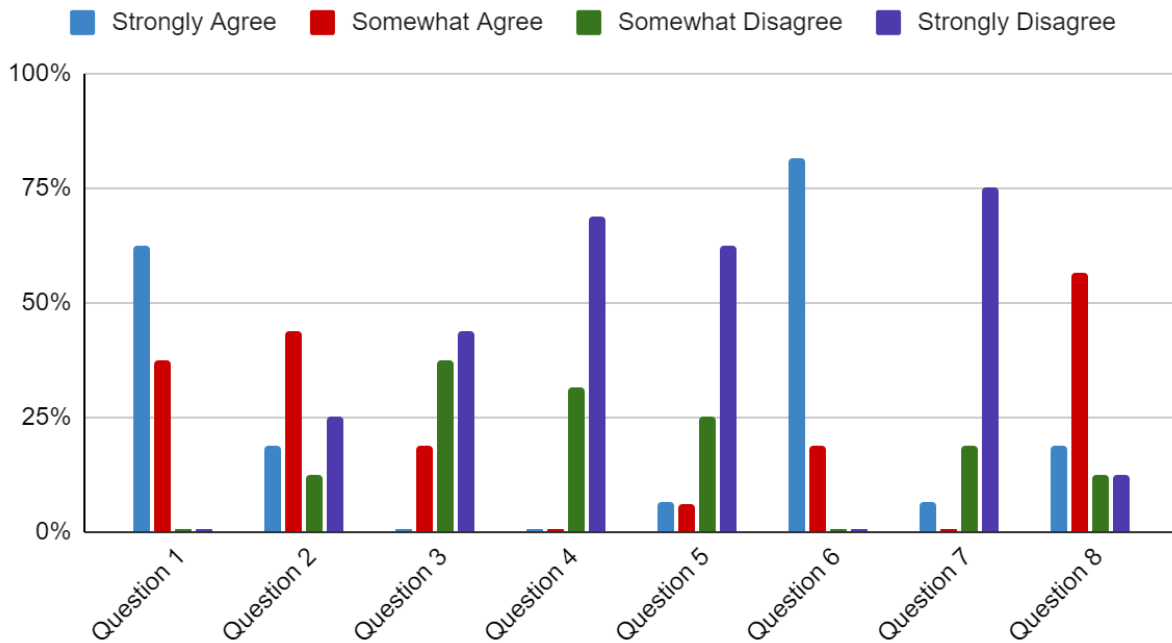
The next question asks if the church has developed a clear plan for the children’s spiritual growth. 19% strongly agreed, while 56% somewhat agreed. Again, the parents have answered this question favorably but when asked what the church has done to accomplish this task, no one

¹⁹⁴ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 24-25.

could provide a definitive answer other than Sunday school and youth group. As a result, during the training, it was discovered that many of these parents did not have enough biblical knowledge to conduct family worship or Bible study with their children.

Table 4.1

Part I: Parental Perception Survey Results



Parental Practice Survey¹⁹⁵

I Pray with My Child

When asked, other than at mealtimes, how many times in the past week they have prayed with their child, 44% said 7 or more times, 6% said 5-6 times, 31% said 3-4 times, 6% said 2 times, and 13% said once a week. Prayer is an integral part of the Christian life. However it does not seem to be a priority in many Christian homes. Both lack of knowledge and shortage of time

¹⁹⁵ See Appendix A for Survey Questions (Part 2).

have contributed to why parents fail to engage in any spiritual practices. In his research Jones notes,

For most parents, intentional processes of spiritual formation with their children range from sporadic to nonexistent. One out of every five parents admit to never engaging in practices of prayer, Bible reading, or worship in their households. More than 90 percent of parents see themselves as personally responsible for their children's Christian formation, but only few of them do anything consistent to disciple their offspring.¹⁹⁶

Family Meals

The next question on the parental practices survey asks how many times this past week has their family eaten together. 19% said 7 or more times, 13% said 5-6 times, 19% said 3-4 times, 38% said a couple times, and 13% said once. This proves that the majority of families are so overwhelmed with activities, that eating meals together or spending quality time with their families has become a rarity. Most of the informal teaching happens between parents and children takes place at the dinner table. Mealtimes is a great opportunity for families to discuss the events of the day and recall God's provision and protection that was apparent in the various activities. This is also a good opportunity for parents to teach life skills, manners, and biblical principles.

Family Bible Study

The next question asks how many times parents read the Bible with their children. 19% said 7 or more times, 31% said 5-6 times, 19% said 3-4 times, 13% said once. Thus, out the 16 participants, only 3 read the Bible to their children daily. During the training the parents admitted that the reason they send their children to a Christian school is so they can learn the Bible properly. Most feel inadequate and unprepared to be able to read and explain the Word of God to their children. Some even stated that their children have more biblical knowledge than they did.

¹⁹⁶ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 98-100.

Clearly then, the church must get serious about discipling these parents and encourage them to study the Bible for themselves. The church must also hold these parents accountable to ensure that they are actively engaged in their children's spiritual development.

Discussing Biblical/Spiritual Matters During Day-to-Day Activities

This question asks parents how often they have biblical or spiritual conversations while engaged in daily activities. 31% said 7 or more times a week, 13% said 5-6 times a week, 19% said 3-5 times a week, 31% said a couple of times a week, and 6% said once a week. If parents are not having biblical and spiritual discussions with their children daily, it is not possible for the children to form a biblical worldview. According to Deuteronomy 6, it is necessary to both formally and informally instruct them daily. The only way it will become a part of their reality is if it is being discussed and demonstrated by the parents on a regular basis. Parents must realize that it is not possible to raise godly children without God's Word. Cole asserts, "You cannot impart what you do not possess. If you are not walking in submission to God's Word, you cannot expect your children to do so. If you secretly look at sinful images on the Internet, you can't lecture your kids about moral purity, much less pray for their purity. If you are an angry man, you can't expect your kids to be sweet, compliant children. So, start with yourself!"¹⁹⁷

Family Worship

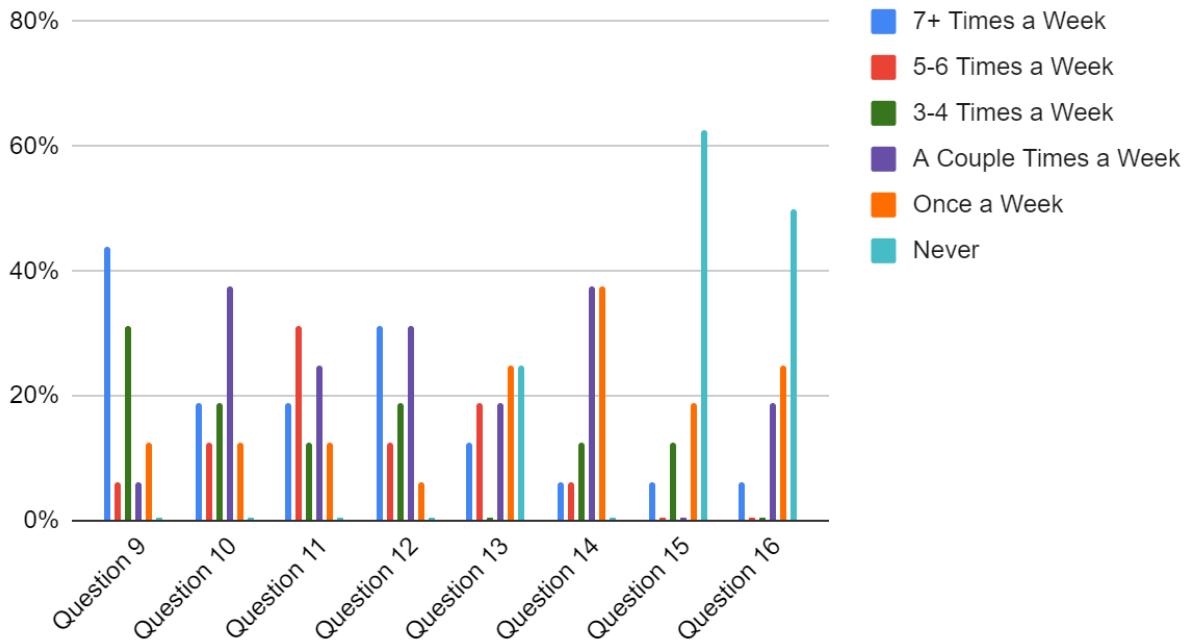
This question asks parents how many times in the past two months have they engaged in family devotions or worship. 13% said 7 or more times a week, 19% said 5-6 times a week, 19% said a couple of times a week, 25% said once a week, and 25% said never. The reason these participants are not engaging in family worship daily is either lack of time or lack of knowledge, which is consistent with the studies revealed in the literature review. If the children are not being

¹⁹⁷ Cole, *The Christian Home*, 2446.

taught the Word of God that guides their decisions daily, they will absorb information from television, social media, peers, and many other worldly sources. Whatever they are exposed to the most will form their worldview. Since they not routed and grounded in the Word of God, it is not surprising that they are lured by the first false doctrine or ungodly philosophy they hear once they leave home.

