

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DEVELOPING A MEASURING INSTRUMENT
TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF DISCIPLESHIP COMMITMENT
ATTAINED BY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A MEASURING INSTRUMENT TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF DISCIPLESHIP COMMITMENT ATTAINED BY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS

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The writer's personal experience, consultations with clergy and laity, and a review of current literature reveal a lack of genuine discipleship in the modern church. The purpose of the project is to develop a usable Biblical model of a disciple, and to develop a measuring instrument by which conformity to this model may be determined in the lives of individual Christians. The project details the creation of the model and the instrument, and then documents the field testing of the instrument in various churches and other venues, with resulting evaluation and improvement to the instrument.

Abstract length: 95 words.

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CHAPTER 1

THESIS PROSPECTUS

Introduction

Personal Background and Ministry Setting

The author serves as the pastor of Summit Point Baptist Church, of Summit Point, West Virginia, and has done so for seven years as of August, 2003. His background is Southern Baptist, raised in a Christian home, and called to the ministry in high school. After seminary he served as a minister of education in Richmond, Virginia for some two and a half years before coming to Summit Point. This is his first pastorate.

Summit Point is a small village located in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia, about 60 miles northwest of Washington, D.C. It is in a formerly (and still largely) rural area that is fast becoming a bedroom community for the Washington-Baltimore metroplex. The church itself is small, almost tiny by metropolitan standards, but viable for this area. At this writing it numbers fewer than fifty adults in regular attendance. Fewer than thirty-five adults are fairly active in the life of the church, in the pastor's estimation. It has been established for over one hundred years, and is still largely a "family church." Much of the membership is related through blood or marriage, although that is beginning to change with the influx of "outsiders."

Rationale for the Project

Summit Point Baptist Church may be considered an excellent congregation in many respects. It is the writer's personal observation, developed through six years of

pastoral ministry here, that they have a desire for growth and community relevance, several members engaged in outreach and ministry, and a number of dedicated and godly individuals who give indication of trying to live a Christian life, as they perceive it. There are personality frictions, as there are in any human institution, but there is no great conflict in evidence.

The difficulty facing Summit Point is that, despite good intentions and sincere desires, it is not appreciably impacting the community with the gospel. There is little or no Christian conversion evidenced in recent years due to the efforts of the church. This seems intolerable to the pastor and to the church. There is a desire to be more than a self-serving institution. Although some in the church are perhaps too comfortable and unmotivated to make a real effort, there is nevertheless a hunger to make a difference for Christ in the world.

It could be argued, with some justification, that the church is in the midst of a resistant population.¹ There are several reasons for this.² The church has been in the community for a long time, and long-term residents have grown accustomed to its presence and have built up a considerable immunity to it. Furthermore, there is a significant cultural disconnect between old-timers and newcomers, and newer residents find little attractive about a small, older church building housing mainly long-term residents. In addition, many in this area are unchurched, and, with the long weekdays many local commuters have (thirteen hours away from home is not unheard of), it is difficult to get unchurched people to come anywhere near a church on the weekends.

¹ Reference the writer's personal conversations with the Rev. Charles Lumpkin and the Rev. Bill Smith, former Directors of Mission, Shenandoah Baptist Association, of which Summit Point is a member.

² Based on numerous conversations with community residents.

It seems unlikely, however, that as resistant as the population may be, it is totally impervious to the work of the gospel. There are churches in the area that are experiencing growth,³ and there are people moving into the area that are looking for churches. They frequently visit SPBC, although they don't tend to come back, and they certainly don't tend to commit. Furthermore, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit ought to be able to work through a faithful church to bring men, women, and children to a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ, and that doesn't seem to be happening with Summit Point.

The pastor has come to the conclusion that something is missing which causes this lack of God's blessing, and it is suggested that this is discipleship. God blesses obedience and commitment.⁴ Many of the people are busy doing church activities, but they're not engaged in making disciples, partly because they don't really know how, partly because they're not motivated to, but mainly because the congregation is largely composed of individuals who haven't been exposed to real discipleship. They don't know how to be disciples themselves, much less how to make disciples of others.

The pastor bears much of the responsibility here. A great deal is said about the necessity of outreach and evangelism, and a certain amount of pastoral visiting and witnessing is done (although not to any sort of acceptable level), but the pastor has made little headway in "equipping the saints for the work of the ministry." Talking about evangelism and outreach isn't getting the job done. The pastor must be about the

³ Summit Point UMC, Covenant Baptist Church, Shenandoah Bible Church, et. al.

⁴ Elmer Towns, "The Doctrine of Blessability" material in *Spiritual Foundations of Church Growth* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Publishers, 2000), 4.

business of making disciples himself, and leading the church members to become not only disciples, but, that which follows naturally, reproducing disciples, becoming disciple-makers themselves.

The major goal of this project is the formulation of a diagnostic instrument. The writer has experienced little difficulty convincing his church that they ought to do the right thing. The difficulty is demonstrating what the right thing is. It is hoped that being able to clearly and convincingly demonstrate to individual Christians where they fall short in their level of discipleship commitment will be sufficient to motivate them towards a more mature level of commitment.

