

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity  
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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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This action research project focuses on equipping parents to disciple their children in home-based worship, Bible study, and developing a biblical worldview. The problem at The Mission Church is poor decision-making from teens in the student group. The students make decisions from a malformed biblical worldview, resulting in decisions contrary to God's Word. Further analysis of this problem revealed the need for home-based discipleship. Contemporary literature demonstrates the need for family ministry, specifically family-based discipleship. Thus, this research is critical to developing parents to teach their families God's precepts (Deut 6:7-9). This thesis intervention seeks to instruct the parents about biblical worldviews, equipping them to teach and develop this worldview in themselves and their families. The developed strategy of this DMIN action research project will utilize parent group instruction on andragogy and pedagogy, biblical worldview development, daily Scripture reading, and applying this knowledge to everyday life. The expectation is that the spiritual maturity of the parents and children will grow in the knowledge of Christ, building a biblical worldview in both parents and teens and strengthening the family core centered on Christ. The family is God's strategy to disciple all others. Therefore, discipleship must begin there by teaching, equipping, and encouraging parents to embrace the godly task of raising children in the admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4). If parents are better prepared, equipped, and more confident in discipling their children, then faulty decisions based on a distorted worldview will improve.

Keywords: worldview, worldview development, biblical worldview, parent equipping, discipleship, family discipleship, family ministry.

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This project was made possible by my faith family at The Mission Church. I greatly respect Pastor Donovan Stewart and am indebted to him for giving me the time and resources to complete this endeavor. I want to acknowledge the Pastoral Staff at TMC for their support and encouragement. I want to thank the TMC congregation for their support and devotion to me and my family. Lastly, the students at TMC and their families have been a source of joy and family. We have been together for many years, and many more will come. We have weathered storms and, through God's help, learned to rely on each other and, most importantly, to rely on Him. I love them as if they were my children and their families were my families. It is because of you and for you that this thesis project was created. May God richly bless each of you.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my Lord and Savior, Jesus. It is because of your grace that I have achieved this accomplishment. I am grateful that You gave me the courage to walk through the doors You opened for me and gave me the humility to know that it was You and always will be You. I give thanks for the call that You placed on my life and offer all of my being to You in fulfillment of this call for many years to come. I pray for Your blessing on this thesis, which will edify the parents at TMC and in the larger context.

This thesis project was created for the parents and students at TMC. I have struggled and labored alongside you through the years; your pains have been my pains, and your joys are my joys. I revel in the success of our students and carry responsibility for their failures. I am thankful to those families that participated in this thesis; your efforts made this possible. I pray that what we have learned together fosters many years of carrying the mantle of teaching our families God's ways and that our efforts to honor His call result in generational godliness.

I want to thank my children, Christian, Calvin, and Allie, for their support, prayers, and forgiveness for the copious hours spent in my study working on this academic journey. They are part of this thesis and everything I do for our Lord. I cannot put my love and appreciation for them into words. They are indeed a gift from God.

Lastly, to my loving wife, April. God brought us together twenty-three years ago for a purpose we could not yet see but knew was there. Your support, encouragement, and determination for me pushed me forward when, at times, I wanted to walk away. This accomplishment is ours together in Christ. Thank you for our godly family and the confidence

you have given me to lead them in God's ways. You mean everything to me, and I could not have done this without you. I look forward to growing old with you as we continue to minister side by side wherever God calls us.

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....         | 1  |
| <b>Introduction</b> .....                    | 1  |
| <b>Ministry Context</b> .....                | 2  |
| History of TMC .....                         | 3  |
| Context within the Context .....             | 4  |
| <b>Problem Presented</b> .....               | 6  |
| <b>Purpose Statement</b> .....               | 9  |
| <b>Basic Assumptions</b> .....               | 10 |
| <b>Definitions</b> .....                     | 11 |
| <b>Limitations</b> .....                     | 16 |
| <b>Delimitations</b> .....                   | 18 |
| <b>Thesis Statement</b> .....                | 19 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b> ..... | 21 |
| <b>Literature Review</b> .....               | 21 |
| Approach .....                               | 22 |
| <i>Discipleship</i> .....                    | 22 |
| <i>Strategy</i> .....                        | 23 |
| <i>Models of Discipleship</i> .....          | 26 |
| <i>Christian Spiritual Formation</i> .....   | 32 |
| <i>Curriculum</i> .....                      | 34 |
| Psychology .....                             | 38 |
| <i>Identity</i> .....                        | 38 |
| <i>Cognitive Development Theories</i> .....  | 40 |
| <i>Schema</i> .....                          | 41 |
| <i>Thema</i> .....                           | 44 |
| Christian Apologetics .....                  | 45 |
| <i>Culture</i> .....                         | 45 |
| <i>Worldview</i> .....                       | 47 |
| <i>Moralistic Therapeutic Deism</i> .....    | 49 |
| <b>Theological Foundations</b> .....         | 52 |
| Identity .....                               | 53 |
| Destiny and Purpose .....                    | 55 |
| Morality .....                               | 57 |
| <b>Theoretical Foundations</b> .....         | 59 |
| Three Ministry Models .....                  | 60 |
| Theoretical Methodology .....                | 63 |
| <i>Questionnaires and Surveys</i> .....      | 63 |
| <i>Group Instruction</i> .....               | 64 |
| <i>Home-based Worship</i> .....              | 65 |
| <i>Daily Scripture reading</i> .....         | 66 |
| <b>Conclusion</b> .....                      | 66 |



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b> .....                       | 69  |
| <b>Intervention Design</b> .....                          | 69  |
| First Steps .....   | 70  |
| The Body .....  | 71  |
| <i>Weeks Three and Four</i> .....                         | 71  |
| <i>Weeks Five and Six</i> .....                           | 80  |
| <i>Weeks Seven and Eight</i> .....                        | 81  |
| <i>Weeks Nine and Ten</i> .....                           | 83  |
| <i>Weeks Eleven and Twelve</i> .....                      | 85  |
| <b>Implementation of Intervention Design</b> .....        | 87  |
| Acquisition .....   | 88  |
| Fellowship .....  | 90  |
| Instruction .....   | 92  |
| <i>Weeks One and Two</i> .....                            | 93  |
| <i>Weeks Three and Four</i> .....                         | 95  |
| <i>Weeks Five and Six</i> .....                           | 96  |
| <i>Weeks Seven and Eight</i> .....                        | 98  |
| Conclusion .....  | 101 |
| <br>  |     |
| <b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS</b> .....                           | 102 |
| <b>Collective Results</b> .....                           | 103 |
| Participants .....  | 103 |
| Data Collection .....                                     | 105 |
| <i>Surveys and Questionnaire</i> .....                    | 105 |
| <i>Participant Handbook</i> .....                         | 107 |
| <i>Focus Groups and Post-Intervention Critiques</i> ..... | 109 |
| Collective Data Summary .....                             | 111 |
| <b>Data Analysis</b> .....                                | 112 |
| Spiritual Maturity .....                                  | 112 |
| <i>Prayer</i> .....                                       | 113 |
| <i>Bible Study</i> .....                                  | 115 |
| <i>Church Attendance</i> .....                            | 117 |
| <i>Fellowship</i> .....                                   | 118 |
| Parent Equipping .....                                    | 120 |
| <i>Home-based Worship</i> .....                           | 120 |
| <i>Equipped</i> .....                                     | 122 |
| Biblical Worldview .....                                  | 124 |
| <i>Identity</i> .....                                     | 124 |
| <i>Destiny</i> .....                                      | 125 |
| <i>Purpose</i> .....                                      | 126 |
| <i>Morality</i> .....                                     | 127 |
| <b>Summary of Results</b> .....                           | 127 |

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b> ..... | 129 |
| <b>Research Implications</b> ..... | 133 |
| <b>Research Applications</b> ..... | 137 |
| <b>Research Limitations</b> .....  | 140 |
| <b>Further Research</b> .....      | 143 |
| <br>                               |     |
| Appendix A .....                   | 146 |
| Appendix B .....                   | 148 |
| Appendix C .....                   | 149 |
| Appendix D .....                   | 153 |
| Appendix E .....                   | 157 |
| Appendix F .....                   | 161 |
| Appendix G .....                   | 166 |
| Appendix H .....                   | 171 |
| Appendix I .....                   | 172 |
| Appendix J .....                   | 173 |
| Appendix K .....                   | 221 |
| Appendix L .....                   | 269 |
| Appendix M .....                   | 270 |
| Appendix N .....                   | 272 |
| Bibliography .....                 | 273 |
| IRB Approval Letter .....          | 282 |

## Tables

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 1  | Thesis Intervention Participants .....                             | 104 |
| 2  | Core Competencies of the Christian Faith - Pray .....              | 114 |
| 3  | t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Prayer .....                 | 115 |
| 4  | Core Competencies of the Christian Faith - Bible Study .....       | 116 |
| 5  | t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Bible Study .....            | 117 |
| 6  | Core Competencies of the Christian Faith - Church Attendance ..... | 117 |
| 7  | t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Church Attendance .....      | 118 |
| 8  | Core Competencies of the Christian Faith - Fellowship .....        | 119 |
| 9  | t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Fellowship .....             | 119 |
| 10 | Christian Culture in the Home - Home-based Worship .....           | 121 |
| 11 | t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Home-based Worship .....     | 122 |
| 12 | Christian Culture in the Home - Equipped .....                     | 123 |
| 13 | t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Equipped .....               | 124 |

## Abbreviations

|      |  |
|------|--|
| CMM  | <i>The Commonwealth Mission Movement</i> |
| CSF  | <i>Christian Spiritual Formation</i>     |
| DMIN | <i>Doctor of Ministry</i>                |
| ESV  | <i>English Standard Version</i>          |
| MTD  | <i>Moralistic Therapeutic Deism</i>      |
| NASB | <i>New American Standard Bible</i>       |
| TMC  | <i>The Mission Church</i>                |

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

A divinely ordained relationship within the family unit serves as the training ground for children, adolescents, and young adults. The parents perform this training, with the primary educator being the father (Deut 6:7).<sup>1</sup> This training teaches citizenship, integrity, ethics, morals, and relationality with other people. The guided lessons foster careful decision-making through the development of worldview for the children and the family. Whereas this is a broad postulation of the function within the family, the more pointed focus is the Christian family and the development of a biblical worldview.

A worldview is a catalyst in decision-making, and a biblical worldview establishes decision-making from the premise of Scripture. Some of these decisions are called into question based on faulty results. More specifically, flawed decisions made by teens who profess faith in Jesus Christ. The onus here points to a maldeveloped biblical worldview. A biblical worldview should be taught in the home, supported and furthered by the church, and lived out by the teen through a God-fearing, obedient lifestyle. This points to the lack of discipleship in the home, which builds a foundational biblical worldview. The question at this point focuses on the causes of this lack of home-based discipleship. Is it time, availability, or resources? Is it ignorance, or do the parents lack a biblical worldview to pass on to their children? Another negative influence on the family is broken homes, where the child lives with a single parent, grandparents, or a guardian. In these venues, the child's worldview is often influenced by what they see and

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture places the responsibility of teaching the family on the father as observed in Deuteronomy 6:7. Sadly, modern society and culture have seen an increase in fatherless homes globally, with the United States being the world leader in this statistic. Therefore, this action research project will seek to educate the leader of each family selected to participate in this intervention: father, mother, grandparent, or guardian. See the "Definition" section for additional information.

experience outside of the family and, thus, subjected to secular beliefs manifesting in a maldeveloped biblical worldview.

The maldeveloped biblical worldview is an insight into the problem of Generation Z and younger millennials falling away from the church. Furthermore, fractured homes leave youth separated from a unified parental worldview. The significance here is that absent a unified, modeled worldview, the youth traverse one worldview to another in succession, not settling on a particular view or synchronizing worldviews, causing continuous inner change and disrupting normal social engagement, both psychologically and philosophically. Thus leaving the youth tossed from one ideology to another. Therefore, the need to educate, equip, and support the family unit as the most crucial vehicle for home-based discipleship is a priority at The Mission Church of Lexington. It is the family unit that God ordained as this vehicle to strengthen the church, embody the lived Christian experience, develop a biblical worldview, and grow in the knowledge of God.

The following pages will engage this premise from the local ministry context of The Mission Church of Lexington to better prepare and equip parents and guardians in Christian homes to disciple their children, developing a biblical worldview manifesting in godly decision-making that honors God, family, and their community.

### **Ministry Context**

The evidence and imagery postulated to this point could be applied to almost any church in the West; it would be presumptuous to say otherwise. But, what will unfold in the following pages is the experience and observation of this author in a local context, The Mission Church of Lexington.

## The History of TMC

The Mission Church was established in Lexington, Kentucky, on February 4, 2018. Our congregation was a church plant and began services in the building occupied by the Fraternal Order of Police, Bluegrass Lodge number 4. A core group of about thirty launch members led by Pastor Donovan Stewart began following God's call to plant this church. As the church grew, an opportunity to purchase a property with an existing building became available, and the church members came together to muster the downpayment securing the property. In August 2019, the church moved into the property, which consists of a small building on 3.48 acres. The building was constructed in the mid-80s and has been the location of various churches. Our present member enrollment is approximately 165, with an average Sunday attendance of 150 members and guests.

TMC (The Mission Church) is a contributing member of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and our area association, the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists. TMC uses a biblical polity utilizing the offices of elders and deacons to lead and serve the congregation following the Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Acts 6. The Senior Pastor, Donovan Stewart, leads the Elder Board, comprised of four additional pastors: the Associate Pastor (this author), the Worship Pastor, the Executive Pastor, and our Congregational Care Pastor for our senior saints. The church utilizes three deacons and several deacon yoke fellows. The church polity includes trustees to guide the elder board on financial matters and legal governance. In all activities, the actions undertaken by the church leadership are congregationally affirmed. The mission of TMC is to be a Bible-based, mission-minded church for God's glory.

The DNA of TMC is discipleship, evangelism, missions, and church planting (Matt 28:19-20). An integral component of this mindset is church planting and the Commonwealth Mission Movement (CMM). This movement is a church planting strategy for planting churches in the nine regions of Kentucky. These Mission churches would then send out and plant churches in their areas, establishing churches all across Kentucky and beyond for God's glory. This author joined TMC to be one of these church planters.

### The Context within the Context

This author joined the pastoral staff of TMC in January 2020, two months before COVID-19. The position assumed was for a church planter intern expecting to plant a church in 2023. In 2021, the opportunity arose to become part of the permanent staff as the Associate Pastor. After prayer, it was clear God was calling me to stay at TMC and assume the role of Associate to solidify the core leadership at TMC and be foundationally involved in equipping the planters that will be sent out within the CMM. As associate pastor, this author was tasked with leading student ministry. This ministry comprises male and female students in middle and high school. Our average attendance is fifteen students, with the majority being female; a percentage estimate is seventy/thirty female to male ratio.

Initially, the student ministry did not have a solid footing. COVID restrictions affected this, but other contributing factors were the lack of space in the new building and other church ministry needs. The church building is small and only has two additional rooms other than a seventy-five-seat sanctuary. Therefore, the students could not meet on Wednesdays due to the congregational Bible study. Additionally, TMC does not run a Sunday School model, so no specific biblical instruction is given to the students on Sunday mornings. Some aspects of the



family-integrated church model are present by environmental design rather than intention.<sup>2</sup> By this, students join their families during Wednesday evening Bible study and Sunday morning worship services. This led to a hybrid family ministry platform. Space did not allow age-segregated ministries to co-occur on the church campus. Initially, our student group met on Friday evenings for fellowship, worship, and Bible study. Friday evenings presented challenges that negated widespread, consistent student participation from week to week.

In October 2022, a new strategy was implemented using an outdoor commercial pole tent. This tent, affectionately referred to as the tabernacle, is where the students began to meet on Wednesday evenings. The tent also served as a Sunday morning worship overflow for additional seating. The tabernacle has sides and can be set up with gas heaters to regulate outdoor temperatures in the winter months. The front of the church was equipped with external TVs that showed the inside of the sanctuary and outdoor speakers to project the sound from inside. The TVs and speakers can be turned off if the activities inside the church are to be separated from the outside. This resulted in the student group being able to have separate gatherings, at least on Wednesday evenings, while parents and other congregants participated in the adult Bible study.

The noted hybrid family ministry platform resulted in this author spending time with the students and their families in off-campus visits and activities. The intent to minister to the families opened avenues to observe gaps or fractures within those families. A few notable fractures were single-parent homes, homes where grandparents raised their grandchildren, and low-income families with limited resources. The employed ministry strategy brought closeness between this pastor, the students, and the families.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Renfro, Brandon Shields, and Jay Strother, *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, 2nd ed., ed. by Timothy P. Jones (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 63, Kindle.

Over the past few years, watching and participating in the spiritual growth and maturity of the students allowed a vantage point to see the roots of poor decision-making of the students with identity, friend groups away from church, and a general malaise in purpose and existence. Student lessons would be crafted from Scripture detailing identity, purpose, teaching holy habits, and developing a biblical worldview, but the poor decision-making continued. Analyzing what had been observed, it was clear that the students were not receiving discipleship at home, which affected their commitment to developing a biblical worldview. This does not mean all students, nor does every student engage in poor decisions, at least no more so than would be attributed to any other teenager. But, the need to educate parents and caregivers for home-based discipleship of the teens became apparent. The tagline of TMC is “Find your why.”<sup>3</sup> This statement is a mantra for the discipleship efforts of the pastoral staff at TMC and a particular point driven forward in student ministry. TMC puts excellent effort into discipling adults, male and female, young adults, and students. Amidst the church’s discipleship programs, there is a gap in discipling parents to instruct their children in the ways of God (Deut 6:6-9). This need became the driving force of this research quest.

### **Problem Presented**

There has been a growing trend among Western teens with various issues concerning worldview.<sup>4</sup> A contributing factor is the political scene of the last few years coupled with the COVID pandemic, which unwittingly ushered in issues with isolation due to lockdown and non-in-person education in many of the school systems. However, this is not the focus here. A recent

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<sup>3</sup> “Find your why,” The Mission Church of Lexington, unknown last update, <https://www.missionchurchlex.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> This statement is not presumptuous to say that only teens in the West have and experience worldview issues. It is an assumption to say that this stigma is global, but this is the likely status of worldview issues among teens globally. As this statement applies here, it is specific to the West, namely North America, and the local context of this researcher.

journal article highlights difficulties that have occurred in the biological sciences that have been investigating the link between LGBTQ adherents and mental health issues. Pieter H.

Labuschagne, a faculty member of the South African Theological Seminary, Bryanston, South Africa, draws attention to a 2016 article by two scientists in this field asking for help from the field of humanities.<sup>5</sup> The issue is that there is no biological basis for the problems within the LGBTQ ideology. The call for the humanities falls on theology, as espoused by Labuschagne.<sup>6</sup> Though tragic, mental health concerns are not the focus. The focus is on the factors contributing to distorted worldviews, manifesting relational issues among teens and other generations. This need brings theology into the conversation and the tenets of a biblical worldview that fosters discipleship that coheres with reality.

C. Fred Smith says a biblical worldview is comprehensive, including values, ethics, morals, and a deeper understanding of how the world is and should be, and that a biblical worldview is not instant but something cultivated over a lifetime.<sup>7</sup> The consideration of a biblical worldview being developed over long periods demonstrates the need for this endeavor to begin in the home. A recent journal article reflects the importance of the family structure on teen development. The study performed on adolescents in Germany of varying family structures showed an overwhelming health advantage in adolescents who lived in an intact family unit.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Labuschagne, Pieter H. "Science in Service of Theology: Gender and Sexual Orientation." *In Die Skriflig* 55, no. 1 (2021): 2, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/science-service-theology-gender-sexual/docview/2502111536/se-2>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 5, Logos.

<sup>8</sup> Max Herke, Anja Knöchelmann, and Matthias Richter, "Health and Well-Being of Adolescents in Different Family Structures in Germany and the Importance of Family Climate," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17 (2020), 2, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7559242/>.

Adolescents who did not live within a nuclear family demonstrated socialization problems, more adverse mental health, and less identity positivity.<sup>9</sup> This is a symptom of cultural influence.

The anecdotal evidence conveyed by Generation Z shows the demonstrable effect that they are being influenced by culture rather than being an influencer of culture.<sup>10</sup> This leads to poor decision-making resulting from a distorted worldview, negatively affecting confidence, relatability with peers, and ultimately, identity crises, to name a few. Much of the cause for these issues is attributed to the need for discipleship, which often falls on the Student Pastor at the local congregation. As such, at weekly student groups, the Pastor focuses and re-focuses the students on a christocentric biblical worldview by reinforcing the tenets of biblical discipleship and core competencies of the Christian faith.<sup>11</sup> Yet, refocusing seems endless; not as much going backward but never entirely going forward. Analyzing the issue reveals the need for individual discipleship as a symptom of a more significant underlying concern. This identified concern is narrowed down to discipleship in the home. There are many reasons for this: single parent home, the parent spends excessive time away from home working, the parent does not believe they are equipped to teach theology and doctrine, they may not know where to start; in any case, the parents need to understand their capacity to biblically influence their children and effect this change within the home. The problem at The Mission Church is the lack of home-based discipleship, resulting in a distorted biblical worldview, manifesting in poor decision-making with teens.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> John Beeson, "Are Christian Teens Influencing or Being Influenced by the World?," Lifeway Research, June 14, 2021, <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/06/14/are-christian-teens-influencing-or-being-influenced-by-the-world/>. This article published by Lifeway research details a survey conducted in the United States utilizing 410 teens, between the ages of 13-19.

<sup>11</sup> Core competencies of the Christian faith would be daily reading and study of Scripture, daily focused or concentrated prayer time, attending corporate worship, and participation in off-campus church activities being around and with like-minded followers of Christ.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose for this DMIN action research project is to develop home-based discipleship strategies and disciple parents to build a biblical worldview in their children. There is a defined need to instill confidence in parents and guardians of the teens at TMC and to equip these caregivers with the discipleship knowledge and tools to lead their families to think biblically and effectively. The participant group ranges in spiritual maturity, from new followers of Christ to mature Christians. In both categories, the participants lack the confidence and knowledge to guide their children to a biblical worldview and instruct them to think biblically. Therefore, the strategy sought would be a two-fold process involving the individual discipleship of the parent/guardian, leading to home-based instruction to build a biblical worldview.

This bifurcated approach will seek to advance the discipling abilities of the parents and guardians by educating them in crucial areas. Those areas pertain to the biblical worldview, discipleship, and holy habits. Additionally, areas of adolescent learning structures and strategies and a developed curriculum for adult and adolescent home-based discipleship will facilitate parental instruction. The decided intent is to help parents understand the biblical mandate to instruct their children in the ways of God (Deut 6:4-9) to assist them in developing their biblical worldview so that they are equipped to teach this to others.

The purpose here is not to wage an apologetic for a biblical worldview against a secular worldview; instead, it is to engage parents in teaching them how to disciple their children, developing a biblical worldview. The intent of this project will enable parents and guardians to don the mantle of “biblical teachers” in their homes, instructing their children on God’s precepts

and having a relationship with Him. This will be accomplished by integrating the biblical and theological training received at church with the parents and guardians in the home. The result is a foundational biblical worldview the teen holds that enables them to navigate many of the secular issues confronting them daily.

### **Basic Assumptions**

This action research project carries several assumptions that undergird the structure of a home-based discipleship program designed to equip parents for the instruction of their children in the ways of the Lord (Eph 6:4). The first assumption lies in the salvation of each participant. This author assumes that each participant is a born-again believer in Jesus. Salvation is critical for the illumination of the Holy Spirit as the participants progress through the intervention. Apart from this illumination, the participants will not be able to grasp the teaching of Scripture; an unbeliever is spiritually blind (1 Cor 2:14).

The second assumption is that the participants have a high opinion of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. Holy Scripture is sufficient in all matters of life and holy living (2 Tim 3:16-17). This proposed intervention relies on the willingness of the participants to receive the voice of Scripture to shape their lives and conform to the will of God (Rom 12:2). Anything other than a high view of Scripture will carry resistance to the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

The third assumption is that participants see the family as God's intent for generational instruction and admonition of the Lord (Gen 2:24; Ps 127:3; Mal 2:15). God commanded man and woman to "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28, NASB). This union of man and woman with offspring is the structural component of the family. The family was created and ordained from

the beginning and holds a high position for pointing the younger generations to God and teaching His ways.

The fourth assumption of this action research project is the blessings foretold in Scripture for following God's command to educate the children about Him. Proverbs gives several examples of the blessings received from raising a godly son (Prov 10:1, 15:20, 23:24, 29:3). The assumption is that if done according to the Lord, gladness will accompany the parent. This is double-sided in that the righteous actions of the parent will bring gladness to the Father.

The last assumption of this author is godly parenthood. God revealed Himself throughout the pages of Scripture, His attributes (Exod 34:6-7), and the loving way He deals with His children (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13; Is 43:6; Hos 1:10; 2 Cor 6:19). The assumption, then, is that an earthly parent will follow God's example of instructing, caring for, and disciplining his children; following God's model will bring "the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Heb 12:11, NASB). This is the ordained telos of being a godly parent for their family, instantiating a righteous relationship with Jesus our Lord.

### **Definitions**

This DMIN action research project focuses on developing a strategy to equip parents and guardians for home-based discipleship. The context is narrow, being this group of parents and students within TMC, but incorporating a wide range of subtopics within the research parameters. Therefore, what will be deduced in the following pages needs clarification and refinement to fit within this local context. The essence of this action research project is discipling the disciplers. An effective strategy then requires learning aids encompassing adult education, knowledge acquisition methodologies, spiritual formation, and family ministry models. The purpose of this section is explicitly linked to understanding these terms as utilized in this thesis.

*Biblical Worldview.* A worldview is a framework of the beliefs of an individual utilized to understand themselves, the world, and how they should live.<sup>12</sup> A biblical worldview embodies beliefs, whereas individuals understand themselves, the world, and how they should live through the Bible. That is, the measure of existence is understood through a biblical lens. Components of a biblical worldview are a heart towards God, cognitive assent to God, and behavior pleasing to God.<sup>13</sup> Another way of understanding a biblical worldview is reading the Bible to read culture.<sup>14</sup> The importance of the biblical worldview is the line of demarcation to good decision-making. Thus, understanding the term “biblical worldview” is critical.

*Cognition.* Cognition, in a basic understanding, is a function of processing information in the mind.<sup>15</sup> Understanding how we process information is essential so that the proper environment can be achieved to maximize home-based discipleship. The modality of learning is influenced by the environment in the home. This environment is physical and psychological, both used to produce meaningful learning experiences. Specifically, the means of successful Christian education is the emphasis.

*Collective Identity.* Collective identity represents the individual within a more significant or larger context. Examples of the larger context are Christendom, the church, and the family, all intertwined within a collective identity. This pertains to the family on a micro level through the

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<sup>12</sup> Mikael Stenmark, "Worldview Studies." *Religious Studies* 58, no. 3 (09, 2022): 565, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/worldview-studies/docview/2697527855/se-2>.

<sup>13</sup> Roger C. S. Erdvig, "A Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 29, no. 3 (2020): 286, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10656219.2020.1816517>.

<sup>14</sup> David S. Dockery, and Trevin Wax, *Christian Worldview Handbook* (Philadelphia: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 16, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin D. Young, and Carolyn Dicey Jennings, *Mind, Cognition, and Neuroscience: A Philosophical Introduction* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), 20, Taylor and Francis.



response of actions, good and bad, accomplishments, and contributions of good behavior towards a family identity.<sup>16</sup> This relationality is crucial to identity within a group and is used by God to form a relationship with individuals and those individuals in the more prominent Christian family.<sup>17</sup>

*Collective Memory.* Collective memory is and has always been part of culture.<sup>18</sup>

Laikhuram states this to be a group representation of history and, presumably, the history of that group.<sup>19</sup> This term in this thesis applies to the passing of what was then an oral tradition of the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:3-4 and parents teaching these creeds to their children in verses 7-9. The onus of this application lies in the collective memory afforded by Scripture. This collective memory recorded in the pages of the Bible lays the foundation of deep theology, which allows the instruction and understanding of God and His precepts.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it is a foundational term for equipping parents to disciple and instruct their children in God's ways, utilizing the biblical formulation of repetition through creeds.

*Culture.* Culture comes with an interesting paradigm. The previously defined collective identity is, in essence, culture and society comprised of people. As it is here, the paradigm offers objective and subjective position on whether individuals influence and direct culture or whether culture directs and form the individuals. Despite this functional dichotomy, culture, as applied in

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<sup>16</sup> Matt Chandler, and Adam Griffin, *Family Discipleship: Leading Your Home Through Time, Moments, and Milestones* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 40, Logos.

<sup>17</sup> D. T. Everhart, "Communio Dei and the Mind of Christ," *Theologica* 6, no. 1 (2022): 59, <https://doaj.org/article/f26dac73ce484131a9dc413d9704060d>.

<sup>18</sup> Premjit Singh Laikhuram, "History Contra Collective Memory: Collective Memory's Finite Province," *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* 13, no. 4 (2021): 2, <https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=8909e6d2-10e1-4464-bd20-91010205a7d1%40redis>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Mark J. Boda, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*, ed. by Craig A. Evans (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 7, Logos.

this thesis, will function from the perspective of culture shaping the individual. Culture defined is a broad referent to the functional dichotomy mentioned above, in that people construct culture, which conversely shapes the people, their thoughts, ethics, values, and morality in certain circumstances.<sup>21</sup> The significance here is the culture within a family, which is formed from Scripture and taught by the parents to the children.

*Discipleship.* A disciple is “a student, a learner.”<sup>22</sup> Building on this definition, discipleship is the act of learning. Despite the simple nature of this definition, the problem becomes what or whom one is a disciple of. One could imagine levels of discipleship based on the “learner” paradigm; this would be a lower-level discipleship pairing where the emphasis is the transfer of knowledge. The highest order, and the one intended here, is being a learner of our Lord Jesus and, more than learning from Him, to be transformed into His likeness. Vanhoozer defines discipleship using the backdrop of a military idiom, being “fit for purpose.”<sup>23</sup> The purpose is to engage in kingdom building.<sup>24</sup> The training ground is in the home.

*Family Discipleship.* Juxtaposing the previously defined term, family discipleship could be misconstrued as the whole family being disciplined. This is a functional understanding but not as it pertains to this thesis. This term is more directed at the parents disciplining the children in the home. God ordained the family as His vehicle to teach His ways and expectations (Gen. 2:24). Dodson sums this up perfectly, “Children become like their parents, apprentices like their mentors, and players like their coaches. We reflect the character of our models, whether for good

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<sup>21</sup> Bruce Riley Ashford, *Every Square Inch: An Introduction to Cultural Engagement for Christians* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 13, Logos.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Hayes, and Cherry, Stephen, eds., *The Meanings of Discipleship: Being Disciples Then and Now* (La Vergne: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2021), 12, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>23</sup> Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers: A Pastor’s Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 64, Logos.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

or for ill. But when we behold the beauty of Christ, we become beautiful like Christ."<sup>25</sup> The home is the proper context for discipleship.

*Family Ministry.* Family ministry is the equipping model for home-based discipleship noted in the definition of family discipleship. Family ministry is how the discipling knowledge is passed from the church to the parents. "Family ministry is the process of coordinating the practices of a church so that members develop diverse discipling relationships and so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives."<sup>26</sup> The context here will be the methodology of equipping parents for family discipleship.

*Parent.* The biblical decree to teach children falls on the father (Deut 6:7). Sadly, many families today do not have an active father in the home. A 2019 Pew Research Center study showed that the United States is the world leader in children raised in single-parent homes. This study revealed that 23% of the children in the U.S. live in a single-parent home.<sup>27</sup> This percentage is observed within the families of the students at TMC. The leaders of student families at TMC are fathers, mothers, and grandparents in the role of primary instructors of their children. In a perfect world, fathers would be the primary participants in this intervention, but this is not the case, causing mothers and grandparents to step in and fill the fatherly position. Therefore, this action research project will engage the adult positioned in the family to oversee the care and custody of the children placed there regardless of the reason and instruct them in the role of primary teachers in the family. Those individuals in leadership roles are given this

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<sup>25</sup> Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship: Revised and Expanded* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2022), 43, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>26</sup> Jones, T. P. "Family as Church, Church as Family: Toward a More Comprehensive Definition of Family Ministry." *D6 Family Ministry Journal* 4, (May 2019): 21.

<sup>27</sup> Stephanie Kramer, "U.S. Has World's Highest Rate of Children Living in Single-parent Households," Pew Research Center, (December 23, 2019), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/12/12/u-s-children-more-likely-than-children-in-other-countries-to-live-with-just-one-parent/>.

authority by God (Rom 13:1); these leaders, regardless of gender or familial connection, will be referred to as parents in the following pages.

*Spirituality.* This word has gained popularity in recent decades. New Age spirituality took away the transcendence and infused an amalgamation of varied offerings from other cultures and places, leaving a feeling of dissatisfaction.<sup>28</sup> Biblical spirituality results from living life with the Holy Spirit and observing the core beliefs of the Bible.<sup>29</sup> These core beliefs are to be taught in the home for spiritual formation and developing a biblical worldview.

*Spiritual Formation.* Spiritual formation is “the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.”<sup>30</sup> “Spiritual formation does not take place primarily in small groups and Sunday school classes; instead, it mostly takes place in the well-lived and everyday events of life.”<sup>31</sup> While shared in small groups and Sunday school classes, these events are best experienced in the home with the family. Through the trials of life, parents can guide their children with a biblical perspective, forming a biblical worldview to best deal with life as it truly is.

### **Limitations**

This action research project contains several identified limitations in the context of TMC. One limitation is willful participation. Participation will be offered to each parent with a teen

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<sup>28</sup> Hart, Trevor, *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), 196, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>29</sup> Adam McClendon, *Paul’s Spirituality in Galatians: A Critique of Contemporary Christian Spiritualities* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 1, Logos.

<sup>30</sup> R. Robert Creech, *Family Systems and Congregational Life: A Map for Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 80, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>31</sup> James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation As If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ Through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 34, ProQuest Ebook Central.

involved in the student ministry group at TMC; it is their prerogative to participate in this action research project. Therefore, this limitation must be accounted for.

The second limitation is the availability of the participants. Portions of the program will require group settings that involve discussion and sharing for accountability and edification of each participant. The parents of the students at TMC work in various genres, such as restauranteur, construction, retail merchandise, and retirement. Coordinating a group meeting day and time may be a challenge with this range of employment and will be a limitation that needs to be considered.

Third, the life commitments of each participant vary and, at times, are outside of the biblical mandate to walk with the Spirit (Gal 5:16). There will be a self-examination that needs to take place so that what is learned will be employed according to God's plan. As a reflection of our heavenly Father, the assumption noted earlier is the reflection parents are to exude to their children.

There is an element of participation on the part of the student. Their participation is necessary for receiving the instruction taught to the parents to pass on the knowledge of God to the next generation. Students are often constrained with sporting activities, part-time jobs, and homework. Participation in this research action project will require re-ordering family matters to allow time for home-based instruction to build a biblical worldview.

Additionally, a limitation of this action research project is continuous participation. Individuals and family life are interrupted in the ordinary course of life.<sup>32</sup> A common statement is that life gets in the way. This may result from childcare, working late, sporting events, and

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<sup>32</sup> There is a subjective tone in this statement. The intent here with interruptions and the ordinary course of life are those unexpected events such as working late, sickness, or unexpected events that displace previously planned activities.

other extracurricular activities that occupy family time. There is a commitment that needs to be made by each participant and then followed through to completion of the program. This will require a realignment of priorities that cannot be guaranteed for participants.

Lastly, a critical limitation is the willingness of the participants to allow Scripture to speak into their lives to foster change that is pleasing to God. The parents and teens participating may have sin in their lives that will work against the project content and inhibit the overall efficacy of developing a biblical worldview and decision-making. This carries Jesus' command to follow Him, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt 16:24, NASB). This means the parents and teens may need to adjust to align with God's Word and conform to His will (Rom 12:1-2). The content of this intervention requires effort on the part of the participant in group meetings and instruction, interviews, completing surveys and questionnaires, and journaling. Each area elicits a commitment to spiritual maturity and the development of a biblical worldview conforming the individual to the will of God.