Table 4.2

Part II: Parental Practices



Questionnaire Results

A structured interview/questionnaire made up of ten questions was also utilized as a research tool to allow the participants the opportunity to share their background and exposure to biblical parenting. The researcher chose to add this method for its efficiency and accuracy. This method of questioning does not allow for any deviation from the topic at hand and can be carried out in a timely manner. Therefore, comparisons between responses can be easily analyzed as

there is no variation in the questions asked¹⁹⁸ (see Appendix B for Interview Questions). The data collected through the Interview/questionnaire was analyzed using google sheets. These questions were meant to generate honest responses from the parents and were helpful for the researcher to gauge the biblical literacy and daily habits of those who responded. In addition, the survey and questionnaire appeared to have produced a paradigm shift in their minds, so they can recognize their failures and short comings as Christian parents and lead them on a quest for the biblical pattern of parenting that God Himself has established in His Word. For several participants, this “aha” experience led to the desire to attend this training. The predicted outcome is that these parents will become diligent students of the Word themselves and will in turn pass down that truth to their children.

Legacy of Faith Questionnaire¹⁹⁹

Christian Upbringing

This question asked whether the participants had a Christian upbringing 50% said they had a Christian upbringing, in which at least one of their parents was a professing Christian. 25% grew up in a catholic household, and the remaining 25% did not have a Christian upbringing. Even the parents who grew up in Christian households were not taught how to be spiritual trainers because their parents did not model it to them. Clearly many families have failed to pass down a spiritual legacy to their children, which could potentially become a multigenerational problem, unless the church becomes intentional in equipping these parents, in order to stop this devastating cycle.

¹⁹⁸ Hitesh Bhasin, *Types of Interviews in Qualitative Research*, accessed May 2, 2020 <https://www.marketing91.com/types-of-interviews-in-qualitative-research/>

¹⁹⁹ See Appendix B for Questionnaires.

Table 4.3

| | Christian Upbringing | Non-Christian Upbringing | Catholic Upbringing |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Q1: Christian Upbringing | 50% | 25% | 25% |

Male Headship/Spiritual Leadership

This question asks the participants if they grew up in a home in which the father was the spiritual head of the household. 25% (4) said yes. 13% (2) said the mother was the spiritual head, 25% (4) said there was no spiritual head, 25% said both parents were the spiritual head, and 13% (2) said others (pastor, relatives) were the spiritual head. Several of the fathers who participated admitted that they felt inadequate to lead their families spiritually, as they never had an example. Therefore, they either completely avoided it or handed that responsibility to their wives. Some of the participants, during the discussions also noted that that they grew up in a harsh and legalistic environment in which the fathers were to be feared but not necessarily respected for their character, which demonstrates that their fathers did not pass down a spiritual legacy. Several of the female participants said that they took on the responsibility of spiritual leadership because they grew up in homes where their mothers were the spiritual heads. During the discussions, some of the mothers also stated that they had to take on that responsibility, since the fathers failed to do so.

Table 4.4

| | Father was Spiritual Leader | Mother was Spiritual Leader | No Spiritual Leader in Home | Both Parents were Spiritual Leaders | Other People (Pastor, Relatives) were Spiritual Leaders |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Q2: Male Headship/Spiritual Leadership | 25% | 13% | 25% | 25% | 13% |

Family Devotions

This question asked the participants how they conducted family devotions or family worship and what that looked like. 13% (2) said that they had family devotions daily. 6% (1) said they had family devotions frequently. 13% (2) they had family devotions once week, while 69% (11) said that they never had family devotions growing up. It is glaringly obvious then that many parents today are not conducting family devotions because they never were shown how. It is not possible to internalize, practice and pass down values that do not exist.

Table 4.5

| | Daily | Frequently | Once a Week | Never |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------------|-------------|-------|
| Q3: Family Worship/ Devotions | 13% | 6% | 13% | 69% |

Parent Involvement in Spiritual Development

This question asked the participants to describe their parents' involvement in their spiritual development. 63% (10) said their parents were involved, 25% (4) said their parents were minimally involved, while 13% (2) said that their parents were not involved at all. One of the participants whose parents were involved stated that her parents practically lived Deuteronomy 6. Others admitted that their parents were more concerned about their outward behavior rather than their inner character. During discussion some of the participants admitted, until it was explained to them during the training, they too thought that making sure kids attended Sunday school and youth group constituted as parental participation in spiritual development. A couple of them also recall that since parents were barely around, they practically raised themselves. They considered it a miracle that they did not make horrible mistakes that ruined their lives, and are grateful that God saved them.

Table 4.6

| | Parents were Involved | Minimal Involvement | No Involvement |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Q4: Parent Involvement in Spiritual Formation | 63% | 25% | 13% |

Priority of Scripture in the Home

This question asks the participants whether Scripture was a priority in the home or whether biblical principles were taught and practiced. 44% (7) said that biblical principles were taught and practiced, 19% (3) said that their parents demanded good behavior and they taught good morals but did not really refer to the Bible., and 38% (6) stated that biblical principles were neither taught nor practiced. Some even added that they had many Bibles in their homes, but no one ever read them. One of the participants even stated that they had an open oversized Bible as decoration, however it was neither read nor discussed. During the training, several of the participants, even those who stated that biblical principles were practiced in the home, noted that what they learned at home was very minimal and most of it was misleading, meaning that it was used as a scare tactic to make the children behave. However, these hell and brimstone discussions were not effective in producing lasting change. One of the participants admits that her parents were so legalistic that it had the opposite effect on her and her siblings. She said that they demanded perfection from the kids, while they themselves did not practice what they preached. Therefore, the children learned to play the game at home, while they did whatever they wanted outside the home. Clearly this approach is extremely damaging and has a lasting effect on the next generation. Unless God transforms the heart, demanding good behavior from children cannot restrain evil. Bettis notes, “a wise shepherd focuses on capturing and keeping the heart of his or her child. Three thousand years ago, Solomon knew that to teach his son he first

needed his heart. Fifteen times in the opening chapters he appeals to his son’s heart. Later he implores ‘My son, give me your heart,’” (Proverbs 23:26).²⁰⁰

Table 4.7

| | Yes, Biblical Principles Taught/ Practiced | Parents were Moral but did not Refer to Bible | No the Bible was not Taught at All |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Q5: Bible (Biblical Principles Taught/ Practiced) | 44% | 19% | 38% |

Asking Questions and Voicing Concerns

The next question asked whether the participants were able to ask questions and voice their doubts to their parents. 63% (10) said yes to this question, 25% (4) said no, while 13% (2) stated that their parents referred them to others, such as the pastor when they had questions. It is extremely critical that parents answer spiritually questions of their children biblically, which can only occur if the parents themselves are biblically literate. It is inevitable that children will have tough questions at some point in their lives. However, several of the participants indicated that even those who were able to ask questions, did not have satisfactory answers to clarify their spiritual confusion, which demonstrates lack of biblical literacy of the parents. Parents truly do need be trained to turn to God’s Word, where God has supplied everything needed for life and practice.

Table 4.8

| | Was Able to Ask Questions and Voice Concerns | Was not Able to Ask Questions or Voice Concerns | My Parents Referred Me to the Pastor or Others |
|--|--|---|--|
| Q6: Was Able to Ask Spiritual Questions/ Voice Doubts | 63% | 25% | 13% |

²⁰⁰ Bettis, *The Disciple Making Parent*, 95.

Active Church Membership

This question asked whether the participants had parents who were active members of a local church. 69% (11) said yes. 13% (2) said no, and 25% (4) said that although members of a local church, their parents did not get involved. Several of the participants stated that their parents were so active in the church, they barely had time for their own families. Many parents are so active in their church and in their communities that they neglect their children. As the parents were teaching other church members, they failed to be their children’s spiritual trainers. As a result, several of the participants were spiritually malnourished and resented their parents for not being around. Some of the participant on the other hand stated that their parents were great role models for them in that they balanced being available to their children and being involved in their local churches.

Table 4.9

| | Parents Active in Church (Taught/ Volunteered) | Parents were not Members of any Church | Parents Attended but did not Get Involved |
|---|---|--|--|
| Q7: Parents were Active Church Members | 69% | 25% | 6% |

Sunday School/Youth Group

This question asked the participants if they grew up attending Sunday school or youth group and if so, to describe how it impacted their spiritual development. 69% (11) said yes, 25% (4) said no, while 13% (2) said they attended youth group on Wednesdays but not Sunday school. 69% (11) said that they learned a great deal about God in Sunday school or youth group. 6% (1) stated that it helped them stay focused on their priorities. 6% said that it helped them to stay focused and accountable. 19% (3) said that they attended for fun but did not really learned much. During the training it was discovered that one hour a week in Sunday school was not

helpful to several of the participants who attended either Sunday school or youth group. Some who attended youth group said it was helpful in their spiritual development, as it was the only spiritual exposure they had in their lives. Those whose parents did family worship at home said that it was beneficial to them, as it added to their existing knowledge. Others stated that it was fun but they didn't benefit spiritually, which reflects the findings revealed on the literature review. Mattera notes that one hour a week in Sunday school cannot possibly counter the hours of worldly views instilled in children through school, friends, and media. Therefore, parents need to take the lead in the training and discipling of their children so that the influence of the home and the church can more effectively protect the children from the influence of the ungodly humanistic mindset of the world system.²⁰¹

Table 4.10

| | Grew Up Attending Sunday School/ Youth Group | Did not Grow Up Attending Sunday School/ Youth Group | Attended Youth Group with Friends on Wednesdays |
|--|--|--|---|
| Q8: Attended Sunday School/ Youth Group | 62% | 25% | 13% |

| | I Learned a Great Deal About God | It Helped Me to Stay Focused on My Priorities | It Helped Me to Stay Engaged and Accountable | I Attended for Fun but did not Really Learn Much |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Impact of Sunday School/ Youth Group | 69% | 6% | 6% | 19% |

²⁰¹ Mattera, *Walking in Generational Blessings*, 129.