Statement of the Problem

Mandate of the Church

The basis for this project will be dealt with more fully in section IV, “Theoretical Basis for the Project,” but the Great Commission should be sufficiently familiar to this project’s target audience that it may be introduced here without detailed explanation. The universal church’s mandate was given by the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is recorded by Matthew in his gospel as an utterance to Jesus’ eleven remaining disciples:

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

The definition of a disciple will be given fuller treatment later as well, but it may be simply stated that a disciple as this project uses the term is a fully committed follower

of Jesus Christ.⁵ The writer of the gospel of Matthew uses the word of the eleven men (twelve prior to the loss of Judas) who left everything to follow Jesus, and who would later lay down their lives in His service. A disciple, in the fullest sense of the word is “one who has come to Jesus for eternal life, has claimed Him as Savior and God, and has embarked upon the life of following Him. Discipleship and discipling imply the process of becoming like Jesus Christ,”⁶ and the church was commanded to make disciples.

Nonconformity of Summit Point Baptist Church with the Mandate

In the estimation and evaluation of the pastor, this writer, Summit Point Baptist Church is not a church filled with disciples, nor is it a church that tends to make them, at least not intentionally. This evaluation will be further refined in later stages of the thesis project, but even this casual assessment will no doubt be borne out. This is not meant to imply that there is no interest in holiness or Christian living in the church, but only that it is inconsistent at best. It is also not implied that a fully committed disciple is one who has arrived at Christian perfection, for none achieve perfection this side of heaven.

A fully committed disciple is one who intentionally places the Lord Jesus Christ at the center of his or her life, and who deliberately endeavors to subordinate every other

⁵ Some hold the Great Commission to have a missiological emphasis, rather than an emphasis on personal disciple making. See, for example, Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, MI, 1990), 31-ff. This writer agrees in general with this understanding, but contends that a missionary perspective on the Great Commission is not incompatible with local church disciple making, and, as this writer’s primary field of responsibility and experience is the local church, that will constitute the focus of this particular project.

⁶ Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*. (Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, MI, 1992), 342.

desire, activity, or decision to that relationship.⁷ A disciple is one who consciously works to improve his or her relationship and obedience to Christ. The deep desire for disciple making will and should flow naturally from genuine discipleship, with structure, training, and encouragement provided.

Nonconformity of the Pastor with the Mandate

The pastor, this writer, again in his own estimation, has not acted as a true disciple nor a disciple-maker himself. There are many areas where the pastor falls short in his own walk with Christ, and, while it is not intended to turn this paper into a confessional, it must be mentioned that this writer has been very lax in his responsibilities in disciple-making. Much has been said about being a disciple, but little has been accomplished.

It is the experience and understanding of this writer that many other pastors share similar challenges, and it is hoped that other pastors may benefit from the experiences of this writer in this area. Other churches shall be brought into the process, that the work of discipleship may occur in a larger area than simply one congregation, although this writer's primary focus remains of course on his own local church.

Statement of Limitations

The goal is to be a discipler, a "disciple-making disciple," and to lead other Christians to be the same. Producing fully formed disciple-makers is the work of years, and shall be beyond the scope of what this project can reasonably hope to accomplish. This project will represent beginning steps along the process of becoming disciples.

⁷ This writer's personal definition.

The primary goal of this project shall be evaluative in nature, of which more information shall be given later. It is therefore neither the end goal of this project to produce evangelistic converts, nor to produce disciples, nor to produce reproducing disciples. This project's goal is to produce an instrument by which the quality and level of an individual's discipleship may be assessed. It is the writer's purpose to take this information and use it to help lead his people towards greater discipleship, and it is his hope that other pastors and church leaders may use this instrument to obtain information for this same purpose. The application of this information for the purpose of fostering increased discipleship shall be beyond the goal and scope of this particular project.

Very little, if any, in the way of church statistics or other information shall be included in this project. Attendance, baptisms, giving, and so forth are all possible indicators of church health, but they are not relevant to the scope of this project, except insofar as they impact a particular individual's level of Christian commitment.

The goal of this project is practical rather than theoretical or persuasive. It is not the purpose of this writer in this project to prove by scholarship and reasoning that discipleship is a desirable thing, or to exhort and convince persons that they ought to be growing in discipleship. Therefore, this paper shall largely assume that discipleship is a desirable goal, and, in the practical stages of the project, the target group shall be only composed of interested individuals. It is understood that this will keep the results of the assessment from being purely objective—an individual who is willing to take a discipleship assessment test is already likely to be growing in discipleship, simply because of the desire to do so.

Theoretical Basis for the Project

As referenced earlier, the Great Commission, in which the church is commanded to “make disciples,” shall form the guiding principle for this project. The Greek word *mathetes*, typically translated disciple,⁸ is commonly understood to mean a learner, a pupil, or a follower.⁹ The New Testament refers to disciples of John and of Moses, but the word is most often used of the pupils and followers of Jesus. The term is occasionally used interchangeably with “apostles” (Greek *apostolou*, “sent ones”)¹⁰ to refer to Jesus’ twelve travelling companions, but later it refers to the larger company of believers. The disciples were always qualitatively different than the crowds, who followed Jesus out of fascination with his teachings and miracles. Discipleship appears in the Bible to have involved a certain high level of commitment. Being a disciple is not necessarily equivalent to salvation, nor is it necessarily a perpetual condition—Judas was called a disciple, and John 6:66 relates that many of Jesus’ disciples ceased following Him when His sayings offended them.