### **Delimitations**

One delimitation will include parents at TMC with teenagers in the Mission Students group. This researcher will only accept participants committed to involving their teenage child in biblical teaching and other activities within the Mission Students group.

The second delimitation will include the content used to create the intervention strategy. This action research project is not a polemic against the secular worldview. The intent is to build a biblical worldview against the background of secular thinking. Thus, the instruction material will be limited to data of the secular worldview and what the Bible teaches. This intervention will rely on the Bible's teaching to develop the believer's mind regarding heavenly thinking (Col

3:1-2). The content will focus on biblical decision-making and its application to everyday life in this cultural context.

Third is the content developed for this action research plan. There are three areas proposed to develop the participant's biblical worldview. These content areas will be curriculum developed for group instruction once a week, home-based worship once a week, and daily Scripture reading. This researcher will intentionally limit the Scripture in all content to address a mind toward God. The content will seek to answer basic worldview questions from the biblical perspective: 1) identity, 2) destiny, 3) purpose, and 4) morality. These questions define 1) who I am? 2) what is my end goal? 3) what is my purpose? and 4) how should I live?

The last delimitation is cost. There will be no cost for participation. The curriculum will be created using Scripture as the foundation and elements revealed in the literature review to facilitate the lessons from Scripture. Additionally, a perceived gap in the literature would suggest the need for a curriculum engineered for this specific engagement of discipleship: the instruction of parents to be instructors of God's word.

### **Thesis Statement**

God assigned the primary task of training children to fathers (Deut 6:7), and in modern church history, parents have relegated this responsibility to the churches.<sup>33</sup> The problem here is that the teen only spends a few hours a week at church with other like-minded teens and the professional clergy. This does not supplant the noise of the secular world speaking into the student's life outside their time at church. Outside the biblical mandate, the home is the logical place where correct thinking can and should be taught. The parents or guardians know their

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<sup>33</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 10.

families best and, with equipping and encouragement, can lead their families to the knowledge of God.

The involvement of the parents of children is essential in equipping teens with the tools to manage a humanistic and sensate world. Typically, the time allotted to church youth activities and biblical instruction is approximately two hours per week. There are other times when this allotment is much more significant, such as summer camps and other church youth retreats, but these are exceptions and not the norm. Simple math demonstrates the majority of the time for biblical instruction is in the home. The influences induced into the lives and minds of teens far exceed the time student pastors need to combat and redirect youth toward cultivating a biblical worldview. The line of engagement must lie in the home with the parents and guardians.

Many statistics extracted from various surveys of Generation Z speak to a generation falling into a metaphysical malaise and secular humanism. These cultural influences negatively affect young Christians, causing conflict between the secular mindset and a biblical worldview. This created dissonance is the epitome of the “double-minded man” trying to live two different lives (Jas 1:8, NASB). The solution to this problem cannot rest on the Student Pastor alone or the church but must include the familial effort needed in home-based discipleship. The need for parent/guardian discipleship strategies is paramount in combatting this issue at TMC. This strategy would infuse the biblical tools, knowledge, and confidence parents and guardians need to assist their children in developing a biblical worldview. If parents are better prepared, equipped, and more confident in discipling their children, then faulty decisions based on a distorted worldview will improve.



## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This Doctor of Ministry project is founded on the manifestation of poor decision-making among teens at TMC. A deep reflection on this issue demonstrates a problem with discipleship, specifically, home-based discipleship to develop a biblical worldview. Therefore, research is needed to understand the current and past endeavors to engage this issue in a larger context. The research focuses on understanding the minds of scholars, academics, philosophers, theologians, and pastors. Analyzing and synthesizing the available literature allows the researcher to see what areas have received attention and which have yet to or need more research. This is critical to contributing to this collection of literature and addressing the problem in the local context. Scripture should and will be the foundational text from which any action proceeds. The section Theological Foundation focuses on God's call to parents to educate their families (Deut 6:7). This section will deduce the biblical foundation supporting this project within the church. Lastly, the section on Theoretical Foundation will explore the implementation of the existing curriculum and the philosophy of creating a new curriculum to be employed with families.

### Literature Review

Loving God and being obedient to His commands is not an individual endeavor. Instead, it is a family matter. This is an implication from Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The commands are to be present with you, "on your heart" (Deut 6:6, NASB). The explicit command in verse seven is that this teaching begins in the home (Deut 6:7). Thus, the resulting research for home-based discipleship revealed several areas or themes within family ministry and discipleship. The research from the following fifty-two relevant, scholarly sources revealed three preeminent areas of Christian development that will allow parents and guardians to be more confident through preparation and being equipped to teach the things of God to their children (Deut 6:7). The

literature review presented here will engage the fifty-two scholarly works in the areas of approach, psychology, and Christian apologetics.

### Approach

The title of this section denotes an encompassing body of research that exposes several sub-topics within the larger theme. These topics elucidate the baseline for forming a hierarchal approach to home-based discipleship: discipleship, strategy, models of discipleship, Christian spiritual formation, and curriculum.

### Discipleship

If home-based discipleship is the focus, a word is necessary on discipleship generally. To be a disciple is to be a learner.<sup>34</sup> This dynamic instantiates a relationship.<sup>35</sup> We observe this relational concept in Matthew 11, where Jesus beckons the weary to take His yoke and learn from Him (Matt 11:29). This denotes another aspect of discipleship that is taking on the character and persona of the teacher.<sup>36</sup> Discipleship assumes a likeness or mimeograph of the teacher, modeling what is learned in all aspects of life and action.<sup>37</sup> This acquisition is an aspect that needs to be included in contemporary Christianity, likely resulting from misunderstanding what discipleship is.<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Dodson, academic and pastor of City Life Church in Austin,

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<sup>34</sup> Andrew Hayes, *The Meanings of Discipleship*, 12.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship: Revised and Expanded* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2022), 43, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

Texas, asserts that discipleship is maturing as a Christian.<sup>39</sup> More so, being a disciple is foundational; it is an identity.<sup>40</sup> This identity results from being with the teacher.

The relationship between the teacher and the disciple is proximal. Hayes and Cherry posit this relationship to be present sense.<sup>41</sup> Peter Scazzero, the founder of New Life Fellowship Church in New York, says we place our current understanding behind serving or “doing” for God.<sup>42</sup> Thus, true or intimate discipleship suffers and lags behind the endless “doing,” culminating in superficial discipleship.<sup>43</sup> The location of discipleship, which is the thrust of this thesis, is the home. This location centers on the family, ordained by God for discipleship in the family context.<sup>44</sup> Discipleship is taking on the identity of the one being emulated or learning from (Matt 11:19; Phil 2:5) and being with this person. God’s institution of the family is His strategy of disciple formation.

## Strategy

Another descriptive word for strategy is “plan,” or having a plan. Despite the simplicity of this word, finding resources that define and articulate the meaning is sparse but present unless consulting a tertiary source. Henri Hakala and Tero Vuorinen uphold this statement of seeming obscurity.<sup>45</sup> The word strategy is better accounted for in the literature referencing something else, such as a business, military, or education strategy. These descriptors demonstrate that a

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<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, 43.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Hayes, *The Meanings of Discipleship*, 147.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship: Moving from Shallow Christianity to Deep Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021), 10, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 25.

<sup>45</sup> Henri Hakala, and Tero Vuorinen, *Tools for Strategy: A Starter Kit for Academics and Practitioners, Elements in Business Strategy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.

strategy is an action plan. The intent behind a strategy is to use resources to accomplish a goal, which will multiply into more incredible things.<sup>46</sup> In the context of this thesis, strategy accounts for engaging ministry opportunities. Therefore, it has an ecclesiological application. Edward P. Mermilliod holistically defines strategy as increasing vision, application, and praxis, all to cover areas for success or eliminate mistakes committed by competitors or other organizations.<sup>47</sup> This means strategy is deliberate for a desired outcome.<sup>48</sup> Henri Hakala and Tero Vuorinen hold similar positions in that strategy is a tool used to achieve a desired outcome.<sup>49</sup> This is a focal point of this and every other thesis: the intentionality and organization of data for an outcome. The referenced authors demonstrate the flexibility of the word strategy, thus, the viability of conforming to different settings such as family ministry.

Edward Mermilliod has a penchant for family ministry and demonstrates this proclivity through his dissertation and journal articles focusing on family discipleship. In a 2020 article in the *Christian Education Journal*, he stressed the need for churches to equip parents to disciple their children. This perspective is based on the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) and that honoring the command of Christ begins in the home with the family.<sup>50</sup> As noted earlier, “strategy” is versatile and malleable to various entities and other disciplines, such as psychology.

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<sup>46</sup> Scott Downey, "What is Strategy?" *Agri Marketing* 60, no. 4 (May-June 2022): 38. [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A708626054/GBIB?u=vic\\_liberty&sid=summon&xid=4c01c229](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A708626054/GBIB?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=4c01c229). This short journal article defines the word strategy but is one page long. It gives a definition that can be formatted to various systems to coordinate a movement to affect a desired outcome.

<sup>47</sup> Edward Paul Mermilliod, "Strategic Church-Based Family Ministry: An Analysis of Family Ministry Priority and Practice within the Southern Baptist Convention" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021): 32-33, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>49</sup> Henri Hakala, *Tools for Strategy*, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Edward P. Mermilliod, "A Synthesis of Academic Research related to Church-based Family Ministry," *Christian Education Journal*, vol. 18, no. 3, (2020): 410, accessed August 4, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739891320974383>.

A determined plan is as functional to a church as to a psychologist or cognitive researcher. The art of observation is a strategy scientists employ in the cognitive science of religion. According to this field of study, belief in gods is connected to culture, which shapes an individual's belief structure.<sup>51</sup> The observation strategy is employed to collect data on gods related to cognitive function and use that data to explain the characteristics of the god or gods in question.<sup>52</sup> This observation mode is also a method used as a strategy for parents passing on their faith to their children.

The explicative in Deuteronomy 6:7-9 teaches through action, actions which create patterns, thus repetition.<sup>53</sup> Parents use this verbal, visual, and physical methodology to pass on the faith. The biblical command is for parents to teach their children (Deut 6:7). This command of action through repetition is a strategy used then and now to pass on the belief and faith of the parents to their children. *Religious Parenting: Transmitting Faith and Values in Contemporary America*, a recent offering, suggests that a very effective way to transmit parents' faith to their children is to practice faith normally in the presence of their children.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, this praxis augments deficient intellectual knowledge with difficult doctrines by the physical action of doing.<sup>55</sup> This works in a collective to demonstrate the practical application with the cognitive ability to observe, process, and record faith beliefs. This method of instruction is strategic

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<sup>51</sup> Justin L. Barrett, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Cognitive Science of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 71, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>53</sup> Lain M. Duguid, et al., *Deuteronomy-Ruth*, 2 vols., ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), 146, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>54</sup> Christian Smith, Bridget Ritz, and Michael Rotolo, *Religious Parenting: Transmitting Faith and Values in Contemporary America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 179, Pro Quest Ebook Central.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

management intended to ensure success over long periods.<sup>56</sup> Observed in these sources is an intertwined function of strategy. A strategy that works through praxis and cognition. Although most thoughts turn to the military or commercial business, strategies are present any time a goal is to be obtained. Strategy is the driving force behind models of discipleship.

## **Models of Discipleship**

This subsection covers much of the literary landscape and will be foundational to this chapter. There is an interlacing of practical ministry through models of discipleship, the onslaught of society and culture against the nuclear family, underpinned psychologically. As has been deduced thus far, the family is the first and most important ministry and the primary recipient of discipleship assistance.<sup>57</sup> The most basic functional intent for home-based discipleship is that the father instructs the wife and children to follow the commands of God.<sup>58</sup> There is no difference between fifteenth-century BC Israel and AD twenty-first-century America in this regard. God's strategy is fulfilled by those who love Him with all their being (Deut 6:5). Hence, the modern church has undertaken family ministry, producing many discipleship models. Denise Muir Kjesbo, director of children's and family ministry at Bethel University, and Lou Cha, Assistant Professor of Christian Ministry and Formation at John Brown University, espouse that the modern church uses many models, an amalgamation of sorts, to fit their essence and forge family ministry.<sup>59</sup> The authors cover the historical development of curriculum and ministry

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<sup>56</sup> Henri Hakala, *Tools for Strategy*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Matt Chandler, and Adam Griffin, *Family Discipleship: Leading Your Home Through Time, Moments, and Milestones* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 48. Logos.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Denise M. Kjesbo, and Lou Y. Cha, "Family Ministry: Past, Present, Future," *Christian Education Journal* 17, no 3, (2020): 494, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0739891320943603>. This source is an excellent representation of what has transpired in family ministry from the 1970s through the early 2000s. This paper covers a quasi-history of curriculum and ministry models adopted and adapted by the church to assist parents and guardians with home-based discipleship. This piece is recommended for further analysis and use.

models in the late twentieth century, which serve as a vessel for some created curricula.<sup>60</sup> They elucidate six forms of family ministry: educational, caring, parent equipping, family of families, service as family, and milestones.<sup>61</sup> These forms are a conduit to provide parents and guardians and empower them through study material that incorporates everyday life in the home with discipleship. This is a comprehensive treatment that has and will contribute to the research of this thesis. A comparative text offered through the contributions of several scholars depicts three of these ministry models as the foundation of family ministry in the church.

The quest to reach families and equip them for home ministry and discipleship is viewed broadly by Denise Kjesbo and Lou Cha but narrowed in the book *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*. This collection of practical scholars discusses and refutes the functionality of three modes of ministry for families.<sup>62</sup> The three ministry models that form the foundation of this book are family-integrated, family-based, and family-equipping ministries.<sup>63</sup> There is an interesting contrast between this resource and Kjesbo and Cha in that the six models from the latter are condensed into the three models in the former. The difference is models versus modes. The latter is a strategy, and the former is the conduit to implement the strategy. Therefore, *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views* could be better understood as three modes that employ various models to execute the whole. Thus far in the discourse, much has been covered with the

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<sup>60</sup> The aspect of the curriculum will be covered more thoroughly in a later section of this chapter. The reference here shows the encompassing family ministry approach deduced in the paper.

<sup>61</sup> Denise M. Kjesbo, "Family Ministry," 494-501.

<sup>62</sup> The use of "practical scholars" defines the contributing authors of *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views* as scholars active in family ministry, having served and serving in the pastoral position.

<sup>63</sup> Paul Renfro, et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 49-52.

mechanics of family ministry. This book discusses the need as well. A need that focuses on families under attack.<sup>64</sup>

The family was ordained by God and instituted from the beginning of creation (Gen 1:27-28; 2:22-24). This is a foundational element in the creation, an element from which God will bless His creation and the conduit through which God passes His goodness and commands for righteousness (right relationship with Him) to the next generations. The preferred mode is through the family. Randy Stinson, Provost at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, states that family ministry is necessary “because families are under siege.”<sup>65</sup> Timothy Paul Jones, vice president for doctoral studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, reinforces this notion through the civic and economic reshaping of the family. Although the reshaping of the family has occurred over eons of time, a predominant catalyst in the demise of the modern family is the Industrial Revolution, where commerce and economics once took place in the home (multi-generational); this production traversed to the factories.<sup>66</sup> The results were that the men (fathers specifically) were removed from the home to provide for their families. This economic restructuring created a cascading effect that the then church and other parachurch organizations observed and engaged society.

Timothy P. Jones details the appearance of various church-led and para-church organizations that instituted programs that mentored and disciplined families, specifically youth. This approach led to segregating previously intergenerational family ministry into compartmentalized ministry and culture.<sup>67</sup> This position is related to ministry models and the

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<sup>64</sup> Paul Renfro, et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>66</sup> T. P. Jones, “Family as Church, Church as Family: Toward a More Comprehensive Definition of Family Ministry,” *D6 Family Ministry Journal* 4, (May 2019): 8.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.



propagation of these North American models across the globe.<sup>68</sup> In this view of ministry models, the idea is to emphasize family-based ministry and discipleship. Edward Mermilliod insists that the modern church strives to reinstate the home as the primary location of discipleship.<sup>69</sup> This prompts the question of why the family unit is vital to passing on the knowledge of God and His precepts. The answer to this question bridges psychology and cognition to the models or modes of home learning. In an earlier section, key components have been noted with repetition and the practice of faith in the home.<sup>70</sup> The rationale for this model is also understood in psychology as *schema* and *thema*. *Schema* is the rational or cognitive area to process knowledge, and *thema* is the relational aspect of learning, or interactional, in this case, for discipleship.<sup>71</sup> This psychological understanding is vital in forming faith in youth in the home.

The notion of *schema* and *thema* is epistemology's intellectual and experiential nodes. Although a slightly older codex, James Riley Estep, vice president of academics at Central Christian College of the Bible in Moberly, Missouri, attributes these modes to Piaget (*schema*) and Vygotsky (*thema*).<sup>72</sup> In this instance, Piaget pioneered *schema* and Vygotsky *thema*.<sup>73</sup> James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim continue to say that both schemes must be incorporated to develop Christian formation.<sup>74</sup> Understanding the area of emphasis for each, a connection can be

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<sup>68</sup> T. P. Jones, "Family as Church, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Edward Mermilliod, "A Synthesis," 409.

<sup>70</sup> The section on Strategy reflects the components of teaching faith to children through the verbal, physical, and regular practice of faith as observed and emulated by the children in the home.

<sup>71</sup> Mark A. Maddix, Kim, Jonathan H., and James Riley Estep Jr., *Understanding Faith Formation: Theological, Congregational, and Global Dimensions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 30, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>72</sup> James R. Estep, and Jonathan H. Kim, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2010), 64, Kindle.

<sup>73</sup> James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, chapter three, Kindle.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

made with the practice of Christian daily faith in the presence of the children at home, as postulated by Christian Smith, Bridget Ritz, and Michael Rotolo in *Religious Parenting*.<sup>75</sup> An amalgamation of verbal teaching coupled with religious practice stimulates intellectual and experiential epistemology, fostering the equipping of the children in the home with the Christian faith. This draws an interesting connection to the model of discipleship noted in Deuteronomy 6:7-9.

The command of Scripture in Deuteronomy is a call to stimulate the mind through *schema* and the body with *thema*. This passage will be extricated thoroughly in a later section, but what is understood must be juxtaposed with modern psychology. A literal understanding of, “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” (Deut 6:7, NASB) equates to a verbal and physical mode of the teaching, coupled with the experiential or sensate connection with doing or praxis. Two dimensions are observed here that coordinate teaching the children in the home; one is strategic, and the other is a natural flow of information through direct and indirect teaching.<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, what God instituted in the past is considered a modern discovery of mind and cognition. This verse in Deuteronomy also calls on parents to teach their children using both modes of cognition, acquiring knowledge of God and faith. The godly edict also works to strengthen the bonds between parents and children. These relational bonds connect the children socially and intellectually and are better suited to engage the anxieties of life and culture.<sup>77</sup> Justin Barrett, an American experimental psychologist, argues in favor of

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<sup>75</sup> Christian Smith, et al., *Religious Parenting*, 179.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>77</sup> Lisa Howard, “Parental Involvement Factors Promoting Adolescent Faith Formation,” *D6 Family Ministry Journal* 4, (May 2019): 89.

the family from a socio-economic benefit for “reduced crime, reduced sexual and physical abuse, and increased child investment and economic productivity.”<sup>78</sup> Lisa Howard, Youth Pastor and thirty-year educator, demonstrates that these benefits from a robust parent-child relationship work to develop faith and religious conviction.<sup>79</sup>

It is clear from these experts that the role of family discipleship is critical to productivity for families and societies. Matt Chalder and Adam Griffin suggest that family discipleship is God’s strategy for revival in the church and the revitalization of entire communities.<sup>80</sup> The family is generally the primary means to transfer religious belief, with religion being linked to reduced anxiety and personal wellness.<sup>81</sup> Christian Smith and company say the positive results of religious belief are “citizenship, strengthening society, and upholding morals.”<sup>82</sup> This familial strategy God instituted far surpasses the narrow scope of the family and is a catalyst for revival throughout humanity. The family begins with a husband and wife who work together for the good of society. Matthew Bracey, Vice Provost at Welch College, says marriage works to keep society from destruction.<sup>83</sup> Matthew Bracey continues by noting marriage’s positive effect on sexual morality and the restraining element it provides, preventing societal ruin.<sup>84</sup> This ruin is the current state of Western society as moral degradation rapidly removes the image observed in society that reveals the current context.<sup>85</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, theologian and professor of

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<sup>78</sup> Justin Barrett, *The Oxford Handbook*, 271.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>80</sup> Matt Chandler, *Family Discipleship*, 35.

<sup>81</sup> Christian Smith, et al., *Religious Parenting*, 51.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Matthew S. Bracey, “The Institutional Good of Marriage, the Family, and Society,” *D6 Family Ministry Journal* 4, (May 2019): 31.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>85</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers*, 8.

Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, summarizes this as the assumption of right and wrong.<sup>86</sup> These assumptions are the ontic responsibilities prescribed by God through the institution of marriage. Kevin Vanhoozer continues to say that this societal destruction, and arguably the dismantling of the family, resulted from God not being in His rightful place within society.<sup>87</sup> The family is the preeminent model of discipleship. The Holy Spirit does His work within this model to produce spiritual formation.

### **Christian Spiritual Formation**

Christian spiritual formation (from here forward CSF) is the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciple of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). It is a heart matter, a matter the Holy Spirit moves toward God and conforms the believer into the likeness of Jesus (Rom 8:29). Steve Porter, Ph.D. from the University of Southern California and editor of the *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, asserts CSF is a ubiquitous call to the sanctification of the followers of Jesus.<sup>88</sup> James C. Wilhoit, Ph.D., emeritus professor of Christian education at Wheaton College, and Evan B. Howard, adjunct professor of Christian Spirituality at Fuller Theological Seminary, posit that CSF has been part of Christianity from the beginning.<sup>89</sup> Acts 2:42 is the explication of CSF through experience and direct teaching and the development of core competencies of CSF (daily prayer, Bible study, gathering as an assembly, and spending time with other Christians). James C. Wilhoit, in *Spiritual Formation As If the Church Mattered:*

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<sup>86</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers*, 8.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>88</sup> Steve L. Porter, "The Future of Christian Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 16, no 1 (2023): 4, [www.journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/19397909231173908](http://www.journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/19397909231173908).

<sup>89</sup> James C. Wilhoit, and Evan B Howard, "The Wisdom of Christian Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 13, no 1 (2020): 5, [www.journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/1939790920903841](http://www.journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/1939790920903841).

*Growing in Christ Through Community*, argues that CSF is the church's primary responsibility.<sup>90</sup> This responsibility is in response to Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). It is essential to note the idea of succession in this passage. Jesus' command was to make disciples that will make more disciples. The juxtaposition of this and James Wilhoit's statement regarding the church's primary responsibility demonstrates a dichotomy of the intentional action of the church. This means the church is mandated to make disciples on the one hand, and on the other, not all disciples are to be made by the church. Thus, disciples that make disciples. Here is where the family is inserted, supported by the church.

The argument thus far shows the venue for the work of the Holy Spirit is through the family. As the Spirit sanctifies the believer, His work engages the family and is pointed to Christ. This engages parents through the work of the Spirit to instill the responsibility for the CSF of their children. Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin support the parental responsibility of spiritual formation in their families.<sup>91</sup> This ordained structure is one of God's primary means of spiritual formation, as expressed by Edward Mermilliod in his dissertation work.<sup>92</sup> The godly strategy through the family uses experiences that change the believer's heart and that individual's inner world to be like Christ.<sup>93</sup> R. Robert Creech, a professor of Pastoral Leadership and director of Pastoral Ministries at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, in Waco, Texas, supports the experiential nature of spiritual formation and further adds that while this is

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<sup>90</sup> James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation As If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ Through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 14, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>91</sup> Matt Chandler, *Family Discipleship*, 51.

<sup>92</sup> Edward Mermilliod, "Strategic Church-Based Family Ministry," 16.

<sup>93</sup> R. Robert Creech, *Family Systems and Congregational Life: A Map for Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019,) 80, ProQuest Ebook Central.

solely the work of the Holy Spirit, human involvement is an element used through God's grace.<sup>94</sup> Steve L. Porter adds to this position of involvement by way of God's invitation to believers to collaborate with Him in the process of sanctification.<sup>95</sup> This element is the family structure and the relational aspect, both theologically and biologically, which forms experiential spiritual formation.<sup>96</sup> Jeremy Rios, a pastor and theologian, affirms the family structure as a renewed anthropology for theological and biological spiritual formation, thwarting individualism.<sup>97</sup> More will be offered with identity in a subsequent section of this chapter, but regarding the individual juxtaposed to the collective, suffice to say, Rios' position of the failings of the individualist places credence on the family as the collective beginning for CSF. This section sought to draw conclusions about what CSF is and where the responsibility lies for the nurture and growth of CSF. The heavy lifting is the work of the Holy Spirit in cooperation with the individual and the collective to foster CSF. The remaining question is how. This lays the foundation for curriculum.

## **Curriculum**

Curriculum is a systematic approach to teaching discipleship (or other subjects). Discipleship, as understood in a previous section, is the church's primary responsibility. James Wilhoit defines curriculum as the layout of a race,<sup>98</sup> meaning a determined path to an end or goal. Individual discipleship curriculum is not difficult to locate. The problem lies with a curriculum that enables and equips parents to disciple their children. This is not a new issue or

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<sup>94</sup> R. Robert Creech, *Family Systems*, 80.

<sup>95</sup> Steve L. Porter, "The Future," 6.

<sup>96</sup> Jeremy M. Rios, "Bonhoeffer and Bowen Theory: A Theological Anthropology of the Collective-Person and its Implications for Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 13, no. 2 (2020): 184, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1939790920915700>.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>98</sup> James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation*, 35.

discovery. Denise Kjesbo and Lou Cha note this long-term conundrum with inquisitions of family-oriented curriculum from the 70s.<sup>99</sup> The focal point of this epiphany was the parents' connection to the curriculum used to teach their children on Sunday mornings.<sup>100</sup> A supplement to this strategy is revealed in a hybrid system comprised of family-integrated and family-equipping ministry modes.<sup>101</sup> Here, the idea of multi-generational influence is coupled with strategies for equipping parents to disciple their children. In the early 2000s, Youth Minister Mark DeVries created curricula to connect adults with youth.<sup>102</sup> This and other curricula provide a means for family-based ministry, teaching the Bible to youth.<sup>103</sup> The proper implementation to achieve the goal of curriculum creation is to have primary goals.<sup>104</sup> Andrew Burggraff, Vice president of Enrollment Services at Shepherd's Theological Seminary, says this goal is to understand Scripture better individually, enveloping this understanding in the individual, then incorporating Scripture into a daily walk with Jesus.<sup>105</sup> Initiating this goal is to understand that two groups of people will be instructed with the curriculum: adults and youth. Each group can be further separated, creating a taxonomy of learners.

Taxonomically, young adults, middle-aged, seniors, singles, widowed, and divorced comprise adult education within the church, as espoused by Clair Allen Budd, professor of

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<sup>99</sup> Denise Kjesbo and Lou Cha, "Family Ministry," *Christian Education Journal*, 17, (2020): 490.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 491.

<sup>101</sup> This hybrid formulation is discussed in the section Models of Discipleship on page 6.

<sup>102</sup> T. P. Jones, "Family as Church," 16.

<sup>103</sup> Edward Mermilliod, "A Synthesis of Academic Research," 417.

<sup>104</sup> James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation*, 45.

<sup>105</sup> Andrew Burggraff, "Developing Discipleship Curriculum: Applying the Systems Approach Model for Designing Instruction by Dick, Carey, and Carey to the Construction of Church Discipleship Courses," *Christian Education Journal* 12, no. 2 (Fall, 2015): 399, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/developing-discipleship-curriculum-applying/docview/1725036343/se-2>.

Christian Ministries, Asbury University, and Martha S. Bergen, professor of Christian Education at Hannibal-LaGrange University, Hannibal, Missouri.<sup>106</sup> The youth participants are categorized by newborns, toddlers, elementary age, middle school, and high school. The curriculum then needs to conform to the strengths of each and the differences between them. Nataliya Machynska, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences and professor, and Halyna Boiko, at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, the mistake of treating both groups the same is the negation of the adult's use of experience and collective learning.<sup>107</sup> There is a delineation between adult and child learning or andragogy versus pedagogy.<sup>108</sup>

Clair Allen Budd and Martha Bergen demonstrate a growing body of adult learning literature and knowledge gained over the past forty years.<sup>109</sup> This is built upon in this thesis intervention, focusing on the desired connectivity with the adult for home-based discipleship. Thus, andragogy is the focus, to prepare parents to teach and disciple their children. There are many differences between adult and youth education, such as independence, life experience, teachability (willingness), and availability control.<sup>110</sup> A preeminent feature distinguishing adults from youth is the need and want to problem-solve.<sup>111</sup> Komail Malik, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad, and Tanwir Khaliq, Department of Medical Education, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University, Islamabad, assert that knowing is not enough for adults;

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<sup>106</sup> Clair Allen Budd, and Martha S Bergen, "Adult Ministry in the Church: A Forty-Year Perspective," *Christian Education Journal* 17, no. 3 (2020): 471, [www.journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0739891320951201](http://www.journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0739891320951201).

<sup>107</sup> Nataliya Machynska, and Halyna Boiko, "Andragogy – The Science of Adult Education: Theoretical aspects," *Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education and Didactics* 24, no. 1 (January 2020): 26, [www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/andragogy-science-adult-education-theoretical/docview/2479494712/se-2](http://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/andragogy-science-adult-education-theoretical/docview/2479494712/se-2).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>109</sup> Clair Allen Budd, "Adult Ministry in the Church," 468.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Komail Malik, and Tanwir Khaliq, "Andragogy (Adult Learning)," *Annals of PIMS-Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University* 13, no. 4 (2017): 301, [www.apims.net/index.php/apims/article/view/1](http://www.apims.net/index.php/apims/article/view/1).



adults want to do something with the gained knowledge.<sup>112</sup> This paradigmatic assertion demonstrates hearing and doing, which points to the biblical mandate for parents to educate their children in the ways of God (Deut 6:4-9). Jeff Hoppe, a Chaplain and certified educator, co-wrote a book with his wife, Kathy Hoppe, an Assistant Professor of Community Counseling at Rogers State University in Claremore, Oklahoma, posits that to induce this paradigm of hearing and doing, the appropriate environment to propagate internalization and assertion of gained knowledge, relying on experience to produce solutions.<sup>113</sup> Learning adults want to analyze and codify information utilizing their life experience, thinking through the taught content; this modality is constructivist learning.<sup>114</sup>

Dorit Alt, Professor of Education, and Yariv Itzkovich, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, both at Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, Jordan Valley, Israel, press the fortitude of constructivist learning against the traditional authoritarian teaching paradigm as with constructivism, the student exercises their experience in choosing solutions to problems through life proximity.<sup>115</sup> This teaching environment fosters a shared authority, freeing the student to utilize experience sorting out problems and potential solutions.<sup>116</sup> This dialectic teaching paradigm is the focal point in discovery teaching. The Hoppes propose a dialectic environment, such as how Jesus taught His disciples. Jesus' teaching was not bland; instead, He taught through stories, adding an intriguing element and then posing questions so the disciples could formulate

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<sup>112</sup> Komail Malik, and Tanwir Khaliq, "Andragogy (Adult Learning)," 301.

<sup>113</sup> Kathy Hoppe, and Jeff Hoppe, *Discovery Teaching Like Jesus: Engaging Adult Learners* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), 14, Logos.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>115</sup> Dorit Alt, and Yariv Itzkovich, "The Connection between Perceived Constructivist Learning Environments and Faculty Uncivil Authoritarian Behaviors," *Higher Education* 77, no. 3 (2019): 440, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45116925>.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

an answer.<sup>117</sup> The curriculum should be developed around a dialectic paradigm involving discussion and experience from the teacher and adult student to foster greater retention and application of the information being taught and absorbed. The position of this thesis intervention is that the modality of adult learning is to be gleaned from Scripture, as noted in Deuteronomy 6:7-9. Thus, the theme of psychology and the acquisition of knowledge.

### Psychology

The role of psychology in this thesis intervention centers on acquiring information through direct learning and tactile assimilation of what is perceived from the environment. This acquisition entails the individual and others who are intertwined, forming a nexus of sharing and learning from one another. This epistemological landscape is formed from Scripture, specifically, the passage from Deuteronomy 6:7-9 and Acts 2:42. This section will survey the literature defining identity and cognition as these elements form the individual and Christian faith.

### Identity

This section will elucidate personal identity and collective identity. J. P. Moreland, distinguished professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, and William Lane Craig, an analytic philosopher and Christian apologist, assert that identity is a basic idea of existence.<sup>118</sup> C. Fred Smith, Associate professor of Theology and Biblical Studies at Liberty University, posits that identity is understanding who an individual is, not in a basic sense but in the profound understanding of being human.<sup>119</sup> This facet of identity is comparatively narrow to Christine

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<sup>117</sup> Kathy Hoppe, and Jeff Hoppe, *Discovery Teaching*, 13.

<sup>118</sup> J. P. Moreland, and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 2nd ed (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 178, Logos.

<sup>119</sup> C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 13, Logos.

Selby's definition of identity as the individual has a role with something else.<sup>120</sup> Christine Selby, a licensed psychologist, connects identity with what the individual commits themselves to.<sup>121</sup> This definition best correlates to this thesis intervention as identity is a connection to Christ; Christ is the One believers commit to. Selby further denotes identity as what others see from the individual.<sup>122</sup> John C. Chatlos, a psychiatrist in Holmdel, New Jersey, argues that the role of adolescent research is related to the strength of identity commitments and that this allows for higher psychological adjustment than that of adolescents reeling with identity issues.<sup>123</sup> A way of understanding this higher psychological adjustment ability is what Creech defines as well-differentiated.<sup>124</sup> This works to understand collective identity.

Collective identity is being part of a whole, as is in this intervention; the whole is the family.<sup>125</sup> John C. Chatlos furthers the understanding of collective identity as shared characteristics of a group, such as language, ethnic origin, and beliefs.<sup>126</sup> R. Robert Creech connects the collective identity to the many disciples Jesus taught and lived with during His ministry.<sup>127</sup> D. T. Everheart of the Logos Institute for Analytic and Exegetical Theology, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom, states that there is an ontological dependency on relationship with God and other believers.<sup>128</sup> According to D. T. Everheart, the collective

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<sup>120</sup> Christine L. B. Selby, *Who Am I?: Understanding Identity and the Many Ways We Define Ourselves* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2021), 4, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>122</sup> Christine L. B. Selby, *Who Am I?*, 5.

<sup>123</sup> John C. Chatlos, "Adolescent Identity Formation Versus Spiritual Transformation," *Zygon* 58, no. 1 (2023): 157, [www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/zygo.12862](http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/zygo.12862).

<sup>124</sup> R. Robert Creech, *Family Systems*, 133.

<sup>125</sup> Matt Chandler, *Family Discipleship*, 40.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>128</sup> D. T. Everhart, "Communio Dei and the Mind of Christ," *Theologica* 6, no. 1 (2022): 45, <https://doaj.org/article/f26dac73ce484131a9dc413d9704060d>.

identity is a network of relationships that interconnect others to a whole, specifically believers to God through Christ.<sup>129</sup> Trevor Hart, theologian, pastor, and former professor of Divinity at St. Andrews, United Kingdom, gives the analogous relation of a story to that of the collective, the individuals in community.<sup>130</sup> This communal relationship rests in the church, with origins in the family. The family was created and ordained by God (Gen 2:24). The family receives instruction from the parents (Deut 6:7-9) in the admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4, NKJV). Paul Renfro describes the church as a family of family, but only in structure, not nature.<sup>131</sup> But, Jeremy Rios extends the nature of the church through the collective person, bound to each other through connection with Christ, thus demonstrating this collective to the world.<sup>132</sup> The family is the foundational teaching element created by God to facilitate passing knowledge of Him to the generations and the world. The following section will detail this passage related to Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and cognitive development.