Legacy of Faith

This asked whether the participants thought that their upbringing prepared them to pass down the legacy of faith to their children. 69% (11) said yes, and 31% (5) said no. One participant said that although her parents were good role models, she still has a lot to learn. Another said she constantly goes back to how her parents dealt with the wrong choices she made, and she tries to follow their footsteps. Several of them remember all the moral lessons their parents instilled in them but wish they had more biblical training in dealing with their children. A couple of the participants said that they are grateful for the foundation that their parents laid for them. Yet others said that although their parents did what they could, they did not leave a very strong spiritual legacy. Cole acknowledges that leaving an impressive legacy is not guaranteed, however, parents can make an impact for Christ on this world if they raise up godly generations by loving God fervently, teaching their children diligently, and living in the world carefully.²⁰²

Table 4.11

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|-----|
| Q9: Parents Passed Down a Legacy of Faith | 69% | 31% |

Spiritual Influence

This final question asked who the participants considered to be the most spiritually influential person in their lives. 44% (7) said parents, 19% (3) said their pastor, 6% (1) said teacher, 25% (4) said extended family, while 6% (1) said a neighbor. One participant said that, although she grew up in a Christian home, it was not until she was in college that she understood what Christianity was all about, due to her pastor's great spiritual impact on her. Several

²⁰² Cole, *The Christian Home*, 2667.

participants admit that they came to Christ by observing the lives of their extended families, since their parents were either not believers or did not live what they professed to believe. One participant even recalls that her parents were examples of how not to parent, and she is determined to do the opposite of what they did. Fortunately, God saved her soul through the ministry of others outside of her home.

Table 4.12

| | My Parent(s) | My Pastor | My Teacher | Extended Family | My Neighbor |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Q10: Spiritual Influence | 44% | 19% | 6% | 25% | 6% |

Pre/Post Assessments²⁰³

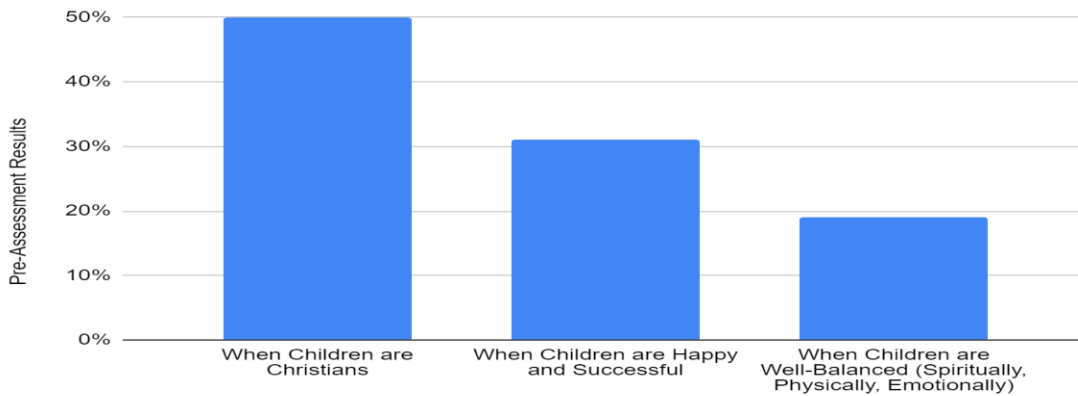
Both the pre and post assessments were identical questions, and were created to evaluate the participants' perspectives pre and post training.

Success in Parenting

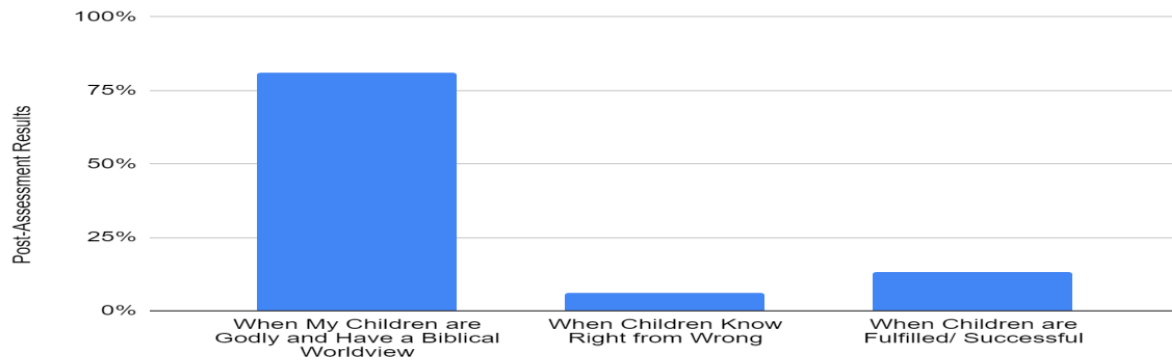
The first question was asked to illicit what the participants considered success in parenting. On the preassessment, 50% (8) said when children are Christians, 31% (5) said when children are happy and successful, while 19% (3) said when children grow up well balanced (spiritually, physically, and emotionally). However, after the training their answers changed dramatically. On the post assessment 81% (13) said success in parenting would be when children are godly and have a biblical worldview, 6% (1) said when children knows right from wrong, and 13% (2) said when children are fulfilled and successful. Clearly the training was helpful in helping them realize that their child's greatest need is, his/her relationship with Jesus Christ.

²⁰³ See Appendix D for Pre/Post Questions.

Q1: How do you define success in parenting?



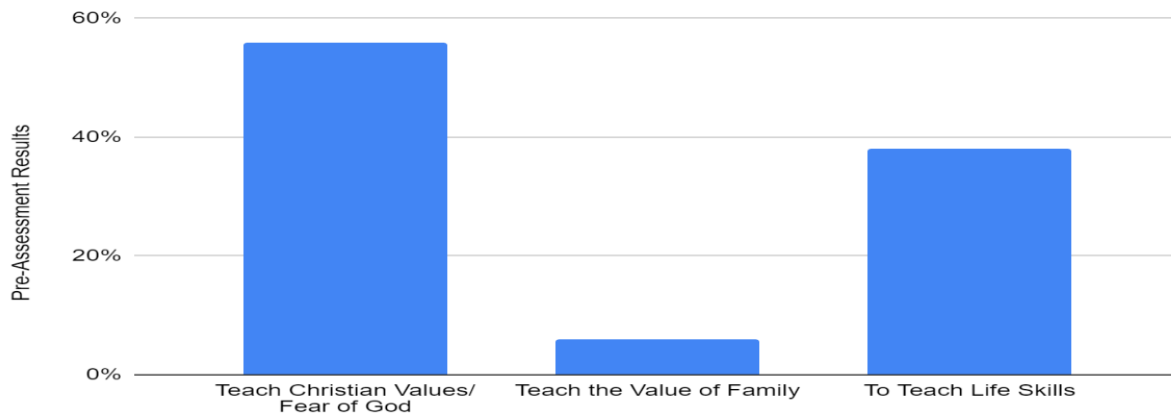
Q1: How do you define success in parenting?



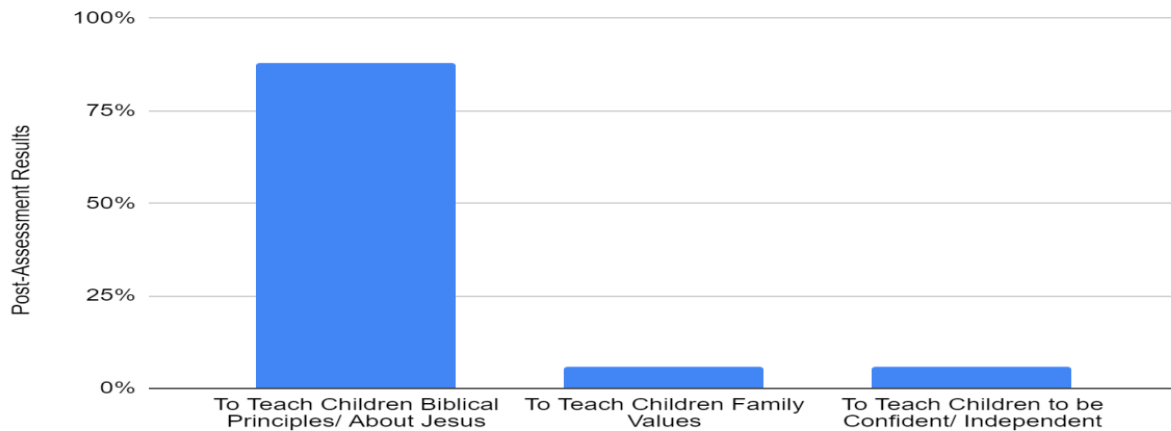
Parents' Ultimate Goal

The second question on both the pre and post assessments asked what they considered to be their ultimate goal as parents. On the pre-assessment 56% (9) said to teach Christian values, 6% (1) said to teach the value of family, and 38% (6) said to teach life skills. On the post-assessment, 88% (14) said to teach children biblical principles/about Jesus, 6% (1) said to teach children about the value of family, and 6% (1) to teach children to be confident and independent. The change of attitude regarding the priority of the parents is significant. It is obvious that the training was effective in helping them understand their primary responsibility, which is raising godly offspring (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6).