It may be easily observed in the book of Acts that in several places “disciple” seems to mean what is meant today by the word “Christian,”¹¹ and too sharp a distinction should therefore not be drawn between the two terms. In current usage of the term, all disciples are Christians, but perhaps it is fair to say that not all Christians are acting like disciples. A greater commitment to following the teachings and commands of Jesus is called for than simply obedience to the call to repent and be saved, although none will argue the primacy of that command.

⁸ From the Latin *discipulus*, “pupil.”

⁹ Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), 386.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68

¹¹ Acts 1:15, 6:7, 11:26, and others

It is frequently bemoaned by pastors and is a common criticism of mass evangelistic efforts that we have too many “Christians” who seem to have little interest or aptitude concerning living a Christ-like life.¹² In Summit Point Baptist Church there are numerous individuals on the membership rolls, who have made a profession of saving faith and have been baptized, who do not attend church even once in a while, and there are other attendees whose Christianity seems to make very little difference in how they live their lives. A clear call to a greater commitment is unquestionably needed.

Christ’s command, however, was not to *be* disciples, but to *make* them. The commitment of His followers to obedience was assumed.¹³ The ultimate goal of the pastor is to train and motivate disciple-makers, and yet the members of the church have to become disciples first. There is nothing attractive or compelling about a Christianity that looks exactly like the world. It is not necessary to arrive at perfect discipleship to begin leading others to be disciples, but Christians need to be a little further along the track than those they seek to reach.

Theologically, discipleship is enabled by the indwelling Comforter, God the Holy Spirit, Who lives in the hearts of Christians and enables them to know and do the will of God. It is the Spirit Who leads in prayer, worship, study, and obedience.¹⁴ In theory, discipleship may be achieved by as simple an action as continually following the leading of the Holy Spirit, Jesus reigning on the throne of our hearts. In practice, because free

¹² See, for example, D. Elton Trueblood, “A Time for Holy Dissatisfaction,” *Leadership Journal* (Winter 1983), 19., and Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 40.

¹³ See John 15:14.

¹⁴ John MacArthur, *The Keys to Spiritual Growth*, (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 1991) 75-87.

will is involved in every instant of life, there must be a continual deciding to either follow Christ or follow self, and, all too often, even the most dedicated choose to follow their own way and to sin against God.¹⁵ Sin not only becomes habitual when harbored and nurtured, but also deafens one to the leading of the Spirit, with the end result being that most spend a great portion of their lives out of step with God's will and not living as disciples.

Methodology

The project will consist of four main parts: the development of a profile of a disciple, the development of a measuring instrument to determine conformity with the profile, administering the instrument to a select group of individuals who desire to be disciples, and interpretation and implementation of a discipleship program from the data gained.

Development of the Disciple's Profile

Much of the work here will be culled from other sources. This will be more fully discussed in the "Literature Review" section of this chapter, but it may be stated here that there are ample resources available describing the "ideal disciple," and it is not the purpose of this project to rework territory that has already been thoroughly covered. A working model of a disciple will be developed, primarily through research, and will be validated and approved by consultation and consensus with experienced Christian ministers, professors, and others.

This model will seek to be more descriptive than comprehensive. That is, what is desired is a snapshot of the ideal disciple, to give individual Christians a goal for which

¹⁵ See James Boice, *Romans, Volume 2*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 763-770, for an insightful commentary on the Christian's constant struggle with sin.

to aim, rather than an exhaustive treatise covering multiple aspects of discipleship in depth. Such a thorough, scholarly profile would be inappropriate and not helpful to the majority of the laity of the typical church. The goal is a profile of perhaps two to three pages in total, although the background material will of course be substantially greater. The profile itself will be included as an appendix to this project.

Development of a Measuring Instrument

The major portion of the project will be the development of a measuring instrument by which an interested individual Christian may determine his or her conformity, or lack thereof, to the disciple's profile. The finished product will be a diagnostic test administered to the target individuals. A significant amount of time and energy will be spent in the development of this test.

Obviously, the test will be compiled with the disciple's profile as a baseline and guide. It has been suggested¹⁶ that this test should be in the nature of a Biblical adjective check list;¹⁷ that is, the test will consist, at least in part, of descriptions of various aspects of discipleship taken directly from Biblical material. The intent, then, will be to develop a rating or measuring system to determine how closely individual Christians come to the model.¹⁸

Much effort and seeking of assistance is anticipated here. It is this writer's hope and plan to seek out the advice of statisticians, counselors, clergy, and others in the development of a measuring instrument. It is this writer's goal to achieve an instrument

¹⁶ By this writer's thesis mentor, Dr. Dan Mitchell, in a personal conversation on September 26, 2002, at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

¹⁷ This owes much in inspiration to the Adjective Check List (personality evaluation) of Light Counseling, Inc., of Lynchburg, Virginia.

¹⁸ For example, a particular individual might have a Stewardship rating of 60% of ideal.

that will not only measure the conformity of an individual Christian to the model of the ideal disciple, but will also indicate what remedial action can be taken to bring the individual closer to the model. This will require two parts to the test, a diagnostic portion, and an interpretive portion. The test will doubtless undergo several revisions, both before it is administered to a target group and during the process of field-testing. Consultations with ministers, counselors, and disciple-makers shall form a large part of refining the instrument.