### **Cognitive Development Theories**

Faith and reason are problems that have plagued theologians from the onset of the early church. This dichotomy of theology and intellect is an underlying girder for Christian development and spiritual formation. The contention in this essay is that the two work together through *schema* and *thema* to understand and act on perceptible data, which develops and forms spiritual growth and, thus, Christian formation. The two noted theories, *schema*, and *thema*, come from two psychologists, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky. The contention in this short essay is that these theories work together to produce the environment in which the Holy Spirit works to

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<sup>129</sup> D. T. Everhart, "Communio Dei," 59.

<sup>130</sup> Trevor Hart, *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), 101, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>131</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 80.

<sup>132</sup> Jeremy M. Rios, "Bonhoeffer and Bowen theory," 185.

develop spiritual growth and formation in every believer in Christ. This will be deduced by explaining each theory's premise and theological perspectives, identifying the expected spiritual growth of individual participants in this action research project resulting from these theories, and finally, the methodology measuring this growth, solidifying the application of these cognitive theories in Christian formation. If these cognitive development theories are applied correctly, as Scripture prescribes, then Christian formation will result.

Cognition: acquisition and relation

This section will deduce the theories of *schema* and *thema* with the theological perspective. The book *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* explores these cognitive theories and implications for Christian formation.<sup>133</sup> This essay hypothesizes that the two theories work together; one produces the learning environment, and the other directs teaching. Together, they work to form cognition and human development. The theological perspective is that these theories are not theories according to Scripture, as these cognitive functions have been present in human learning and development from the beginning of creation.

*Schema*

The theory of schematic perspective was developed by Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Piaget idealized a four-stage growth continuum in children up to age thirteen: reflexive thought, intuitive thought, concrete thought, and abstract thought.<sup>134</sup> These stages of intellectual growth are born from the human mental need to organize and adapt perceived data through assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration.<sup>135</sup> An analogy for this theory is a card catalog. Each card

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<sup>133</sup> James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, 63, Kindle.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

represents an item or data stored in a card drawer. When an object is perceived, a card is produced with basic identifiers, and a taxonomy of the article is scribed onto the card and stored. This cognitive action is assimilation and accommodation. This is also the building block of organization or systematizing the data collected through sensory perception in the mind for future recall.

The cards are schemes or new data and act by existing data by being able to further define an object already in the card catalog or adding an object (scheme) to the catalog. The intellect grows as the catalog grows, but the antithesis to the existing catalog are new schemes that create disequilibrium. The human mind requires harmony or balance. When everything perceived agrees with the card catalog, all is well. This issue then comes with a disagreement. An example of this is the taxonomy of four-legged animals that have fur. If the child equates every furry four-legged animal to a dog, disequilibrium occurs when they are told that the animal is not a dog but a cat; cats are different.<sup>136</sup> Establishing a balance requires a new card and further descriptors noted on the existing cards, adding characteristics to each card about the object they represent. Balance is then restored, and intellect grows. The four stages stated earlier are now able to be instantiated.

The card catalog that has been built allows the four stages to become operational (reflexive, intuitive, concrete, and abstract thought). Although Piaget lists these stages chronologically, they are not contingent on time; the individual will use the smallest data to begin relational associations with the items recorded in the catalog.<sup>137</sup> Reflexive thought is the beginning of association with other objects. This mental space is self-centered and basic in

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<sup>136</sup> James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, 67.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

forming initial tactile experiences (developing the cards in the catalog).<sup>138</sup> The intuitive stage focuses on the unsupported knowledge gained in the reflexive stage and seeks to create ideas and psychologies about the environment apart from the individual.<sup>139</sup> This researcher believes biases begin at this stage due to intuitive thought that is unsupported or lacks inferential solidity. Next is the concrete stage. This stage induces inductive reasoning, concluding perceived data to a general understanding of what is observed.<sup>140</sup> This stage expands cognitive ability, bringing logic to bear with systematizing and establishing relational congruity with objects (i.e., concepts of things). This researcher likens this stage of intellectual development to mental hyperlinks for the cards in the catalog to form generalizations and connectivity through object taxonomy. Lastly, abstract thought is the stage where the card catalog comes into full use. This does not mean the catalog is vast in content; it does mean that the individual can begin to use the catalog to draw conclusions from information and develop hypotheses and theories to solve problems.<sup>141</sup> This stage of development ushers in the ability to reason to conclusions and make determinations and comparisons of abstract thoughts, such as understanding red or any color. From here forward, the card catalog is expanded and hyperlinked for intellectual and cognitive growth. This excursion of Piaget's theory is simplistic but gives the theory's basic premise as it postulates cognitive and intellectual growth. The second theory is *thema*. This essay hypothesizes that the two theories work together to form intellect and cognition. This formation results from the individual's contextual placement, the family.

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<sup>138</sup> James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, 69.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

### *Thema*

The developmental theory of *thema* was initiated by Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). The basic premise of this theory is the social and cultural context as it bears on the intellectual development of children.<sup>142</sup> Vygotsky placed a high yield on language and teaching, a dialogic approach to intellectual growth.<sup>143</sup> This is a form of Socratic induction or the relational passing of information or knowledge.<sup>144</sup> This is strikingly similar to the Old Testament creeds passed from generation to generation. This will be treated in more detail in the theological perspectives section, but suffice it to say God has used this intellectual strategy from the beginning.

Vygotsky's theory is zoned development based on two levels of thought. The zones of development are actual, potential, and proximal development.<sup>145</sup> The last zone, proximal, is the defining element of Vygotsky's theory: what a child can do through the assistance of another (relational).<sup>146</sup> This is the contextual component that defines *thema*. The concept of culture and society inputting knowledge into children is better placed into the family where parents have a direct track to share and impart knowledge to their children. This contextual setting is the most intimate zone for proximal growth. Children progress through the zones of development by two levels of thinking, lower (*schema*) and higher (*thema*).<sup>147</sup> The lower level is theoretical knowledge, and the higher is relative or praxis knowledge.<sup>148</sup> Another way of looking at these two levels is with the card catalog. The lower level is the catalog, and the higher level takes the

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<sup>142</sup> James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, 72.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.



cards from the catalog and does something with them. The praxis aspect of the proximal zone is doing something with the cards in conjunction with someone else's assistance.<sup>149</sup> As noted, the striking similarity to learning strategies in Scripture resembles what has been espoused by these two psychologists and their contributions to cognitive development. Given the establishment of knowledge acquisition, Christian apologetics is the venue of the family teaching paradigm to engage the current culture.

### Christian Apologetics

Three areas of Christian apologetics are addressed in this section: culture, worldview, and moralistic therapeutic deism (from here forward, MTD). The first area is culture. The intent of the previous section is that culture is an environment where learning takes place through praxis and direct teaching. Being a Christian means a believer models a biblical culture, but the culture sometimes negatively influences the believer. Understanding culture is a means to further the gospel and the kingdom of God.

### Culture

Defining culture is not a simple task. Bruce R. Ashford, Dean of Faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, defines culture as the interaction of people and the products they create and use.<sup>150</sup> Joash Chatraw, Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism and Cultural Engagement Beeson Divinity School draws a curious implication of culture in that culture promises a way of life; therefore, culture determines how we live.<sup>151</sup> Cecilia Heyes, a Professor of Psychology at the University of Oxford, defines culture as a characteristic of how a particular group thinks and

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<sup>149</sup> James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, 75.

<sup>150</sup> Bruce Riley Ashford, *Every Square Inch: An Introduction to Cultural Engagement for Christians* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 13, Logos.

<sup>151</sup> Joshua D. Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk about God in a Skeptical Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 6, Logos.

acts.<sup>152</sup> Kenneth Mercer, Editor in Chief of the American Water Works Association Water Science, implies culture has subcultures, meaning water supply companies have a way (culture) of doing business.<sup>153</sup> The reality of subcultures gives meaning to cross-cultural relationships.

David Livermore, President of the Cultural Intelligence Center in Bingham Farms, Michigan, says cross-cultural engagement is a relatability factor some people have that allows for better communication and other cultural sensitivity.<sup>154</sup> David Livermore adds a caveat: having the ability to maintain an individual culture while relating to different cultures.<sup>155</sup> Jonathan Dodson, Pastor of City Life Church in Austin, Texas, gives an example of a congregant evangelizing a neighbor of a Near Eastern religion and the need to communicate across belief boundaries while maintaining the Christian belief.<sup>156</sup> The issue of cross-cultural communication and interaction is a problem for many in the church. R. Robert Creech notes that with a culture regressing rather than advancing, many church leaders become intertwined with the regression and culture rather than inform the culture and maintain a biblical worldview.<sup>157</sup> Maintaining a biblical worldview is crucial to affecting the culture with the truthfulness of Christian belief.

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<sup>152</sup> Cecilia Heyes, "Culture," *Current Biology* 30, no. 20 (2020): R1246, [www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960982220312768](http://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960982220312768)

<sup>153</sup> Kenneth L. Mercer, "Culture," *Journal of the American Water Works Association* 110, no. 12 (2018): 1, [www.web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=d2916114-f33c-4dda-bf41-bc8216596984%40redis](http://www.web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=d2916114-f33c-4dda-bf41-bc8216596984%40redis).

<sup>154</sup> David Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success*, 2nd ed. (New York: American Management Association, 2015), 26, Logos.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, 30.

<sup>157</sup> R. Robert Creech, *Family Systems*, 50.

## Worldview

C. Fred Smith acknowledges a worldview is something everyone has.<sup>158</sup> Roger Erdvig, Senior Director of Worldview Education at Summit Ministries, reports that a worldview results from personal orientation, intellectual, and communitive or through contact.<sup>159</sup> Erdvig further defines a worldview as how an individual sees the world.<sup>160</sup> Mark Ward, Ph.D. from Bob Jones University and editor of Bible Study Magazine, posits a trifurcated foundation for worldviews: presuppositions, a story, and doing.<sup>161</sup> These presuppositions are commitments that individuals abide by as they interact with the world.<sup>162</sup> Denise Kjesbo and Lou Cha assert that in this modality (communitive), culture exerts great pressure on the church steeped in secular values and worldviews.<sup>163</sup> As Paul Renfro et al. observed, this pressure and humanistic worldview is being realized in the public school system.<sup>164</sup> The current secular mindset tends to levy morality and other foundational worldview elements on individualism, says Justin Barret.<sup>165</sup> According to the evidence, Justin Barrett also states that it is apparent in areas of society where biblical morality is strong, eliciting formidable rejoinders from anti-religious adherents in response to religious morality, the fight intensifies.<sup>166</sup> This secular pressure is being applied to the youth of America in an ever-growing secular culture. Therefore, as Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin note,

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<sup>158</sup> C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview*, 2.

<sup>159</sup> Roger C. S. Erdvig, "A Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 29, no. 3 (2020): 285-306. [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10656219.2020.1816517](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10656219.2020.1816517).

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>161</sup> Mark Ward, *Biblical Worldview: Creation, Fall, Redemption*, ed. by Mark L. Ward Jr. and Dennis Cone (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2016), 6, Logos.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>163</sup> Denise Kjesbo, "Family Ministry," 503.

<sup>164</sup> Renfro, et al., *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 82.

<sup>165</sup> Justin L. Barrett, *The Oxford Handbook*, 313.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

family discipleship unapologetically teaches the family about God amidst the growing secular cause to remove God from the culture.<sup>167</sup> This aesthetic is best suited in the home and with a well-rounded understanding of what families are confronted with in the culture.

Another platform to understand this familial position from a worldview perspective is cultural apologetics. Paul Gould, a professor and Christian Apologist at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida, asserts the need for cultural apologetics, engaging the culture with attention paid to the type and use of evidence in offering the case for Christianity.<sup>168</sup> Josh Chatraw equates a worldview as a story that answers the questions of life told through a series of smaller narratives.<sup>169</sup> Interaction through narration is an avenue to engage the culture. Josh Chatraw and Karen Swallow Prior, Ph.D., English professor, and author, profess that cultural engagement involves understanding the longings of the culture individuals are immersed in for a more empathetic engagement.<sup>170</sup> Josh Chatraw and Karen Prior continue in this idiom that understanding the culture safeguards the Christian witness from being encapsulated in the culture.<sup>171</sup> Jesus understood this idiom and advised His disciples to be weary of the culture, wise, yet gentle (Matt 10:16). This is a matter of paying attention to people and what they say. Josh Chatraw and Mark D. Allen, Ph.D. and professor at Liberty University, show that the Apostle Paul was, in some ways, a cultural apologist as Paul engaged the unbelievers and culture of the

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<sup>167</sup> Matt Chandler, *Family Discipleship*, 31.

<sup>168</sup> Paul M. Gould, *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 20, Logos.

<sup>169</sup> Josh Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story*, 5.

<sup>170</sup> Joshua D. Chatraw, and Karen Swallow Prior, *Cultural Engagement: A Crash Course in Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 21, Logos.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

first century.<sup>172</sup> Paul's use of cultural engagement in Acts 17 is the template for how Christian families should engage the culture of the twenty-first century. The Apostle Paul's travels in Athens demonstrated cultural engagement and Paul's cultural intelligence. The Apostle Paul surveyed the city and engaged people in the Synagogues and the marketplace (Acts 17:16-17). Paul, the Apostle, used his senses to see, hear, and experience the culture of Athens, then engaged the culture (Acts 17:17-34). Paul Copan, Christian theologian, analytic philosopher, apologist, and author, points out the congruency of the twenty-first century to the first century and that, like Paul, Christians need to engage the culture with the better story of Christianity.<sup>173</sup> The need for Christians to engage the current culture is as apparent now as it was in Paul's day. Though not an entirely pagan worldview, the distorted worldview of the youth culture in the twenty-first century swirls around a trichotomy of paradigms, moralistic-therapeutic-deism.

### **Moralistic-Therapeutic-Deism (MTD)**

The trichotomy of moralistic-therapeutic-deism emerged as a prevailing life paradigm for teenagers in the early 2000s. This discovery was made by Christian Smith, a sociologist and professor of sociology at the University of Notre Dame, and Melinda Lundquist Denton, a professor of sociology at the University of Texas at San Antonio. These sociologists collaborated on the book *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, published in 2005.<sup>174</sup> This is an older volume, but a watershed excursus of the survey results of the National Study of Youth and Religion (from here forward, NSYR) conducted in the early 2000s.

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<sup>172</sup> Joshua D. Chatraw, and Mark D. Allen, *Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 28, Logos.

<sup>173</sup> Paul Copan, and Kenneth D. Litwak, *The Gospel in the Marketplace of Ideas: Paul's Mars Hill Experience for Our Pluralistic World* (Westmont: IVP, 2018), 12, Logos.

<sup>174</sup> Christian Smith, and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Kindle.

The treatment here will be brief, as a more detailed engagement will occur in a later chapter. The premise explored by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton was teenagers' spiritual and religious lives, which, according to the authors, is an overlooked aspect of teenage life.<sup>175</sup>

As noted in the previous section, the unfolding narrative results from being held captive in the current culture.<sup>176</sup> This captivity infuses various religious beliefs, spirituality, and assumptions of the world as an amalgamation of beliefs.<sup>177</sup> There is societal stress placed on teens through school, work, media, and friend groups, which often push religion and spirituality to the side.<sup>178</sup> In the early 2000s, the rise of “spiritual seekers” prompted the NYSR survey to establish empirical data to determine a generational effect.<sup>179</sup> This data was Christian Smith and Melinda Denton's source pool to determine teens' religious adherence and spirituality and the potential for changing religious culture in America.<sup>180</sup> An initial finding is that many surveyed teenagers found truth in other religious beliefs.<sup>181</sup> A further position the teens hold is that their beliefs are individualized and do not need to be gathered in a formal church setting.<sup>182</sup> This position varies from religious system to system; some, such as Mormons, hold strictly exclusive and non-individualistic religious beliefs; they are part of the Mormon collective.<sup>183</sup> An interesting statistic uncovered in the study was why teens raised in a religious setting stopped

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<sup>175</sup> Christian Smith, and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching*, 4.

<sup>176</sup> Josh Chatraw, *Cultural Engagement*, 22.

<sup>177</sup> Christian Smith, *Soul searching*, 26.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

being religious; the answer was doubt and disbelief.<sup>184</sup> This is an area of this intervention where this doubt can be engaged in the home to dissuade disbelief. The crux of the findings led to what the authors termed MTD.

Moralistic-Therapeutic-Deism is characterized by five elements, as explained by the authors. Those elements are 1) God exists, 2) people should be nice to each other, 3) happiness and good feelings of self are a life goal, 4) God is involved in life only when there is a problem, and 5) going to heaven is based on being good.<sup>185</sup> Albert Mohler, president of the Southeastern Theological Seminary, engaged the authors in a 2005 article from his website.<sup>186</sup> Albert Mohler concludes a striking summation of the meaning of God and MTD: this belief system is safe.<sup>187</sup> Mohler also infers the onus of this belief amalgamation is the fault of churches and parents.<sup>188</sup> There is a defined need for Christian parents to be engaged in their children's lives, to communicate theological truths of Christianity so that their children can speak more articulately about their faith. Mohler concludes with a stinging indictment of parents and the church, as each embraces individualism and does not demonstrate a biblical faith, which is observed throughout the children's lives.<sup>189</sup> Michael W. Cunningham, Liberty University alumni, engages the teens of this study, who are now adults, in a 2003 article. Michael Cunningham envisions these now-adult adherents of MTD as Nomads.<sup>190</sup> Cunningham notes that MTD avoids the authority of Scripture,

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<sup>184</sup> Christian Smith, and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching*, 89.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>186</sup> Albert Mohler, "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism—the New American Religion," Albert Mohler, (April; 11, 2005), [www.albertmohler.com/2005/04/11/moralistic-therapeutic-deism-the-new-american-religion-2](http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/04/11/moralistic-therapeutic-deism-the-new-american-religion-2).

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Michael W. Cunningham, "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism: A Classical Critique," *Eleutheria* 7, no. 1 (June 2023): 31, [www.digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1226&context=eleu](http://www.digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1226&context=eleu).

which is evident in the original NYSR study.<sup>191</sup> Michael Cunningham's explication of MTD follows a trifurcated examination of each main tenet of this belief system: 1) Moralistic = Humanism,<sup>192</sup> 2) Therapeutic = Individualism, the most prominent of the three,<sup>193</sup> 3) Deism = Individualism and Relativism in that the degree that God involves himself in the affairs of humankind differs from person to person and the situation.<sup>194</sup>

### **Theological Foundations**

The intended result of this DMIN action research project is a rightly developed biblical worldview producing good decisions from teenagers at TMC. This is accomplished through home-based discipleship, teaching the parents to disciple their children, and developing a biblical worldview based on Scripture. The thrust of this action research project will equip parents to assist their teenagers in answering four fundamental worldview questions: 1) who am I? 2) what is my destiny? 3) what is my purpose? and 4) how should I live? These questions can be summed up with identity, destiny, purpose, and morality. The foundation of this endeavor is Scripture. Scripture guides the participants to understand the aspects of these four questions through the lens of the Bible. These questions are fundamental to answering key areas of life, and Scripture will be the guiding framework. Cunningham's conclusion is that this generation can and should be reached with the truth of Scripture, but from a relational aspect.<sup>195</sup> Bulldozer tactics will induce pushback from this generation.<sup>196</sup> It is clear from this literary review that adherents of MTD can and should be reached by the church, instructing these individuals and families about

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<sup>191</sup> Michael W. Cunningham, "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism," 33.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.



the truth of the Christian faith, teaching them to instruct their children in the goodness of God for the generations (Deut 6:4-9).

### Identity

The Bible says that all people are created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Being made in God's image is the jewel in the crown of all God created.<sup>197</sup> The implication here is that when God created man, all men and women from there on would be image bearers of the same creative intent (Gen 5:3). The creation events in verses 1-25 imply that the order God created was for man who was created last. Gordon Wenham, Old Testament scholar, says that the creation order leading up to man was to provide for man's basic needs: a place to live, the ability to know time cycles by the stars, and food.<sup>198</sup> If this implication is correct, there is inherent worth in humanity and more in being God's image bearers.

Derek Kidner, Old Testament scholar (deceased), highlights the difference between man's creation and all other created things. The noted difference is between the phrases bring forth and let Us.<sup>199</sup> God created everything by His word, but these two phrases distinguish between man (let Us) and the created order (bring forth). Additionally, God seated man over all the creation (Gen 1:28), understood as a place of honor. The image humanity bears does not come without scrutiny or perplexity. The notion of the *imago Dei* has been the source of great consternation. The image of God has been postulated as spiritual and physical.<sup>200</sup> The apparent

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<sup>197</sup> K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 160, Logos.

<sup>198</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 27, Logos.

<sup>199</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 55, Logos.

<sup>200</sup> K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 164.

physical aspect is being a vice-regent over the creation.<sup>201</sup> The spiritual correlation to the *imago Dei* is a connective thread that allows man to be in a relationship with God.<sup>202</sup>

This researcher's position is that both are correct and agree with Scripture. In various respects, the *imago Dei* are shared characteristics with God, such as intelligence, compassion, self-reflection, emotion, will, and the ability to form relationships. This is not a replete list of the shared attributes given through the *imago Dei*; they are a glimpse of understanding “who I am.” This was the scene in the beginning, and God pronounced it “very good” (Gen 1:31, NASB). This is man in the perfect sense of creation, but this would not remain permanent as sin came into the world through disobedience. This side of perfection is brokenness. Another way to understand brokenness is sin. Sin is that which is contrary to the will of God. This is where man (humanity) ended up through disobedience and pride. Part of the identity confusion in individuals today is based on the broken image.

Sin is any action contrary to the will and Word of God. Sin’s appearance comes in Genesis chapter 3 (Gen 3:1-7). The disobedience of the woman and man was met with a consequence suffered by every subsequent generation. K. A. Matthews notes this inherited sin as an indelible mark passed to all humans.<sup>203</sup> This mark left the stain of sin on all people. The Apostle Paul states that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23, NASB). Through sin, the *imago Dei* is broken. A New Testament scholar, Douglas Moo, equates the loss of God’s glory with this brokenness.<sup>204</sup> Therefore, glory was an original element in the *imago Dei*. James Dunn, a New Testament scholar (deceased), furthers this statement, saying the glory

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<sup>201</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 32.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>203</sup> K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 227.

<sup>204</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 127, Logos.

lost is also continued to the present, a continual absence of the glory of God in man.<sup>205</sup> The personal relationship with the Creator had been severed. Considering the image is spiritual and relational, this leaves a chasm, a gap, or a hole in our hearts. Humanity seeks to fill this gap with anything other than God, which leads to more brokenness.

Scripture states that humanity is dead in sin (Eph 2:1). Darrel Bock, New Testament scholar and professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, says that despite being alive, unsaved humanity “are spiritually dead, useless, detached from a functioning relationship with God.”<sup>206</sup> This broken status can be viewed in the world through the actions of humanity. The individual speaks lies and generates abhorrent thoughts, displaying this sinful nature. What Scripture testifies to the basic nature of humanity is visible. Despite the sinful nature possessed by all people, the biblical understanding of origin is having the image of the Creator with value, dignity, and equality among people.

### Destiny and Purpose

Destiny and purpose are intertwined yet separate. As these two worldview questions are closely aligned, they will be treated together in this section. The Bible says that for believers in Christ they have been destined to become the likeness of God’s son, Jesus (Rom 8:29). This passage speaks to destiny and purpose. Douglas Moo states that God entered into a relationship with humanity, initially with Israel and ultimately with all people.<sup>207</sup> James Dunn furthers this understanding as “a relationship experienced and acknowledged.”<sup>208</sup> The sense of destiny and

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<sup>205</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), 168, Logos.

<sup>206</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. by Eckhard J. Schnabel (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2019), 60, Logos.

<sup>207</sup> Douglas Moo, *Romans*, 270.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 482.

purpose surmised by these theologians is that each falls within a proper relationship with God, thus becoming like Christ.

This is a return to the original *imago Dei* and a restored relationship with the Creator. To live life apart from God is vanity, as King Solomon stated (Eccl 1:2). Solomon concludes Ecclesiastes with a statement that succinctly sums destiny and purpose, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl 12:13, English Standard Version). Michael Eaton, former pastor and author, notes Solomon’s juxtaposition between two spheres of life: with God and apart from God, and in the end, it is better to be with God.<sup>209</sup> Keeping God’s commandments is a key to purpose and destiny and harkens to Deuteronomy 6:7-9 as the instruction to be given to the generations. This, then, determines that our purpose is to grow in the knowledge and fear of God (Prov 1:7, 9:10) and to become like Christ (1 John 3:2).

The Apostle Paul, in Philippians, uses vivid language to describe a life apart from Christ, that it is “rubbish” in comparison (Phil 3:8, NASB). George Guthrie, a New Testament professor at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, relates the “rubbish” (v. 8) stated by Paul as a total loss of Paul’s former life in comparison to a relationship to Christ.<sup>210</sup> Paul says in Galatians 2, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal 2:20, NASB). This passage implies Paul’s obedience to God and

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<sup>209</sup> Michael A. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 18, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 176, Logos.

<sup>210</sup> George H. Guthrie, *Philippians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. by Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 239, Logos.

spiritual growth.<sup>211</sup> It also denotes Paul's radical new life as a believer in Christ; thus, Christ lives in him.<sup>212</sup> This is spiritual formation, an element of salvation critical to conform to the likeness of Christ (Rom 8:29). This spiritual formation is counted toward purpose and destiny and is a key to thinking biblically or developing a biblical worldview. Spiritual maturity also speaks to morality.

### Morality

The question of morality is a question of living. The proposed worldview question, how should I live? is answered in a culmination of the previous three worldview questions. Morality is a result of the *imago Dei*. Conscience is part of this image, and free will to choose good or bad. Understanding who an individual is is the beginning of living a moral life. Romans 2:15 tells us that God placed His commandments on the hearts of people (Rom 2:15). This denotes conscience and moral living. Paul shows that the Law governs the Jews, but Gentiles also follow the Law not written but stamped on their hearts, "laws of humanity and decency."<sup>213</sup> This understanding of right and wrong results from the *imago Dei* and points people to a moral existence. Specifically, followers of Jesus live moral lives in obedience to Him. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NASB). Jesus' commandments were simple: love God and your neighbor (Matt 22:37-40). Jesus' statement points back to the Decalogue.

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<sup>211</sup> Adam McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians: A Critique of Contemporary Christian Spiritualities* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 8, Logos.

<sup>212</sup> Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 200, Logos.

<sup>213</sup> Kenneth Boa, and William Kruidenier, *Romans*, vol. 6, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 80, Logos.

A fundamental passage in Scripture, thus this thesis, is Deuteronomy 6:4-9. This pericope is also known as the Shema. The beginning verses, vs. 4-6, are essential to verses 7-9, as they set the reason to teach and what must be taught. The Shema testifies to the oneness of God and His position over Israel.<sup>214</sup> The word “Shema” is a translation of the Hebrew word “hear,” meaning listen and obey.<sup>215</sup> Additionally, the initial command is to love God with every faculty possessed by the individual (v. 6). To love God is to obey His commands; Jesus made this clear (John 14:15). The New Testament connection is denoted by the answer Jesus gave when asked which of the commandments was the greatest (Matt 22:36). Jesus’ response is the culmination of the law and the prophets, that is to love God with all you are and to love others as yourself (Matt 22:37-40). Loving God is more than a sensation; it means giving the entirety of oneself to Him in obedience and love.<sup>216</sup> Craig Bloomberg, Professor Emeritus of the New Testament at Denver Seminary in Colorado, notes this stance as a “wholehearted devotion to God with every aspect of one’s being.”<sup>217</sup> The question then becomes what needs to be taught by the parents to their children to live a moral life. The answer to this question is God’s laws and commandments, specifically, the Decalogue.

The Decalogue is the word for the Ten Commandments. These commandments are reiterated in Deuteronomy 5. Therefore, the command to parents to teach their children about God and His requirements falls on the heels of the reiteration of these commandments.

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<sup>214</sup> Michael Grisanti, Tremper Longman III, and David E. Garland, *Deuteronomy*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Harper Collins, 2017), 146, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>215</sup> Edward J. Woods, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, Vol. 5, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. David G. Firth (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011), 133, Logos.

<sup>216</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 725, Logos.

<sup>217</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 335, Logos.

Deuteronomy 5 is framed with chapters four and six, like “an envelope around the Decalogue.”<sup>218</sup> Chapter four begins with God’s command to obey His law (Deut 4:1). This is like a preparatory command, preparing Israel for the reception of the Decalogue. Chapter five is the restatement of that law (Deut 5:7-21). Chapter six, then, is the requirement to teach these laws to the children. Teaching these laws is the pathway to living a moral life, a life pleasing to God and growing in the knowledge of Him (Col 1:10). Living given the Decalogue is thinking biblically, answering the worldview question of how should I live.

The Theological Foundation expressed in these pages lays the framework to answer the four life questions of origin, destiny, purpose, and morality. The answers are biblical, thus fostering a biblical worldview. This worldview is the proposed telos of this action research project and the abatement of poor decision-making of the teens at TMC.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

God's provision for equipping generations is the biblical imperative for parents to disciple their children (Deut 6:4-9). The knowledge of God passed through the generations is a theological position executed through home-based discipleship (theoretical foundation), which fosters a biblical worldview. This worldview is necessary for navigating life and truth and is a determining factor in decision-making. Therefore, this action research project intends to develop a twelve-week program with three content areas. The program aims to engage biblical discipleship for personal spiritual growth and to build on this base to teach parents how to shape and develop a biblical worldview in their children. Additionally, the psychology of *schema* and *thema* will facilitate the foundational acquisition and application of newly learned material for

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<sup>218</sup> Edward J. Woods, *Deuteronomy*, 133.

home-based discipleship.<sup>219</sup> A functional framework is a hybrid model of family ministry, family-integrated, family-based, and family-equipping ministries.<sup>220</sup> Coupled with these ministry models will be instruction on understanding a biblical worldview and building that worldview for the parent and their children. The three areas of content incorporated into this action research project will be group instruction, home-based worship, and daily Scripture reading. Reading Scripture is a critical step in developing a biblical worldview; knowing what God says through His Word is imperative to begin to think like Christ (Phil 2:5). This research action project will also use questionnaires and surveys to make pre- and post-intervention assessments to determine efficacy. It is proposed that questionnaires and surveys are viable means to measure the intended change of home-based discipleship. The program, as offered, would narrow a gap in the literature and instantiate a program that will instruct parents to educate their children in the ways of God (Eph 6:4) and, through rational and tactile learning, foster the development of a biblical worldview in their children.

### Three Ministry Models

Three popular ministry models engage parents with instruction for discipling their children; these models are the focus of *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, 2nd Edition.<sup>221</sup> Reaching families with the tools for discipleship is the driving force behind the three models, but a church service schematic seems to be the more prevalent function of each model. This author concludes that no one model meets every needed criterion for family discipleship for building a biblical worldview. There are countless discipleship materials for singular individuals and small groups, but little or no material to address the issue of home-based discipleship, with a

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<sup>219</sup> Christian Smith, et al., *Religious Parenting*, 179.

<sup>220</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 49-51.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.



specificity of this platform used to develop a biblical worldview. The noted hybrid ministry model at TMC is not an intentional result. The hybrid model exists due to the available space in the church building and various daily ministries offered at the church. Although not intended, the hybrid model at TMC works well for the home-based content of this intervention. A brief excursion of each ministry model follows.

Paul Renfro, the Pastor of Discipleship at Grace Family Baptist Church, writes this chapter on family-integrated ministry. His rationale for this model lies in the “de-age segregation” of the church.<sup>222</sup> This need to eliminate age-segregated ministry was brought about by the increasing mechanization of the organizational side of the church.<sup>223</sup> Paul Renfro reiterates that this platform intends to deconstruct age-segregated programs in the church and place accountability for family discipleship on the father (parent for this thesis).<sup>224</sup> This accountability is made through small groups. The family-integrated church focuses on families doing everything together, sitting together in church service, and attending weekly small groups.<sup>225</sup>

The family-based model keeps age segregation but offers family-based event programming.<sup>226</sup> Brandon Shields is the author of this chapter and the lead Pastor at Soma Church in Indianapolis. An area of concern for Shields is the dropout rate of teens and church.<sup>227</sup> This means that Christian teens are not influencing the culture but being influenced by culture.

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<sup>222</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 63.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. 62.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 117.

Family-based ministry involves limiting activity-driven youth programming.<sup>228</sup> Instead, families are situated in activities for growth and intergenerational relationships with other families.

Jay Strothers, Campus and Teaching Pastor at Brentwood Baptist Church in Brentwood, Tennessee, says, "the family-equipping model is in reality the younger brother of the family-based model [sic]."<sup>229</sup> Of the ministry models explored, this model represents the focus of this thesis in the best possible area, the parents as primary disciplers of their children. Strothers is a proponent of leading and equipping parents to teach their children to love God and obey His commands. Jay Strothers speaks to the willful abandonment of the biblical call to teach their children to the youth and student ministers in the local church.<sup>230</sup> This model seeks to put discipleship back into the homes (Deut 6:4-9) and work with and for parents to increase their spiritual formation to facilitate this growth in their kids.

These ministry models have positive aspects that can and should be utilized to instruct parents about discipleship methods to cultivate a solid biblical worldview in their children. Of the three, the family-equipping model embodies the most significant impact for this action research project. Some areas of the other two will be incorporated, such as families sitting together during Sunday morning services (family-integrated) and various family-focused activities (family-based) throughout the calendar year to promote family-to-family interaction and relationships. This amalgamation is the proposal church model through this action research project.

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<sup>228</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 124.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

## Theoretical Methodology

Various models of ministry focus on parents as the primary disciple-makers of their children. This teaching modality is not a church leaders' consensus but a Scripture call for parents to disciple their children (Deut 6:7-9). This action research project seeks to induce a discipleship program using questionnaires, group instruction, home-based worship, and daily Scripture reading. This plan relies on intentionality from the involved parents and teens and the pastoral staff at TMC. The program is a holistic approach to discipleship and worldview development, resulting in biblically based decision-making that reflects a life lived for Christ. A key Bible passage for this application is Acts 2:42. This passage functions as a template for the praxis of Deuteronomy 6:7-9. This passage also embodies the *schema* and *thema* integration through teaching (intellectual) and physical participation (action).

### Questionnaires and Surveys

Questionnaires and surveys are measured to determine an individual's spiritual maturity and personal practice of basic Christian competencies. These measures allow the collection of data that will be analyzed and used to create a content curriculum. Additionally, the data captured before the program is initialized and after completion will be used to measure the effectiveness and results.

Open-ended questions and a Likert scale of measure will be deployed to understand each participant's spiritual terrain. These data collection methods are critical, containing project boundaries and the general direction of the project research questions.<sup>231</sup> The use of these

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<sup>231</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 90, Logos.

collection tools will also increase anonymity.<sup>232</sup> These data collection methods will foster better participation among the parents and teens and allow qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results to measure success.

### **Group Instruction**

The primary Scripture passage is Deuteronomy 6:4-9. This is the command to disciple children, and the passage in Acts 2:42 will serve as the methodology for home-based instruction. Viewing this passage reveals four key aspects of spiritual formation, which are vital to forming a biblical worldview: learning, fellowship, eating together, and prayer. These are the base elements within the home. Thus, the home is the primary venue for discipleship. Being a disciple is being a learner.<sup>233</sup> The home is the place where parents educate their kids formally and informally. The group instruction will engage everyday life as teaching moments for discipleship. This is where the methodology of cognition and learning bears on the equipping of parents to disciple their children.

The group instruction will incorporate a curriculum developed to answer the afore-noted worldview questions and engage the cognitive structures and physical mnemonic cues that enable data retention and function as recurring memory for decision-making. Like a catechism, this is an intellectual and physical interaction foundational to instructing children.<sup>234</sup> The basis for this is the *schema* and *thema*, which will be induced to show learning methods. This intervention proposes that group instruction will provide a platform for interactive learning. Each participant will express successes and failures from the previous week during group time. This

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<sup>232</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, and Terry Dwain Robertson, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 40, Logos.

<sup>233</sup> Bruce Riley Ashford, *Every Square Inch*, 13.