Q2: What do you consider your ultimate goal as a parent to be?



Q2: What do you consider your ultimate goal as a parent to be?

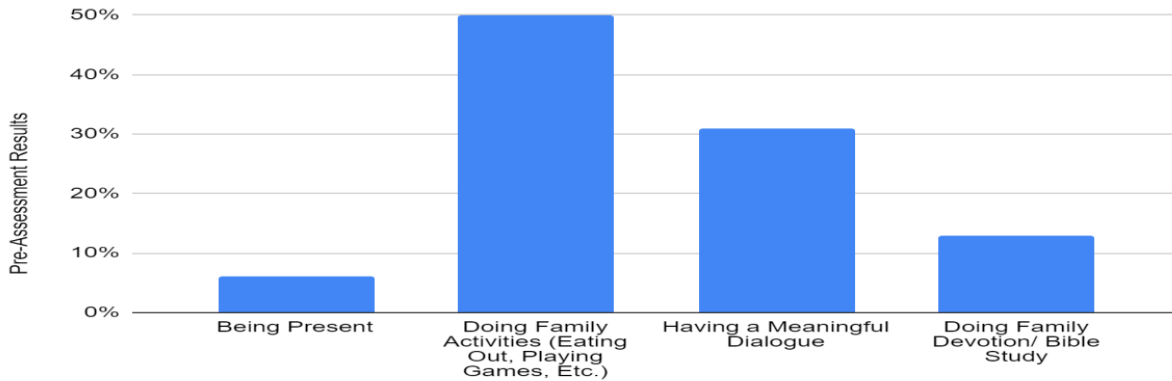


Quality Time

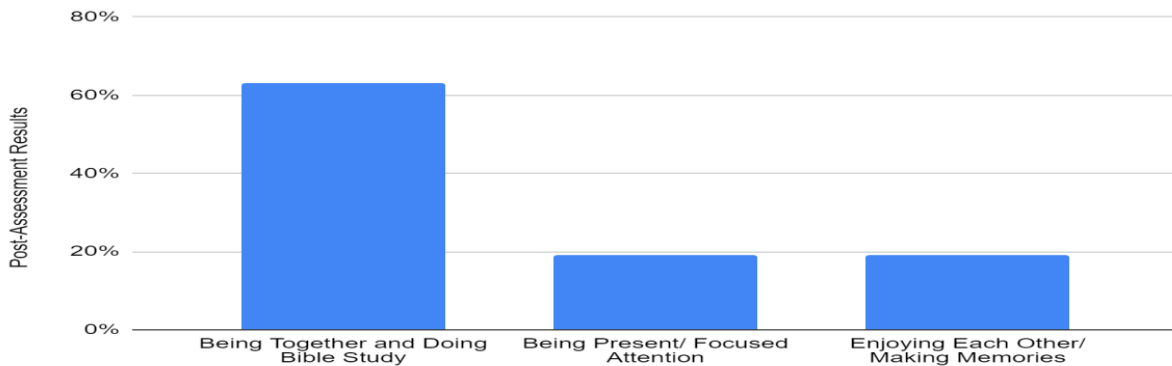
This question asked parents what they viewed as quality time with their families. On the pre-assessment, 6% (1) said being present, 50% (8) said doing family activities, 31% (5) said having a meaningful dialogue, and 13% (2) said doing family devotions/Bible study. On the post-assessment, 63% (10) said being together and doing Bible study, 19% (3) said being present and giving children focused attention, 19% (3) said enjoying each other/making memories. Clearly the training has caused a paradigm shift in what the parents consider to be quality time. After the expository training of Deuteronomy 6, the parents understood that nothing qualifies as

quality time apart from God’s Word. When God’s Word is interwoven into every activity, it enhances interactions and adds value to the parent/child relationships.

Q3: What constitutes quality time as a family?



Q3: What constitutes quality time as a family?

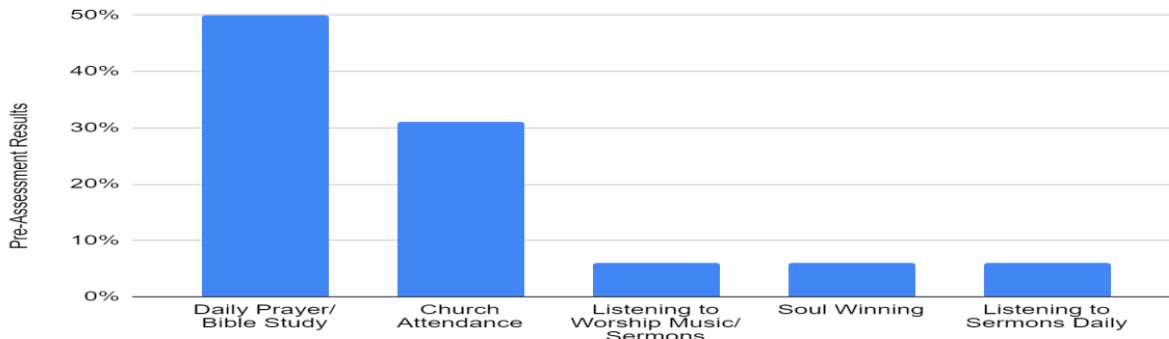


Godly Habits

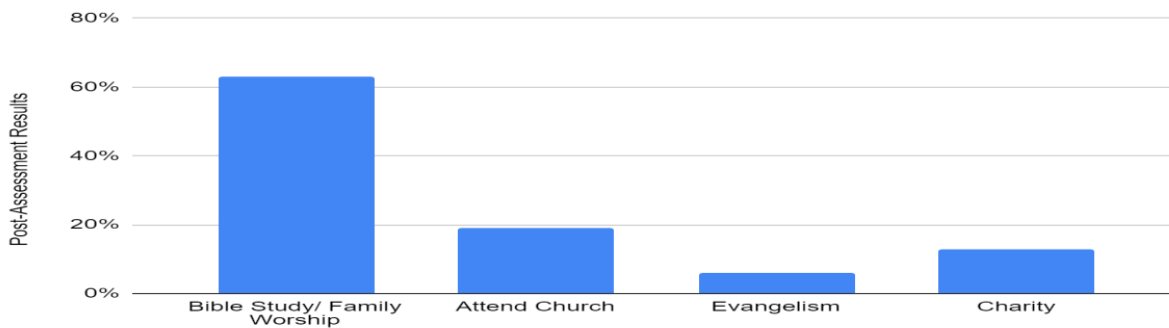
This question asks parents to describe some of the habits in which they engage that demonstrate their devotion to God. On the pre-assessment, 50% (8) said prayer/Bible study, 31% (5) church attendance, 6% (1) listening to worship music/sermons, 6% (1) soul winning, and 6% (1) listening to sermons daily. The post-assessment was slightly different in describing the habits the participants engaged in to demonstrate devotion to God. 63% (10) said Bible study/family worship, 19% (3) said attend church, 6% (1) said evangelism, and 13% (2) said charity. It’s encouraging to see that the majority of the parents are engaged in Bible study and family

worship, which seems to have increased after the training. It demonstrates not only that the parents are engaged in private Bible study, but they are also conducting family worship as they instill the necessity of daily Bible reading habits into their children.

Q4: What habits demonstrate your devotion to God?



Q4: What habits do you engage in that demonstrate your devotion to God?

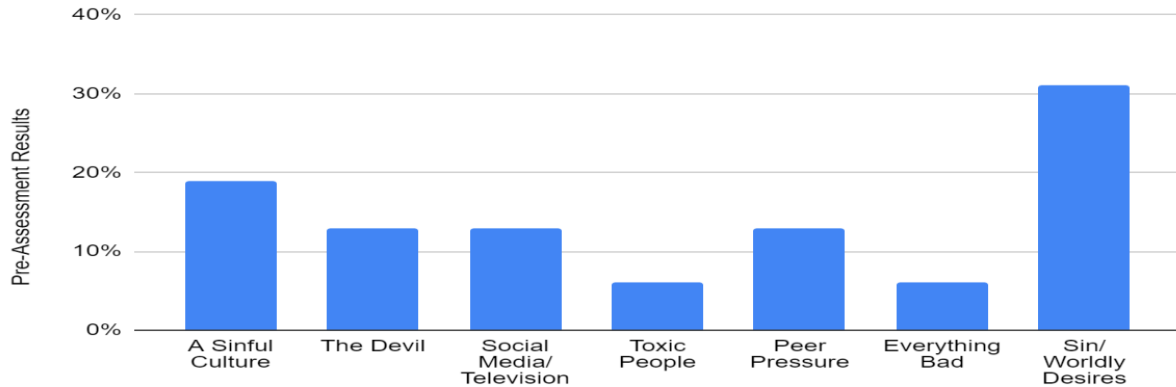


Greatest Danger Children Will Face

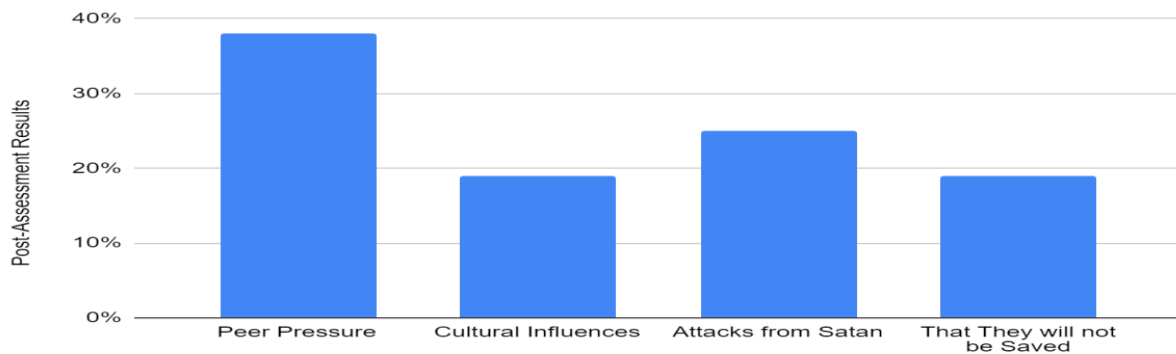
This question asked parents what they considered the greatest danger their children would face. On the pre-assessment, 19% (3) said a sinful culture, 13% (2) said the devil, 13% (2) social media/television, 6% (1) said toxic people, 13% (2) said peer pressure, 6% (1) said everything bad, and 31% (5) said sin/worldly desires. On the post assessment, 38% (6) said peer pressure, 19% (3) said cultural influences, 25% (4) said attacks from Satan, and 19% (3) said that they will not be saved. Clearly only 3 parents understand that the greatest danger their children would face

is the wrath of God that would be poured out on the disobedient. If they understood that, they would consider family worship and teaching biblical principles to their children a priority.