Administering the Instrument to a Target Group

Once the instrument has been developed, it will be administered to a select group of individual Christians committed to a greater degree of discipleship in their Christian lives. The plan is not only to administer the test to members of Summit Point Baptist Church, but also to Christians in several other churches, in order to obtain the largest test population possible for further refinement of the instrument. It will be communicated to all test takers that this is a field test of the instrument as much as it is a test of their discipleship level, and that feedback on the accuracy of the test will be solicited and appreciated after the process is complete.

This group will not necessarily be restricted to Baptist churches, although most available contacts are in those churches, but will be restricted to those church bodies who have similar views on Christian discipleship, the authority of the Scriptures, and the work of the Holy Spirit, in order to avoid conflicts of interpretation of the testing material. This writer claims a “Biblical authority” bias. That is, he believes the Bible is true, accurate, and authoritative in all that it seeks to affirm, and there is little possibility of

meaningful work at this level with those who may hold incompatible beliefs regarding the Scriptures.

Interpretation and Implementation of the Data Gained

The second part of the testing process shall be the “scoring” of the test. Individual test takers shall be informed of their personal discipleship profiles, as compared to the model of the ideal disciple. At this point, both individual and corporate feedback shall be sought. It is hoped, prior to the initial round of field testing, to have an instrument which shall be able to make accurate measurements of a person’s level of discipleship. Realistically, there will in all probability need to be some fine tuning. Opinions shall be sought, correcting for lack of self-knowledge where possible, on the perceived correlation or disparity between the individual’s profile assessment and their actual experience.

If there is a sufficiently wide margin of disparity between assessment and actuality in a majority (or significant minority) of test cases, then it shall be assumed that the test itself is flawed and in need of further refinement. In what manner and to what degree it is found to be flawed will dictate further progress of this project.

Should there be a high degree of correlation between assessed and self-perceived discipleship profiles, the instrument will be assumed to have been demonstrated to be reasonably valid and of use. Pastors and leaders of cooperating churches will, with the consent of those tested, be given the information on discipleship profiles, in order to design a process by which those wishing to grow in discipleship in their churches may be brought more closely in line with the ideal.

This writer shall take the discipleship profiles of his own congregation and use them to refine and redesign his own discipleship program in order to increase the level of discipleship in his own congregation. This will influence preaching, Bible study, and special emphasis programs in Summit Point Baptist Church. These, however, fall outside the scope of this project, and shall not be covered in this paper.

Literature Review¹⁹

The great difficulty with bibliographic material for this project will not be to obtain resources but to cull through the vast body of work available to find the best thinking in the field. Discipleship and evangelism are very broad topics, and there are and continue to be a number of writers who have dealt with these matters with passion and skill.

Among current authors talking mainly about a discipling community, this writer has been greatly influenced by Bill Hull, author of *The Disciple-Making Church* and *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose-Driven Church*, and Larry Crabb, author of *Understanding People* and *The Safest Place on Earth*. J. Oswald Sanders does a masterful work of exhorting individuals to discipleship in *The Joy of Following Jesus*. Michael Wilkins, author of *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel* and *Following the Master*, does an excellent job with the Biblical foundations of discipleship. George Barna and Elmer Towns write on the practical application of discipleship principles, in such books as *The Power of Vision* and *Growing True Disciples* (Barna) and *Into the Future* and *Understanding the Deeper Life* (Towns).

¹⁹ Bibliographic material for all mentioned works may be found in the bibliography.

Among authors talking primarily about the making of disciples, a very practical guide can be found in Christopher Adsit's *Personal Disciple-Making*, and Leroy Eims, in *The Lost Art of Disciple-Making*, has one of the defining works in the field in modern times. This writer is also indebted to, and will rely heavily on, fellow students who have done work in this field. James Price wrote a Doctor of Ministry dissertation on "The Master's Mandate: A Discipleship Manual for Those Who Desire to Become Faithful and Obedient Followers of Jesus Christ," and David A. Benzel completed a Master of Theology work on "What is a Disciple: An Historical and Theological Investigation of 'Mathetes.'" Furthermore, friends and colleagues in the ministry, pastors of churches and others interested and involved in disciple making will be entreated for help and advice in these matters.

Space would make listing the various available Biblical study references and commentaries prohibitive, but it is intended to focus heavily on the gospel of Matthew for the Biblical basis for this project, with supportive material from other Scriptures. The project will not focus extensively on discipleship in church history.

Space and memory limitations also discourage the mentioning or heavy usage of the literally hundreds of preachers, teachers, and devotional writers who have influenced, and continue to influence, this writer with their faithful exhortations towards discipleship and disciple making, and their practical, Biblically-based strategies and ideas for growing in discipleship. This project owes much in motivation and spirit to the diligent work of many whose names and specific words can no longer be recalled. This writer is convinced that nothing he mentions or does in this project is truly original with him, but is based on the work of all those who labor beside him and who have gone before, except

for the application of these truths and wisdom to the writer's current place of service to the Lord.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROFILE OF THE IDEAL DISCIPLE

Introduction

In order to do any sort of work with making disciples, it is necessary to have some idea of what the end result is to look like. What is a disciple? This chapter will detail the creation of a disciple's profile, to give a clear picture of the aim of the disciple making process. It is necessary to have a model that is explicit enough to be useful while at the same time concise enough to be workable.²⁰ The developed profile itself may be found in Appendix A of this work.