<sup>234</sup> Randy Stinson, and Timothy Paul Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2011), 185, Logos.

portion of the program will rely heavily on the fundamentals of Christian education. In her 2020 dissertation, Melody Smith explores what she terms classical Christian education, using the Socratic method to seek truth, think, and form a biblical worldview.<sup>235</sup> The theories and methodologies associated with Christian education will be tweaked to fit a home-based discipleship model and taught to the parents during group instruction. Lastly, this time of group instruction will cover the remaining content of home-based worship and daily Scripture reading.

### **Home-based Worship**

Home-based worship will center on the shared experiences during Sunday morning church service. The family-integrated church model will highlight this aspect of the project. Although not intentional, the lack of Sunday school classes and no student instruction on Sunday morning at TMC facilitates family integration during Sunday morning worship services. The family will sit together to hear the same message. The content of this message can then be meditated on and discussed during family worship time.

This time, directed once weekly, will serve as the platform to discuss and learn deeper truths about the preached sermon. The deductions will apply to daily life and work towards the spiritual formation of the children in the home. The shared experience will help the parents teach their children as it is a topic covered in the sermon, which should lessen the teaching anxiety of the parent. Elements of the developed curriculum will assist the parent with questions designed to foster biblical thinking as the Sunday sermon is applied to everyday life.

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<sup>235</sup> Melody K. Smith, "Classical Christian Education and Student's Christian Formation" (PhD diss., Liberty University School of Divinity, 2020), 27, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

## Daily Scripture Reading

Scripture is the prime ingredient for an individual's spiritual diet. A robust intake of God's word is the priority to grow spiritually. This statement is equally true for the parents, even more so as they are guiding and teaching their children from God's word and should be able to dissect and interpret the meaning in basic yet edifying applicable ways. This action research project proposes the development of a daily Bible reading plan to guide parents and youth in Scripture that seeks to give answers to basic worldview questions and disciplines to induce spiritual formation and foster biblical thinking. This discipline will provide direction, avoiding drudgery.<sup>236</sup>

The Bible reading plan will establish a daily Bible reading habit and seek to build spiritual discipline. Spiritual discipline will guide the parents and youth in daily Bible intake, prayer, and worship. Developing spiritual practices is pursuing holiness.<sup>237</sup> This pursuit results in spiritual maturity and reshapes the thinking of the parents and youth, conforming the mind and thought to a biblical framework.

## Conclusion

Discipleship is a relationship, an intimate relationship. Being a disciple goes beyond mere learning to experiencing life's teachings. The example in Acts chapter two shows this relational matrix between the Apostles and the disciples who learned from their teaching (Acts 2:42). The earliest church did many things together: learning, eating, fellowship, and praying. This is the model of discipleship that involves the family. The family then acts in relation to Acts 2:42, with the parents teaching the children, the family eating together, learning from each other in

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<sup>236</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 1, Logos.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

fellowship, and praying together. In this segregated era, the family, even though under attack, is the setting best able to mimic this model of discipleship demonstrated by the early church. It is the setting instituted and ordained by God to teach about Him and His precepts (Deut 6:4-9). In this context, we put on the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5), developing a biblical worldview and thinking biblically about the decisions made from a correct relational alignment with God. The Literature review section highlighted past and present efforts to empower parents to disciple their children. The various models and modes of family ministry help develop the strategy to equip parents for home-based discipleship. The literature review also demonstrated a gap in the literature on a practical instruction strategy for parents or what should be taught to parents to equip them for leading their church at home. This action research project attempts to add substance to this gap in the literature. The substance of this thesis intervention project is the foundational structure for education and discipleship in the home to equip parents to teach their children how to answer questions about identity, destiny, purpose, and morality.

The problem presented at TMC is the lack of home-based discipleship, resulting in a distorted biblical worldview, manifesting in poor decision-making with teens. The literature review reveals a contiguous problem in many churches of a similar nature. A problem that many have endeavored to remedy. The remedy is discipleship, specifically, parents discipling their children (Deut 6:7-9). The problem for many is that parents do not have time and do not believe they are equipped to do this spiritual forming task.<sup>238</sup> The purpose for this DMIN action research project is to develop home-based discipleship strategies and disciple parents to build a biblical worldview in their children.

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<sup>238</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 10.

The strategy to develop parents to disciple their children covers three content areas: group instruction, home-based worship, and daily Scripture reading. The underlying structure is a hybrid model of the three ministry modalities from *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*. This equipping strategy will focus on traditional teaching methods to instill discipline to develop holiness. Parents will receive instruction on how adults and children learn and retain information, including basic cognition, the importance of repetition, and home habits that exemplify godliness. The group training will also incorporate group discussions where parents can share everyday experiences and learn from each other (Gal 6:2). This element is connected to the family-equipping and family-based ministry models. Home-based worship will place the parents and children together, discussing the previous Sunday morning service. This will promote a better understanding for the children and allow a communal learning environment for the family. This aspect of content is linked to the family-integrated ministry model. Lastly, a plan will be introduced to bring the family together to engage in daily Scripture reading. This will refine and develop spiritual discipline for progressive holiness and a biblical worldview.

The proposal of the listed strategy is spiritual formation which will transform the minds of the teens at TMC and, through this transformation, propel them to be an influence on culture (Rom, 12:1-2). The vehicle for the proposed strategy is the home and parents engaging their children in discipleship. The aim of the parents will be the cultivation of a biblical worldview to produce biblical thinking and problem-solving to engage the culture and society of the current time. If parents are better prepared, equipped, and more confident in discipling their children, then faulty decisions based on a distorted worldview will improve.



### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will explain the methodology for developing the strategy and materials to prepare parents for in-home Bible study and worldview development. The determined root issue is the lack of home-based discipleship, as parents are ill-equipped to disciple their children. This DMIN action research project intends to develop a strategy to address this equipping issue and encourage parents to engage their children in home-based discipleship to develop a biblical worldview that promotes biblical thinking and decision-making. The designed intervention covers a twelve-week program. The first two weeks cover recruitment, implied consent, and a group meeting to disclose the parameters and expectations of the participants and the intervention plan and receive and answer the participant's questions. Participants will also complete questionnaires and surveys to gauge participant worldview, Christian culture in the home, and spiritual maturity to measure the efficacy of the designed intervention. The following eight weeks will consist of weekly group meetings, once-weekly home-based worship, and daily Scripture reading. The participants will maintain a home discipleship journal, noting each activity within the week.

#### **Intervention Design**

The proposed intervention will use questionnaires and surveys combined with project journals kept by each participant. These triangulated data collection methods will provide the needed data to test the thesis and confirm efficacy. The developed strategy for home-based discipleship will function in three areas of content. The content areas are participant group gatherings, home-based worship, and daily Scripture reading. Post-intervention questionnaires and surveys will follow this instruction period to gauge participant progression. The final step

will be analyzing and synthesizing the gathered data. The following pages will detail each aspect of this DMIN action research project.

### First Steps

This intervention will begin with gaining the required church permission and participant recruitment. Upon receiving approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board and the thesis project mentor, the permission request letter will be sent to the Senior Pastor at TMC (see Appendix A), and the recruitment letters will be sent to the prospective participants (see Appendix B). The participant pool at TMC will be restricted to parents with teens active in Mission Students. A further delimitation could be imposed on parents who are covenant members of TMC, but this would lessen the total number of participants in the intervention. Therefore, participation will be limited to parents with teens active in the student program at TMC. The first step will occupy the first two weeks of the intervention.

The first week of the intervention will gather the program permission and participants' informed consent documents. The applicable group of participants will meet in the second week to discuss the parameters of the intervention, administer the first set of questionnaires and surveys, and answer questions from the participants. The results of the questionnaires and surveys will be analyzed and graphed as a pre-intervention starting point. The graphs will be compiled to show individual and group starting points to determine spiritual maturity and existing conformity to a biblical worldview. Participants will be given project handbooks, which include their participant journals. There are two handbooks, one for the parents (see Appendix J) and the other for the students (see Appendix K). The questionnaires and surveys combined with the journals will be the methodology used to triangulate participant progress and the efficacy of

the proposed intervention. This methodology will provide balance to this research project and give validation to the collected data.<sup>239</sup>

There are two implied consent forms: one for the adults and one for the students (see Appendices C and D). Questionnaires will gather qualitative data with answers to open-ended questions to determine worldview (see Appendix E). Participants will be able to answer the questions in their own words. This self-reflection is a means to understand the problem on an individual level.<sup>240</sup> On the other hand, surveys will be used to gauge spiritual maturity and Christian culture in the home. Based on their survey responses, this will act as a growth scale and determine if any non-believers are in the group. The Christian culture in the home survey will explain what measures of biblical instruction are being attempted at home and what elements, if any, of Christian culture are being modeled in the home (see Appendix G). The Christian culture in the home survey will only be given to the adults in each participating household. The first survey will be given during this initial participant gathering (see Appendix F). As the participants engage in home-based discipleship and grow in spiritual maturity, the expected outcome is the instantiation of biblical thinking through the foundations of a biblical worldview. The biblical worldview strategy is detailed in the body of the intervention.

## The Body

### **Weeks Three and Four**

The third week of this DMIN action research project is the start of the weekly parent gathering, home-based discipleship, and daily Scripture reading. The three content areas will run

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<sup>239</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72.

<sup>240</sup> Ernest T. Stringer, and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2021), 138, Kindle.

congruent each week. The first parent gathering will cover several topics and serve as a “teach on the go” methodology. This means the weekly topics covered in the participant handbooks will be discussed with the parents in the weekly gathering so they are equipped to teach their children. The pedagogy and andragogy teaching methodologies will be addressed and integrated into the home-based family worship and daily Scripture reading times. Additionally, a more formal psychology of Christian formation will be taught to the parent group, explaining the rationale of *schema* and *thema*, both learning modes. This researcher believes that the differing needs of adult and youth learning are directly related to *schema* and *thema* and, thus, critical to this intervention. Lastly, for this starting week of parental instruction, the notion of worldview will be introduced and explained as this is the *telos* for the intervention.

It is paramount that the parents understand how individuals at differing ages learn best for comprehension and retention. For adult learners, two benefits of adulthood are autonomy and experience. Both of which focus the adult on action rather than receiving. This means adults want to use their experience to solve problems rather than learn about those problems.<sup>241</sup> An additional striking difference with adult learners is their understanding of self-concept. This, in effect, is identity, at least from the standpoint of being a self-starting adult with boundaries and capabilities based on life experience.<sup>242</sup> This aspect of adult learning is encapsulated in the adult gathering and will be utilized in the first portion of the meeting. This portion will be a group discussion to engage the parameters of that week's topics, the successes and failures of the participant's home-based discipleship, and allow the parental group to coach each other and share

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<sup>241</sup> Komail Malik, and Tanwir Khaliq, "Andragogy (adult learning)," *Annals of PIMS-Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University* 13, no. 4 (2017): 300, <https://apims.net/index.php/apims/article/view/1>.

<sup>242</sup> Nataliya Machynska, and Halyna Boiko, “Andragogy – The Science of Ault Education: Theoretical Aspects,” *Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education, and Didactics* 24, no 1, (January 2020): 26, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2479494712?accountid=12085&forcedol=true&pq-origsite=summon>.

similar issues with their home discipleship time. This provides a psychological space for the adults to be problem solvers and share strategies they use at home. This learning strategy will also function similarly to youth. Although youth do not have the same measure of experience, group discussion and hands-on learning activities will be beneficial. This applies to two areas of cognition for both adults and youth. These cognitive areas are *schema* and *thema*.

These areas of cognition, *schema*, and *thema* are critical to Christian formation, thus, developing a biblical worldview. These modes of cognitive development work together in this intervention to form spheres of knowledge acquisition. The adult and student workbooks are created based on the direct transfer of knowledge (*schema*, rational acquisition of knowledge) and through activity interaction from person to person, forming a relation transfer of knowledge (*thema*); both areas of learning derived from the parent instructing their family and then engaging in activities that enable learning through action and interaction. Examples of each are reading Scripture and explaining the meaning of the prescribed passage; another example is doing an activity that mimics direct knowledge through hands-on learning, such as sharing a meal, going on a family walk or hike, or creating something together as a family. These spheres are embedded into the intervention plan to grow base knowledge and application through activity to build Christian formation. First, *schema* is the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>243</sup>

This modality of forming knowledge through perception, organization, and connection is the product of Jean Piaget, a Swiss Psychologist (1896-1980). His system, Schematic Perspective, is a form of growing knowledge and intellect by acquiring data through perception and the senses, then taxonomically storing this data to form a knowledge base.<sup>244</sup> This creates a

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<sup>243</sup> James R. Estep, and Jonathan H. Kim, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2010), 66, Kindle.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

knowledge base from which higher forms of thinking and processing occur. A portion of the importance of this as it pertains to adult and youth learning is the acquired knowledge of an adult to a youth. An adult's higher experience allows for more abstract thinking, which factors into their need to be problem solvers.<sup>245</sup> The students involved in this action research project have limited experience and thus require more intellectual reception to be able to engage in abstract thinking on a higher level. However, the level of experience in youth does provide some semblance of abstract thinking, so students also engage in problem-solving at an abstract level, although at a lesser functional level than adults. *Thema*, on the other hand, is relational-based. A simple word to expand the understanding of this theory is influence. The theory of *thema*, Thematic Perspective, comes from a Russian Psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), who postulated that knowledge and development were advanced through influence or societal and relational connections between people.<sup>246</sup> This translates to two levels of learning: *schema*, as the lower, possibly foundational, cognitive epistemic function, and *thema*, as the higher form, where the lower and higher together form development. This is the schematic of knowledge orthodoxy and praxis. Pivotal biblical examples of this scheme are Deuteronomy 5:7-9 and Acts 2:42.

The biblical platform that demonstrates *schema* and *thema* is Deuteronomy 6:7-9 and Acts 2:42. These are not the only examples; Jesus engaged these modes of acquiring and synthesizing knowledge. Jesus used parables and thought-provoking questions toward His hearers. Parables are a way to convey truth through a story that elicits thought, deep thought at times. This teaching style encapsulates the adult's need to use their experience to solve problems. Jesus lived, slept, and ate with His disciples (Luke 6:1-2). In spending this kind of time with

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<sup>245</sup> James Estep, *Christian Formation*, 71.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

them, He instructed them in ways to provoke and influence their thoughts with action. This embodies *schema* and *thema*. The key Scripture of this intervention is Deuteronomy 6:7-9 and Acts 2:42. *Schema* and *thema* are observed in these passages through the family and a closely knit relational community. This is the environment from which Jesus taught and should be best suited for teaching the next generation, the family in the home. This environment is ripe for developing a biblical worldview through parental instruction and familial praxis of this instruction.

A worldview can be complex, with many subtopics and various types of worldviews. The adult participants will be given a brief overview of a worldview, a few different types of worldviews, and how they answer these four basic questions. This will be juxtaposed against the biblical answers to these questions and how each worldview correlates to reality. A worldview is “foundational beliefs concerning the nature and purpose of reality, often shared by persons within a culture, that either constitute or determine the way human experience is interpreted.”<sup>247</sup> A worldview is a way for an individual to see the world and how they fit into the world. Douglas Groothuis, a highly respected Christian philosopher and apologist, says a worldview is a “complex of concepts that explains and gives meaning to reality from where they stand.”<sup>248</sup> The prevailing worldview of modern culture is a hodgepodge or amalgamation of various non-biblical worldviews. A recent Barna poll depicts people with this hodgepodge worldview as “World Citizens.”<sup>249</sup> This means that a growing portion of the population adopts or adapts to a

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<sup>247</sup> Michael Anthony, et al., *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 140-41, Logos.

<sup>248</sup> Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 19, Logos.

<sup>249</sup> George Barna, “American Worldview Inventory 2023 - Release #1: Incidence of Biblical Worldview Shows Significant Change Since the Start of the Pandemic,” George Barna, February 2023, accessed September 22, 2023, [https://www.georgebarna.com/research/90\\_american-worldview-inventory-2023---release-#1:-incidence-of-biblical-worldview-shows-significant-change-since-the-start-of-the-pandemic](https://www.georgebarna.com/research/90_american-worldview-inventory-2023---release-#1:-incidence-of-biblical-worldview-shows-significant-change-since-the-start-of-the-pandemic).

secular worldview. A secular worldview is anything apart from God or the Bible. A formal explanation of secularism is “a word that means simply ‘belonging to this age,’ or ‘worldly.’”<sup>250</sup> Barna’s research showed that Christians with a fully developed biblical worldview make up 4% of the 2,000 people in the research poll, and 82% of this group polled as “World Citizens” (see Appendix G).<sup>251</sup> These are startling numbers, and the secular influence is being pressed against the teens at TMC. The fight to instill a biblical worldview has never been more prevalent or needed. This is the intent of this action research project and the intervention. The four worldview questions taught to the adult participants will be divided over the weekly adult gatherings of the intervention (e.g., weeks three and four will cover Who am I? and weeks five and six will answer What is my destiny?).

An additional topic discussed in this first gathering will be the culmination of four worldview questions noted in the Theological Foundations section: 1) who am I? 2) what is my destiny? 3) what is my purpose? and 4) how should I live? There are other worldview questions, but these are chosen for this intervention for their connection to the Bible and human existence. The instruction of these four questions will reveal a dependency on God in every aspect of each question. A memory phrase was created to help connect the questions to this dependency on God (see Appendix I). As stated, the worldview question for this first parent group meeting is who am I? This question will be posed to the group with minimal explanation to elicit thought on the part of the learner. The explanation will denote the complexity but simplicity of the question. Identity is not a superficial aspect of being but what it is to be; identity is what it is that makes

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<sup>250</sup> Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 106, Logos.

<sup>251</sup> George Barna, “American Worldview Inventory 2023.” Barna reveals that his research has a 95% confidence with a + or – of 2%.



humanity.<sup>252</sup> Scripture says that man and woman are made in the image of God (Gen 1:26) and placed over creation to subdue, rule, and care for what God created (vs. 27-28). God placed man in a specific role over the creation. This stresses the importance of humanity, dignity, respect, value, and many other markers that define being a human. The teaching is furthered in the Adult Handbook and structured to guide the parents as they instruct their children in home-based worship (see an example adult handbook in Appendix J).

The Adult Handbook is structured to develop the worldview question for that week. Each section of the handbook has a guide for the parents. Hence, they are clear on the instruction and why it is important for forming a biblical worldview and spiritual maturity in Jesus. Each home session will begin with prayer. The primary Scripture that answers the worldview question is listed and then explained with helpers so the parents can understand the direction of the lesson. The lessons are formatted to elicit thought and reflection on the part of the parents and the students. Reflective thoughts coincide with each section, accompanied by discovery conversations to solidify what has been learned. The home-based worship then engages the previous Sunday morning church sermon. This family engagement of the sermon fosters better understanding and a collaborative discussion on the sermon's merits and life application and how or if the sermon answered the worldview question. The simplest and most profound aspect of this area of family worship is growing in spiritual maturity together, sharing life experiences, and learning from each other. After this discovery time, the parents will engage their students with an activity, which is a tactile learning method for meaning and memory retention. The worship session will end in prayer, and then each participant will make a journal entry for self-reflection on what has been learned and how it applies to the posed worldview question. The home-based

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<sup>252</sup> C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview*, 13,

worship time will be set for one hour once each week. Applying the worldview questions to the weekly church sermon is open-ended. This is necessary if this intervention is to be replicable and reproducible in other ministry contexts. The daily Scripture reading accompanies the home-based worship section in the adult handbook.

The daily Scripture reading is based on a five-day schedule. The family worship time will be on the first day, with each successive day having a specific Scripture passage that answers the worldview question. Like the home worship section, each daily Scripture reading begins with prayer. Each prescribed day contains two primary focuses of the reading time: the main Scripture and the main thought. The Scripture reference is explained with guides to assist the parent with this instruction time. The Scripture for each day is chosen based on the worldview question, what the Scripture says about this question, and how this verse or passage speaks in the Bible, a biblical theology. The onus of the daily Scripture reading builds spiritual formation and places biblical teaching in direct contrast to the secular worldview. This enables the participants to observe where the secular worldview does not cohere with biblical teaching and what is observed in reality. The daily Scripture reading is intended for the parents and students to read together. After reading and explaining the passage, each main thought is accompanied by a discussion question. After the discussion question, each participant will make a journal entry reflecting on the daily Scripture. This action should be thirty minutes or less. The students will also have a handbook similar to the adult version but without teaching guidance (see the example student handbook in Appendix K). This will end the first whole week of this project intervention. The following week, week four, will focus on the believer's identity in Christ.

The fourth week's parent gathering will focus on the believer's identity in Christ. All of humanity bears the image of God, but only those who receive Christ can be counted as children

of God (John 1:12-13). As explained in week three, the parent meeting format will continue; therefore, no further explanation is needed as this week and every other successive week will follow the same parent meeting format. The exception will be the parent meeting topic, focusing on one of the four worldview questions and what the Bible says to each. Identity in Christ defines self-centeredness to outwardness. The secular mindset is turned inward.<sup>253</sup> This is a centripetal effect as opposed to centrifugal. The secular mindset pushes identity inward, placing the focus on the self. Meanwhile, the believer's identity pushes outward, embracing the identity of Christ. The Apostle Paul makes note of this in several places. Born-again believers are new creatures; the old self has passed away (2 Cor 5:17). Additionally, those in Christ live a life from Him; it is no longer their life but His from which they live (Gal 2:20). This is centrifugal action going outward to Christ. The ideas of centripetal and centrifugal are prevalent in the Scripture. The Old Testament was God's use of centripetal action through the nation of Israel to all nations, and the New Testament is the centrifugal action directly to all nations through the church.<sup>254</sup> Michael Gorman, theologian and professor at St. Mary's Seminary, draws this conclusion with the action of Jesus. Jesus' primary mission was centripetal with the Jews and centrifugal to the Gentiles.<sup>255</sup> A biblical example of Jesus teaching these lessons on physics is with the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7. Here, Jesus spoke in a parable to the woman about not taking the food from the children (Mark 7:27). The parable used an analogous reference of Jews as the children being fed and dogs as the Gentile referent, not getting scraps (Mark 7:27). The woman responded that even dogs get droppings (Mark 7:28). Here Jesus Himself goes to the Jew first

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<sup>253</sup> C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview*, 65.

<sup>254</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Faith*, vol. 2 (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 203, Logos.

<sup>255</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series, ed. by John R. Franke (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 37, Logos.

them the Gentile, thus, centripetal versus centrifugal. The intent here is to demonstrate a Scripture pattern with an inward and outward focus. This is also visible in identity. The secular world looks inward, while the believer's identity in Christ looks outward to Christ. The following weekly lesson will focus on destiny.

### **Weeks Five and Six**

This week will introduce the worldview question of destiny. There are two paths this question can take based on the understanding of destiny. As is observed in this intervention, destiny is synonymous with telos or the end goal of humanity, specifically the individual. As this and the remaining worldview questions have been explored elsewhere, the treatment here will be brief. The end goal for humans is relational, a relationship with the Creator. This begins with identity and progresses to a deeper relationship with God through Christ. The Bible says that because of sin, people are separated from God, but through the sacrifice of Christ, believers are reconciled back to God (Rom 5:10-11). Reconciliation is the repairing of the relationship with God. James Dunn notes that the understanding of reconciliation amongst Jews was personal rather than formal, such as royalty to their subjects.<sup>256</sup> God made man in the beginning and determined that he should not be alone (Gen 2:18). Thus, the woman was created as a helper for the man (Gen 2:21-22). This relational value is featured in the family and the relationship with the Trinity. The secular counter-position to this biblical worldview answer is self-centeredness, the opposite of relational. This has been described as the "buffered self."<sup>257</sup> This is a separation

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<sup>256</sup> D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 259.

<sup>257</sup> Benjamin K. Forrest, Joshua D. Chatraw, and Alister E. McGrath, *The History of Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 680, Logos.

from religion and living in the moment; this is the modern mindset with a centripetal intent of the self.<sup>258</sup> The second path of viewing the telos of the believer is becoming like Christ.

Week six will introduce conforming to the likeness of Christ. The Holy Spirit works daily, transforming believers into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). Colin Kruse, a Bible lecturer at the Melbourne School of Theology, equates conforming to the likeness of Christ as a progressive transformation.<sup>259</sup> This progression is stated in Philippians 1:6, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:6, NASB). This verse speaks to the progressive transformation of the believer in Jesus. Guthrie clarifies that God is the subject in this verse as the One who started the work.<sup>260</sup> The destiny of believers in Jesus is to be like Him. As Paul shared his confidence with the church in Philippi, those in Christ today have the same assurance. The next worldview question asks about purpose.

### **Weeks Seven and Eight**

The seventh week of the intervention introduces the worldview question of purpose. The answer to this question is two-fold centered on the Decalogue. The seventh week will cover the first four commandments, and week eight will cover the remaining six. Therefore, the two-fold purpose is serving God and people. A recurring theme in this thesis is that of a vice-regent over creation. Followers of Jesus are to be good stewards of what God created (Gen 1:28; 2:15,19-20). This demonstrates serving God and honoring Him. The first four commandments place God first in the lives of believers and serve Him only. Joshua is an Old Testament example of serving God

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<sup>258</sup> Benjamin K. Forrest, *The History of Apologetics*, 681.

<sup>259</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. by Eckhard J. Schnabel (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2015), 136, Logos.

<sup>260</sup> George Guthrie, *Philippians*, 69.

(Josh 24:15). Richard Hess, Old Testament scholar and professor of Semitic languages at Denver Seminary, illuminates Joshua as “a model of bearing witness to one’s faith.”<sup>261</sup> This places God above all other things. Jesus reinforced this idea when He stated that following Him required everyone else to be forsaken, including the individual (Luke 14:26). According to Robert Stein, this does not mean hating literally but loving others less, family, spouse, and self.<sup>262</sup> This biblical mandate of serving God first clashes with the secular worldview. The secularist places the individual at the center of existence.<sup>263</sup> Peter Jones, an Adjunct Professor at Westminster Seminary, California, furthers the argument against secularism through humanity's misdeeds in the last 100 years: wars, genocide, and totalitarianism.<sup>264</sup> *The Advancement*, by L. Russ Bush, details and argues the rise and development of technology has done nothing to improve the goodness of humanity.<sup>265</sup> Putting the individual at the center of existence places a premium on the goodness and fullness of the individual. This does not cohere with what is viewed with humanity; it is contrary to reality. The anecdote to individuality is putting others first, which is the topic for week eight.

The main topic for week eight is serving others, which is summed up in the later six commandments. The adult gathering for this week will begin with the group discussion of the home-based worship and daily Scripture reading. A review of commandments five through ten will demonstrate service to others, and by serving others, believers serve Christ. This is captured

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<sup>261</sup> Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 336, Logos.

<sup>262</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 396, Logos.

<sup>263</sup> Peter Jones, *The Other Worldview: Exposing Christianity’s Greatest Threat* (Bellingham, WA: Kirkdale Press, 2015), 22, Logos.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>265</sup> L. Russ Bush, *The Advancement: Keeping the Faith in an Evolutionary Age*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003.

in Jesus' statement in Matthew 22 about loving God and loving others as yourself (Matt 22:37-40). Michael Wilkens places great weight on Jesus' message about loving your neighbors as this is a "concrete responsibility."<sup>266</sup> Galatians chapter six details the service responsibility for Christians (Gal 6:1-10). Service should be sacrificial for the Christian, directed to other Christians, teachers of the faith, and all persons.<sup>267</sup> This service is a crucible for morality, the topic for weeks nine and ten.

### **Weeks Nine and Ten**

The structural integrity of a biblical worldview is morality. The previous two weeks of adult instruction and home-based discipleship covered the Decalogue and loving God and others. These last two weeks of instruction for the intervention participants will seek to answer the question, "How should I live?." James R. Estep Jr. is a professor of Christian Education at Lincoln Christian College and Seminary in Lincoln, Illinois, and notes the impossibility for Christians to ignore moral engagement with the world.<sup>268</sup> Moral conduct is a hallmark of being a follower of Christ. This last worldview question is intertwined with the previous three worldview questions. The image humanity bears, the *imago Dei*, comes with cognition, rationality, self-reflection, and an intuitive notion of right and wrong (Gen 1:26; Rom 2:15). C. Stephen Evans, a Christian philosopher, while arguing for the existence of God, says God is the basis of morality and that if He does exist, this moral claim is true.<sup>269</sup> While this DMIN action research project does not propose the need for arguments for the existence of God, the notion of morality is an intuitive understanding based on the image that humanity was created. The remaining worldview

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<sup>266</sup> Michael J. Wilkens, *Matthew*, 725.

<sup>267</sup> John F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 609, Logos.

<sup>268</sup> James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, 124.

<sup>269</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *God and Moral Obligation* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 1, Logos.

questions of destiny and purpose align with morality by being transformed into the likeness of Christ (Rom 8:29) and altruistically serving others (Gal 6:1-10). The week nine class will introduce morality and right living. Morality is opaque in modern society. Francis Schaeffer draws a connection with the statement “be a good girl” and that this statement would induce a pause in the contemporary female.<sup>270</sup> Schaeffer, an American philosopher, theologian, and pastor (deceased), argues that this lack of modern morality explains the separation of generations on the reconceptualization of truth, an aspect of morality. The secular individual or “World Citizen” places a subjectivity or relative understanding of truth.

The slow rise to secularism today is traced by Douglas Groothuis back to the Renaissance and the development of philosophies that concluded life and reality from sources other than the Bible.<sup>271</sup> Steve Wilkens, professor of philosophy and ethics at Azusa Pacific University, notes eight different hidden worldviews, with moral relativism counted among them. Using Barna’s reclassification of a “World Citizen,” moral relativism is one of many worldviews in the amalgamation of modern thought, thus secularization. Steve Wilkens states the prevailing position on moral truth is that this truth does not exist any longer, and if it did, it would not be knowable.<sup>272</sup> Young adults and youth in this secularized society are sensate; hence, feelings are ideal to a specific person or individual. Defining the prevailing societal mindset and its effects on Christian youth is a key to pointing them back to Jesus and moral living.

Week ten will parse out living a life pleasing to God and morally grounded. As followers of Jesus, believers must walk in Him, be supported in Him, and be constructed in Him (Col 2:6-

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<sup>270</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1998), 22, Kindle.

<sup>271</sup> Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against The Challenges Of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000), loc 279, Kindle.

<sup>272</sup> Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldview: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives* (Downers Grove: IVO Academics, 2009), 79, Kindle.



7). This statement is a preparatory clause from the Apostle Paul leading up to a warning about worldly thought. “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col 2:8, NASB). Every aspect and thought in this thesis intervention has led to this point. Understanding the four worldview questions and the believer's dependency on God comes to the precipice of living a moral life that is pleasing to God. The Apostle Paul wrote Colossians to the church in Colossae to refute false teachings.<sup>273</sup> Douglas Moo states that this is obvious, given Paul's admonition not to be seduced by influential opinions (Col 2:4).<sup>274</sup> How do the students live morally? Colossians speaks volumes to this question. The student participants and adults need to look above to heavenly things (Col 3:1), do everything, said and in action, for Christ (Col 3:17), and do these things from the heart for Christ and not for man (Col 3:23). We live for God; this is the first four Commandments and the key to a moral life. Every thought and action needs to be held accountable. The sensate motivation of the “World Citizen” creates a dissonance between man's way and God's way. This is the example of the “doubled minded” man in James 1 (Jas 1:8, NASB). Stability in living a moral life requires believers to take “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor 10:5, NASB). The remaining weeks of the study are a combined adult and student group meeting, debriefing, and final data gathering.

### **Weeks Eleven and Twelve**

Week eleven will be a combined adult and student gathering to discuss the intervention and complete the final worldview questionnaire and spiritual growth survey. An adapted SWOT

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<sup>273</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 46, Logos.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

analysis will be given to garner data about how the participants viewed this intervention. The SWOT analysis has been a strategy tool for organizations for many years. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were created for organizational long-term planning.<sup>275</sup> This intervention will use an adapted version of this analytical tool known as the good, the bad, and the ugly.

The participants will be asked to rate the intervention in these three areas: good, bad, and ugly (see Appendix L). The Good is self-explanatory and focuses on areas of the intervention that were helpful and productive. The Bad requires the areas of the intervention that the participants believed to be unnecessary or cumbersome. The Ugly examines the areas that were functional but should be improved for overall efficacy. Lastly, the participants must complete a worldview questionnaire and a spiritual growth survey to measure progress in developing a biblical worldview, spiritual health, and maturity. These are the last elements in the participant portion of the action research project. The next step for this researcher is compiling the data.

Week twelve will be data gathering, analysis, and synthesis. This researcher will qualify the questionnaires and quantify the surveys to measure the change in worldview, spiritual maturity, and Christian culture developed in the home. The survey numbers will be graphed and displayed in a chart showing the starting points of each participant and the modifications induced through the intervention (see Appendix N). This will be a quantitative measure of success or non-success. The intervention journal kept by this researcher will be evaluated, analyzed, and compared to the determined progression numbers to look for consistency as reported by the

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<sup>275</sup> Richard W. Puyt, Finn Birger Lie, and Celeste P. M. Wilderom, "The Origins of SWOT Analysis," *Long Range Planning* 56, no. 3 (2023): 2, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0024630123000110?via%3Dihub>.

adults in the weekly gatherings. The research intervention will close, and the final observations and results will be recorded.

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

This section will detail the practical application of the thesis intervention design. One task for this researcher was identifying an intervention taxonomy. This means the intervention components are organized into larger areas to give a meaningful understanding of the intervention and the participants. The four areas representing the thesis intervention best are acquisition, fellowship, instruction, and data collection. An idea that became prevalent during the implementation of this intervention was that the program needed to look like the desired outcome. In other words, if the intent is to strengthen and equip parents to teach their families about God and His ways (Deut 6:7), the intervention must function from this same premise: the premise of home-based discipleship.

The four areas detailing the various components of the intervention implementation can be assumed in the home-based discipleship setting: acquisition, fellowship, instruction, and data collection. The following represents these four areas and the thesis intervention's impact on the program and the families. Acquisition in this thesis intervention is acquiring the needed permissions from the church to engage in the study, the oversight of the Institutional Review Board at Liberty University, and the participants' willingness to participate in the intervention. Fellowship is of immense importance and is equivalent to the ministry of presence. Instruction is the action of the fellowship when raising children in the ways of God (Eph 6:4). Data collection is a term that seems sterile when juxtaposed against the preceding areas. Still, for the family, it is the measure of spiritual maturity individually and as a family. As for this thesis intervention, data collection is more mechanical but also carries the essence of relational learning. This thesis

intervention embodied the cognitive elements of *schema* and *thema*.<sup>276</sup> Although continuously in the background, the idea of these two areas of cognition being the practical application of this thesis intervention had not occurred to this researcher during the planning phase. Only after the intervention began was it glaringly apparent that the elements of *schema* and *thema* were also present in the thesis intervention program. This implemented layers of instruction within the instruction. The results of the layers will be explained in a later chapter. Still, for this section, the intervention not only instructed what needs to be done but was an example of how to engage in home-based worship and discipleship with each group gathering.

### Acquisition

This section will detail the actions taken to gain permission to implement the thesis intervention program at TMC. This includes the Liberty University IRB approval, approval from the Senior Pastor at TMC, and the recruitment process for the intervention participants gaining their implied consent.

The IRB gave permission for the study on November 28, 2023 (see Appendix O). The next step was securing the permission of the Senior Pastor of TMC to conduct the intervention using church members. The permission letter was sent to Pastor Donovan Stewart on December 4, 2023, gaining the needed permission to utilize the church and members within the church for the intervention (see Appendix A). The recruitment process began on December 5, 2023. A letter was sent to nineteen potential participants with basic information about the thesis intervention and a digital copy of the implied consent (see Appendices B, C, and D). The letter also served as the announcement for the first focus group meeting, which took place on December 10, 2023, at

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<sup>276</sup> For further information on *schema* and *thema*, see page 41.

6:30 PM at the church. All nineteen potential participants attended the meeting, with eleven agreeing to participate in the intervention. Their implied consent forms were collected and retained in a secure location. The eight that declined participation cited time constraints as the biggest obstacle to participation. This first focus group intended to introduce the thesis intervention formally.