Q5: What is the greatest danger your children will face in this world? vs.



Q5: What do you believe is the greatest danger your children will face in this world?

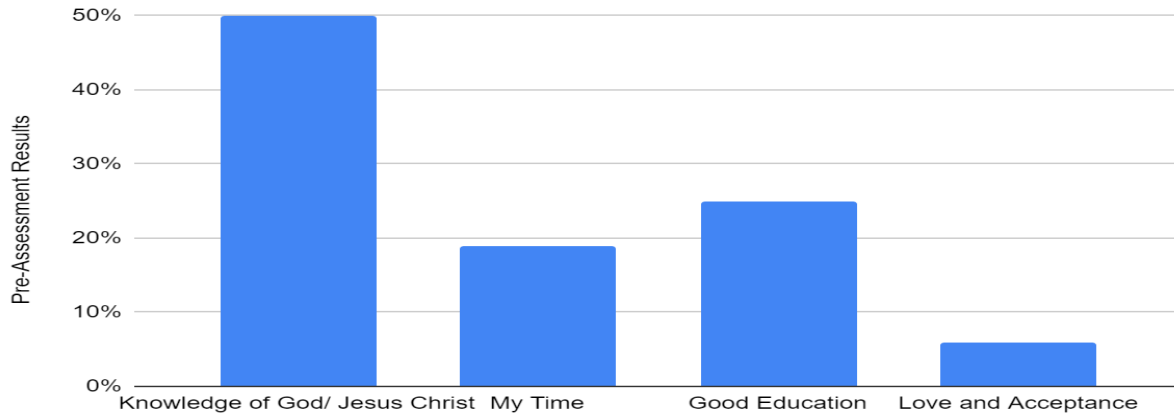


Most Important Thing

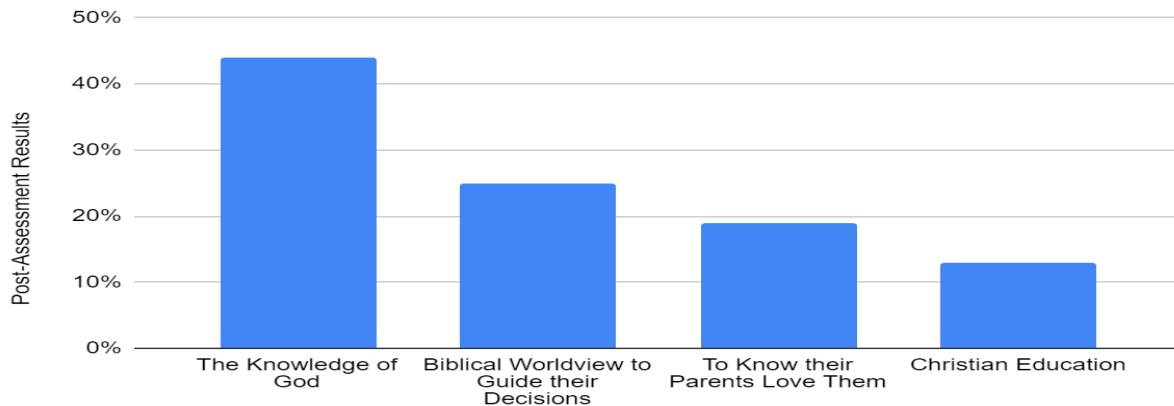
This question asked parents what they considered the important thing to give their children before they leave home would be. On the pre-assessment, 50% (8) said the knowledge of God, 19% (3) said my time, 25% (8) said good education, 6% (1) said love and acceptance. On the post-assessment, 44% (7) said the knowledge of God, 25% (4) said biblical worldview, 19% said to know that their parents love them, and 13% said Christian education. This reveals that after the training, 88% acknowledge the importance of leaving a legacy of faith to their

children, whether it is passing it down by teaching biblical principles, teaching biblical worldview, or sending them to a Christian school.

Q6: What do you consider to be the most important thing you can give your children by the time they leave your home?



Q6: What do you consider to be the most important thing you can give your children by the time they leave your home?

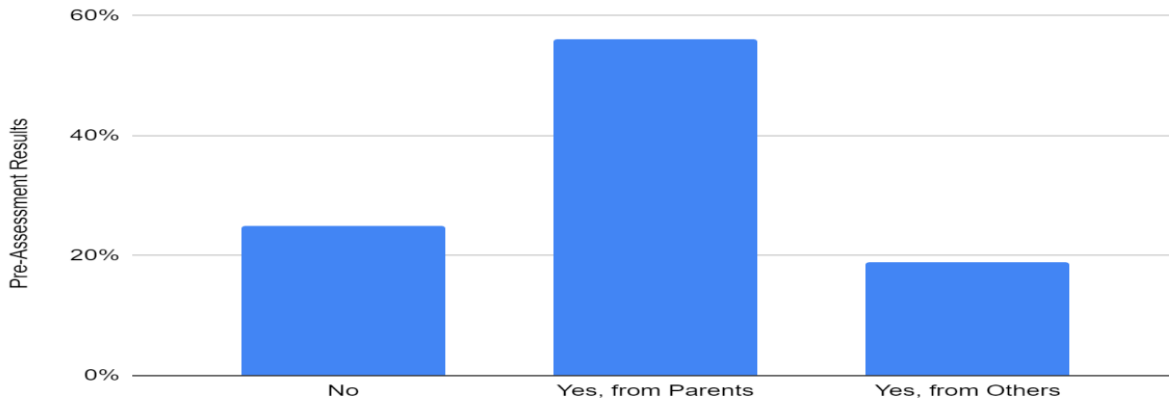


Instruction on Nurturing Children

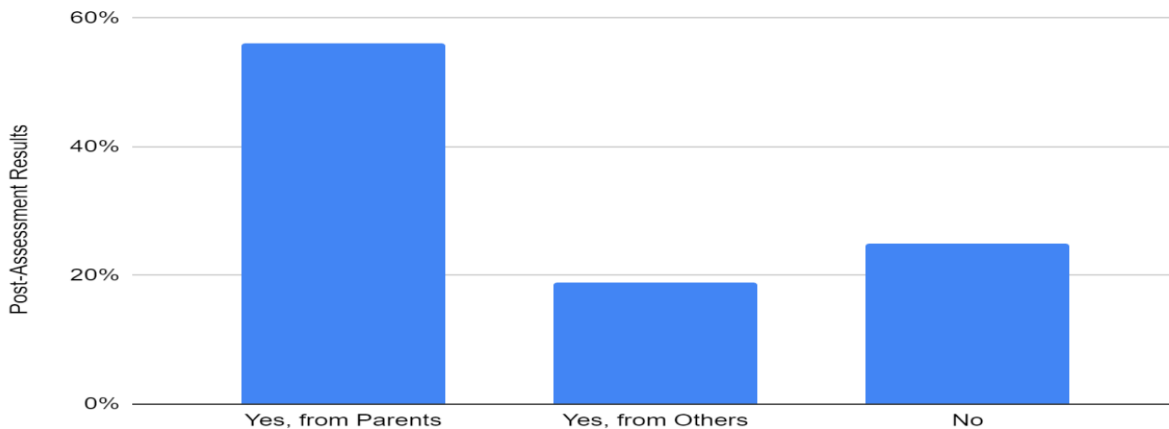
This question asked the participants if they had instruction nurturing their child’s faith. Both the pre and post assessment were identical. 25% (4) said no, 56% (9) said they learned from their parents, and 19% (3) said they learned from others. Although it didn’t reflect on the survey, 100% of the participants acknowledged that this training sufficiently equipped them and were able to immediately begin conducting family worship/Bible study with their children. Many of

these parents are not bad parents. In fact it is clear that they want the best for their children. What is lacking, however, is that they did not have the kind of parents that modeled biblical parenting to them. Furthermore, once they became Christians and joined a local church, they were not disciplined nor equipped to be the kind of parents mandated in Scripture.

Q7: Did you have any instruction in nurturing your child's faith?



Q7: Did you have instruction in nurturing your child's faith?