It is freely admitted that this model has certain limitations. While this writer has attempted to distill the work of some of the best thinkers in this field,²¹ he takes sole responsibility for the compilation and arrangement of the material and the conclusions reached. Others might emphasize different aspects, or feel that too much has been included, or too little. Furthermore, this model features what is felt are the irreducible minimums of a Christian disciple. Criteria for making these judgments

²⁰ For instance, "the disciple should follow Jesus," while perfectly correct, is not useful, because it does not contain measurable criteria. On the other hand, there are at least 120 specific commands "disciples" were to follow in the New Testament alone, by this writer's personal count. A profile based on such a list of guidelines would be unwieldy, impossible to conform to, and in danger of being legalistic. Michael J. Wilkins, in "The Jesus Movement" (Ch. 6 of *Following the Master*, 98-121) comes between the two extremes when he discusses the various ramifications of "following Jesus." There were always specific actions associated with following Christ, but the costs of discipleship differed from disciple to disciple, and the key ingredient in discipleship was always the transformational power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciple, rather than programs and methods (120-121).

²¹ Such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Bill Hull, Leroy Eims, John MacArthur, Watchman Nee, Michael J. Wilkins and others.

primarily come from study and understanding of Scripture. Various matters of church government, doctrinal position, and other issues that are causes of disagreement among Christians today are noticeably absent from the profile. It is not that these matters are considered unimportant, or that personal convictions and beliefs concerning such things do not exist, but that the understanding of the Bible is that discipleship does not come with a lengthy and detailed list of what, for instance, a person must believe regarding sanctification or practice regarding church organization in order to be a follower of Christ.

Paradoxically, the model may be observed to be quite stringent in the areas it does include (e.g. an absolute commitment of the disciple's life to the authority of Christ.) It is of great concern and belief that many in our churches today are practitioners of a very half-hearted discipleship, largely because they have never been genuinely challenged to rise higher. The Biblical exhortations to discipleship, particularly in the words of our Lord, are often strong to the point of seeming harsh, and it is necessary for the profile to capture the radical nature of true discipleship.

Finally, it may also be noticed that areas of this model overlap significantly. This is unavoidable as, in the life of the disciple, various aspects are enabled by other aspects and enable still others. For instance, "abiding in Christ" is an essential part of a "complete commitment to Christ," and it would seem that the disciple's commitment to study of the Word of God and to prayer are indispensable if the disciple is to enjoy "victory over sin." The disciple's life is a unified whole; it resists being broken down into easily discernable segments.

Sources of Information

The New Testament is obviously the best source of information on what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. The mandate to make disciples is taken from the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, in which Jesus' followers were commanded to teach the nations to follow the commandments of Christ. In various passages, followers of Christ are exhorted to keep those commandments, deny themselves, take up their cross and follow, love one another, bear spiritual fruit, confess Christ before men, place Christ before everything else, abide in Christ and continue in his love, and many other teachings.²² This chapter will explore what is meant by many of these concepts.

Being a Disciple

The simplest way to understand being a disciple, as the New Testament uses the term, is to picture a disciple as an absolutely committed follower of Jesus Christ. David Benzel gives the understanding of the concept of discipleship from the perspective of the New Testament mind:

Following Jesus entails leaving all else behind; to receive from Him one must let go of all that to which one has been clinging. This amounts to self-denial. Further, for the sake of the cause, the Kingdom of God, a disciple should be willing to risk everything, including his life, just as disciples advancing other causes had borne their crosses to the site of their deaths.²³

Michael Wilkins says that “*Mathetes*’ [usually translated disciple] was a popular term at the time of Jesus to designate a follower who was vitally committed to a teacher/leader and/or movement.”²⁴ Disciples, in modern Christian usage of the term, are

²² See, for example, Matthew 10:32-39, Luke 14:26-33, John 21:15-19, and John 15:8-26.

²³ David Benzel, “What is a Disciple: An Historical and Theological Investigation of *Mathetes*.” (M. Theology Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1991), 66.

²⁴ Michael Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew’s Gospel*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 221.

people of commitment and obedience, and the essence of being a disciple is always following.²⁵ Finally, teaching in the context of surrender and submission, Stuart Briscoe says that “to become a Christian you have to be willing to sacrifice anything that’s going to hinder God’s work of grace in your life.”²⁶

It may be seen, therefore, that the starting point of being a follower of Jesus Christ, the *sine qua non* of discipleship, is submission, commitment, and surrender to the leading of Jesus Christ. If this one point, with all that it implies, was fully grasped in the churches of the land, revival would break out. The great tragedy of modern Christianity is that most Christians are engaged in, at best, partial surrender. Some aspects of life are offered to Christ wholeheartedly, some are given to Him grudgingly, and many areas of life are kept back stubbornly. Richard Owen Thomas writes on how to become like Christ:

The key to Christlikeness is humility. If I’m proud or arrogant, there’s no way I’m going to see Christ. But when I’m reduced to my proper level, I will see Christ’s majesty, beauty, purity, and holiness, and I will yearn to be like that. Humility comes from seeing God as He is. ...Humility is the key to personal revival.²⁷

Without this humble self-surrender, without a person placing his or her life in a proper, fully yielded servant-Lord relationship to Jesus Christ, there is no real discipleship. It must be said that it is this writer’s experience that God will at times bless and use even partial obedience, even stirrings towards genuine surrender. This, however, is purely God’s mercy and must not be presumed upon, nor thought to represent the ideal.