The focus group began with a prayer and a welcome, followed by a brief introduction to the thesis intervention. The problem, purpose, and thesis statements were then read to the group to include the basic tenets of the intervention. Beginning with the biblical foundation, the potential participants were given the theological basis for the study. Key texts from the OT (Deut 6:4-9) and the NT (Acts 2:42; Eph 6:4) were shared, providing the bedrock for this thesis intervention. Key concepts of the intervention were also explored. These concepts, andragogy vs. pedagogy, worldview determination, and the cognitive science of *schema* and *thema*, form the foundational elements of the intervention. The criteria required for each participant were explained, including completing pre and post-surveys and a worldview questionnaire, keeping a weekly journal for each home-based session, and a post-intervention critique. Additionally, the potential participants were made aware that each gathering would be recorded for the sanctity of the meeting and proper representation of each discussion. The main question of the group concerned time.

Several parents asked when they should conduct the family worship time and daily Scripture readings. The eight-week home study has a rigid format, with the family worship being the first day as the remaining Scripture reading days build on the worship time. Therefore, family worship time must come first for the continuity of the week's lessons. The time of day is left to the parent. This question and the reason for this question should give pause to all Christian

families.<sup>277</sup> That pause is a life too busy for God and His expectations of parents teaching their families. The meeting was concluded, and those who had their implied consent forms ready turned them in to be held in a secure location. The following week, the remaining forms were submitted to this researcher, who finalized the participant roster of eleven: five adults and six teens. The next step was to disseminate the surveys and worldview questionnaire.

Part of the triangulation of data is surveys and a questionnaire. Two surveys and one worldview questionnaire were created and sent to the thesis intervention participants (see Appendices E, F, and G). The collection documents were sent to the participants on December 29, 2023. To facilitate ease of use, the documents were recreated in Survey Monkey so the data tools could be completed online. The two surveys measure spiritual maturity and the level of Christian culture in the home. The worldview questionnaire measures the scope of the individual participant's worldview. Together, these documents form a baseline in each area to measure positive increases based on the completion of the thesis intervention. Using these documents as a baseline determinant also provides reliability and substance to this DMIN thesis project.<sup>278</sup> The participants completed the surveys and questionnaires, and the group held the first parent focus group on January 7, 2024.

### Fellowship

Fellowship is a key component of discipleship, as evidenced by the early church and taught in Acts 2:42; the earliest disciples learned from the Apostles, engaged in fellowship, ate

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<sup>277</sup> This statement was the first realization of the “business problem” families encounter in modern life. Amid the myriad reasons Christian parents do not instruct their children on the ways of God, scheduling has squeezed God out of families. It is a contributing reason for the degradation of the family, as noted throughout the intervention process. This thesis intervention has brought light to this problem that was not fully grasped in the early planning stages of the intervention. More will be discussed in chapters four and five.

<sup>278</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 71.

meals together, and prayed together. As interpreted by this researcher, Fellowship is spending time together in life, sharing ideas and problems sprinkled with joys and God's love. This fellowship prompts intimacy throughout the group. This biblical concept became a cornerstone for this thesis intervention program.

The thesis intervention was initially planned to be carried out at TMC on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:00 PM. During the initial planning phase, the church was open during this time frame, which made it the best location. This changed when church programming changed in January 2024, closing the opportunity to utilize the church building for the parent focus group on Sunday evenings. Facing this dilemma, through prayer, it was determined that the parent focus group be held at the home of this researcher. The most agreeable day and time was Sunday at 1:00 PM. The participants would attend the second Sunday morning service and then come to this researcher's home for lunch and group time. This setting also included the teens in the lunch and fellowship. The previous model did not include the teens during the adult focus groups. The idea was that the adults would be taught so they would teach their teens. The new model proved better. All participants gathered in one room to share a meal and conversation, building togetherness through fellowship. The conversations varied from the church message, work issues, and life and family aspects. The conversations were not steered or guided but organic, as friends joined together, and natural conversations ensued. After the meal, the teens would go to another location in the home and spend time together playing Xbox and hanging out while the parents engaged in the intervention group time and instruction. Both environments were healthy and fostered a Christian environment, building bonds through fellowship.

The parent focus group time always began with prayer and covered five questions about the previous week's home-based worship to spawn group discussion: 1) a. What went well?, 2)

What did not go well?, 3) What questions were asked?, 4) Were the experienced issues the same or similar in each home?, and 5) How did you address the questions? This questioning allowed the adults to see the inside of the other family worship times and to share how they approached and solved issues as they each gave instructions to their families throughout the week. This also allowed this researcher to see how each family progressed through the study and how the intervention program worked as anticipated. There is a fellowship aspect of this portion, as hearing what was happening in our homes codifies the reality that problems of the same and similar nature exist in all homes. This draws the parents and families closer together in solidarity (the body of Christ 1 Cor 12:12-13) and bearing each other's burdens (Gal 6:2). Each gathering was audio recorded so proper respect could be given to the conversations and the parents engaged in them.

### Instruction

The mechanics of this thesis intervention is the instruction portion of each week's parent focus group. The Intervention Design section of this chapter focuses on how the intervention was built; this section looks at the implementation or how it worked. The kitchen table in this researcher's home was an impactful setting for each week's group time. The group affectionately referred to the instruction time as "table talk." After the meal and cleanup, the parents would gather at the kitchen table to cover the week's lesson. This brought intimacy to the gathering and was a model for what this would look like in their homes. Working from this format provided a healthy environment in which to begin each week's group time.



## Weeks One and Two

These two weeks engage the worldview question of identity. The first week concerns the identity of all humanity as image bearers of God, and the second week narrows the focus to the individual believer in Christ and his or her identity based on Him. This week's first intervention focus group began with prayer and a meal with fellowship time. As this was the first week of instruction, additional guidance was needed to set the foundational blocks of a worldview, secular and biblical, andragogy, the theories of *schema* and *thema*, and how these relate to the family and home-based discipleship. Initially, as posited elsewhere in this paper, the theory of *schema* and *thema* is well-versed in Scripture (Deut 6:4-9 and Eph 6:4). The family is God's vessel for instruction about Him and His expectations of those who call Him Lord. The parents were given basic information about these cognitive theories and the family structure being a "built-in" reflection of all facets of cognitive influx. The assembly of the focus group exudes these cognitive learning and acquisition faculties. This helped them better understand the importance of a Christian culture in the home, as learning is more than the direct transfer of knowledge; it is also relational or transference in how people learn. The family provides both structures and, thus, the perfect venue for instruction. This led to the discussion of worldviews.

The intent behind this element and the others was not to regurgitate a massive amount of information in one sitting. Each week, the focus group engaged in one of the four worldview questions, providing an opportunity to expand the participants' knowledge of worldviews generally and specifically as they applied or answered the worldview question. The biblical position of identity focuses on Gen 1:26-27 and each person alive bearing God's image. In this, certain intrinsic rights, such as dignity, worth, and purpose, come to bear. The secular identity is mired in individualism, which breeds pride, and is undergirded through scientism by way of

evolution. This can be a touchy subject even in Christian circles, but this focus group looked at each position and discussed their differences. The idea is also to make people think about what they know or believe they know and how that belief corresponds with reality. The innate values that are intuitively known (the biblical worldview) match reality. One difference noted between the two worldviews is that the biblical position espouses these values intuitively, juxtaposed against the scientism position of values through evolution as being inherited. The value of every person is ingrained in their being and existence rather than being granted by a lesser authority, and the second week explored individual identity in Christ.

Week two focused on the believer's identity in Christ. The focus group began with a review of the previous week's home discipleship. The subject matter had no direct issues, but specific positives came from the family gatherings. All four families reported having an open dialog with their children, conversations they have not had before. Parents can see how their teenagers think and see the world. They were also able to share ideas so that they could objectively look at Scripture and the biblical worldview and come under God's authority of identity. The remainder of the group time entailed instruction on the believer's identity in Christ. A crucial understanding in this week's lesson is the outward turn of the inward self towards Jesus. The parents were instructed on how this role reversal differs from the secular worldview. The world communicates the need for everything else to come to the individual, making life about the person. The reality is that this does not work, and additionally, if the self is pointed outward to others and not connected to Christ, the joy that comes from putting others first is benign. The group had no specific questions on this topic, so the group ended. It is important to note that time was a recurring issue with all participating families. This was a consideration made initially but from the parental perspective. A contributing issue was time on the part of the

teen. The object is consistency with family discipleship, but when teens have work or a school function, the parents are given latitude to employ the program when it is advantageous for their family. This session completed the first two weeks of the intervention and the first worldview question of identity.

### **Weeks Three and Four**

These two weeks engage the question of destiny. As with the previous week, the questions about functionality were given to start the group time. It was determined that the time concern was balancing out for each family as they adjusted to each other's varying schedules and made time to come together for prayer, worship, and Scripture reading. As each week progresses, the families see more and deeper insight and participation from their teens. This is a win as these conversations bring individual and family growth. This week's topic of destiny focused on reconciliation with God (Rom 5:10-11). The instruction for the week drew comparisons between the self-centered world and being brought into a right relationship with God through Jesus. Everything revolves around the individual, from relationships and acquiring material things to self-love (pride). This internal preservation leads to the individual creating a personal zone that denies contrary opinions and ideas to preserve the sanctity of the self. The biblical worldview removes the buffer zone, removes the self, and adds God as the focal point. The need to reunite with God overshadows the self and, thus, the things acquired by and for the self. The following week covered reconciliation with others.

The fourth week explores the believer's destiny to become like Jesus (2 Cor 3:18). The thrust of these two weeks is replacing the self with Christ. Rather than doing things for self-gratification, what is done is for God and a righteous connection with Him. The key Bible passages that address this are John 1:12-13 and Romans 8:29. It was explained to the parents the

importance of walking with the Holy Spirit (Col 1:10) as He works within the believer to transform them into the likeness of Christ. The importance of developing a biblical worldview results in thinking like Christ. The mind of Christ is what every believer should strive to attain (Phil 2:1-5). The Holy Spirit uses trials and tribulations to build our character (Rom 5:3-5) and the mind of Christ in the believer. The adults were encouraged to look at their own lives, their trials and tribulations, and determine how God used those moments to transform them into the likeness of Christ. One parent remarked about conversations they have had with unbelievers they know and that in the trials the unbelievers have faced, they do not learn and change habits; their character never changes due to the things they endure. This was an example everyone in the group could relate to. It is also a difference between the biblical worldview and the secular worldview. When individuals rely on themselves, the character never changes; it only adapts to situations the individual tries to manipulate for their advantage. Therefore, the change is not in the person but in how they engage the problem, bringing it to the unchanged character. The next two weeks

### **Week's Five and Six**

The worldview questions addressed during these two weeks focus on the purpose of followers of Jesus and how the secular world understands purpose. In a supportive tone for the parents in the study, an unanticipated breakthrough with each household is that the parents are asking their teens questions that are not incorporated in this study. Questions such as How did you glorify God today, and how did you demonstrate Jesus through your actions? This shows a positive bent towards developing a biblical worldview and a Christian culture in the home. The teens also continue to reflect deeper on the week's lessons and have a more substantial stake in the family's progression with spiritual maturity.

With each group gathering, the first thirty minutes detailed answering the questions regarding successes and failures of the previous week's home-based worship. The parents were never given a time limit for this portion of the group gathering. Time constraints were not imposed as this time was a great learning experience for each parent; they could learn from the other parents and adapt their home approaches to a favorable outcome. Week five concentrated on serving God as the believer's primary purpose. The Scripture used for this meeting was Joshua 24:15. This means putting God first, no matter the circumstance. The counter position is putting the individual first. Rather than pleasing God, the secular worldview encourages the individual to fulfill personal wants and gratifications; that satisfaction comes from pleasing the self. This is a sharp departure from the biblical worldview and is an example of an individual's lack of satisfaction in accomplishment apart from a righteous relationship with God.

Week six observed the purpose of serving others. The biblical worldview is a continuous denial of the self. That is, putting God first, then others. The self is always last, thus relinquishing claim on personal satisfaction at the expense of others. The main Scripture passage for this question is Matthew 22:37-40. This passage is Jesus' encapsulation of the law, putting God first, followed by others. The latter half of this passage implies how others should treat the individual. Jesus said to love others as you love yourself (Matt 22:39, NASB); therefore, the expectation is that others will observe this in their service. If this mantra were carried out, no individual would rely on themselves as others would meet their needs. Of course, humanity lives in a broken world; thus, loving your neighbor as yourself means receiving rather than giving. This is a selfish love, as opposed to a selfless love. This researcher was delighted with the growth of each family, not just for this thesis but for Kingdom purposes.

## **Weeks Seven and Eight**

These two weeks are the last in this thesis intervention's instruction portion. The focus of these two weeks is also the portion that met the most pushback from the teens in each household. One household observed doubts about being saved due to poor life choices, and another had questions about God's goodness because of friends' questionable actions and life choices. The LGBT problem facing the world came to bear in these two weeks of instruction. There are some in this study who have family members who profess homosexuality, bi-sexuality, and gender confusion, to name a few alternate lifestyle choices. The adult participants were encouraged to persevere through love and truth (God's truth) and continue to instruct their teens on what is correct behavior through the biblical worldview juxtaposed to the secular worldview. The inevitable question of how was uttered? The answer is through what this researcher understands as triad leadership: love, presence, and godliness. Love, as Jesus says, with every part of yourself. Presence is not merely availability but being there, giving an encouraging word, or a meaningful gesture. Presence is being in the trenches with your teen as they navigate the murky waters of life in a broken world. Godliness is living what the parent teaches. Words that are not lived are just words; they are meaningless. Teens are excellent detectors of meaningless behavior and instruction. Parents who embody the triad of leadership will impute meaning in their teens' lives, adding meaning to their relationship with Jesus and with the life He gives to believers (John 10:10). This style of leadership is not short-term but a long-term investment in their families, their communities, and the Kingdom of God; it takes time and intentionality.

Week seven marks the culminating peak of the first three questions. Morality comprises these questions and is based on God's goodness and the intuitive understanding of right and wrong (Rom 2:15). The crux of morality is knowing who the individual is, what the result is that

they are working toward (destiny), and their purpose. These are building blocks for the believer to live a life pleasing to God, a life of morality (2 Pet 1:5-8). The main focus of instruction for these weeks was truth. The foundation of moral living is truth, God's truth. Truth is not a social construct or a contract between people agreeing on specific matters. Truth is not manufactured or deduced on a whim by the individual (subjective). Truth is objective, absolute, and applicable to all people. This is what is meant by God's truth. God's truth was weaved into the creation; truth is the cornerstone of reality. This truth was easy for the intervention participants to see as they lived lives apart from Jesus, and their decisions were not congruent with God's truth early in their lives. The veridical nature of reality starkly contrasted with the manufactured reality they attempted to live. Their truth was contrary to God's truth and reality, and they paid a price for their mistakes. It is a question of following God's plan or the individual's plan. This portion of the study had major implications for all participants and measured how far God has brought each family, drawing them closer to Himself (Jas 4:8).

### **Data Collection**

The last element to be explored is the data collection methodology. The triangulation ethos used surveys, a worldview questionnaire, participant journals, and focus groups. Additionally, this researcher kept a weekly thesis journal and an audio recording of every participant gathering.

The surveys and questionnaire were sent out on December 29, 2023. The collection method used was Survey Monkey, as this platform would facilitate analyzing the data to render it reader-friendly. It would also serve as a mechanism to measure growth in spiritual maturity and forming a Christian culture in the home. Developing a biblical worldview is contingent on the maturation process of the participants, thus making it a long-term investment. There are two sets

of the same surveys and questionnaire. The first was completed before the study began as a baseline marker. The second was completed after the intervention instruction was completed. One additional data collection document was sent to each participant. This document was a post-intervention critique (see Appendices L and M). This critique asked four questions: 1) The Good, 2) The Bad, 3) The Ugly, and 4) What positive aspects came from this study for you and your family?

Participant workbooks were given to each participant at the first meeting on January 7, 2024 (see Appendices J and K). The participants were instructed to use the journals to answer the weekly worship questions and record reflections from each lesson. They were also encouraged to write any issues or concerns they had with a specific aspect of each lesson. This written feedback is an attempt to garner real-time reflection on the general effectiveness of the intervention. The participant workbooks were collected at the last group focus meeting on March 8, 2024.

The focus groups were instrumental data gathering elements and a part of each week's gathering on Sunday afternoon. The weekly focus groups allowed this researcher to see how each week's lessons affected the families and individuals. They also allowed for expeditious attention to be given when a problem arose for a more immediate remedy. The focus groups also allowed adults to hear about issues in other families and provide insight to each other for solutions to those problems. The focus groups also measured the growth in the metrics established for this thesis intervention, and each week brought new challenges and successes. The focus group was a time to encourage the other families and a venue to pray for the continued efforts of the parents. The last focus group, on March 8, 2024, consisted of a fellowship meal and two separate but conjoined meetings. The first was with the teens; the second was with the teens and their parents. This researcher wanted to hear from the teens absent any parental pressure.



The wife of this researcher sat in on the teen focus group to ensure multiple adult presence with the juveniles. The results of these meetings will be parsed out in the next chapter. Still, for now, it was noted that each teen admitted resistance to participation when the study first began but grew to immensely enjoy the family time and spiritual growth from spending time in Scripture and prayer as a family. When the two groups were brought back together for the final focus time, the comments were positive regarding the thesis intervention and the strength that each family experienced during the study.

### **Conclusion**

This final focus group brought the action research portion of this thesis intervention to a close. This chapter covered the journey of the proposed thesis intervention and the actual intervention received by the participants from one week to the next, covering eight total weeks of instruction. Specific areas of the intervention needed to be altered or amended, such as the location, time, and providing a meal for the group each Sunday afternoon. These changes were not harmful but were outside the original intent. Additionally, unanticipated occurrences resulted from these changes. One example was mimicking the home-based worship at each group gathering to what could and should be in each of the participants' homes. This comparison would not have been so apparent if the group had met at church as initially proposed. Another example is the three-pronged leadership approach of love, presence, and godliness. The preliminary findings based on the focus groups show that the intervention equipped the parents to engage the culture their teens are living in and combat this culture with biblical truth. It is clear that growth was achieved, and the basis of a biblical worldview is underway in each participant.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results of this DMIN action research implementation are anticipated to be incremental. The process of forming a biblical worldview is a lifelong endeavor. Each element of this intervention has been cultivated to produce confidence in the parents, equipping them to teach God's precepts and develop a biblical worldview in their children and themselves. The expected results are better-equipped parents and students with a base formation of a biblical worldview and a strengthened family.

The first expected result will be increased spiritual maturity in the parents. The parents will have received detailed instruction on worldview, precisely a biblical worldview, and what the Bible states about these life paradigms. The format of this intervention also implements holy habits with prayer, daily Scripture reading, attendance during corporate worship, and fellowship. These areas will develop the parent and their children to have a heart and mind turned to God. These elements should produce higher spiritual maturity scores for both groups, which will be compared through pre- and post-questionnaires and surveys. The participant's handbooks give a schematic that can be utilized in other areas of home-based teaching for the betterment of children and the family. The students at TMC face a crisis with identity and fitting into a world hostile to God and antithetical to a biblical worldview. The students are expected to show a marked improvement in the worldview questionnaire and the spiritual maturity survey. Ideally, the litmus test of success is better decisions based on godly precepts.

The measure of success is a detectable increase, even if minor, in spiritual maturity and forming a biblical worldview, measured through questionnaires, surveys, and focus group discussions. Since measuring a mature Christian takes a lifetime, the expectation of a specific

percentage increase is unreasonable. Thus, an increase in spiritual maturity will not be gauged in this manner.

### **Collective Results**

The initial observation of the collected data points to a successful thesis intervention project. The implementation was smooth, with a few ripples in getting the surveys and questionnaires in on time. There were no program participant dropouts; all eleven participants completed the thesis intervention program. As a result, the two surveys, the questionnaire and participant handbooks, were completed, and focus group gatherings were attended, with substantial feedback given for the intervention through the critiques. This section will deduce the participant group demographics, the initial results of the data collection documents, the focus group results, and the end of the intervention critiques.

#### **Participants**

The participants of this action research project are all members of TMC and active in the student ministry per the boundaries set in the Limitation Section of Chapter One.<sup>279</sup> The participants vary in age, life experience, employment, and ethnicity. The latter two descriptors did not determine who would be recruited for the project, so these demographic areas are not accounted for.

The participants were five males and six females. Two of the males are adults, and three are teen students. The females were balanced, with three being adults and the remaining three being teen students. The ages were also varied but grouped. This grouping was not intentional or anticipated in the initial forming of the participant pool. It stands to reason that if all nineteen recruited participants had engaged in the thesis intervention, there would have been a greater

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<sup>279</sup> See pages 16-17 for the limitations placed in this thesis action research project.

diversity in the ages. Nevertheless, the teens were split between 13-15 and 16-17. The younger range contained two, and the older teens numbered four. The adult age structure was similar, with 3 participants in the 36-45 age group and 2 in the 46-55 age group.

The last demographic accounted for is the time each participant has been a follower of Christ. An interesting correlation exists between time as a Christian and spiritual maturity and establishing a Christian culture in the home. The insight of this researcher to the group of participants yields insights as to which of the participants are in each range of time as a Christian. The correlation is that the home with the lowest scores in spiritual maturity and establishing a Christian culture in the home are the participants with less time as a Christian. This is expected, thus not a negative to the intervention; it is merely an interesting observation. The integral aspect of this is that establishing a Christian culture in the home is essential to the spiritual growth of a new Christian and their development of a biblical worldview. See table 1 for a snapshot of this data.

**Table 1. Thesis Intervention Participants**

|                            | <b>Percent of Participants</b> | <b>Participants</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>              |                                |                     |
| Male                       | 45.45 %                        | 5                   |
| Female                     | 54.55 %                        | 6                   |
| <b>Age Range</b>           |                                |                     |
| 13-15                      | 18.18 %                        | 2                   |
| 16-17                      | 36.36 %                        | 4                   |
| 36-45                      | 27.27 %                        | 3                   |
| 46-55                      | 18.18 %                        | 2                   |
| <b>Time as a Christian</b> |                                |                     |
| One year or less           | 9.09 %                         | 1                   |
| 2-5 years                  | 9.09 %                         | 1                   |
| 5-10 years                 | 27.27 %                        | 3                   |
| 10-20 years                | 18.18 %                        | 2                   |
| 20 or more years           | 36.36 %                        | 4                   |

## Data Collection Documents

The data collection documents consist of two surveys (spiritual maturity and Christian culture in the home), the worldview questionnaire, the participant handbooks, and the post-intervention critique. Each document was completed promptly, giving this researcher time to analyze the data to form the matrix for deducing the increase in spiritual maturity, the development of Christian culture in the home, and the formation of a biblical worldview. The analysis proved a few anomalies but marked increases in the core Christian competencies cultivated in a more robust Christian culture within the families and the home. The worldview assessment showed changes in the mindset of the teens and several of the adults. This immediately indicates that their worldview began to shift throughout the intervention. The intervention critique also demonstrated that building a Christian culture in the home facilitated deeper conversations about life and how the Bible teaches us to engage in matters of life and faith in a secular world. The focus groups were also encouraging but will be further parsed out in the Data Analysis section of this chapter.

### Surveys and Questionnaire

The two surveys (see Appendices F and G) asked about the homes' spiritual maturity and Christian culture. The spiritual maturity survey contained twenty-three questions, and the Christian culture in the home held twenty-two questions. These questions were formatted to conform to a Likert scale and an evaluative measure for increases or decreases in these broader areas.<sup>280</sup> The scale varied by one point depending on the possible answers to each question. The maximum score is a five, and the minimum score is a one. It is important to note that a score of one on a question meant that the object of the question was not present in the home or the

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<sup>280</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative research*, 114.

spiritual maturity inventory. The maximum score reflects a continuous effort to build on or carry out an action related to the question. The survey questions were designed to determine if aspects of the Christian life are present in the participants. Specifically, the four areas that build the core Christian competencies.

The spiritual maturity survey contained twenty-three questions, which yielded four primary questions. Those questions relate to prayer life, Bible study/Scripture reading, church attendance, and fellowship or spending time with other Christians outside the usual church activities. These four areas form the foundation of spiritual maturity and are used to determine an increase in this area. The specific analysis will be undertaken in the next section. Suffice it to say that the data shows an increase in almost every participant in the four core competencies. The Christian culture in the home survey also marked measured increases. This survey asked twenty-two questions, many connected to the core Christian competencies. It was determined that only two questions should be used to expand and detail the analysis for this thesis. Those questions concern conducting home-based worship and whether the parent was better equipped to train and teach their family. These areas are part of the problem, purpose, and thesis statement, which lends them a specific place in the analysis.

A counterargument to these findings is akin to a circular argument. The increase in the four core competencies is due to participation in the intervention. This could be true if no other means were used to gauge progression. This thesis intervention program was designed to initiate the engagement of these core competencies five days a week in the home to educate the parents, who would then teach their families. It stands to reason that completing the program would yield a positive result in daily prayer, Scripture reading, attending church, and fellowship, a significant

component of this action research project. The proofing method used to remove the circularity is the worldview questionnaire.

The worldview questionnaire (see Appendix E) contains thirty-five questions. These questions engage the participant's understanding of the Godhead, the Bible, identity, human origins, the universe's origin, morality, the current culture's effects on race, ethnicity, other social ideologies, and other cultural and Christian-based areas. There were changes in how several participants viewed the Godhead, the Bible, social interaction, different religions, and salvation, drawing them closer to a biblical worldview. This change of mind and heart shows the effectiveness of this thesis intervention beyond the circular argument and as a result of parents teaching their families the precepts of God in contrast to what society espouses in these areas. All but eight questions in the questionnaire were open-ended. The open-ended nature of the question negates applying a scale to define the amount of change. An example of this is the question about the truthfulness and accuracy of the Bible, question seven. A few participants answered that the Bible could be more accurate but did not give examples of what was inaccurate. The post-intervention questionnaire showed a change with this answer to say that the Bible is truthful and accurate. The handbooks engaged the biblical worldview in contrast to the secular worldview, which served as a change agent in forming the new worldview from a biblical perspective.

### **Participant Handbook**

There are two handbooks, one for adults (see Appendix J) and one for students (see Appendix K). Each handbook is forty-eight pages long and spans eight weeks of home instruction. The design focused on the four worldview questions noted previously in this thesis. The structure of the instruction week begins with home worship and the introduction of the

week's worldview question. A pivotal element of home worship is the connectivity with the Sunday morning message. During the design phase, it was unclear if the worldview question for the week could be answered from the Sunday morning sermon. However, this element was crucial for the future adaptation of this study to other churches and younger ages of family members. Not having a preset instructional element allowed the families to hear the same sermon and then expand on that message to answer the worldview question. This researcher was pleased to see that the Sunday morning sermon always played a role in answering all four worldview questions, including the sub-questions. It is important to note that the sermon series at TMC during this intervention was in the Book of Romans. Based on this functionality, it is believed that this thesis intervention program can be used with any sermon series to answer the questions of identity, destiny, purpose, and morality, thus increasing the versatility of the designed structure.

Each participant kept the handbook, answered the questions inside, and maintained the handbook as a journal. What was gleaned from their writings was not groundbreaking but demonstrated a depth of family discussion that fostered growth in ways each family had not previously experienced. The handbooks also functioned to give the parents and students structure to their conversations to facilitate these more profound experiences. Many participants wrote notes in the margin for areas of possible improvement or needed clarity for future use. It is difficult to determine or measure the growth of each participant through the handbook notations. The functional measurability is that the surveys and questionnaire increases resulted from the intervention. The juxtaposition of the handbooks to the surveys and questionnaire is akin to writing out the math problem versus only giving the answer to the equation. In other words, the adult and student handbooks served as the written equation of a math problem, and the surveys



and questionnaire were the answer. Another catalyst for the worldview changes was the focus group gatherings and the post-intervention critiques.

### **Focus Group and Post-Intervention Critiques**

The focus groups were a foundational portion of the weekly gatherings. As noted elsewhere, the importance of the focus groups was underestimated during the design phase in scope and effectiveness to the overall implementation of this thesis intervention through *schema* and *thema*. The focus groups served as a time for celebration and correction. The participants would share the problems they had been having with the weekly lesson as well as the receptiveness of their families. It was indeed a sharing of life experience. During this time, this researcher was not the principal teacher but more of a conversation participant. The conversations focused on various topics, from spiritual maturity to what each parent did in their home beyond what was called for through the intervention. The observed growth in the group was palpable. Several of the week's conversations centered on what each family would do after the thesis intervention was completed; they lined up their next steps to continue what had been started in their homes. This is also a measure of the success obtained in each family. The final focus group was the most encouraging.

The final focus group took place in the same location (this researcher's home) but at two times and with separate groups. The participants were gathered for a fellowship meal that transitioned into the final focus groups. The teens were interviewed separately from the parents by this researcher and this researcher's wife, so two adults were present. Every teen talked about how the intervention was a blessing to them as they could engage their parents(s) in meaningful conversation. They exchanged ideas about the worldview questions and understood the differences between the biblical worldview and the secular worldview and how the biblical

worldview better suits what is observed in reality; it made sense. A point levied by several of the students was that the home-based worship and the daily Scripture readings proved beneficial as they were able to dialog with their parent(s) when opinions conflicted but collectively learn what the Bible teaches regarding the worldview questions prompting a change in mindset about the particular problem. Overall, each student stated they and their families benefitted from this thesis intervention and that they wanted to continue with home-based worship as it brought their families closer together and closer to God. Students who did not show increases in all four core competencies still remarked about the benefit. After the teen interview, the group was brought back together and interviewed. The parents were the focus here.

The parents also held similar views on the effectiveness of the thesis intervention in their homes. They felt equipped and empowered to engage their families in honoring God's command to teach their children (Deut 6:7). The intervention critiques yielded similar results. The parents were more critical of the intervention, focusing on the handbooks. The fellowship meal before each week's focus group meeting and instruction time was a blessing. It allowed the parents to bond with other families and catalyzed the teen's growth. The overwhelming critical element waged was time. This was a limitation noted in Chapter One that the families and this researcher realized in its fullness once the intervention passed week two. An element not considered in the planning stages was teens who hold after-school jobs in addition to other school and church activities. Time each week was a pressing issue for every family. The families were free to acclimate the study into their daily lives; however, it worked best so that each week's lessons were given attention. This took time management and juggling, but they completed each week's work. For one family, sickness played a significant role in a two-week period beginning in week six. As a result, one family member did not make consistent notations in the adult handbook but

continued reading each lesson. There were recommendations that the family activities planned for each home-based worship could have been more relevant and that some examples to explain the worldview question for the specific week could have been more explicit. It was also suggested that the questions in the handbook that accompanied each day's lesson be segregated so that they can be addressed separately. It was posited that this would garner greater clarity in understanding and answering the questions. These were also recommendations noted in the post-intervention critiques.

The intervention critiques held little more information than the final focus groups. It was unanimous that this thesis action research project was effective in each family. It was influential in helping the parents verbalize and understand what their teens face daily in school and when they are away from a positive Christian influence. Each family member expressed a blessing from being involved in this research study. Several of the parents noted that they did not feel equipped to teach their teens and engage in home-based worship and discipleship and that this intervention gave them the tools and confidence to be obedient to God's command to teach their children and His ways (Deut 6:7; Eph 6:4). The parents noted in their critiques that they were contemplating starting book studies offered by well-known pastors, and some simply keeping with the sermon review and how the four worldview questions are answered and can be applied to their lives.

#### Collective Data Summary

The collective data demonstrates an increase in spiritual maturity for each family, a need to instantiate a more robust Christian culture in the home, and building the foundation of a biblical worldview. This is a success and a positive step in discipleship and the wholeness of the parents to teach and instruct their families. But, as noted earlier, there were a few problems. One

teen, in particular, did not show a measurable increase in spiritual maturity across all four Christian competencies. This was also observed in several of the parents. Given the robust affirmation from each participant about the positive impact this thesis intervention had on their lives and their families, it is a curious position. The data analysis section will attempt to shed light on these anomalies.

### **Data Analysis**

This section will analyze the specifics of each survey and the worldview questionnaire. The adult and student handbooks were necessary tools that brought instruction and structure to the home-based worship environment. However, they were insufficient to gauge spiritual growth other than demonstrating the work each participant added to the study. Thus, they will not be featured here. The core Christian competencies will be the analytical focus of the spiritual maturity survey. The Christian culture in the home survey will be used to demonstrate the increase in the ability of the parent to teach and conduct home-based worship. The answers to the questions were given a numeric value consistent with a Likert scale so that increases and decreases could be more easily tracked.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

Spiritual maturity is the foundation for spiritual growth and living a life pleasing to God (Col 1:10). These traits have been narrowed to four tenets of spiritual growth: prayer, Bible study/Scripture reading, church attendance, and fellowship with like-minded people. These four basics are also extracted as a model for Christian living patterned from the early church in Acts 2:42. The results of the spiritual maturity survey demonstrated growth for several participants, a decline in one, and no change for several. The four areas will be discussed individually as subsections.

## Prayer

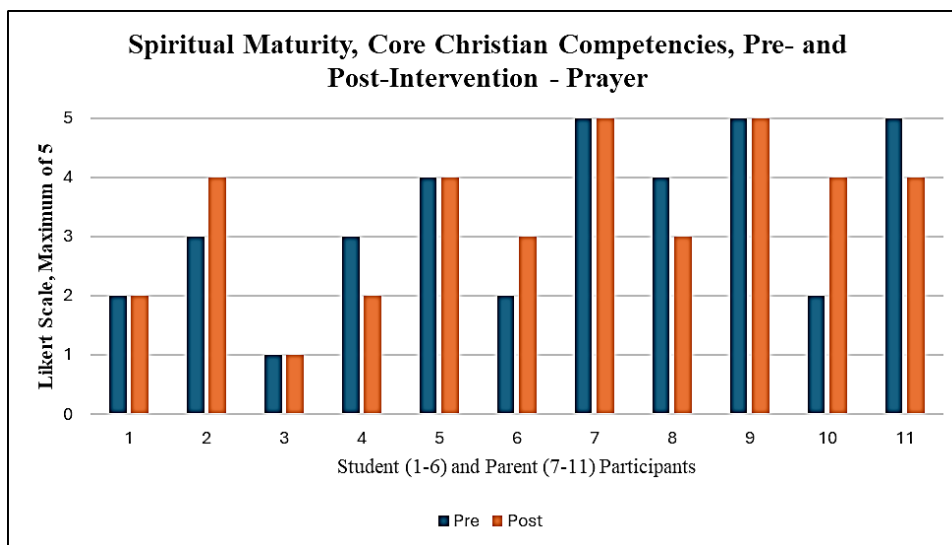
Prayer is a direct line of communication with God and a means to convey the world's pressures to our Creator. Prayer is at the top of the list for spiritual disciplines and is something many Christians do not do or do not do in a manner that allows time to commune with God and then listen for His response.<sup>281</sup> This understanding of prayer exceeds the scope of this thesis action research project in that the importance and frequency of prayer were more the loci for growth. This does not diminish the importance of prolonged time in prayer; this is an essential step toward godliness. But, for many Christians, time is needed to build this spiritual discipline and develop a prayer muscle. The pre- and post-intervention survey results demonstrated growth in this area, with a few teens and adults.

Table 2 shows the pre- and post-intervention survey on prayer. Three participants increased their prayer frequency, five showed no change, and three decreased their prayer frequency. The chart participant numbers begin with the students. They occupy the first six places, with the adults holding the remaining five (1-6 teens and 7-11 adults). The increase shows the effectiveness of the thesis intervention program. Two had the highest score for those who remained the same, meaning they prayed more than thrice daily. The scoring range is below for clarification.

- None = 1
- Once a day = 2
- Twice a day = 3
- Three times a day = 4
- More than three times a day = 5

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<sup>281</sup> Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 80.

**Table 2. Core Competencies of the Christian Faith – Pray**

The anomaly noted earlier is the one participant who listed none for prayer on both surveys: Participant Three. This participant participated fully in the thesis intervention and completed his student handbook. Therefore, he should have chosen prayer once daily and noted an increase, at least due to the intervention program. During the final focus group interviews, he commented on how the program helped him grow spiritually and indicated his enjoyment in learning more about following Jesus. It is important to note that this participant has only been a Christian for over a year. It is possible that he misapplied his answer in the survey or possibly did not understand the question, but his response in the interview overrides it. Participants four and eight also showed a decrease in their daily prayer. There is no answer to this other than to attribute this to an anomaly in the pre- and post-survey. A t-test was also completed on the survey results, demonstrating increased prayer across the group. The difference to the positive was 0.088, or an 11% increase. See table 3 for more details.