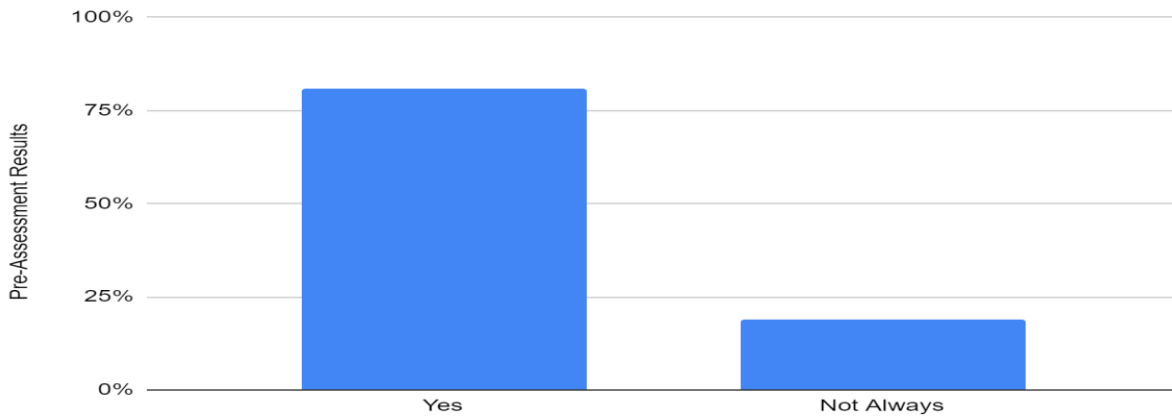


Nurturing A Child's Faith

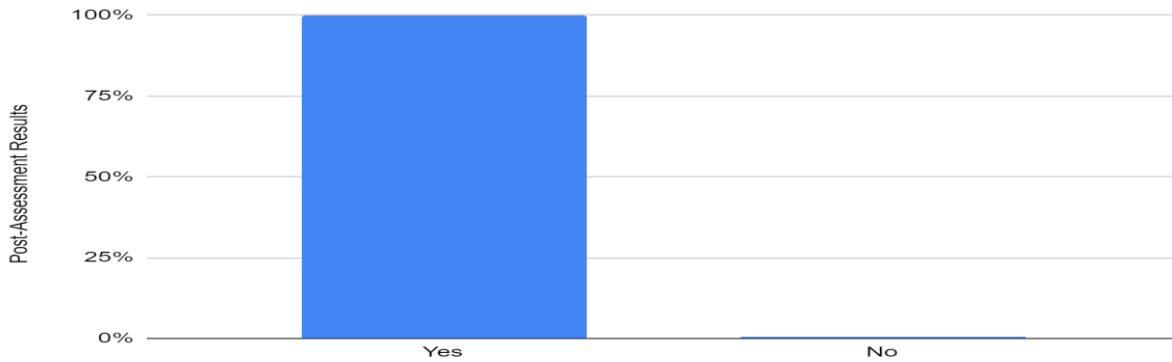
This question asked parents whether nurturing their child's faith is a priority to them. On the pre-assessment, 81% (13) said yes while 19% (3) said not always. On the post-assessment 100% said yes. Many churches are not discipling parents in their congregations to be the spiritual

trainers of their children. Many parents need exposure to the Word of God and training in biblical parenting. Once they understood their responsibility, several of the participants were ready and willing to implement what they learned right away. As Baucham notes, “Our children are falling away because we are asking the church to do what God designed the family to accomplish. Discipleship and multi-generational faithfulness begins and ends at home. At best, the church is to play a supporting role as it “equips the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12).”²⁰⁴

Q8: Do you consider nurturing your child’s faith a priority?



Q8: Do you consider nurturing your child’s faith a priority?

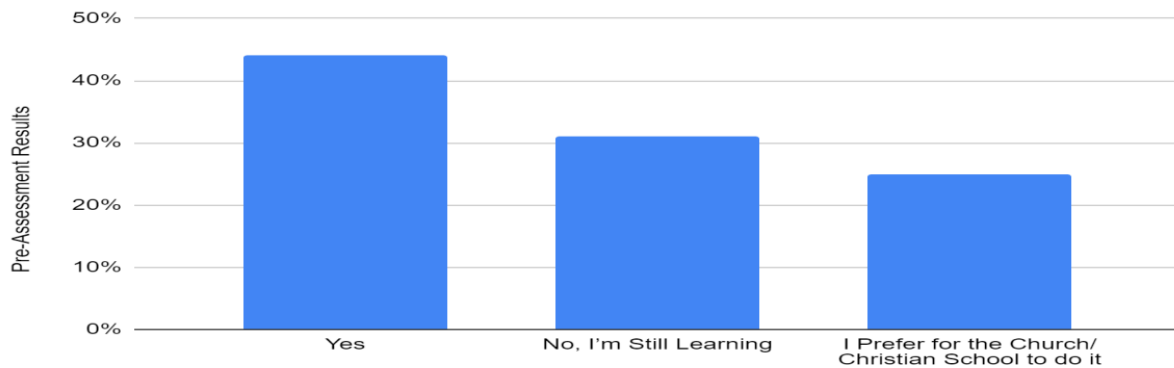


²⁰⁴ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 9.

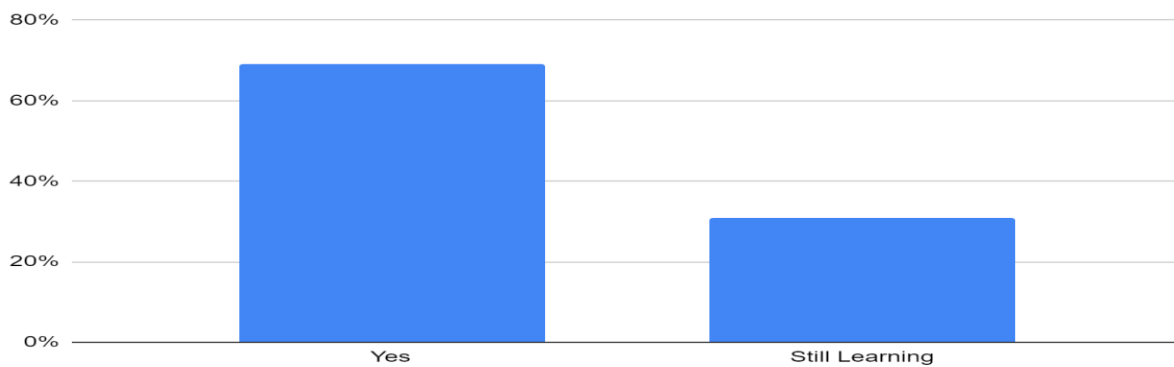
Confidence in Training Children

This question asked if the participants felt confident enough to teach the Bible to their children. On the pre-assessment, 44% (7) said yes, 31% (5) said no, I'm still learning, and 25% (4) said that they would rather the church or the Christian school to do it. On the post-assessment, 69% (11) said yes and 31% (5) said they're still learning. These numbers indicate that the six week training was effective in two ways. First of all, it helped the parents become aware that the spiritual training of their children is their responsibility. Secondly, it equipped them and gave them the confidence to provide that training, even though some still require a great deal of practice.

Q9: Do you feel confident enough to teach the Bible to your children?



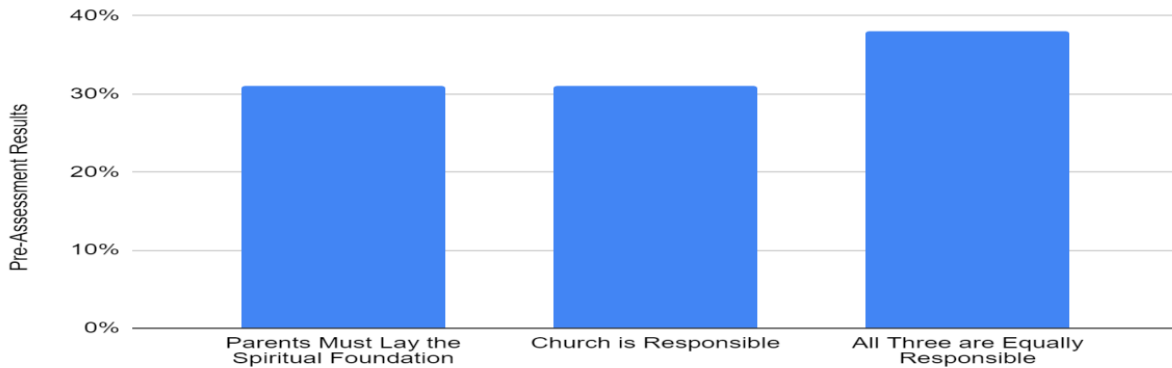
Q9: Do you feel confident enough to teach the Bible to your children?