²⁵ Bill Hull, *The Disciplemaking Pastor*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 56.

²⁶ Stuart Briscoe, “Does the Lordship of Christ Demand Sacrifice?” in *Practical Christianity* ed. Lavonne Neff (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1987), 51.

²⁷ Richard Owen Roberts, “How to Become Like Christ” in *Practical Christianity*, 140.

Discipleship may indeed be thought of as a process and not a goal,²⁸ but, even though God may be pleased with progress, would-be disciples must say with the apostle Paul, “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold on it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”²⁹ John Piper sounds a strong note of hope to the struggle when he contends that:

One final thing to remember about the good fight of faith in future grace: the victory is assured. Our assurance is not destroyed by the demands for endurance. The key to assurance is not to eliminate the biblical commands for endurance, but rather to magnify grace as a future power to believe, as well as a past pardon for sin. Our assurance does not lie in looking back to a momentary decision we made for Christ, but in looking forward to the certainty of God’s preserving grace, based on the all-sufficient atonement of his Son’s death.³⁰

The remainder of this chapter will illustrate how this surrender to the Lordship of Christ is to be lived out in the life of the individual disciple.

Characteristics of a Disciple

Two Major Aspects

Two major aspects of being a disciple will form the framework of the disciple’s profile, and they flow from the Great Commission. There is in the Matthean passage one imperative verb, *matheteusate* (disciple, or make disciples of) all the nations, followed by two participles, *baptizontes* (baptizing) them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and *didaskontes* (teaching) them to observe all things whatever

²⁸ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 123. See also Christopher B. Adsit, *Personal Disciplemaking* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, 1988), 31-35 for a discussion on becoming a disciple as a process.

²⁹ Phil. 3:13-14 NASB.

³⁰ John Piper, *Future Grace* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1995), 317.

[Jesus has] commanded you.³¹ It follows then naturally that, if the primary tasks of the maker of disciples are to baptize and teach, then the primary initial characteristics of the disciple are *being baptized* and *being taught*. This fits in with the disciple's position as a submissive follower; one comes to Christ from a position of weakness, humility, and need, to receive salvation and teaching.

A disciple must first be publicly identified with Christ. The chief means for doing this in New Testament times appears to have been baptism by immersion.³² The New Testament understanding of baptism was that “being baptized by a person or ‘into his name’ meant becoming his disciple.” It was a means of identifying with the person.³³ Jesus Christ Himself was baptized, despite the discomfort of John the Baptizer, in order to “fulfill all righteousness” and to provide an example for His followers. Baptism, as an act of identification with Jesus Christ, particularly in His death, burial, and resurrection, is a partial fulfillment of the command of Jesus Christ to confess Him before men.³⁴ There is no possibility of being a secret follower of Christ allowed in the New Testament. Baptism is a ceremonial act, roughly akin to the covenant act of circumcision of the Jewish people. Erickson writes on baptism that it is “an act of faith and a testimony that

³¹ Matthew 28:19-20.

³² James W. Dale, however, contends that there were many possible modes and meanings of *baptizo* in intertestamental and New Testament times, and that it cannot be said with certainty that the form of baptizing employed by John the Baptist or the apostles was baptism by immersion. See James W. Dale, *An Inquiry into the Usage of “Baptidzo” and the Nature of Johannic Baptism as Exhibited in The Holy Scriptures*. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1871), 374ff.

³³ Benzel, 65.

³⁴ see Matt. 10:32-33

one has been united with Christ in His death and resurrection, that one has experienced spiritual circumcision. It is a public indication of one's commitment to Christ."³⁵

It must be admitted that baptism *per se*, that is, being immersed in a body of water as a public testimony to faith in Christ, is certainly not a requirement for salvation, nor is it necessarily an indispensable part of being a disciple.³⁶ The perspective here is of the Baptist faith and tradition, and it is believed and taught that baptism is still the best and most fitting means of publicly demonstrating faith in Christ, but it can not be maintained in good conscience that discipleship is impossible without it. The indispensable element seems to be public confession of faith in Christ and identification with Him and His work, and there are other venues that will enable this, from the cry of the thief on the cross "Remember me when you come into your kingdom" to the faithful Methodist evangelist boldly proclaiming that "there is no other name given under heaven by which we might be saved." It still seems, however, that, when it is physically possible, being baptized, following the example of Christ Jesus, is a matter of simple obedience.

Along with baptism, a disciple must be taught.³⁷ This implies on the part of the disciple a "teachable" attitude, a willingness to change, or to allow one's life to be changed, because the things that are to be taught are not simply facts or new information, but commandments. The second part of making disciples, according to David Benzel, is

³⁵ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 1101.

³⁶ And, of course, Dale argues that baptism by immersion is not even necessarily what is taught in the scriptures in all places.

³⁷ See Ephesians 4:20-24, (NIV): "You, however, did not come to Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were *taught* in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were *taught*, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (emphasis this writer's).