**Table 3. t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Prayer**

| <b>t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Prayer</b> |             |              |
|---|-------------|--------------|
|   | <i>Pre-</i> | <i>Post-</i> |
| Mean  | 3.27        | 3.36         |
| Variance  | 2.02        | 1.65         |
| Observations  | 11          | 11           |
| Pearson Correlation                                 | 0.76        |              |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference                        | 0           |              |
| df  | 10          |              |
| t Stat  | -0.32       |              |
| P(T<=t) one-tail                                    | 0.38        |              |
| t Critical one-tail                                 | 1.81        |              |
| P(T<=t) two-tail                                    | 0.76        |              |
| t Critical two-tail                                 | 2.23        |              |

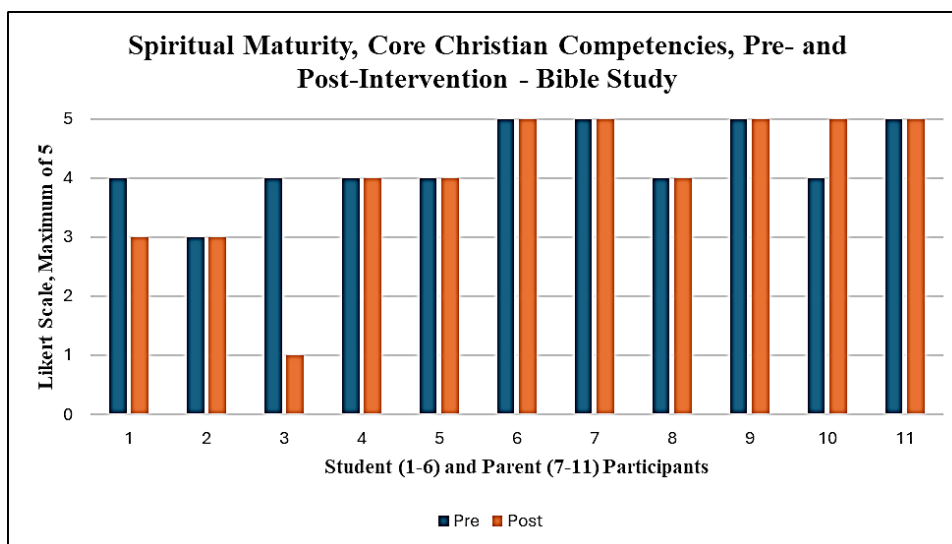
**Bible Study**

Bible study or Scripture reading is arguably the most important spiritual discipline.<sup>282</sup> Meaningful spiritual maturity depends on reading God's word daily. The issues of poor decision-making, identity confusion, lack of understanding of destiny and purpose, and lack of knowledge of how to live a moral life begin with knowing what God says about each area. The only way to know this is to read God's word, speaking His words after Him. The below chart, table 4, details this core competency. The Likert score for this table is as follows:

- Never = 1
- Once a year = 2
- Once a month =3
- Once a week = 4
- Daily = 5

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<sup>282</sup> Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 22.

**Table 4. Core Competencies of the Christian Faith – Bible Study**

Eight of the participants showed no change in their daily intake of Scripture. Participant ten increased, and participants one and three decreased. Of the participants who did not measure an increase, four read every day, two read weekly, and one once a month. Participant Ten is an adult and increased from weekly reading to daily reading. As for the participants who scored lower than reading weekly, this is contrary to the thesis intervention program that engaged Scripture reading five days a week. Be it that this would not constitute daily reading; it would, at a minimum, fall into the weekly category. Participants fully participated in the intervention, completing their handbooks and engaging the questions. Scripture reading was part of each day's activities. It is possible that reading the Scripture from the handbook rather than the Bible may cause reductions in the two participants. A t-test was also conducted, with these results showing a decrease from 4.27 mean to 4. This is a drop of .27 or 6.32%. This reduction is consistent as most participants did not increase their pre-intervention rating. It is not considered a negative as several participants read their Bibles weekly, if not daily. See table 5 for more details.

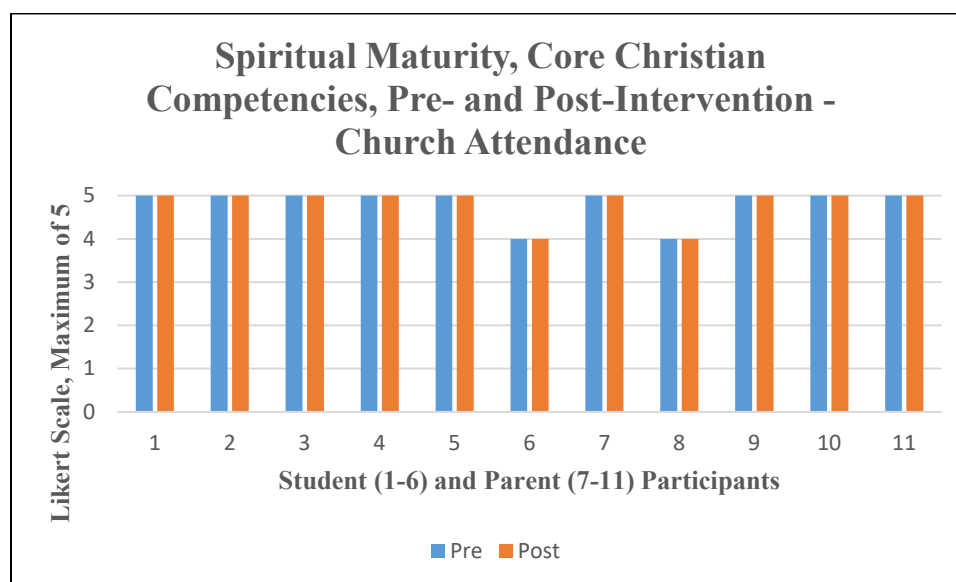


**Table 5. t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Bible Study**

| <b>t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Bible Study</b> |             |              |
|--|-------------|--------------|
|  | <i>Pre-</i> | <i>Post-</i> |
| Mean   | 4.27        | 4            |
| Variance   | 0.42        | 1.6          |
| Observations   | 11          | 11           |
| Pearson Correlation                                      | 0.61        |              |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference                             | 0           |              |
| df   | 10          |              |
| t Stat   | 0.9         |              |
| P(T<=t) one-tail   | 0.2         |              |
| t Critical one-tail                                      | 1.81        |              |
| P(T<=t) two-tail   | 0.39        |              |
| t Critical two-tail                                      | 2.23        |              |

### Church Attendance

This category did not demonstrate change in any of the participants. Each family regularly attends church services unless hindered by health concerns or providential interruptions. Participants Six and Eight miss from time to time due to health concerns but are regular attendees when not experiencing any health conditions. Table 6 shows the results of this core competency.

**Table 6. Core Competencies of the Christian Faith – Church Attendance**

A t-test was also completed on this table of figures, yielding the same result and confirming no change. See table 7.

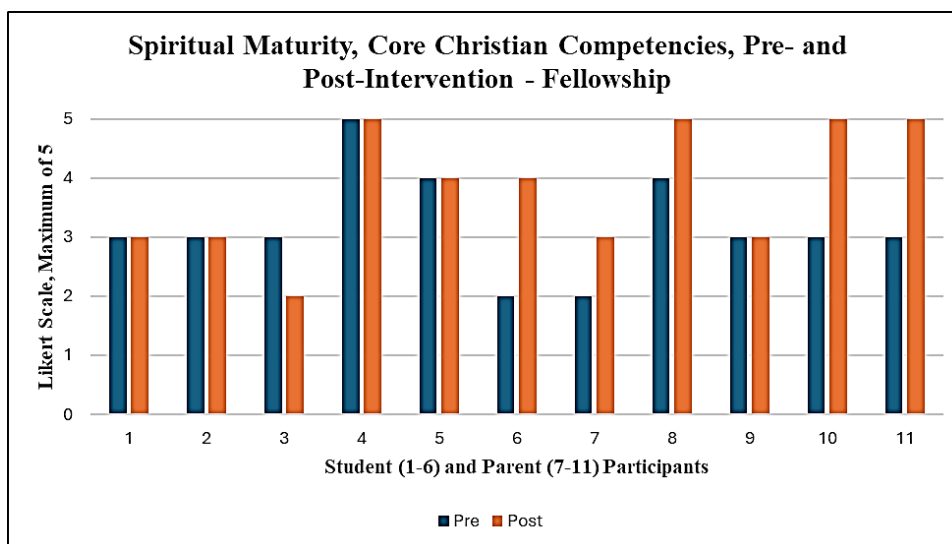
**Table 7. t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Church Attendance**

| <b>t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Church Attendance</b> |             |              |
|--|-------------|--------------|
|  | <i>Pre-</i> | <i>Post-</i> |
| Mean   | 4.82        | 4.82         |
| Variance   | 0.16        | 0.16         |
| Observations   | 11          | 11           |
| Pearson Correlation  | 1           |              |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference                                   | 0           |              |
| df   | 10          |              |
| t Stat   | #DIV/0!     |              |
| P(T<=t) one-tail   | #DIV/0!     |              |
| t Critical one-tail  | #DIV/0!     |              |
| P(T<=t) two-tail   | #DIV/0!     |              |
| t Critical two-tail  | #DIV/0!     |              |

## **Fellowship**

The last core competency is fellowship. The early church spent copious time together where they could encourage one another and learn together. This togetherness promotes strength and accountability and gathers members of the body of Christ together to share life. The area observed the largest increases in the core competencies. Five participants increased in this area: one teen and four adults. Five participants observed no change: four teens and one adult. One participant registered a decrease, Participant Three. The scoring for table 8 is as follows:

- Never = 1
- Rarely = 2
- Sometimes = 3
- Usually = 4
- Always = 5

**Table 8. Core Competencies of the Christian Faith – Fellowship**

Notably, several of the participants increased their scores by several points. This is suggestive of a healthier relationship with other adults engaging the same paradigm of learning together to better serve their families. One teen, participant Six, was placed in an environment that is good for socialization. This core competency received the biggest measurable growth: an increase of .64 or 12.15%. The t-test table, table 9, shows this increase.

**Table 9. t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means – Fellowship**

| <b>t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Fellowship</b> |             |              |
|---|-------------|--------------|
|   | <i>Pre-</i> | <i>Post-</i> |
| Mean  | 3.18        | 3.81         |
| Variance  | 0.76        | 1.16         |
| Observations  | 11          | 11           |
| Pearson Correlation                                     | 0.46        |              |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference                            | 0           |              |
| df  | 10          |              |
| t Stat  | -2.06       |              |
| P(T<=t) one-tail  | 0.033       |              |
| t Critical one-tail                                     | 1.81        |              |
| P(T<=t) two-tail  | 0.067       |              |
| t Critical two-tail                                     | 2.23        |              |

## Parent Equipping

One specific survey was given to just the adult participants. This survey measured the Christian culture in the home and how well the parents believed they were prepared or able to teach their families about God and His commands (Deut 6:7). The survey asked questions ranging from time as a Christian, family prayer, and Bible reading to the actions of the parent while at home. Essentially, how you present at home versus church. The questions deemed most relevant to data analysis were question fifteen, which enquired about the frequency of home-based worship, and question twenty, about how well the parent is equipped to teach their families. The results in both areas increased in most of the homes represented in this thesis intervention.

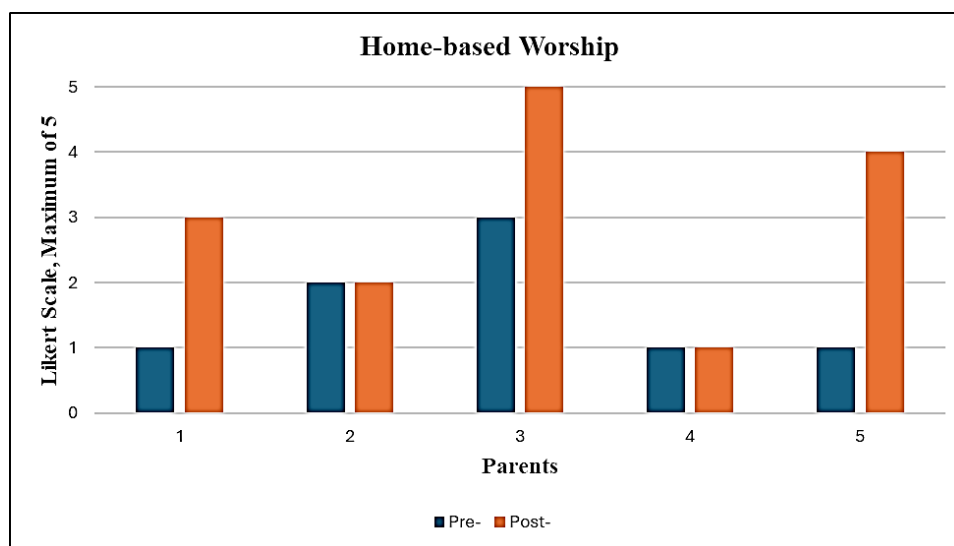
### **Home-based Worship**

The area of worship is easily modified or understood to mean discipleship. This is the parent teaching their children about God and helping them to build a biblical worldview. This requires the parent to teach and participate with their children in the core Christian competencies. This can be done by reviewing the previous Sunday morning sermon or simply reading a book of the Bible with their kids and discussing what was read. Some of the adults were timid about cultural engagement with Scripture. This was more of knowing but not understanding how to engage. This is where the focus group meetings and instruction played a vital role in the parents developing a better understanding of biblical application to modern culture. First, they should point out the differences and how they correlate with reality, and second, they should have some semblance of explaining and expressing this to their teens so that they understand and come into alignment with God's word. The resulting data collection demonstrates parents' growth in home-based worship and their ability to teach their teens.

The results from home-based worship increased dramatically for participants One, Three, and Five, while there was no change for participants Two and Four. Participants Three (male) and Five (female) are single parents, which places additional stress on their ability to conduct home-based worship. This study allowed them to partake without having to do the research, which is nearly impossible, being the sole provider of their homes. Based on their final focus group interview and intervention critique, this study is what they needed and had been hoping for to help their teens deal with the secular culture. Table 10 depicts the differences from the beginning to the end of the intervention. The scoring for this question is as follows:

- Never = 1
- Rarely = 2
- Sometimes = 3
- Usually = 4
- Always = 5

**Table 10. Christian Culture in the Home – Home-based Worship**



Notably, participants who had an increase increased by two points or more. This dramatic difference shows their ability to engage culturally with their teens. The mean before the

intervention was 1.6, and 3 at the end of the intervention. This is an 87.5% increase. The t-test confirms this result, as does the feedback from the parents. See table 11. The results of this study demonstrate an increase in home-based worship. Additionally, as previously stated, these parents have secured their next home-based study material to continue educating their teens in the ways of God. This means they have also increased their ability to carry out this task.

**Table 11. t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Home-based Worship**

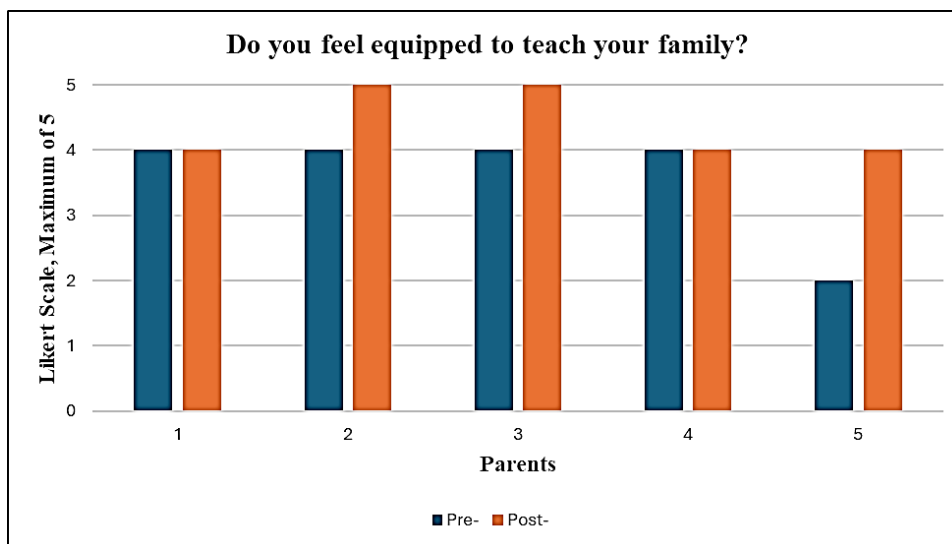
| <b>t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Home-based Worship</b> |             |              |
|---|-------------|--------------|
|   | <i>Pre-</i> | <i>Post-</i> |
| Mean  | 1.6         | 3            |
| Variance  | 0.8         | 2.5          |
| Observations  | 5           | 5            |
| Pearson Correlation   | 0.53        |              |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference                                    | 0           |              |
| df  | 4           |              |
| t Stat  | -2.33       |              |
| P(T<=t) one-tail  | 0.04        |              |
| t Critical one-tail   | 2.13        |              |
| P(T<=t) two-tail  | 0.08        |              |
| t Critical two-tail   | 2.78        |              |

### **Equipped**

Among the many encouragements, this researcher observed during the intervention was the increase in the confidence of the adults through the progression of the study. As noted, the parents were excited to learn how to instruct their children. This is also part of andragogy in that adults will continue to want to learn but learn differently through experience. The adult participants were eager to engage in the study material when provided with the tools to complete a task. Often, it was knowledge they had but lacked the vocabulary to identify it. Table 12 identifies the increase in knowledge and being better equipped for the Christian faith at home. The scoring for this area is as follows:

- Never = 1
- Rarely = 2
- Sometimes = 3
- Usually = 4
- Always = 5

**Table 12. Christian Culture in the Home – Equipped**



Three of the five participants reported being better equipped to teach their teens.

Participant Five showed the highest increase, while Participants Two and Three had moderate increases. In either case, the study subjects increased in knowledge and ability, thus increasing preparedness. The mean in the pre-intervention survey was 3.6, with an increase of 4.4. This is an increase of 22.22%. Analyzing the post-intervention critiques and final focus group interviews, all participants remarked about being better prepared and equipped to conduct home worship and discipleship with their teens and younger children. As with all the previous analysis t-tests, the results are confirmed and consistent with the focus groups (see table 13)

**Table 13. t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means – Equipped**

| <b>t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means - Equipped</b> |             |              |
|---|-------------|--------------|
|   | <i>Pre-</i> | <i>Post-</i> |
| Mean  | 3.6         | 4.4          |
| Variance  | 0.8         | 0.3          |
| Observations  | 5           | 5            |
| Pearson Correlation                                   | 0.41        |              |
| Hypothesized Mean Difference                          | 0           |              |
| df  | 4           |              |
| t Stat  | -2.14       |              |
| P(T<=t) one-tail                                      | 0.05        |              |
| t Critical one-tail                                   | 2.13        |              |
| P(T<=t) two-tail                                      | 0.1         |              |
| t Critical two-tail                                   | 2.78        |              |

### Biblical Worldview

A great deal about worldviews and the differences between a biblical worldview and a secular mindset has been covered. The worldview questionnaire sought to determine each participant's worldview (see Appendix E). The questionnaire asked a variety of questions about how people live, what they think about identity, salvation, the difference between heaven and hell, human origins, and the origin of the universe. Additionally, questions about race, critical race theory, diversity, equity, and inclusion were asked. The four worldview questions of this thesis action research project looked at identity, destiny, purpose, and morality. As these are the primary questions, they will be featured in this section. Overall, the difference between pre- and post-questionnaires showed changes in many participants in each primary question. The changes demonstrate a shift in worldview, a more biblical worldview.

### Identity

This first question engaging identity was number seventeen in the questionnaire. It was posed as, “To what or who do you base your identity?” The answer to this question is critical to living a fulfilling life that is stable and not changing with the whims of society or groups of



people. The adult participants did not waver in answering this question, stating that they based their identity on Christ. Participant Nine answered both the pre- and post-questionnaires in the affirmative. Still, she added a caveat that she once based her identity on the self but has come to realize that life can only be lived to the fullest when Jesus is the basis for our identities. The students were solid in their pre- and post-answers, with a few exceptions.

Half of the students had no change from the pre-questionnaire; they based their identity on Jesus. Participant Three was unsure about his identity before the thesis intervention started or after completion. Participant One did not answer this question in the pre-survey but answered in the affirmative for Jesus in the post-survey. It is unclear why she did not answer the question the first time but did answer the question in the end. Participant Five did not answer negatively in the first questionnaire but stated that her identity was based on what Jesus said rather than Christ Himself. This is not, in effect, wrong but seemingly only a partial answer or partial identity association. Her post-intervention answer was an affirmative in Jesus. Participant Six first stated his identity was based on the Bible and what he learned in school. His post-intervention answer was Jesus and biblical teachings. The questionnaire showed a positive change in the worldview of these three participants with their identity and the influence the Bible has in this area. The trends in identity are similar in the remaining worldview questions, the next being destiny.

### **Destiny**

The connection between destiny and purpose has been noted, and the answers to the questionnaire solidify the closeness of these two states through the answers given by the participants. The destiny question was posed as, “What is your destiny?” There were only two changes in the participants from the beginning to the end of the thesis intervention; both were students. The two students were Participants One and Three. Participant One did not answer the

first questionnaire. Her response in the final questionnaire was to be with God or have the right relationship with Him. This is a positive change.

Participant Three first answered that he was not sure; his response in the final was living through God. Even though he did not express being in the right relationship with the Lord, the implication suggests that this is what Three had in mind. The remainder of the group gave satisfying answers to the question of their destiny, that being in the right relationship with God.

### **Purpose**

The idea of purpose, as portrayed in this action research project, is not to be with God but to serve Him and serve others. This foundational mindset of the biblical worldview should be in every follower of Jesus. This state is also often confused with destiny, which is being in a right relationship with God and conformed to the likeness of Jesus. This question was presented as, “What is your purpose in life?” The answers to this question were mostly correct, as the participants' purpose is to serve God and others. Three students marked changes in their initial answers.

Participants One, Two, and Three gave changed answers to this question. Participant One again did not answer the question in the first questionnaire. Her response in the post-questionnaire was to help others know Jesus. This is believed to be an affirmation of serving others and pointing them to Christ. Participant Two initially answered by being a better person. His second response was to share his faith in Jesus. Participant Three did not know his purpose in the first questionnaire but stated in the second that his purpose was to help guide people to Jesus and the Bible. Each participant gave answers that could have been more precise but clearly showed an increase toward a biblical worldview. The adults all understood their purpose was to

serve God and serve others. Therefore, they had no changes. The question about morality fell in the same vein as the previous questions; there were a few changes, but it was biblically stable.

### **Morality**

As with the previous worldview questions, the adults did not have any changes to their answers, each yielding to God's rule and law for correct conduct and interaction with others. The students had changes in three participants. This question was written as, "Explain morality or living a moral life." Two of the three students' initial answers seemed to be based solely on the rule of law or governmental requirements and those rules set forth by groups of people. This is not to be confused with the post-modern mindset of subjective morality but moral contracts between governments and people and people to people. The third student had no idea what the answer was. The more profound answer is that God established morals; through Him, people know right from wrong and act accordingly (Rom 2:14-15).

Participants One and Six attributed moral living generically by obeying laws and not sinning. Participant Three did not know the answer. The post-questionnaire revealed very different answers than the first. Participant One was particular about following God's rules on conduct and how believers should live. Participant Three gave a partially correct response, attributing morality to God's presence in the individual's life and immorality to the absence of God. There is work to do here, but this student is on the right track. Participant Six shifted his response from a sterile contractual style of morality to a God-based morality, living a life pleasing to God through obedience to Him.

### **Summary of Results**

This chapter analyzed the data collected from two surveys and the worldview questionnaire. Less emphasis was placed on the handbooks, the focus group interviews, and the

post-intervention critiques. These areas were not less but accounted for as test documents and interviews confirming the participants' spiritual growth and a developing biblical worldview. The participants did not have unorthodox answers to the questions about who God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are. They did not waver on what salvation is or through whom salvation is attained. There were some answers about the uncertainty of heaven at death and to what degree they had a personal relationship with Jesus. Still, the post-worldview questionnaire eliminated these issues and proved solid because they were saved and had a personal relationship with Christ. The data analysis results show a positive increase in the four areas of developing a biblical worldview.

These areas, expressed with questions of identity, destiny, purpose, and moral living, were increased throughout the thesis intervention. All of the participants showed some diversity in their answers to these questions. Still, the post-intervention data collection documents showed positive changes for all participants in the four worldview questions. The students better understand who they are, what they should be doing, and for whom they should serve. The parents reported being better equipped to teach their families to honor God's command in Deuteronomy 6:7 and have begun the search for a curriculum they can adapt to teach their families. The focus groups and the post-intervention critiques bear this as true and accurate. The statements speak to the parents' confidence in teaching their families and areas of the intervention that could be improved for clarity and functionality. It should be noted that success in this data analysis only points to the development of a biblical worldview and the parents' increased confidence and newfound ability to teach their families God's precepts. Still, based on this assessment, better decision-making for teens and adults should be improved.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The state of the world dictates an ire toward religion, specifically God and Christianity. The noted Barna poll demonstrates this change and points to a “World Citizen” classified as an individual with a synchronistic worldview.<sup>283</sup> This is an alarming change that requires a response from followers of Christ. The literature review is replete with church models turned toward families and intended to assist in discipleship,<sup>284</sup> and there are many models from the modern church to choose from.<sup>285</sup> This DMIN action research project confirms the need for family discipleship and implements a strategy to equip parents for home-based discipleship to build a biblical worldview.

The results of this intervention have confirmed a strategy to equip parents intellectually and practically and fortify the church models adduced in contemporary literature. Current church models cater to families by bringing them together in worship, activities, and multi-generational learning. However, few train parents to develop a biblical worldview that fosters spiritual maturity and godly decision-making. This intervention has created a reproducible strategy to plug into existing ministry models for family development and to engage the secular worldview with the truth of the Gospel. Therefore, the next steps are refinement and expandability.

The results of this action research project reveal that this intervention strategy produced a budding biblical worldview and increased spiritual maturity. The intent was to foster this result in a specific age group (teens), so additional study remains to broaden this strategy to incorporate varying age groups for repeatable implementation. It is paramount to understand this success is for Kingdom expansion, combatting a secularized world, and for God’s glory.

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<sup>283</sup> George Barna, “American Worldview.”

<sup>284</sup> Paul Renfro, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 49-51.

<sup>285</sup> Demise Kjesbo, “Family Ministry,” 494-501.

The problem explored in this thesis intervention at TMC is the lack of home-based discipleship, resulting in a distorted biblical worldview, manifesting in poor decision-making with teens. The literature review and anecdotal evidence suggest this to be a broader issue. Closer scrutiny reveals several problems on the familial level. First, the current society no longer operates from the nuclear family. Families are often divided through divorce or parents who work multiple jobs, keeping them away from their children throughout the week. In the wake of this deformity of the family, children, teens specifically, are nurtured by society. When society or peer-to-peer education replaces parental instruction, the teen is left to the whims of changing social fads. This results in problems with identity, destiny, purpose, and morality. This DMIN action research project did not deduce this aspect of the psychology of society or succumbing to suggestive ideologies, but this is undoubtedly a conditional aspect of parents abandoning their responsibilities to be the primary instructors of their families. Second, many families attend church but place the onus of spiritual maturation on youth ministers and Student Pastors. The coherence of this mentality to daily life leaves a chasm that the church alone cannot bridge. God placed the family's instruction on the parents (Gen 2:24; Deut 6:7; Eph 6:4). Churches have a definitive influence on teens and children but cannot make up for the lack of home-based training. A third issue is the on-the-go families. These families are hyper-involved in activities that dominate time, such as sports, after-school activities, and working teens. These activities alone are not the problem; they usually form social skills like teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and responsibility. These are all excellent traits, but in hyper form, they distract from what is most important: the sanctity of the family pointed toward God. The practical functionality of spiritual maturity rests on the parents. It is clear from the literature review that many parents do not believe they are equipped and have the confidence to teach their families

God's precepts for life and faith. Thus, a strategy is needed to instruct parents to teach and guide their children toward God.

The purpose for this DMIN action research project is to develop home-based discipleship strategies and disciple parents to build a biblical worldview in their children. The task of developing a strategy to engage the lack of home-based discipleship resulted in the need to educate parents on how to do this. Considering the parent's position of being ill-equipped, the loci of this thesis intervention focused on teaching the parents how to answer four worldview questions: 1) Who am I? 2) What is my destiny? 3) What is my purpose? And 4) How should I live? These are the areas that the teens at TMC struggle with the most. On these tides, the teens eb and flow not having an anchor point from which to navigate life (Eph 4:14). These are essential questions that undergird a worldview. Apart from Scripture, the answers to these questions are left to society, which is ever-changing. The Bible is God's word (2 Tim 3:16-17); it is foundational (Ps 118:89) and is sufficient for life and faith. God is unchanging (Ps 102:27; Heb 13:8); thus, He is the anchor point to answer these four essential life questions. These four questions form the basis for instruction for this thesis intervention.

The developed program centered on two cognitive functions, *schema* and *thema*. This researcher proposes that these areas of cognition are implied in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The practical and relational instruction methodology of these cognitive functions is present in this biblical passage and across Scripture. This teaching and learning methodology is also observed in Acts 2:42. Using the biblical platform, an eight-week instruction paradigm was created. The participants met weekly for a meal and fellowship and were instructed about how to answer the worldview questions. The program was organized into four sections, each being two weeks. Each section answered one worldview question. A basic understanding of what a worldview is began

the study. The cognitive theories of *schema* and *thema* were also introduced, along with lessons in andragogy. These aspects are essential to the program due to the learning differences between adults and youth and how people take in and assimilate information. Ideally, the program taught the parents so they, in turn, could teach their children. Coherence to reality was an aspect of the worldview instruction for each week. Douglas Groothuis posits the absolute necessity of coherence of a belief system to reality.<sup>286</sup> Each week juxtaposed what the Bible teaches about that week's question, what society or the world teaches, and which one coheres with reality. The success of the intervention was predicated on changes in spiritual maturity, the advent of a more robust Christian culture in the home, and shifts toward a biblical worldview. These areas were measured through surveys, a worldview questionnaire, participant handbooks, focus groups, and a post-intervention critique.

The main methodology of triangulation is the two surveys and the worldview questionnaire. The focus groups, handbooks, and post-intervention critiques were used to confirm what the data collection documents revealed. The surveys measured starting points and changes to questions that helped determine spiritual maturity and the level of Christian culture in the home. Four specific measures were taken from the spiritual maturity survey completed by all participants: prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, and fellowship or gathering with like-minded Christians outside of the usual church attendance for worship services.<sup>287</sup> The worldview questionnaire focused on determining the participant's worldview or if an amalgamation or syncretized worldview was present. The questions most relevant to this study were those that enquired about identity, destiny, purpose, and morality. There were increases in these four areas

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<sup>286</sup> Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 50.

<sup>287</sup> These four areas represent the core Christian competencies, each areas being essential to spiritual growth.



toward a biblical worldview in several of the subjects. This was also confirmed through focus groups, the handbooks, and the post-intervention critiques.

The focus groups accompanied the weekly meetings after the fellowship time. The shared meal was a time for general conversation to build friendship and togetherness. All participants shared in the meal; the teens and adults ate in the same room and shared conversations about life. This proved to be an essential element in the intervention. The handbooks were not a means to measure other than seeing each participant's effort in their family's weekly studies. The post-intervention critiques uniformly stated that this study positively impacted their families, their spiritual maturity, and increased Christian attitudes and culture in their homes. The thesis statement of this DMIN action research project finds support in the data analysis. If parents are better prepared, equipped, and more confident in discipling their children, then faulty decisions based on a distorted worldview will improve.

### **Research Implications**

The results of this thesis intervention have implications for several aspects of home-based discipleship. The problem espoused in chapter one was the faulty decision-making of the teenagers at TMC. The problem was a symptom of the lack of home-based discipleship, including a diminished Christian culture in the home. When looking closer at this issue, it was clear that the parents needed to engage their teens in biblical discussions regarding the core Christian competencies and how culture combats Christianity. Building these competencies increased the spiritual maturity of all participants and formed the basis for developing a biblical worldview. This was a top-down investment beginning with the parents as stakeholders in their homes and obedience to God's command to teach His precepts to families. Two areas of interest

with the parents are conducting home-based worship and having confidence in their ability to teach their teens and conduct home-based worship.

The first area is the practical application of discipling families through home-based worship. This area received the highest increase at 87.5%. There were two participants (families) that stayed the same in this area. A possible explanation for this anomaly is that they did not understand this thesis intervention's question or chronology. Completing the eight-week thesis intervention would have netted an increase in these families. This increase in participation is noted in their participant handbooks and the weekly focus group meetings. Participation in this intervention would have precipitated an increase in this scoring rubric. In some ways, this statistic is not misleading, but it is uplifting for the results gained in other homes. The thesis intervention brought the other homes to a two or three-point increase. The results suggest that these parents are better equipped to engage their families with biblical teaching and cultural engagement.

Parents being better equipped to teach their families is the second area of interest regarding the adult side of this thesis intervention. Three of the five parents marked an increase in their ability to be home teachers for their families. The two adults that did not increase in the chart showed evidence of increase based on focus group discussions and how the intervention better prepared them for cultural conversations about the difference between a secular and biblical worldview. Therefore, their scores would have increased in this area, too. Despite this difference, that area of equipping increased by 22.22%. The parents were more comfortable and confident in teaching their teens what the Bible says, addressing the four worldview questions. The parents also increased their spiritual maturity with their teens.

The increase in spiritual maturity is present in the thesis intervention data collection. Prayer increased by 11% among the participants. This demonstrates a continuing conversation with God. Bible reading/study is an anomaly, registering a 6.32% drop in frequency. Table 4 shows a good intake of Bible reading from most of the participants. Two participants decreased, both of which are teens. This is perplexing as the intervention required Bible reading five out of seven days each week. This should have been a demonstrable statistic, but it shows a regression. Looking at their student handbooks, they participated in each day's Bible and worldview lessons. The weight of success in this competency is solidified through the focus groups and the handbooks to show spiritual maturity. Church attendance was never an issue for any of the participants. There was no change for the participants pre- or post-intervention. Fellowship, the last competency, did see an increase. This area observed a 12.15% increase in spending time with other Christians. Five of the eleven participants registered higher post-intervention scores in this area. This yields a 55% increase across the participants. This thesis intervention held implications for the foundation of a biblical worldview.

The base infrastructure of this thesis intervention is exploring four basic worldview questions that focus on identity, destiny, purpose, and morality. Each question affirmed a change in worldview adopting the biblical standard. Identity observed three teens change a worldview position from the self or an organization to Jesus. One parent held the biblical identity but clarified her position of once self-affirming but now solely in Jesus. The understanding of destiny changed toward the biblical worldview for two participants; the remaining participants had already begun developing this area pre-intervention. Purpose also observed changes toward a biblical worldview. The purpose of all Christians is to serve God and serve others, pointing them to Jesus and the Gospel message. Three participants gave changed pre-intervention answers,

directing their service towards God and others by evangelism. Lastly, morality also registered changes toward a biblical worldview. The adults in these four areas demonstrated a biblical worldview, or at a minimum, an excellent foundation to build on. The students had three changes, from a more secular attitude about morality being contractual to a God-seeded understanding of morality from the *imago Dei* (Gen 1:26-27) and the Decalogue (Exod 20:1-17). The post-intervention answers reflect a more profound understanding that civil governments or social constructs do not grant morality; this is from God and imbued in each person through His image.