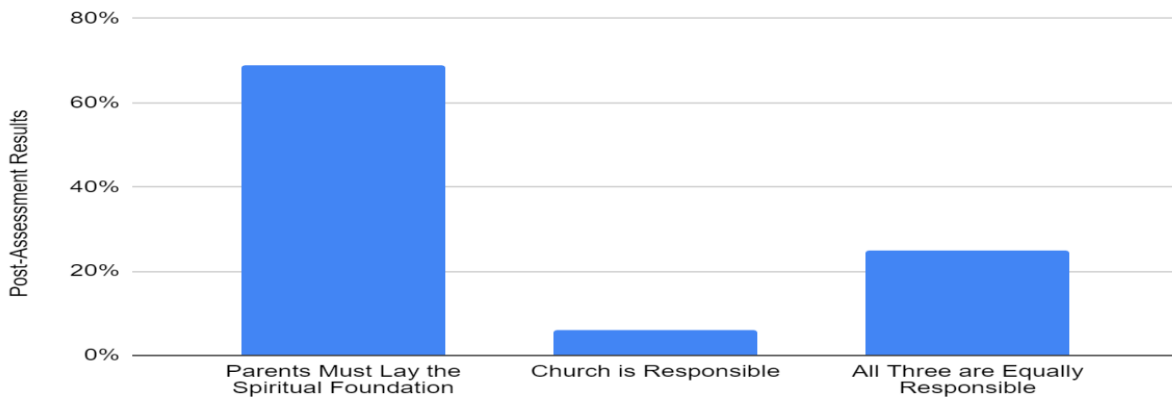
Collaborative Effort

This question asked the participants how the home, the church, and the school should work together to teach children biblical truth. In the pre-assessment, 31% (5) said that parents must lay the spiritual foundation, 31% (5) said that the church was responsible, while 38% (6) said that the church, school, and home are equally responsible. On the post-training, 69% (11) said that the parents must lay the spiritual foundation, 6% (1) said that the church is responsible, and 25% (4) said that all three are equally responsible. The effectiveness of the training is apparent, as the parents who believed that bringing up children is their primary responsibility increased from 31% to 69%. In the end only one parent believed that the church is responsible.

Q10: How should home, church, and school, work together to teach children biblical truth?



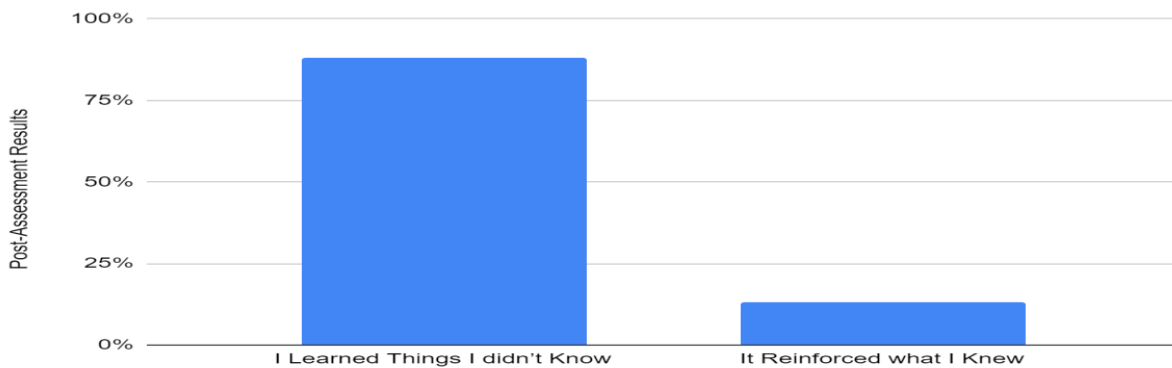
Q10: How should home, church, and school work together to teach children biblical truth?



Effectiveness of Training

This question was asked at the end of the training to determine whether the participants thought the training was useful in equipping them to conduct family worship/Bible study. 88% (14) stated that they learned things that they did not know, and the training equipped them to evangelize and disciple their children. 13% (2) said that the training reinforced things that they already knew and already practiced.

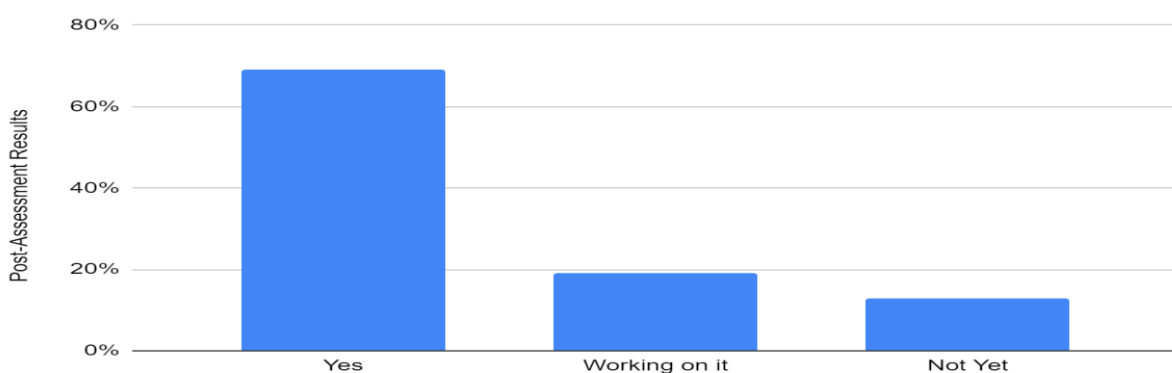
Q11: Was this training helpful?



Family Worship

The final question asked the participants whether family worship/Bible study has become a regular part of their daily routine. 69% said yes, 19% said that they are working on it, and 13% said that they have not made it a part of their daily routine yet.

Q12: Has family worship/ devotions become part of your daily routine?



Survey and Questionnaire Summary

The surveys/questionnaires and the training were a good gauge to evaluate the biblical illiteracy of many Christian parents who remain in the dark when it comes to providing spiritual training to their children. The experiences of the participants in this training were a good representation of what studies have revealed on the literature review. The training not only gave new information, but it was a wakeup call to show parents who either were negligent about their duties or who did not even know that discipling and evangelizing their children was a part of their duty, the urgency of the situation. Failure to passing on truth to their children will have an eternal consequence. They were given both biblical and statical evidence, and this knowledge has generated an eagerness to begin utilizing the tools that are available to them as soon as possible.

Therefore, the training was helpful in revealing weaknesses, shortcomings, and blind spots. At the same time, it provided a newfound passion to teach truth to their children, to guard their hearts and minds, and to hold them accountable when they fall short, so that ultimately they can grow up to love God with all their hearts, souls, and minds, and to love others as themselves. It is the hope and prayer of this researcher that these participants will take notice of the effectiveness of this training and will make every effort to make what they have learned a part of their regular practice.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Scripture is God’s special revelation to humanity and through it, God has spoken and laid out everything that is necessary to live a life of godliness. The responsibility to pass down faith from generation to generation is a biblical mandate that comes with a clear instruction and pattern that all Christians parents ought to emulate. From the beginning God has been faithful. He did not leave His children to wonder aimlessly in figuring out this lifestyle that He desires and requires. Instead, throughout history, He has provided us with good examples to follow and bad examples to avoid. Genesis 18:19 shows God’s blueprint of multigenerational faithfulness, “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.” The “keeping of the way of the LORD” is not only the secret to Abraham being chosen; it is also the secret to the survival of all of God’s chosen. As history shows, even without a dwelling in their homeland for more than 2,000 years, the Jewish people have survived. No other nation on earth has retained their culture and their faith for 4,000 years, which demonstrates that God is the God of generations, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and this pattern of generations has been repeated since Abraham to the present day.²⁰⁵ This legacy of faith that began with the forefathers requires each generation to keep the way of the Lord. For this to happen however, Christian parents must take their role of spiritual shepherding seriously, so that each generation can learn to take the responsibility of preserving the truth of God, by studying it, living it, and teaching it to the next generation in and outside of the home. If the ways of God are to be a reality in the lives of children, parents must make sure

²⁰⁵ Yael Ecksten, *Generation to Generation* (International Fellowship of Christian & Jews, inc., 2020), Kindle, loc. 9.

that it is interwoven into every area of life. Christian traditions that demonstrate faithfulness to God, such as family worship, private and family Bible study, prayer, and faithful church attendance must be a part of family life.

As noted, youth ministry is ineffective in passing down truth to the next generation. Deviating from Scripture for the sake of man's traditions (Mark 7:8), has caused the church to operate under a broken system for decades. Age-segregated youth ministry is the result of that broken system. Over the last two hundred years, the church's departure from Scripture has resulted in a complete departure from the way youth were disciplined in the past. It is glaringly obvious that we need to return the Word of God in its rightful place in order to fix this problem. Brown adds,

The answer is to return to Scripture alone as our rule of faith and practice. A significant correction is now necessary. Building a new foundation based exclusively on God's Word however, will require diligent work. First, all the wrong ideas, methodologies, and practices must be removed. Secondly, the biblical ideas and methodologies needs to be put in place. The church was ordained and given power and authority by Christ, to carry out His commandment to disciple the nations in accordance with the Great Commission and the teaching of the apostles. In His Word, God has defined the function of the church as the governor of the saints' faith and practice. God has also appointed biblically qualified elders who preach and teach God's Word, pray for the congregation, and oversee its appointed ministry, its administration of the ordinances, and its discipline. The elders' authority over the church is to instruct the saints in the ways of God, to call them to holy living, and to hold them accountable.²⁰⁶

Both the family and the church are ideas devised by God Himself. Psalm 127:1 declares, "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." In regard to the church, Christ said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). The church is a collection of families and those families are made up of individuals who have committed their lives to Christ. So in the family as in the church, God has given clear standards of belief and conduct. However, when people fail to abide by God's instructions, all hell will break loose. The church will fail at its

²⁰⁶ Brown, *A Weed in the Church*, 338, 551.

responsibility to teach sound doctrine and equip the saints for godly living and it will be filled with biblically illiterate people who have created a god of their own making. The result, a generation who does not know God will arise.