“not just teaching truths, but teaching the disciple to obey, to *keep*, all that Jesus had commanded.”³⁸ Benzel goes on to express the transformational character of discipleship:

The disciple metaphor signifies a subordinate relationship [with Jesus]. ...The disciple is becoming through the relationship increasingly more like his teacher in certain traits and characteristics. There is a growing understanding in and obedience of the leader’s desires. Furthermore the disciple shares in Jesus’ cause: the kingdom of God.³⁹

We have, then, two major aspects of discipleship. Firstly, the disciple is to be publicly identified with, and committed to, the person, Lordship, and work of Jesus Christ, and secondly, he or she is to learn to observe (obey) all the commandments implicit in that identification. Discipleship involves, as a decisive act, a commitment, allegiance, and loyalty to the person of Christ.⁴⁰

Obedience

The major evidence of being a disciple in the life of a person is, as has been seen, obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ.⁴¹ These commandments may be found in the recorded teachings of Jesus in the Gospel accounts, in the Holy Spirit-inspired words of the writers of the New Testament, and, when properly understood in the light of the New Covenant, in the laws and teachings of the Old Testament.

Obedience to Christ’s commands is emphasized very strongly in the Scriptures as the hallmark of the disciple. James Boice illustrates why this is so:

Are we tired of this emphasis by now, this emphasis upon Christ’s commands? I suspect that we are; but if we are, the fault is in us and not the commands. For, as John says in his first epistle, ‘His commands are not burdensome’ (I John 5:3). Jesus said, ‘My yoke is easy and my burden is light’

³⁸ Benzel, 65 (emphasis Benzel’s).

³⁹ Ibid., 67.

⁴⁰ See Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 124.

⁴¹ See, for example, John 15:10, 14.

(Matt. 11:30). Then what is wrong? I suspect that what is wrong with us is that we are not really as anxious to do Christ's commands as we would like to think we are; thus, the emphasis upon obedience (we have had it several times already in the last discourses and we will have it several times more) exposes our halfhearted commitment to the will of Christ and so gives birth to feelings of true guilt.⁴²

It may be surmised, therefore, that lack of obedience is the greatest hindrance to being a disciple, and therefore the disciple's profile shall be heavily weighted towards obeying Christ's commands. Clearly, a profile that attempted to list obedience to every single commandment given as a condition for discipleship would be unworkably large, legalistic, and inapplicable to individual situations; therefore, it seems advisable to include the fundamental characteristics that a disciple's life must manifest. This is not to imply that, for example, stewardship, reconciliation with fellow Christians, mutual submission, control of the tongue, and other matters are unimportant. They may be assumed to be covered under obedience to Christ's commands.⁴³

Denial of Self

This is contrasted with the modern usage of the term "self-denial," which usually carries the idea of a dieter virtuously forgoing dessert. "Self" is understood to mean the totality of the person, rather than a particular desire or urge that may be prevailing at

⁴² James M. Boice, *The Gospel of John—Volume 4: Peace in Storm*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1999), 1174.

⁴³ The principle may be considered analogous to the teaching of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 22:40 that all the law and the prophets could be subsumed under the two great commands. Broadus informs us that it was a common practice of rabbinical and philosophical teachers to condense a body of teachings into one or two fundamental tenets. (John Broadus, *Commentary on Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1990), 458.) Commenting on the same passage, Blomberg says that the "relationship of all the Old Testament to the double love commandment shows that there is a hierarchy of law that above all requires one's heart attitude to be correct." (David S. Dockery, ed. *The New American Commentary*, vol. 22, *Matthew*, by Craig L. Blomberg. (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 335. It would seem justifiable, then, to assume that all the manifold commandments the disciple is to follow can be stated simply as "obedience to Christ's commands."

present. Denial of self, as the disciple is to understand the phrase, is something far more drastic than refusing oneself an occasional indulgence. We begin with the Biblical material.

Jesus said to His close friends, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”⁴⁴

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus made the following startling demand to a great crowd:

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.⁴⁵

In the same discourse, His would-be followers are urged to consider the cost of discipleship, the cost of following Him. He summarizes the need for the disciple to deny himself by saying, “whoever of you does not forsake *all that he has* cannot be my disciple.”⁴⁶ This would be a nigh-impossible demand even if His followers had properly understood the salvific work He was about to accomplish on their behalf, but Piper again contends that this obedience, rather than motivated by gratitude for Christ’s work for us, is instead enabled by our faith in His future provisions; as he says “faith in future grace, not gratitude, is the source of radical, risk-taking, kingdom-seeking obedience.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Luke 9:23-24 NASB.

⁴⁵ Luke 14:25-27 NKJV.

⁴⁶ Luke 14:33 NKJV, this writer’s emphasis.

⁴⁷ Piper, 42-43.

It is appropriate at this time to give some thought to the idea of bearing one's cross. Obviously in the vast majority of cases disciples are not called upon to literally give their lives on a cross, as our Savior did, but neither is this entirely poetic language.⁴⁸ "From the world's perspective, Christ's frankness in calling people to follow Him appears to be extreme... Jesus is honest and direct: to share in His glory a person must first share in His death."⁴⁹ Jesus uses the image of the cross as a clear and powerful metaphor of the disciple's denying of self, to the extent that, in comparison with his commitment to Jesus, he may be said to hate his family, friends, and even his own life.