There were positive results in every aspect of this thesis intervention. One such element was the reflection of what home-based worship looked like from the weekly gatherings of the participants. As stated in Chapter Three, this modality was not intended during this thesis intervention's planning and discovery phase.<sup>288</sup> Additionally, a leadership revelation unfolded during this thesis intervention is a trifurcated platform of love, presence, and godliness. Each prong yields aspects of *schema*, *thema*, and the four worldview questions. In reverse order, godliness embodies looking up, inward, and outward to others. The participant handbooks taught about vertical and horizontal relationships in Week One, Day One (See Appendices J and K). These two axis are also present in the Decalogue: serving God (commandments 1-4, vertical) and serving others (commandments 6-10, horizontal). This pertains to leadership and godliness through service to God first, recommitting ourselves to Him, and service to others. Presence embodies being there to lead and be an example of godliness. It means giving time to others, specifically the family. Family discipleship will suffer if the parent is at work or leisure time more often than at home. This means rearranging priorities and aligning with God's plan for

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<sup>288</sup> For the initial reference to this layer of instruction, please see Chapter Three, pg 88.

parents to minister to and disciple their children. Love is the culmination of the previous two prongs. Love conquers all (1 Cor 13:7). Love generates compassion to obey God's call. Through love, believers "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt 5:6, NASB). Love gives strength to model godliness and be present for parents called to teach. Love, presence, and godliness are the leadership methodology that fuels family and home-based discipleship.

### **Research Applications**

The problem, as stated, is the need for home-based discipleship. The purpose was to develop a curriculum to help prepare parents to disciple their teens and engage the culture through home-based worship. The participant handbooks for this thesis intervention were designed for parents and teenagers to bring about increased Christian culture in the home, spiritual maturity, and develop a biblical worldview. This application is directed at those teens and parents at TMC. This thesis intervention is myopic in this constrained context but is expandable. This expansion at TMC can serve Christian parents with younger children, married couples planning to have children, newly married couples, and even grandparents as they spend time and are engaged with their grandchildren. Teaching the younger generations is not delineated to only immediate family; it is a biblical call for the older generations to teach the younger (Titus 2:1-10). This thesis intervention is a version of a small group. The study should be offered during the calendar year once or twice to accommodate varying parental schedules and the increasing ministry approaches of TMC.

The handbook is adaptable to any educational circumstance or familial arrangement. As it is, the wording is too advanced for younger children. This would also ring true for adults with a primary school education or K-12<sup>th</sup> grades. This was also a negative response in the post-intervention critiques as several believed it could have been more readable for the teens with

more straightforward vocabulary; the adults and the teens stated this. A remodeled handbook would focus on biblical marriage and worldview paradigms or be established to educate Student Pastors and Children's Ministry leaders to better communicate with those they are called to teach. In short, the handbooks should be adapted to any teaching situation. Additionally, the four worldview questions in the handbook are only four of many questions that can be the focus of education to engage the coherence of a belief system.

Douglas Groothuis offers several criteria to establish a worldview test. Some of these areas are: Does the worldview offer coherent explanations about existence? Is the worldview logically coherent within itself? Does the worldview cohere with itself? Is the worldview factual (can it be tested)?<sup>289</sup> These are merely four additional questions that should be levied against a worldview as a test of veridicality. The questions in the study are interchangeable to engage different aspects of a worldview juxtaposed to Scripture and reality. This flexibility allows adjustments to fit participants, age ranges, and education. The handbook and focus questions are malleable to the changing tides of society. This adaptability is helpful for many situations, such as families with young children.

The study parameters were for the teens at TMC. Still, given that a worldview is solidified by age thirteen, families with young children (elementary school) need to engage their children with the basic worldview questions of identity, destiny, purpose, and morality. Statistical analysis has shown that an individual's worldview is set by the age of thirteen.<sup>290</sup> Thus, parents engaging their young children with the tenets of a biblical worldview is paramount.

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<sup>289</sup> Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 52-55.

<sup>290</sup> Joseph S. Kidder, and Katelyn Campbell, "Molding Your Child's Development, Part 1: The Forces that Shape the Worldview of Your Child," Andrews University Digital Commons Faculty Publications (2020): 80, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/1410>

The benefit is establishing a biblical worldview rather than correcting a non-biblical one. This places the family in front of the crises many millennials and Generation Z suffer. Additionally, married couples will benefit from this course of study.

The expectation of adapting this thesis intervention to serve married couples is that the couple aligns with Christian beliefs. Additionally, couples planning to have children will be versed in their worldview before the first child arrives. The marriage between a man and a woman creates a synergy; they become one (Gen 2:24). The husband is the spiritual head of the family (1 Cor 11:3) and should be engaging his wife in learning and teaching the precepts of God. This will align the couple and their biblical worldview under Christ's headship. This is a time to understand better the aspects of teaching and godly leadership that Deuteronomy 6:7 calls for establishing *schema* and *thema* for a Christian culture in the home. This is multigenerational.

The frequency of grandparents raising their children's children is increasing exponentially. One of the families in this thesis intervention is in this setting. Understanding the culture is invaluable for grandparents who spend copious time with their grandchildren. Engaging the culture with sound doctrine about cultural issues ensures a Christian culture in the home and other venues to which youth are exposed. This embodies the older generations teaching the younger (Titus 2:1-10). There is an increased interest in cultural apologetics, specifically Christian apologetics, and all generations benefit from this understanding, even on a basic level. This entails how to engage youth with the truthfulness of Christianity.

Lastly, this thesis intervention should be placed in a regular teaching rotation at TMC. The structure is similar, if not precisely like a Mission Group (small group at TMC). Mission groups meet weekly and cover the Sunday sermon for clarity. The onus of the sermon review is not apologetic or necessitated toward cultural engagement but, instead, for doctrinal clarity,

discipleship, and evangelism. This thesis intervention functions in the same manner but answers worldview questions through the Sunday morning sermon in addition to doctrinal clarity. Mission groups begin with a potluck meal and conversation. It is a time of fellowship and Christian community. This thesis intervention should be offered as a Mission group once or twice a year to facilitate the above applications within TMC. This course of study would be open to congregants and the Pastoral staff. This builds stronger biblical worldviews in the congregation members and fosters better learning engagement for the Pastors in their ministries.

### **Research Limitations**

The limitations introduced in Chapter One will be expanded here and include a few new ones developed during this thesis intervention. No application will work for everyone in all circumstances. Therefore, this thesis accounts for the research limitations to assist other researchers in breaking ground in family discipleship and worship. This thesis intervention includes elements of radical change. These elements are critical for parents and their teens to develop spiritual maturity, create a Christian culture in the home, and develop a biblical worldview. This change is extreme in various areas, mostly in time allocation and priorities. The hyperactive family sidelines godliness for sports, school events, and work, which is believed to be an investment in their children's lives. The paradox is that despite the believed investment, what families need most is godliness. This godliness results from parents creating a Christian culture in the home.

The number one limiter of this thesis intervention was time. In each weekly focus group, parents railed about having to force time each week for family worship and daily Scripture reading. This position was not a negative critique; it was simply the demand of time to create a Christian culture in the home. The lesson within the lesson dictates that God should not be



spliced into the family schedule, but what areas of the family schedule need to be examined so that God comes first. This lesson did not receive as much traction as was necessary. The limitation will be an issue for most Christian families. The suggestion here is not that extracurricular activities are harmful; instead, how many activities are too many and take away time from leading your family in godliness through family discipleship. The changes needed here are radical, but the biblical worldview questions elicit a radical personal and intellectual change.

A second limitation is availability, which is tied to time. Several of the potential participants were unavailable for this thesis intervention. The reasons varied, but the underlying question is, what is more important than learning to engage in family discipleship, helping your children better understand the biblical worldview, and preparing them to combat secular culture for improved decision-making? It is not the position of this researcher to answer this question for those parents who declined participation; self-examination is necessary so that future opportunities can be utilized for God's glory and the spiritual strength of the families.

A third limitation of this DMIN thesis project is the group size. The number of participants was sufficient to administer the study, but the data pool was limited. Full participation would have yielded nearly twice the data for a larger sample size. The limitation was intentional and restricted to parents and teens active in Mission Students at TMC. There are additional families at TMC with teenagers who are not involved in the student ministry and would have undoubtedly benefitted from participating in this study. It is clear that all teenagers need assistance in spiritual growth, and parents need tools to facilitate this through home-based discipleship.

A fourth limitation is evident in the types of questions and family activities in the participant handbooks, the questions in the surveys, and the worldview questionnaire. One

participant stated in their post-intervention critique that the family activities and worldview question scenarios were antiquated. A few others noted that the family activities regarding what they should be doing were unclear. Reviewing these areas showed places for improvement. Some activities called for building with sticks or other materials. This may be an activity better suited for parents with younger children, not teens. Hindsight suggests using a pre-intervention focus group to determine beneficial activities to create a practical learning environment and a more meaningful setting to better understand the lesson's point. The types of questions in the surveys and worldview questionnaire could have been better focused or narrowed to clarify what each question was asking. Additionally, the answers to specific questions could have been better formed. An example would be question sixteen in the spiritual maturity survey. The possible answers were never, rarely, sometimes, usually, and always. These options are qualitative and would better serve the spirit of the question as a numeric value for a quantitative response. This example is repeated throughout both of the surveys. This would have narrowed the scoring for each of these areas and given a more concise measure of growth.

Lastly, long-term maturation is an undeterminable goal within the scope of this thesis intervention. This action research program has demonstrated short-term growth over the eight-week intervention but cannot ascertain the long-term commitment. As noted previously, this is tantamount to a circular argument. The rejoinder to this argument is the positive feedback from the focus group meetings and the participants' worldview change. Still, this is a mandate for continued home-based worship and discipleship for the parents. This is a continuing problem, but it is not isolated to this intervention or context, nor is it a marker of failure. It is a matter of the parent utilizing the learning and teaching tools they have been equipped with to work in tandem with the Holy Spirit's transforming work for the benefit of their children and families.

This is the work of the body of Christ with the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the participants with accountability measures of the church as each other's burdens are carried together (Gal 6:2) and encouragement in the faith (1 Thess 5:11).

### **Further Research**

The concluding remarks of this DMIN action research project focus on a collision of worldviews and teens who often struggle with the surety of personal faith through Christian discipleship. This struggle is an issue of poorly developed core Christian competencies and, through these competencies, answering foundational questions of identity, destiny, purpose, and morality. Several participants in this thesis intervention showed diminished spiritual maturity, including the parents. This deficiency proved to be a catalyst in the lack of home-based worship and discipleship, contributing to poor decision-making in the teens. This DMIN action research project is one way to instill and improve the ability of parents to equip their children and families to follow God's precepts. It is also a means to show that the biblical worldview coheres with reality and is self-supporting in contrast to the ever-shifting secular mentalities of world citizens. The following areas are points of future research to build on the groundwork laid here.

An exciting area of potential research is the contrast between Generation Z and young millennials regarding MTD: Generation Z in the TMC context is not as focused on a philosophical projection of who God is and His purpose in the lives of believers and humanity. A robust discourse about MTD and the effects of that generation was given in Chapter Two. Still, two decades after the advent of MTD, there seems to be a shift from the dial-a-need mentality of MTD to a more doctrinal-based Christian faith for Generation Z at TMC and at large. In other words, adherents of MTD posited a more sensate or emotional feelings-based interaction with God on an as-needed basis. The teens at TMC are more fundamentally grounded in the doctrines

of God, whom they believe is active in humanity and reality, rather than a distant grandfather who answers when called. Is this a result of an increasing interest in Christian apologetics? Is it a result of science and other fields of inquiry revealing more data about the truthfulness of Christianity and the accuracy of the historicity of the Bible? Could this be due to the significance of doctrinal teaching to the teens at TMC in contrast to less doctrinal teaching in other church settings? These are areas of research to be undertaken that could assist in determining the shift in the MTD worldview to a doctrinally bible-based worldview.

Another area of future research is a continuation of one of this thesis' limitations: exploring other worldview questions and how different religious beliefs answer these same questions. One area specifically is pluralism. This was not an issue at TMC but has roots in the growing acceptance of other belief systems as converging paths to God. This is a caveat of Generation Z in that this generation accepts and tolerates beliefs outside of their own but does not as much synchronize these beliefs into their Christian foundation. But, because of this tolerance, the need for evangelism is not as strong. There are myriad reasons for this: ridicule and increasing hostility toward Christians, wanting to be accepted, and so forth. This generation needs to carry on the mantle of Christian evangelism, which hangs on the truth that Jesus alone is the way to God (Acts 4:12). This will also solidify the need for Generation Z to pass on their faith through their future families. This also entails thinking logically and critically about the Christian faith and other belief systems.

Lastly, an additional area of future research is the advancement of technology through social media and the apparent reduction in primary school education efficiency. This researcher's experience is that youth do not need to earn knowledge because information technology is available at a touch. No discipline is required to gain this knowledge; therefore, there is no

supporting structure to uphold what is held to be true. It is akin to hollow knowledge. The application of this research to faith and core Christian competencies is the doctrinal understanding that supports belief and faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Unbelievers are not reasoned to faith in Christ, but logic and apologetics help clear obstacles to belief. Does teaching Christian apologetics to teens positively build core Christian competencies, thus improving decision-making through forming a biblical worldview? This research could yield evidence of the need for this type of Christian teaching to teens and adults alike, specifically in the home, to strengthen vertical and horizontal relationships.

The problem and purpose of this DMIN action research project defined a need and methodology to equip parents for home-based worship and discipleship. The methodology gave structure and supported parents' knowledge to fulfill their biblical mandate to teach their children about God's precepts. Many church models are built to form churches around families, but this ends when church is over. Parents needed a program to teach them how to conduct home-based worship and discipleship, as well as a church with the tools and knowledge to guide parents in this endeavor and support them in an ever-changing society that continually seeks the destruction of the nuclear family. It is the position here, demonstrated through the participant's increased spiritual maturity and biblical worldview formation, that parents, better prepared, equipped, and more confident in discipling their children, will observe improved decisions based on a well-formed biblical worldview.

APPENDIX A  
TMC PERMISSION LETTER

Date 12-04-2023

Pastor Donovan Stewart,

In accordance with the institutional guidelines of the Liberty University Institutional Review Board and the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am requesting permission to conduct research pertinent to the completion of the degree of Doctor of Ministry. The need for research will be in implementing a developed plan to equip parents to engage their children in home-based discipleship. This research aims to foster good decision-making in teens active in Mission Students by developing a biblical worldview, thus thinking biblically.

The permission requested is for contacting applicable participants of The Mission Church and their teen students who are active in Mission Students. I will also need access to the sanctuary one evening a week for twelve weeks to conduct the research plan. Additionally, the once-a-week group gathering will be video and audio recorded, necessitating access to the Mevo recording system.

The content of the research action project will consist of a twelve-week strategy. The first two weeks will be for participant recruitment and reception of implied consent forms acknowledging participation and an initial group meeting to discuss the intervention strategy and answer any questions the participants may have.

This will be followed by eight weeks of course instruction and implementation. Each week, the participants will meet as a group at the church for one and a half hours. The parent participants will also conduct home-based worship covering areas of that week's Sunday sermon. The last intervention content is daily Scripture reading that the parents will conduct with their children. The remaining two weeks will be for post-intervention questionnaires and surveys and for analyzing and synthesizing the gained data.

The participant's identities will remain hidden and accessible to me alone. No names or demographic information will be released. The collected data will be from participant journals, pre and post-questionnaires, and surveys and used in the intervention to show the progress and overall efficacy of the proposed action research intervention.

The goal, as stated, is to equip and encourage parents to conduct home-based worship to develop a biblical worldview in the teens of The Mission Church. I have included a permission response document, which my institution's IRB requires. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Thank you.

In Christ,

Eric S. McCrickard

Associate Pastor

The Mission Church of Lexington

APPENDIX B  
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Parent

As a Doctoral Candidate in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to implement a program designed to equip parents for home-based discipleship of their children to develop a biblical worldview to foster biblical decision-making, and I am writing to invite you and your student to join my study.

Participants must be parents and teens active in the Mission Students group at The Mission Church. Participants will be asked to participate in questionnaires, surveys, group instruction, home-based worship, and daily Scripture reading. Additionally, the group instruction will be video and audio recorded, and each participant will be required to keep a daily journal congruent with the study. It should take approximately twenty minutes to complete each questionnaire and survey, one and a half hours per week for group instruction, one hour each week for home-based worship, and thirty minutes each day allotted for Scripture reading to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please contact me at [REDACTED]. A consent document will be emailed to you if you meet the study criteria. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the first group gathering or before. If your child chooses to participate, he/she will need to sign the same consent form that you will sign.

Sincerely,

Eric S. McCrickard  
Associate Pastor

[REDACTED]



APPENDIX C  
IMPLIED CONSENT

**Consent**

**Title of the Project: Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions**

**Principal Investigator:** Pastor Eric S. McCrickard, Doctoral Candidate, Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

**Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a parent of an active student in Mission Students at The Mission Church. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

**What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is to develop a home discipleship strategy to teach parents how to disciple their children for the development of a biblical worldview.

**What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. First task is to complete a worldview questionnaire and a spiritual maturity survey that will take no more than one and a half hours. This first task will be completed while attending the first group meeting, which will include the parents of the participating students. This meeting will be videotaped with an audio recording.
2. Second task is to attend a weekly parent-group gathering at the church for the purpose of instruction in home-based discipleship to develop a biblical worldview and spiritual maturity. This gathering will be video and audio recorded. The weekly gathering will last one and a half hours.
3. Third task is participation/leading a home-based worship time (one hour per week). The home-based activities will not be audio or video recorded.
4. Fourth task is participating in/leading daily Scripture reading at home with your student(s) (thirty minutes per activity).
5. Fifth task is your participation in the post-intervention parent/student gathering at the church to complete final questionnaires and surveys.
6. Sixth and concurrent with the aforementioned tasks, is to maintain a home-based discipleship journal. You are required to make activity entries for the weekly parent meetings, home-based worship, and daily Scripture reading. The notations should record

successes, failures, questions, and any issues encountered through the activities or intervention (each entry should not take more than twenty minutes).

### **How could you or others benefit from this study?**

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include growing spiritually toward Christ, honoring the biblical mandate to train your children in the ways of the Lord (Eph 6:4), increasing family bonds, and biblical thinking to foster good decision making on the part of yourself and your student.

Benefits to society include better citizenship as the participant forms a biblical worldview and grows in spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity furthers obedience to authorities and service to others in their community.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and, if hard copy, in a locked safe. After seven years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for seven years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or The Mission Church. If you decide to allow

your student to participate, she or he is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Pastor Eric S. McCrickard. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, TBD, at TBD.

### Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date

## APPENDIX D

## PARENTAL AND STUDENT CONSENT

**Combined Parental Consent and Student Assent**

**Title of the Project: Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions**

**Principal Investigator:** Pastor Eric S. McCrickard, Doctoral Candidate, Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

|  |
|--|
| <b>Invitation to be Part of a Research Study</b> |
|--|

Your student is invited to participate in a research study. To participate, he or she must be an active participant in the Mission Student ministry at The Mission Church. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your student to take part in this research project.

|   |
|---|
| <b>What is the study about and why are we doing it?</b> |
|---|

The purpose of the study is to develop a home discipleship strategy to teach parents how to disciple their children for the development of a biblical worldview.

|   |
|---|
| <b>What will participants be asked to do in this study?</b> |
|---|

If you agree to allow your student to be in this study, I will ask her or him to do the following:

7. First task is to complete a worldview questionnaire and a spiritual maturity survey that will take no more than one and a half hours. This first task will be completed while attending the first group meeting, which will include the parents of the participating students. This meeting will be videotaped with an audio recording.
8. Second task is participation in home-based worship (one hour per week). The home-based tasks will not be recorded in any way.
9. Third task is daily Scripture reading (thirty minutes each prescribed day).
10. Fourth task is your student's participation in the post-intervention parent/student gathering at the church to complete final worldview questionnaires and spiritual maturity surveys.
11. Additional tasks will be keeping a participant journal of the home-based discipleship events. The notations should record successes, failures, questions, and any issues encountered through the activities or intervention (each entry should not take more than twenty minutes).

### **How could participants or others benefit from this study?**

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are a more developed biblical worldview fostering spiritual maturity and biblically based decision-making.

Benefits to society include better citizenship as the students form a biblical worldview and grow in spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity furthers obedience to authorities and service to others in their community.

### **What risks might participants experience from being in this study?**

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your student would encounter in everyday life.

### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and, if hard copy, in a locked safe. After seven years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for seven years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

### **How will participants be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to allow your student to participate will not affect your or his or her current or future relations with Liberty University or The Mission Church. If you decide to allow your student to participate, she or he is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your student from the study or your student chooses to withdraw, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw her or him or should your student choose to withdraw, data collected from your student, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your student's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw him or her/your student chooses to withdraw.

### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Pastor Eric S. McCrickard. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, TBD, at TBD.

### Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your student to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my student to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record my student as part of his/her participation in this study.

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Printed Child's/Student's Name

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Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

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Minor's Signature

Date



APPENDIX E  
WORLDVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. Define what it means to be a Christian.
4. How do you view different religions?
5. Who is God?
6. Who is Jesus?
7. What do you believe about the Bible? Is it truthful and accurate?
8. When you die, will you go to heaven or hell? Explain your answer.
9. What is heaven?
10. What is hell?
11. What is salvation?

12. Are all people eventually saved?

13. Explain what it is to be a human.

14. How did humans come to be in this world, human origin?

15. How do you view human nature?

16. Describe the nature of humans; are they good or bad? Give an example.

17. To what or who do you base your identity?

18. What is your purpose in life?

19. What is your destiny?

20. How should you live each day?

21. Explain your position on marriage.

22. Explain your position on homosexuality.

23. Explain your position on transgenderism.

24. How do you view truth?

25. Explain morality or living a moral life.

26. Explain how the world and everything in the universe came to be.

27. How do you define a successful life?

28. How familiar are you with Critical Race Theory?

Not Familiar     Somewhat Familiar     Familiar     Very Familiar

29. Based on your level of familiarity, do you agree or disagree with the principles of CRT?  
(If you are unfamiliar with CRT, you may leave this question unanswered)

Agree     Disagree

30. What level of instruction of CRT have you experienced in school or formal education?

None     Very Little     Some     Extensive

31. How often does race inform your decisions?

None     Very Little     Often     Always

32. Do you agree that the United States is systemically racist?

Agree     Disagree

33. Explain your understanding of equality and equity.

Equality -

Equity –

34. Do you believe CRT agrees with biblical teachings?

None     Very Little     Some     Much

35. Where do you receive the majority of your news?

Social Media

Network News

Cable News

Newspaper

APPENDIX F  
SPIRITUAL MATURITY SURVEY

1. What is your gender?

| Male                     | Female                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. What is your age?

| 13-15                    | 16-17                    | 18-25                    | 26-35                    | 36 +                     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. How long have you been a Christian?

| 1 year or less             | 2-5 years                  | 5-10 years                 | 10-20 years                | 20 or more years           |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. How often do you feel close to God?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. How often do you go to church worship services?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. Do you place personal interest in front of attending church?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. How likely would you give up a personal interest in your relationship with Jesus?

| Very unlikely              | Unlikely                   | Neither                    | Likely                     | Very likely                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. Does Jesus hold the number one spot in your life in everything you do?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. How often do you feel your life has a purpose?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. How often do you think of ways to serve others?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. Does it bother you when someone else has something you do not?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. How often do you feel joy?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. How likely are you to listen to others' problems?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

14. How often do you pray to God?

| None                       | Once a day                 | Twice a day                | Three a day                | Three +                    |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

15. How often do you read your Bible?

| Never                      | Once a year                | Once a month               | Once a week                | Daily                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

16. How often do you gather with other Christians outside of church?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

17. How often do you witness about Christ?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

18. How often do you feel hopeful?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

19. How often do you forgive other people?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. How often do you create long-term friendships?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |



21. How often do you tell the truth?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

22. How often do you express feelings of love for others?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

23. How often do you feel you are living a moral life?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

## APPENDIX G

## CHRISTIAN CULTURE IN THE HOME SURVEY

1. What is your gender?

| Male                     | Female                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. What is your age?

| 13-15                    | 16-17                    | 18-25                    | 26-35                    | 36 +                     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. How Long have you been a Christian?

| 1 year or less             | 2-5 years                  | 5-10 years                 | 10-20 years                | 20 or more years           |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. How often do you teach the Christian faith at home?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Do you consider yourself committed to the biblical teachings of Christianity?

| Definitely not             | Probably not               | Neither                    | Probably would             | Definitely would           |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. How often do you express your commitment to Christianity through your actions?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. How often do you pray with your children/family?

| Never                      | Yearly                     | Monthly                    | Weekly                     | Daily                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. How often do you read Scripture with your children/family?

| Never                      | Yearly                     | Monthly                    | Weekly                     | Daily                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. How often do you talk about matters of your faith with your children/family?

| Never                      | Not very often             | Often                      | Almost always              | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. How often do you attend church services with your children/family?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. How often do you engage in service to others with your children/family?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. How likely would you be to discuss sex with your children/family according to Christian faith?

| Very unlikely              | Unlikely                   | Neither                    | Likely                     | Very likely                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. How often do you talk with your children about their Christian identity?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

14. How often do you talk with your children/family about their identity in Christ Jesus?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

15. How often do you conduct home-based worship?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

16. Do you complain about the church before your children/family?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

17. How often do you discuss other belief systems with your children/family?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

18. Do you agree that spiritual training and learning is the church's responsibility?

| Strongly disagree          | Disagree                   | Neither                    | Agree                      | Strongly agree             |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

19. Do you agree that spiritual training and learning is the parent's responsibility?

| Strongly disagree          | Disagree                   | Neither                    | Agree                      | Strongly agree             |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. How often do you feel equipped to teach your faith to your children/family?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

21. Do you believe your church leaders are available to you for questions and support?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

22. Are you living your life according to the biblical mandates?

| Never                      | Rarely                     | Sometimes                  | Usually                    | Always                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

APPENDIX H  
WORLD CITIZENS

| The Shift in Biblical Worldview Incidence |  |  |      |
|---|--|--|------|
|   |  | National Incidence of Adults with a Biblical Worldview |      |
| Worldview Segment                         | Segment Description  | 2020   | 2023 |
| Integrated Disciples                      | Possess a biblical worldview based on scores related to beliefs and behavior   | 6%   | 4%   |
| Emergent Followers                        | Possess a significant portion of a biblical worldview based on scores related to beliefs and behaviors, but not enough to qualify as having a biblical worldview | 25%  | 14%  |
| World Citizens                            | Possess a worldview other than a biblical worldview, but might have a few beliefs and behaviors that are consistent with biblical principles                     | 69%  | 82%  |

Source: *American Worldview Inventory*, conducted in 2020 and 2023, by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Each study is based on a national sample of 2,000 adults, interviewed by telephone and online in January.

The depicted graph was created for use in a 2023 Barna Report detailing the state of a biblical worldview in the West. George Barna, “American Worldview Inventory 2023 - Release #1: Incidence of Biblical Worldview Shows Significant Change Since the Start of the Pandemic,” February 2023, [https://www.georgebarna.com/research/90\\_american-worldview-inventory-2023--release-#1:-incidence-of-biblical-worldview-shows-significant-change-since-the-start-of-the-pandemic](https://www.georgebarna.com/research/90_american-worldview-inventory-2023--release-#1:-incidence-of-biblical-worldview-shows-significant-change-since-the-start-of-the-pandemic).

APPENDIX I  
I'M DEPENDENT

**I'M DEPENDENT**

**I** = Identity, who am I?

**M** = Morality, how should I live?

**D** = Destiny, what is my destiny?

e

**P** = Purpose, what is my purpose?

e

n

d

e

n



APPENDIX J  
ADULT HANDBOOK

**Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions**

**Adult Handbook**

**Week One – Day One**

**Weekly Topic - Identity**

**Main Scripture** - Genesis 1:26-27, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

**Family Prayer**

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

**Main Thought – Our Identity from the Image of God**

Identity is a core component of humanity. Our identity is a bridge to relationships; it is a key to being a companion and seeking companionship. Our identity as image bearers of God has two axes: vertical and horizontal. The vertical axis is the believer’s identity in Christ; the horizontal axis is person-to-person relationality. The vertical sets the precedence and success for the horizontal. Therefore, when individuals are unsure of who they are, they struggle to relate to others. This positively connects identity with relationships. Knowing who we are is critical to developing a biblical worldview.

**Family Discussion**

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. How many identity attributes can you spot in today’s main Scripture (e.g., authority, value, intelligence, feelings, etc.)? Each group member should note what they see about identity in these verses in their home discipleship journal. Please take five minutes to jot down these attributes, then discuss which are present in each of you.

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**Sermon Review**

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss the portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about identity? Discuss this as a family.

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### Application

The sermon review revealed areas of individual identity and relational aspects of our identity to other people. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### Family Activity

We are formed in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Like a potter and clay, God formed us into something special.

Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.”

All people are made in God’s image. Take a few minutes with your family and write down common characteristics all people have. These can be physical characteristics and mental attributes that make humanity special and unique in contrast to every other thing that exists (e.g., eyes, mouth, arms, legs, thought, speech, compassion, and reason). Even among these similarities, how do people differ?

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to clarify yourself and your family about their identity, an identity formed in the image of God. Ask for courage to embrace this identity in God and to share this with others.

### Journal Entry

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about identity in your daily life. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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## Week One – Day Two

### Daily Scripture Reading

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God's Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

#### Pray

#### Main Scripture – Genesis 3:10-11

“He said, ‘I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.’<sup>11</sup> And He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’”

#### Main Thought – Sin

Despite being created in God's image and the first man and woman enjoying a perfect relationship with God, sin entered humanity. This sin was disobedience. Adam heard God walking in the garden and spoke to Him when He called for Adam. Sin is anything done against the will and Word of God. Even if you commit a wrong that does not affect another person, it is still contrary to God's will and Word. What indications do you see in the text that give clues to the effects of sin (e.g., Adam hiding and being fearful)? Are these effects slow, or do they come fast due to disobedience? Discuss this with your family and write down your reflections. Everyone sins; take a few moments to write down a few sins you have or are committing and their effects on you. What must you do to align with God's will and Word?

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#### Closing Prayer

**Week One – Day Three**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Romans 3:23

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

**Main Thought – The Loss of Glory**

This short verse speaks loudly about our identity and the image we were created in. The Apostle Paul shows that there is no distinction between people groups; all have sinned. This places humanity on par together as everyone is disobedient to God’s will and Word. When sin entered the world, our created image was marred by the effects of sin. One effect is the loss of glory in the *imago Dei* (image of God). How does this speak to our identity in relation to other people? Should we be more humble knowing everyone is in the same sin boat? Discuss this with your family and record your reflections below.

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**Closing Prayer**



## Week One – Day Five

### Daily Scripture Reading

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

#### Pray

**Main Scripture** – 1 Corinthians 2:14

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

#### Main Thought - Understanding

The “natural man” the Apostle Paul refers to is an unbelieving man who does not believe in God or salvation through Jesus Christ. Scripture is a thing from God; therefore, the unbeliever cannot understand what is being stated through Scripture by the Holy Spirit. This will affect an individual’s understanding of identity. In what ways could an unbeliever see themselves, their identity? Does an unbelieving society and culture struggle with identity? In what ways? Discuss this verse with your family and record your reflections.

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#### Closing Prayer

## Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions

### Adult Handbook

#### Week Two – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Identity in Christ

**Main Scripture** – 1 John 3:1, NKJV, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Our Identity in Christ

A biblical worldview requires a definitive answer to identity. Those who have placed their faith in Christ are called the children of God. All people are image-bearers, but only those with a saving relationship with Jesus are God’s children. The main verse explains that the world does not know God; therefore, they do not know you. But you try to emulate the world by copying their appearance and actions. Show your identity in Christ so the world will have an opportunity to see Him in you.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they try to emulate the world (e.g., clothing, makeup, hairstyle, music, etc.). Each group member should note how they copy what they see in society and make a notation in their home discipleship journal. Take five minutes to jot down these attitudes, then discuss which ones disagree with the Bible and being a child of God.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss the portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about our identity in Christ or where the world would not know us as children of God or known God? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed areas of our identity in Christ and how the world works to mold us into the secular image because they do not know God or the followers of Jesus. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

As image bearers and children of God (Gen 1:26; John 1:12-13), we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ. The world does not know God; therefore, they do not know the followers of Jesus (1 John 3:1).

2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Take a mirror and have every member of the group look at their reflection. Write down what they see. Is it a godly image or the image of someone trying to blend into culture? If you do not have a mirror, pair up your family by twos. Have each person take a turn describing what they see in the other person. The idea here is to look for ways that appearance affects how people see followers of Jesus or if what is observed speaks more to society. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to clarify yourself and your family about their identity in Christ. Ask for courage to embrace this identity in Christ and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about being a child of God in your daily life. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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## Week Two – Day Five

### Daily Scripture Reading

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

#### **Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Ephesians 4:24

“that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

#### **Main Thought – The New You!**

We have discussed and read what Scripture teaches us about who we are in Christ. Our new identity as believers and followers of Jesus should be worn daily for others to see. We should not try to imitate the world but imitate Jesus (Eph 5:1). This means to walk or live as Jesus does. The believer should stay in step with Jesus, doing as He did, and focused on His teachings. This means living a certain way pleasing to Christ (Col 1:10). Are you imitating Christ by putting on the new self, living your life in a way pleasing to Jesus? In what ways? How does this clash with the secular worldview? Discuss this verse with your family and record your reflections.

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#### **Closing Prayer**

## Adult Handbook

### Week Three – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Destiny

**Main Scripture** – Romans 5:10-11, NKJV, “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup> And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Destiny

The secular worldview sees destiny as something controlled by something else, a mystical force or fate determined to end the way it did. This does not align with Scripture. Humans were created with free will and can choose one path over another. This does not mean man is the captain of his destiny, but he can choose God or not choose God. Placing your trust in Jesus for salvation is choosing the path God has created for you; that path is a restored relationship, reconciled to God, and spending eternity with Him.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they understand destiny (e.g., fate, karma, reconciliation with God, etc.). Each group member should note how they understand destiny and make a notation in their home discipleship journal. Take five minutes to jot down these attitudes, then discuss what the Bible says about the destiny of those who trust Christ for salvation.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss the portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about a Christian's destiny? Discuss this as a family.

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### Application

The sermon review revealed areas of man's destiny in Christ and reconciled to a right relationship with God. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### Family Activity

Adam and Eve sinned against God in the garden (Gen 3). Their fate was based on their decisions, not a predetermined plan. This should be obvious as the initial creation was perfect, and Adam and Eve had a right relationship with God. But God did not leave the fate of humanity to fatalism; He provided a way, which is Jesus, and it is our choice to trust Him with our destiny.

James 4:2 says, "You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask."

Please take a few pieces of candy and put them before you. Just wait a few moments while the candy sits motionless. Ask your children what their destiny is with the candy. Will the candy be moved by a mysterious force and end up in their hand, or will they never be able to have it, so the presence of the candy is pointless? The best answer is that the candy is there for them, but they must ask for it. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### Journal Entry

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about destiny in your daily life and a reconciled relationship with God. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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**Week Three – Day Four****Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray****Main Scripture** – Matthew 5:24

“leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

**Main Thought – Family of Families**

This discussion of reconciliation now turns to each other. The passage for today is an excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus is talking about severed person-to-person relationships. Another way to view this passage is forgiveness. The secular mindset, being turned inward to the self, says that whatever is wrong is someone else's fault. The Bible teaches followers of Jesus must make the first move when something is wrong or a wrong has been committed. Who do you need to forgive? Discuss this with your family and record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

**Week Three – Day Five**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation... Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”

**Main Thought – The New You!**

This was the Scripture from Day Two. This is an intentional repeat to look at the second part of this verse, Christian reconciliation. This action of reconciliation for believers is two-fold. First, the ministry of reconciliation is telling others about the gospel, about what Jesus has done for you and wants to do for others. The second is being an ambassador of Christ. To be an ambassador is to champion a cause or a person. As believers, we are ambassadors of Jesus, making His gospel known to many people. The secular worldview lives life apart from the truth of the gospel, placing reconciliation within themselves or someone else's responsibility. Are you being an ambassador of Jesus? Discuss this verse with your family and record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

## Adult Handbook

### Week Four – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Destiny to be Conformed into Christ

**Main Scripture** – 2 Corinthians 3:18, NKJV, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Destiny

The Apostle Paul uses the words “we all” to show that all followers of Jesus conform to His likeness, as looking in a mirror, transformed, able to see God and know Him. This conformity allows believers to come to God unveiled and transformed into glory. This transformation grows the believer spiritually, thus becoming more like Christ.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they understand destiny, being transformed into the likeness of Christ (e.g., knowledge of Christ, following the example of Christ, etc.). Each group member should note how they understand this destiny and make a notation in their home discipleship journal. Take five minutes to jot down these attitudes, then discuss what the Bible says about the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about a Christian's transformation? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed areas of man's transformation into the likeness of Christ, knowing Him, and imitating Him. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

God's plan for believers is our destiny to be transformed into the likeness of His Son. This transformation grows the believer spiritually through God's Word, thus knowing more about Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:49 says, "And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."