Therefore, it is the conviction of this researcher that both Sunday school and youth ministry should be eliminated from the church, and family integrated church services be implemented. Nowhere in Scripture can we find any models of Sunday school or youth ministry. In fact, from the very beginning, families had the privilege and obligation to worship the Creator, as worship at altars was a family event (see Genesis 8:16; Genesis 22:7). So family integrated worship was evident both in the Old and New Testaments (see Deuteronomy 31:12; Colossians 3:20). In first-century churches the presence of children in the church assembly was assumed.²⁰⁷

The goal of this project was two-fold: to equip parents to be the primary evangelizers and disciplers of their children, and to raise awareness of the necessity of such training in the various churches represented by these participants. The first goal was accomplished. As a result of the training the parents learned to refrain from relinquishing their responsibility to the church's Sunday school and youth ministry. Although they still have a long way to go, they have embraced their responsibility of being their child's primary shaping influence as Scripture instructs. The second goal is still in progress. It is hoped that in the very near future, instead of usurping the parents' responsibility, the church will come alongside them to provide the tools, resources, and supports they need so they are well equipped to "train up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord," (Ephesians 6:4). This training was practical and simple enough that these parents were able to implement it into their daily routines immediately.

²⁰⁷ Renfro, "Family Integrated Church," 76.

The point of this training was to impart knowledge and for that knowledge to produce a lasting change. This training represented the Word of God as the living, active power that will both transform hearts and empower a godly lifestyle, as when it comes to training and influencing children, more is caught than taught.²⁰⁸ Therefore, the participants were ready to receive God's Word with open hearts and this information developed convictions and principles that they will live by both as Christians and as parents. By the power of the Holy Spirit, this new found knowledge, taken to heart, will continue to develop a hunger and thirst to obey God's Word and motivate godly habits. As Romans 12:1-2 declares, "so that they will be transformed by the renewing of their minds." After exposure to such training, there must be a marked difference in how these parents live their lives and train up their children and thankfully, the post assessment survey shows that the parents did benefit from this training. A successful outcome of this training would be demonstrated when lasting change in lifestyle and daily parental habits are formed and when these parents are able to share this knowledge with others as they "spur one another on to love and good deeds," (Heb. 10:23-24). Further research is required in how to motivate churches to eliminate youth ministry and adopt the family integrated church model.

Recommendation

Biblical parenting education is clearly a need and should be a regular practice of the church. As noted throughout this document, many Christian parents, who are regular member of a local church are not aware that evangelizing and discipling their children at home is part of their God ordained duty. On the other hand, many parents are well aware that their children's spiritual education is their responsibility, however, they feel inadequate to practice it, as they have never been shown how. Many of these parents grew up under parents and pastors who did

²⁰⁸ Bucknell et al., *Biblical Parenting*, 17.

not prioritize family worship or devotions. It is no wonder then, that many parents, particularly fathers, continue to neglect this crucial duty, that has eternal consequences. What gives them a false hope is the notion that youth pastors and Sunday school teachers are taking care of it. However, multiple studies have revealed that the church has failed both at equipping parents and their children. As noted, neither Sunday school nor youth ministry have sufficiently prepared young people for a life of holiness nor provided them with the necessary tools to contend for their faith.

Therefore, a parent equipping training should be a part of the church's mission and vision. Initially, when the churches introduce it to their congregations, it should be offered to parents of young children, who will be able to adopt it as part of their normal routine. Subsequently, young couples who are planning to get married, newlyweds who are planning to have children, and all those who are interested in biblical child rearing should be encouraged to receive this training. There are various ways the church can provide this training, such as emails, newsletters, and videos. However, I believe the most effective way to conduct such training is, in a small group setting, where the participants have the opportunity, to ask questions and voice their concerns. This training should focus on God's pattern of raising godly children, such as the one provided by this researcher.²⁰⁹ This 6-week training, which is an exposition of Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Ephesians 6:1-4, and Proverbs 22:6, teaches parents about their own commitment to God and how to successfully pass the baton of faith to their children. To reinforce the training then, the church should provide resources such as books, videos, and websites on its church website.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Refer to Appendix C.

²¹⁰ Refer to appendix E.

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Appendix A²¹¹

Survey Questions Part I: Parental Perceptions

1. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

2. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

3. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

4. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

5. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities, even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

6. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

²¹¹ Jones, 16-17.

7. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

8. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Somewhat Disagree
 - c. Somewhat Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

Survey Questions Part 2: Parental Practices

9. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past week have I prayed aloud with any of my children?
 - a. Seven or more times a week
 - b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never

10. How many times in the past week has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?
 - a. Seven or more times a week
 - b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never

11. How many times in the past month have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?
 - a. Seven or more times a week
 - b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never

12. How many times in the past month have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?
 - a. Seven or more times a week

- b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never
13. How many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?
- a. Seven or more times a week
 - b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never
14. How many times in the past two months have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?
- a. Seven or more times a week
 - b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never
15. How many times in the past year have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?
- a. Seven or more times a week
 - b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never
16. How often in the past year has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual development?
- a. Seven or more times a week
 - b. Five or six times a week
 - c. Three or four times a week
 - d. A couple of times a week
 - e. Once a week
 - f. Never

Appendix B
Questionnaires

1. Did you have a Christian upbringing? Explain...
2. Did you grow up in a home where the father was the spiritual head of the household? Explain.
3. How often were family devotions or family worship conducted in your home? What did this gathering consist of?
4. Describe your parents' involvement in your spiritual development. If none, describe your religious background.
5. Did you grow up witnessing a high view of God and Scripture in your home? Explain.
6. Were you able to ask questions and voice your doubts to your parents? And if so, how did they respond?
7. Were your parents active members of a church body? Describe their level of involvement.
8. Did you grow up attending Sunday school or youth group? If yes, describe how it impacted your spiritual development.
9. Would you say that your upbringing prepared you to pass down the legacy of faith to your children? Explain.
10. Who would you say was the most spiritually influential person in your life? Why?

Appendix C

Weekly Training Sessions

Week 1: Establishing and Living by God's standards

- Deuteronomy 6:1
- Sufficiency of Scripture
- Introducing Family worship basics

Week 2: Pass it on To the Next Generation

- Deuteronomy 6:2
- Be consistent
 - Verbal Instruction (formal and informal)
 - Example (Children learn by imitation)
 - Practice (Children learn by doing)
 - Repetition (Develop habits by repeating and reiterating)
- God's Story Part 1: How to teach the Bible in a way that is meaningful and relevant to your child at any age
 - The Bible as a narrative in its original story line.
 - The Lineage of the Redeemer (from Creation to Noah)
 - The Unique Promise (From Abraham to Joseph)

Week 3: Obedience Produces Blessing

- Deuteronomy 6:3
 - God's ways always bring the greatest blessing.
 - To the degree our lives are shaped by His teaching, we are able to live by His high standards.
 - When we carefully apply these teachings to our lives, we see how God's promises fill our lives.
 - Part of this blessing is material blessing (provision, protection, family, etc.).
 - Part of it is multiplication (Duet. 7:13).
- God's story Part 2: The Bible as a Narrative
 - Slavery to Freedom (From Egypt to the Promised Land)

Week 4: Undivided Loyalty to the LORD

- Deuteronomy 6:4-5
 - Whole hearted commitment, Loyalty
 - Demonstrated by Obedience
- God's Story part 3: The Bible as a Narrative
 - Kings, good and bad (From Saul to Solomon)

Week 5: The Value and Work of God's Word (Deuteronomy 6-7)

- Devoted to God's Word (Deuteronomy 6:6)
 - Devoted to the Word

- Passion for the Word
- Demonstrated by daily practice
- Committed to Teaching Sons (Deuteronomy 6:7)
 - Formal
 - The father is responsible for diligently teaching his sons.
 - Teach God's Words diligently
 - Teach positive and negative commands
 - Recite narrative
 - Informal
 - When sitting down
 - When walking, driving, en route from one place to another
 - At bed time
 - In the morning
- God's Story Part 4: The Bible as a Narrative
 - Jews in Captivity (Daniel, Esther, Nehemiah, Silent Years)

Week 6: Display God's Word

- Deuteronomy 6:8-9
 - Word Governed Life
 - Store it in your heart
 - Allow it to renew your mind
 - Must direct every decision
 - God's story Part 5
 - The Incarnation (Christ life, death, resurrection, ascension)
 - The second coming (Christ comes as a King and Judge)
 - Conclusion
 - Opportunities for further training and follow up

Appendix D

Pre/Post Training Assessment

1. How do you define success in parenting?
2. What do you consider your ultimate goal as a parent to be?
3. What constitutes quality time as a family?
4. What habits do you engage in that demonstrate your devotion to God?
5. What do you believe is the greatest danger your children will face in this world?
6. What do you consider to be the most important thing you can give your children by the time they leave your home?
7. Did you have any instruction in nurturing your child's faith?
8. Do you consider nurturing your child's faith a priority?
9. Do you feel confident enough to teach the Bible to your children?
10. How should home, church, and school work together to teach children Bible truth?

Appendix E

Resources

Baucham Voddie. *Biblical Worldview*. Accessed February 21, 2021.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=voddie+baucham+worldview.

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Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXKV4DydfXk>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvUPOkMoLmo>

Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDic5YVndnw>

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IRB Approval

Dear Mehret Kahsai, Brent Kelly:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office