This family activity is a reflection exercise. With your children, pair up and write down what you know about Jesus (e.g., His attributes, character, emotions, etc.). Reflect on what was written and discuss how these descriptors are demonstrated in your lives. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about the destiny of being conformed into the likeness of Christ. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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## **Week Four – Day Two**

### **Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

#### **Pray**

#### **Main Scripture – 2 Peter 3:18**

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”

#### **Main Thought – Spiritual Birth**

This doxology encourages believers to continue to grow in the knowledge of Jesus. A doxology is a praise to the Lord and is often used to end correspondence, in this case, a letter. The Apostle Peter is calling believers to grow in the knowledge of Christ. This knowledge is not a one-time acquisition. The believer's life is dedicated to transformation into the likeness of Christ. This means believers never stop growing and knowing more about Him. Knowing Jesus is following Him, being His disciple, taking His yoke, and learning from Him (Matt 11:29). Discuss this with your family and write down your reflections. Take a few moments to write down how you follow Jesus and learn from Him (e.g., Jesus’ actions, emotions, relationships, etc.). If you lack in following Jesus, what must be done to obey Him in discipleship?

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#### **Closing Prayer**

**Week Four – Day Three****Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray****Main Scripture** – Romans 12:2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

**Main Thought – Resistance**

This verse is a direct command to resist the secular worldview. The secular worldview demands a life apart from God. Resisting secularism is not enough; the believer must transform by thinking differently. This is biblical thinking, a biblical worldview. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul teaches the believer to look up and seek heavenly things (Col 3:1). Last week, it was learned that becoming a disciple of Christ means to learn from Him. We look to heaven for the knowledge God has revealed in Christ and His Word. Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” These are heavenly things, things that reveal the perfect will of God. Take a few moments to reflect on the things you think about. Are they heavenly or worldly? Record your thoughts.

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**Closing Prayer**

**Week Four – Day Four**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Philippians 1:6

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

**Main Thought – Family of Families**

This passage demonstrates several vital truths for the believer. First is the confidence of the believer. Second, God is the initiator and sustainer of the work in the believer. Lastly, this work is a lifelong plan for the believer. A follower of Christ should have confidence that they will grow spiritually. This confidence is not without effort from the believer; the believer must discipline themselves to be a learner (1 Tim 4:7). God is the promise keeper (Ps 145:13) and will continue His work in the believer's life. Lastly, the believer should be patient and work diligently following Jesus, growing in the knowledge of Him, and seeking the heavenly things.

Discipleship is a lifelong endeavor. Do a spiritual growth situation report with your family. How has your life changed with Jesus? Discuss this with your family and record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

**Week Four – Day Five**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – John 3:30

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

**Main Thought – The New You!**

This simple verse resonates loudly in Scripture. It is a specific statement from a prominent figure in the Gospels, John the Baptist, about his relationality to Jesus. John the Baptizer was the herald for Jesus (John 1:23). This herald was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah (Isa 40:3-5). John knew he was to take a lesser role to Jesus. This is what each believer should do as well. The secular worldview says that the individual is king and should be first, appealing to what makes the individual happy and fulfilled. This always ends poorly, as there are never enough worldly things to give complete happiness. Jesus comes first in the life of the believer (Luke 14:25-33); He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). Are you placing Jesus first in your life? Discuss this verse with your family and record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**



## Adult Handbook

### Week Five – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Purpose Part One, Serving God

**Main Scripture** – Joshua 24:15, NKJV, “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Purpose Part One

Humanity's true purpose is to worship and serve God, the one true God. God said there is no other god, just Him (Isa 45:6). The secular mindset says each person is a god unto themselves. This results in failure, regret, despair, and hopelessness. God is true, a promise keeper, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good. Hence, He deserves our worship and service, which is our purpose. Joshua knew this and decided that his family would serve God. Serving God is placing Him first in our lives. The first four Commandments make this requirement (Exod 20:1-8).

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they worship and serve God. Review the first four Commandments in Exodus 20:1-8: 1) you will have no other god but Him, 2) you shall not make an idol, 3) do not take God’s name in vain, 4) keep the Sabbath holy (Exod 20:1-8). Each group member should note how they worship and serve God. Take five minutes to jot down these reflections, then discuss what God requires of those who follow Him.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that spoke about worship and serving God? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed how followers of God should worship and serve Him. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

Before you started this study, how often did you read Scripture? How would you categorize God's position in your life? Take a pen and paper with your children and write out a timeline of your day. Start when you get up and note everything you do in an ordinary day (e.g., getting ready, eating meals, driving to work, work, school, watching TV, time on social media, etc.). Add up the total amount of time you spend doing necessary things. How much time remains, and what do you do with this time? Could time be better spent with God in His Word and prayer?

This family activity is a reflection exercise. With your children, discuss what was discovered and how this time can be better spent in worship and service to God. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about putting God first in your lives with worship and service. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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**Week Five – Day Two**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Matthew 22:37-38

“And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ <sup>38</sup> ‘This is the great and foremost commandment.’”

**Main Thought – Loving God the Most**

Jesus declared this to the Pharisees when they asked Him which of the Commandments was the greatest. Jesus stated that loving God with all you are is the first step. This statement of Jesus harkens back to the Shema, Deuteronomy 6:3-5. Jesus is saying to worship and serve God first. Jesus is God in the flesh (John 1:1-14), and also said that if we love Him, obey Him (John 14:14). Take a few moments to write down how you obey Jesus through worship and service. If you lack obedience, what must be done to correct this?

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**Closing Prayer**



## Week Five – Day Four

### Daily Scripture Reading

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

#### **Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Colossians 3:23

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

#### **Main Thought – Serve God, Not Man**

This short verse speaks loudly about the human condition and secular thought and what life should be for the believer in Jesus. When a man is the center of the universe, and all things are there for his pleasure, that person is working or doing for man. Scripture clearly states that all things should be done for the Lord and not for man. How is this done to honor the Lord?

Working for God requires humility, action without platitudes, and demonstrating The Lord’s glory through us in what we do. Discuss with your family work without recognition; that means doing something in service, not for gratitude. What does this look like in your lives? Discuss this with your family and record your reflections.

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#### **Closing Prayer**

**Week Five – Day Five**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – 1 Peter 2:9

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

**Main Thought – Be a Light**

This verse from 1 Peter encourages the believer to be a light to others. This is accomplished through worship and service to God through the work done in this life to glorify Him. When others see God’s glory through believers, the path from darkness to light is magnified and glorifies God. This is the fear of the Lord that others can see through God’s great gift to humanity in Jesus. Discuss this with your family. How can they show this marvelous light of God through their worship and service? Record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

## Adult Handbook

### Week Six – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Purpose Part Two, Serving Others

**Main Scripture** –Matthew 22:37-40, NKJV, “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment.<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Purpose Part Two, Serving Others

The emphasis this week is on serving others as believers serve God. The verse from last week has been included for the continuity of Jesus’ message. The focus of the passage is serving others. Jesus is the perfect model of serving others, selfless service through selfless love. The secular worldview pushes individuals to love themselves above others. The love of self that Jesus is speaking about is not self-love but high regard for love as you would want to be loved. Being loved this way is not self-seeking but the proper love the believer should have and show others. The remaining six Commandments exemplify this love for others (Exod 20:12-17).

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they worship and serve God. Review the last six Commandments in Exodus 20:12-17: 1) honor your parents, 2) do not murder, 3) do not commit adultery, 4) do not steal, 5) do not lie, 6) and do not covet the things of others (Exod 20:12-17). Take five minutes to jot down reflections from these Commandments, then discuss what God requires of those who follow Him.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that spoke about serving others? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed how followers of God should serve others. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

Service is a hallmark of followers of Christ. Discuss serving others with your family. What service do you engage with for other people? Followers of Jesus do not serve for credit, payment, or gratitude. What service do you do with selfless love for others? With your family's input, plan a service project for a neighbor, a fellow church member, or the church building (e.g., cutting grass, picking up trash, cleaning, etc.). Do this for no reason other than selfless love for others in obedience to Christ.

This family activity is an action of service. Write down the proposed plan and how that plan ended after the service was completed. Record your reflections about this serving project.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about putting God first in your lives with worship and service. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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**Week Six – Day Two****Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray****Main Scripture – 1 Peter 4:10**

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

**Main Thought – Sharing God’s Gifts**

This verse in 1 Peter directs believers to use their God-given gifts to serve one another. The act of service witnesses the freedom believers have been given through a saving relationship with Jesus. The ministry of service can also be evangelistic; a non-believer may be drawn to your selfless, loving service and God’s grace. These are opportunities to encourage other believers and to share your faith with unbelievers. Take a few moments to write down the gifts you have and how they can be used in service to glorify the Lord.

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**Closing Prayer**

**Week Six – Day Three**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Galatians 6:10

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

**Main Thought – Time is Short**

Verses 1-9 in Galatians 6 speak of sharing the burdens of others, helping when help is needed, and living a life doing good for others rather than evil. Verse ten above talks about a fleeting opportunity and taking this time available to do for all people, especially those who share our faith in Christ. Time is short, and no one is promised tomorrow (Prov 27:1). Take advantage of the time God gives and serve others. Record your thoughts.

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**Closing Prayer**



**Week Six – Day Five**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture – Romans 12:10**

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

**Main Thought – Be a Light**

This excursion through Scripture shows the true nature of following Jesus. Jesus loves without regard for Himself, His love is sacrificial. Too often, individuals are not affectionate as Scripture dictates. This affection is not romantic but in love for one another. It is kindness towards each other and builds fellowship. This is service and worship to God. Discuss this with your family. Have you ever been hateful to one another or not as kind as you should be? What must you do to invoke this kindness to each other? Ask the Holy Spirit to change your heart to kindness and devotion to others in fellowship. Record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

## Adult Handbook

### Week Seven – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Morality

**Main Scripture** –2 Peter 1:5-8, NKJV, “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, <sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, <sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – How Should I Live?

The emphasis this week is living morally, a life pleasing to God. This week's main verse is a call to moral living. The Apostle Peter gives a sequence of living that begins with adding morality to faith. The word “virtue,” translated from the original Greek, can also mean goodness or morality. The word virtue is an ethical term to understand moral practices. The secular worldview ascribes morality by social conduct or what society tolerates as moral or right action. This leaves subjectivity as the guide to moral living. God’s moral character is absolute; we can know what moral behavior is from this. Peter declares that followers of Christ live a moral life, a life pleasing to God. There are eight components to Peter’s exhortation, each leading to spiritual maturity and virtuous living.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your family. Ask them how they live with these virtues. This is a morality inventory necessary for spiritual maturity and the measure of living a life pleasing to God. Take five minutes to jot down reflections from these Commandments, then discuss what God requires of those who follow Him.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message about moral living? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed how followers of God should live morally. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

Living morally is a hallmark of the Christian life. The Apostle Peter stressed that followers of Christ strive for this life. With your family, get a jar, an empty jelly jar, or another jar you can place pieces of paper into. Create a label for the jar that says, “How should I live?” and put the note in the jar for every act of moral living each family member does through week seven. Use the eight steps outlined in the Main Scripture above to determine the recorded virtues. At the end of the week, remove the pieces of paper from the jar and see how each family member lived morally through the week. Record your responses.

This family activity is action research to determine a problem and a solution. Put the jar in a prominent place for visibility and put a pen and paper next to it for easy access. Write your thoughts about this activity below and the results at the end of the week.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about living a moral life pleasing to the Lord. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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## Adult Handbook

### Week Eight – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Living a Moral Life Pleasing to God

**Main Scripture** – Colossians 2:6-7, NKJV, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – How Should I Live?

This last week's instruction will frame the responsibility of the Christian to live a life pleasing to God. The passage above details the foundation of living a life pleasing to God: having received Christ, He is our foundation. A building, house, or any structure must have a solid foundation, or it will not stand. The believer is attached to Christ and raised in Him, and individuals are thankful through faith established in Jesus. Matthew 7:24-29 speaks about two foundations. One foundation is the rock, the other sand (Matt 7:24,26). The sand washed away when calamity came, but the rock held firm (Matt 7:24-29). Salvation is firm in Christ, like the house on the rock. Believers are built upon this foundation to live a moral life pleasing to God.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your family. Talk with them about a foundation that lasts. Compare this to your house or where you live. What would happen if this structure were compromised or fell into disrepair? Take five minutes to jot down your reflections.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday's sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message about your foundation in Jesus? Discuss this as a family.

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**Application**

The sermon review revealed how followers of God have a firm foundation. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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**Family Activity**

This week’s family activity is a building project. You can use cards, popsicle sticks, twigs, or any material on hand to make a structure. Use the items to build a structure and see what you must do with the foundation to strengthen your structure. What happens if the structure that was made has a weak foundation? Record your results.

This family activity is a fun, interactive way to view the benefit of a strong foundation. Write your thoughts about this activity below and the results of your building projects.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

**Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about the believer's foundation in the Lord. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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**Week Eight – Day Three**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Colossians 3:1-2

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

**Main Thought – Look Up**

The believer has been raised with Christ, a shared resurrection (Rom 6:5-6). This means that Christ lives through the believer, and the believer then lives a life of faith in Christ (Gal 2:20). The passage in Colossians tells the believer to remember this Christ-lived life and seek the things of Heaven, not the things of this world. The first builds, and the second destroys. Discuss with your family. What does it mean to you to look to the heavenly things? Record your thoughts.

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**Closing Prayer**

## Week Eight – Day Four

### Daily Scripture Reading

The daily Scripture reading is intended to be a portion of the day you spend with your family, reading and meditating on God’s Word. Seek to understand what God is saying and look for ways to apply it to your daily life.

#### Pray

**Main Scripture** – 2 Corinthians 10:5

“casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

#### Main Thought – What Would Jesus Do?

Several decades past, a popular Christian saying was, “What would Jesus do?” The verse above speaks to this in some ways. Scripture tells the believer that war is at hand. It is not a conventional war with physical weapons but a spiritual war (Eph 6:12). It is fought on spiritual grounds but with ramifications in the physical world. As discussed last week, looking up means lifting every thought to Christ. What did He do in His earthly ministry to combat this spiritual warfare? How should the believer act, emulating Christ and being obedient to Him? The world is hostile to God and, as a follower of Christ, hostile to you. This makes living a life pleasing to God difficult at times. Christ defeated the world so the followers of Jesus can have peace (John 16:33). What does this look like in your lives? Discuss this with your family and record your reflections.

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#### Closing Prayer





APPENDIX K  
STUDENT HANDBOOK

**Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions**

**Student Handbook**

**Week One – Day One**

**Weekly Topic - Identity**

**Main Scripture** - Genesis 1:26-27, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

**Family Prayer**

**Main Thought – Our Identity from the Image of God**

Identity is a core component of humanity. Our identity is a bridge to relationships; it is a key to being a companion and seeking companionship. Our identity as image bearers of God has two axes: vertical and horizontal. The vertical axis is the believer’s identity in Christ; the horizontal axis is person-to-person relationality. The vertical sets the precedence and success for the horizontal. Therefore, when individuals are unsure of who they are, they struggle to relate to others. This positively connects identity with relationships. Knowing who we are is critical to developing a biblical worldview.

**Family Discussion**

How many identity attributes can you spot in today’s main Scripture (e.g., authority, value, intelligence, feelings, etc.)? Please take five minutes to jot down these attributes, then discuss which are present in each of you.

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**Sermon Review**

Participate with your family in reviewing this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss the portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about identity? Record your reflections.

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### Application

The sermon review revealed areas of individual identity and relational aspects of our identity to other people. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives.

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### Family Activity

We are formed in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Like a potter and clay, God formed us into something special.

Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.”

All people are made in God’s image. Take a few minutes and write down common characteristics all people have. These can be physical characteristics and mental attributes that make humanity special and unique in contrast to every other thing that exists (e.g., eyes, mouth, arms, legs, thought, speech, compassion, and reason). Even among these similarities, how do people differ?

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**Pray** – Ask God to clarify your identity, an identity formed in the image of God. Ask for courage to embrace this identity in God and to share this with others.

### Journal Entry

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed with your family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about identity in your daily life. This is a time to record any questions and difficulties encountered during family worship.

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## Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions

### Student Handbook

#### Week Two – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Identity in Christ

**Main Scripture** – 1 John 3:1, NKJV, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

#### Family Prayer

#### Main Thought – Our Identity in Christ

A biblical worldview requires a definitive answer to identity. Those who have placed their faith in Christ are called the children of God. All people are image-bearers, but only those with a saving relationship with Jesus are God’s children. The main verse explains that the world does not know God; therefore, they do not know you. But you try to emulate the world by copying their appearance and actions. Show your identity in Christ so the world will have an opportunity to see Him in you.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they emulate the world (e.g., clothing, makeup, hairstyle, music, etc.). Each group member should note how they copy what they see in society and make a notation in their home discipleship journal. Take five minutes to jot down these attitudes, then discuss which ones disagree with the Bible and being a child of God.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss the portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about our identity in Christ or where the world would not know us as children of God or known God? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed areas of our identity in Christ and how the world works to mold us into the secular image because they do not know God or the followers of Jesus. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

As image bearers and children of God (Gen 1:26; John 1:12-13), we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ. The world does not know God; therefore, they do not know the followers of Jesus (1 John 3:1).

2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Take a mirror and have every member of the group look at their reflection. Write down what they see. Is it a godly image or the image of someone trying to blend into culture? If you do not have a mirror, pair up your family by twos. Have each person take a turn describing what they see in the other person. The idea here is to look for ways that appearance affects how people see followers of Jesus or if what is observed speaks more to society. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to clarify yourself and your family about their identity in Christ. Ask for courage to embrace this identity in Christ and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about being a child of God in your daily life. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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## Student Handbook

### Week Three – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Destiny

**Main Scripture** – Romans 5:10-11, NKJV, “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup> And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Destiny

The secular worldview sees destiny as something controlled by something else, a mystical force or fate determined to end the way it did. This does not align with Scripture. Humans were created with free will and can choose one path over another. This does not mean man is the captain of his destiny, but he can choose God or not choose God. Placing your trust in Jesus for salvation is choosing the path God has created for you; that path is a restored relationship, reconciled to God, and spending eternity with Him.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they understand destiny (e.g., fate, karma, reconciliation with God, etc.). Each group member should note how they understand destiny and make a notation in their home discipleship journal. Take five minutes to jot down these attitudes, then discuss what the Bible says about the destiny of those who trust Christ for salvation.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss the portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about a Christian's destiny? Discuss this as a family.

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### Application

The sermon review revealed areas of man's destiny in Christ and reconciled to a right relationship with God. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### Family Activity

Adam and Eve sinned against God in the garden (Gen 3). Their fate was based on their decisions, not a predetermined plan. This should be obvious as the initial creation was perfect, and Adam and Eve had a right relationship with God. But God did not leave the fate of humanity to fatalism; He provided a way, which is Jesus, and it is our choice to trust Him with our destiny.

James 4:2 says, "You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask."

Please take a few pieces of candy and put them before you. Just wait a few moments while the candy sits motionless. Ask your children what their destiny is with the candy. Will the candy be moved by a mysterious force and end up in their hand, or will they never be able to have it, so the presence of the candy is pointless? The best answer is that the candy is there for them, but they must ask for it. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### Journal Entry

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about destiny in your daily life and a reconciled relationship with God. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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**Week Three – Day Three**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Colossians 1:20

“and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

**Main Thought – Peace**

The verse describes Jesus’ action on the cross for us, reconciling us to God. The verse also explains another aspect of reconciliation: peace. This peace is not of this world; it is a godly peace. Jesus said He gives this peace and not to be afraid (John 14:27). A secular worldview does not generate true peace. Peace in the secular mind is happiness achieved through material goods, high-paying jobs, or psychotherapy. This peace only lasts as long as the item or emotion provides, which is not long. Jesus gives an unending peace, reconciling believers in Jesus to God the Father. With what you have learned so far, think of things that bring happiness and the temporary nature of this happiness and compare them to Jesus’ peace. Discuss this with your family and record your reflections below.

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**Closing Prayer**



**Week Three – Day Four****Daily Scripture Reading****Pray****Main Scripture** – Matthew 5:24

“leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

**Main Thought – Family of Families**

This discussion of reconciliation now turns to each other. The passage for today is an excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus is talking about severed person-to-person relationships. Another way to view this passage is forgiveness. The secular mindset, being turned inward to the self, says that whatever is wrong is someone else's fault. The Bible teaches followers of Jesus must make the first move when something is wrong or a wrong has been committed. Who do you need to forgive? Discuss this with your family and record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

**Week Three – Day Five**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

**Pray**

**Main Scripture – 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20**

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation... Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”

**Main Thought – The New You!**

This was the Scripture from Day Two. This is an intentional repeat to look at the second part of this verse, Christian reconciliation. This action of reconciliation for believers is two-fold. First, the ministry of reconciliation is telling others about the gospel, about what Jesus has done for you and wants to do for others. The second is being an ambassador of Christ. To be an ambassador is to champion a cause or a person. As believers, we are ambassadors of Jesus, making His gospel known to many people. The secular worldview lives life apart from the truth of the gospel, placing reconciliation within themselves or someone else's responsibility. Are you being an ambassador of Jesus? Discuss this verse with your family and record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

## Student Handbook

### Week Four – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Destiny to be Conformed into Christ

**Main Scripture** – 2 Corinthians 3:18, NKJV, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Destiny

The Apostle Paul uses the words “we all” to show that all followers of Jesus conform to His likeness, as looking in a mirror, transformed, able to see God and know Him. This conformity allows believers to come to God unveiled and transformed into glory. This transformation grows the believer spiritually, thus becoming more like Christ.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they understand destiny, being transformed into the likeness of Christ (e.g., knowledge of Christ, following the example of Christ, etc.). Each group member should note how they understand this destiny and make a notation in their home discipleship journal. Take five minutes to jot down these attitudes, then discuss what the Bible says about the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that answered the question about a Christian's transformation? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed areas of man's transformation into the likeness of Christ, knowing Him, and imitating Him. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

God's plan for believers is our destiny to be transformed into the likeness of His Son. This transformation grows the believer spiritually through God's Word, thus knowing more about Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:49 says, "And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."

This family activity is a reflection exercise. With your children, pair up and write down what you know about Jesus (e.g., His attributes, character, emotions, etc.). Reflect on what was written and discuss how these descriptors are demonstrated in your lives. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and the conclusion you came to by applying what was learned about the destiny of being conformed into the likeness of Christ. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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**Week Four – Day Two**  
**Daily Scripture Reading**

**Pray****Main Scripture** – 2 Peter 3:18

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”

**Main Thought – Spiritual Birth**

This doxology encourages believers to continue to grow in the knowledge of Jesus. A doxology is a praise to the Lord and is often used to end correspondence, in this case, a letter. The Apostle Peter is calling believers to grow in the knowledge of Christ. This knowledge is not a one-time acquisition. The believer's life is dedicated to transformation into the likeness of Christ. This means believers never stop growing and knowing more about Him. Knowing Jesus is following Him, being His disciple, taking His yoke, and learning from Him (Matt 11:29). Discuss this with your family and write down your reflections. Take a few moments to write down how you follow Jesus and learn from Him (e.g., Jesus' actions, emotions, relationships, etc.). If you lack in following Jesus, what must be done to obey Him in discipleship?

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**Closing Prayer**

**Week Four – Day Three**

**Daily Scripture Reading**

**Pray**

**Main Scripture – Romans 12:2**

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

**Main Thought – Resistance**

This verse is a direct command to resist the secular worldview. The secular worldview demands a life apart from God. Resisting secularism is not enough; the believer must transform by thinking differently. This is biblical thinking, a biblical worldview. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul teaches the believer to look up and seek heavenly things (Col 3:1). Last week, it was learned that becoming a disciple of Christ means to learn from Him. We look to heaven for the knowledge God has revealed in Christ and His Word. Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” These are heavenly things, things that reveal the perfect will of God. Take a few moments to reflect on the things you think about. Are they heavenly or worldly? Record your thoughts.

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**Closing Prayer**

**Week Four – Day Four**  
**Daily Scripture Reading**

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – Philippians 1:6

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

**Main Thought – Family of Families**

This passage demonstrates several vital truths for the believer. First is the confidence of the believer. Second, God is the initiator and sustainer of the work in the believer. Lastly, this work is a lifelong plan for the believer. A follower of Christ should have confidence that they will grow spiritually. This confidence is not without effort from the believer; the believer must discipline themselves to be a learner (1 Tim 4:7). God is the promise keeper (Ps 145:13) and will continue His work in the believer's life. Lastly, the believer should be patient and work diligently following Jesus, growing in the knowledge of Him, and seeking the heavenly things.

Discipleship is a lifelong endeavor. Do a spiritual growth situation report with your family. How has your life changed with Jesus? Discuss this with your family and record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**





## Student Handbook

### Week Five – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Purpose Part One, Serving God

**Main Scripture** – Joshua 24:15, NKJV, “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Purpose Part One

Humanity's true purpose is to worship and serve God, the one true God. God said there is no other god, just Him (Isa 45:6). The secular mindset says each person is a god unto themselves. This results in failure, regret, despair, and hopelessness. God is true, a promise keeper, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good. Hence, He deserves our worship and service, which is our purpose. Joshua knew this and decided that his family would serve God. Serving God is placing Him first in our lives. The first four Commandments make this requirement (Exod 20:1-8).

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they worship and serve God. Review the first four Commandments in Exodus 20:1-8: 1) you will have no other god but Him, 2) you shall not make an idol, 3) do not take God’s name in vain, 4) keep the Sabbath holy (Exod 20:1-8). Each group member should note how they worship and serve God. Take five minutes to jot down these reflections, then discuss what God requires of those who follow Him.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that spoke about worship and serving God? Discuss this as a family.

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### Application

The sermon review revealed how followers of God should worship and serve Him. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### Family Activity

Before you started this study, how often did you read Scripture? How would you categorize God's position in your life? Take a pen and paper with your children and write out a timeline of your day. Start when you get up and note everything you do in an ordinary day (e.g., getting ready, eating meals, driving to work, work, school, watching TV, time on social media, etc.). Add up the total amount of time you spend doing necessary things. How much time remains, and what do you do with this time? Could time be better spent with God in His Word and prayer?

This family activity is a reflection exercise. With your children, discuss what was discovered and how this time can be better spent in worship and service to God. Write down what is observed.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### Journal Entry

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about putting God first in your lives with worship and service. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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**Week Five – Day Five**  
**Daily Scripture Reading**

**Pray**

**Main Scripture** – 1 Peter 2:9

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

**Main Thought – Be a Light**

This verse from 1 Peter encourages the believer to be a light to others. This is accomplished through worship and service to God through the work done in this life to glorify Him. When others see God’s glory through believers, the path from darkness to light is magnified and glorifies God. This is the fear of the Lord that others can see through God’s great gift to humanity in Jesus. Discuss this with your family. How can they show this marvelous light of God through their worship and service? Record your reflections.

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**Closing Prayer**

## Student Handbook

### Week Six – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Purpose Part Two, Serving Others

**Main Scripture** –Matthew 22:37-40, NKJV, “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment.<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – Purpose Part Two, Serving Others

The emphasis this week is on serving others as believers serve God. The verse from last week has been included for the continuity of Jesus’ message. The focus of the passage is serving others. Jesus is the perfect model of serving others, selfless service through selfless love. The secular worldview pushes individuals to love themselves above others. The love of self that Jesus is speaking about is not self-love but high regard for love as you would want to be loved. Being loved this way is not self-seeking but the proper love the believer should have and show others. The remaining six Commandments exemplify this love for others (Exod 20:12-17).

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your children. Ask your children how they worship and serve God. Review the last six Commandments in Exodus 20:12-17: 1) honor your parents, 2) do not murder, 3) do not commit adultery, 4) do not steal, 5) do not lie, 6) and do not covet the things of others (Exod 20:12-17). Take five minutes to jot down reflections from these Commandments, then discuss what God requires of those who follow Him.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message that spoke about serving others? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed how followers of God should serve others. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

Service is a hallmark of followers of Christ. Discuss serving others with your family. What service do you engage with for other people? Followers of Jesus do not serve for credit, payment, or gratitude. What service do you do with selfless love for others? With your family's input, plan a service project for a neighbor, a fellow church member, or the church building (e.g., cutting grass, picking up trash, cleaning, etc.). Do this for no reason other than selfless love for others in obedience to Christ.

This family activity is an action of service. Write down the proposed plan and how that plan ended after the service was completed. Record your reflections about this serving project.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about putting God first in your lives with worship and service. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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## Student Handbook

### Week Seven – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Morality

**Main Scripture** –2 Peter 1:5-8, NKJV, “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, <sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, <sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – How Should I Live?

The emphasis this week is living morally, a life pleasing to God. This week's main verse is a call to moral living. The Apostle Peter gives a sequence of living that begins with adding morality to faith. The word “virtue,” translated from the original Greek, can also mean goodness or morality. The word virtue is an ethical term to understand moral practices. The secular worldview ascribes morality by social conduct or what society tolerates as moral or right action. This leaves subjectivity as the guide to moral living. God’s moral character is absolute; we can know what moral behavior is from this. Peter declares that followers of Christ live a moral life, a life pleasing to God. There are eight components to Peter’s exhortation, each leading to spiritual maturity and virtuous living.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your family. Ask them how they live with these virtues. This is a morality inventory necessary for spiritual maturity and the measure of living a life pleasing to God. Take five minutes to jot down reflections from these Commandments, then discuss what God requires of those who follow Him.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday’s sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message about moral living? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed how followers of God should live morally. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

Living morally is a hallmark of the Christian life. The Apostle Peter stressed that followers of Christ strive for this life. With your family, get a jar, an empty jelly jar, or another jar you can place pieces of paper into. Create a label for the jar that says, “How should I live?” and put the note in the jar for every act of moral living each family member does through week seven. Use the eight steps outlined in the Main Scripture above to determine the recorded virtues. At the end of the week, remove the pieces of paper from the jar and see how each family member lived morally through the week. Record your responses.

This family activity is action research to determine a problem and a solution. Put the jar in a prominent place for visibility and put a pen and paper next to it for easy access. Write your thoughts about this activity below and the results at the end of the week.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about living a moral life pleasing to the Lord. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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## Student Handbook

### Week Eight – Day One

#### Weekly Topic – Living a Moral Life Pleasing to God

**Main Scripture** – Colossians 2:6-7, NKJV, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

#### Family Prayer

Each family worship session and daily Scripture reading should begin and end in prayer. Ask God to bless your time and give you the wisdom to understand His Word (Jas 1:5-6).

#### Main Thought – How Should I Live?

This last week's instruction will frame the responsibility of the Christian to live a life pleasing to God. The passage above details the foundation of living a life pleasing to God: having received Christ, He is our foundation. A building, house, or any structure must have a solid foundation, or it will not stand. The believer is attached to Christ and raised in Him, and individuals are thankful through faith established in Jesus. Matthew 7:24-29 speaks about two foundations. One foundation is the rock, the other sand (Matt 7:24,26). The sand washed away when calamity came, but the rock held firm (Matt 7:24-29). Salvation is firm in Christ, like the house on the rock. Believers are built upon this foundation to live a moral life pleasing to God.

#### Family Discussion

Read the Main Scripture passage for this week with your family. Talk with them about a foundation that lasts. Compare this to your house or where you live. What would happen if this structure were compromised or fell into disrepair? Take five minutes to jot down your reflections.

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#### Sermon Review

As a family, review this past Sunday's sermon. Discuss a portion of the sermon that stood out to you. What did you hear and read in the Scripture from that message about your foundation in Jesus? Discuss this as a family.

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### **Application**

The sermon review revealed how followers of God have a firm foundation. Discuss how we can apply this understanding to our daily lives as a family.

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### **Family Activity**

This week's family activity is a building project. You can use cards, popsicle sticks, twigs, or any material on hand to make a structure. Use the items to build a structure and see what you must do with the foundation to strengthen your structure. What happens if the structure that was made has a weak foundation? Record your results.

This family activity is a fun, interactive way to view the benefit of a strong foundation. Write your thoughts about this activity below and the results of your building projects.

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**Pray** – take a few moments to close your family worship. Ask God to strengthen you and your relationship with Him. Ask for courage to demonstrate this relationship with God and to share this with others.

### **Journal Entry**

Take a few moments and make a journal entry noting what you discussed as a family and your conclusion by applying what was learned about the believer's foundation in the Lord. This is a time to record successes from your family worship time, any questions, and any difficulties encountered during your family worship time.

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APPENDIX L  
PARTICIPANT EVALUATION



## APPENDIX M

## Intervention Critique

Take a few moments to write down your thoughts on four key areas of this intervention.

The areas are the good, the bad, and the ugly. Additionally, please briefly write down any positive elements that you learned that assisted you in developing a biblical worldview, strengthened your family, and how you have personally grown spiritually. Give one paragraph for each response.

## 1. The Good?

## 2. The Bad?

3. The Ugly?

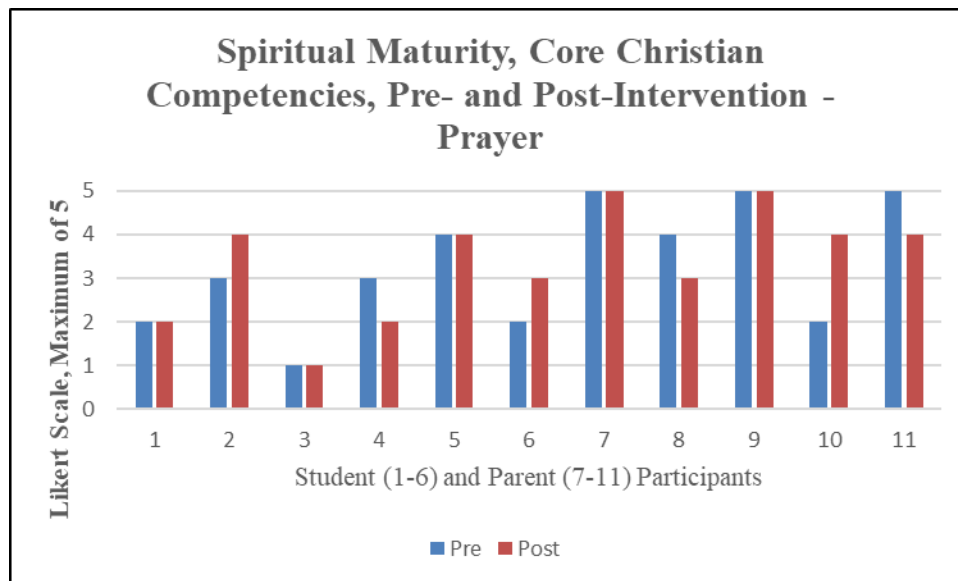


4. What positive elements assisted you in developing a biblical worldview, strengthening your family, and spiritual growth?



## APPENDIX N

## SAMPLE DATA CHART FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH



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## APPENDIX O

## IRB APPROVAL LETTER

November 28, 2023

Eric McCrickard  
Robert Greer

Re: Modification - IRB-FY23-24-795 Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions

Dear Eric McCrickard, Robert Greer,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has rendered the decision below for IRB-FY23-24-795 Family Discipleship: Forming a Biblical Worldview for Godly Decisions.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Your request to add questions to the questionnaire and survey and to add participants from your local area has been approved. For a PDF of your modification letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Modification under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. If your modification required you to submit revised documents, they can be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Thank you for complying with the IRB's requirements for making changes to your study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We wish you well as you continue with your research.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP  
Administrative Chair  
Research Ethics Office