Many writers have applied much insight and wisdom to what it truly means to bear one's cross. Watchman Nee contends that it is only when we have truly died to self that God can use us.⁵⁰ J. Oswald Sanders emphasizes that bearing the cross is always voluntary (in contrast to the common misconception that any chronic misfortune is "my cross to bear"), and that it involves sacrifice and suffering, costly renunciation, and rejection by the world.⁵¹ It is to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, however, that one may look to for the most heartfelt distillation of what it means to take up one's cross:

The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we

⁴⁸ "Take up his cross' is ...likely metaphorical, referring to submission to God's will wherever it may lead and explained further by the parallel phrase 'deny himself.' But the more ominous possibility that some disciples might literally be crucified looms larger in the wake of Jesus' prediction in vs. 21." (Blomberg, on Mt. 16:24, 260.) Barclay, however, in commenting on Luke 9:23, contends that "to take up our cross means to be prepared to face things like that [crucifixion] for loyalty to Jesus; it means to be ready to endure the worst that man can do to us for the sake of being true to Him." (William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 121.)

⁴⁹ Keith Phillips, *The Making of a Disciple*. (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 16.

⁵⁰ see Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1977), 244-266 for a discourse on the necessity of the Christian's death to self.

⁵¹ J. Oswald Sanders, *The Joy of Following Jesus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 21-22.

embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. Jesus' summons to the rich young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact, every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life.⁵²

It may be seen, therefore, that the call of Jesus to deny self, take up one's cross, and follow is a call to completely and totally give over any claims to one's own will, rights, prerogatives, possessions, aspirations, goals, or desires. The command is catastrophic—the disciple is called to surrender literally everything to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Difficulties may arise in describing what this looks like in a disciple's life.

Jesus calls His followers to many different tasks and missions, so that self-surrender for one will look entirely different from self-surrender in another. It must be mentioned that, in calling His followers to surrender all things, Jesus is asking nothing that He has not already done Himself.⁵³ He gave everything He had, privileges, possessions, comfort, reputation, and His own life in order that God's will might be done rather than His own. It is perhaps reasonable to conclude that the key to self-surrender in the life of a disciple is to possess a continual *attitude* of submission, characterized by action. Charles Colson aptly summarizes the idea of ongoing, active surrender:

God's time is every moment of our lives. ...being obedient to Christ is a twenty-four-hour-a-day thing. ...In practical terms, we should start out each day by saying 'I want God's will for my life today.' Meditate on what God is

⁵² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1963), 99.

⁵³ Sanders, 23.

working on with us at that point. Pray. Read the Scriptures. Then, during the day, we shouldn't put God aside.⁵⁴

The first major act of obedience of the disciple to the commandments of Jesus is to totally, continually surrender himself, his will, and everything he has, to the Lordship of Jesus. How this manifests itself will differ to some degree from disciple to disciple, as Christ calls His followers to different tasks, but the attitude of denying of self, with resulting action, should be noticeably present.

Abiding in Christ

The crucial thing for one wishing to be a disciple is to *abide* in Christ.⁵⁵ Barry Sneed and Roy Edgemon, in *Transformational Discipleship*, say that:

Our relationship with Jesus, our deep, abiding relationship, determines how great our witness is to the world. In other words, a far-reaching witness requires a close-knit relationship with Jesus. You might also add that the health of all other relationships is dependent on an abiding relationship with Jesus. The most crucial aspect of spiritual transformation is an abiding, intimate, growing relationship with God.⁵⁶

The clear commands of our Lord Jesus were to abide in Him, to continue in His love, to remain in Him, to have an ongoing relationship with Him.⁵⁷ Unlike all the other master/disciple relationships in existence, in Jesus' time and since, the disciples of Jesus were to do more than merely commit to the person and teachings of their master. They were to have an intimate, personal relationship at a depth impossible to any two mere

⁵⁴ Charles Colson, "The Quest for Obedience" in *Practical Christianity*, 145.

⁵⁵ Barry Sneed and Roy Edgemon, *Transformational Discipleship*. (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 1999), 5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Matt. 11:28-30, John 15:1-15, Acts 14:22, I Corinthians 7:24, I John 2:24.

persons. The word picture given in John 15 is, of course, of a relationship as close as that of a vine to its branches. On the importance of this, William Bright says that:

...the key...to a dynamic Christian life is to understand God and to master His Word. ...this knowledge cannot be superficial, shallow, and legalistic. ...in order to understand the keys to a dynamic Christian life, one needs to realize that the Christian life is a life of relationship—a supernatural relationship. Man cannot live the Christian life alone.⁵⁸

Therefore, the second major aspect of the disciple's obedience is that he must learn⁵⁹ to have an ongoing, vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. James Price details the benefits of this abiding in Christ:

When we abide in Him, we remain in close fellowship with Him, understanding that we can do nothing of our own strength (Jn. 15:5). We allow Him to empower us for daily living, allowing His life to live through us. We learn to rest in His strength, realizing that our sufficiency is not of ourselves, but of God (2 Cor. 3:5). We learn to rest in His provision for us, realizing that His divine power has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).⁶⁰

We see that abiding is necessary not only to fulfill the demands of obedience, but to make possible the living of the disciple's life. Three major aspects of abiding in Christ are included as essential qualities of the disciple's profile: dedication to the Word, dedication to prayer, and dedication to the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁸ William Bright, "Keys to A Dynamic Christian Life," in *Practical Christianity*, 43-45.

⁵⁹ Learning to abide in Christ may be compared with the apostle Paul's instructions in Galatians 5 to walk in the Spirit as opposed to walking in the flesh. There seem to be some elements of both human volition as well as divine empowerment in "learning" to have a spiritual relationship with Christ, as well as a progressive aspect to the phenomenon. See Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 872-875, for a discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification and spiritual relationship.

⁶⁰ James Price, "The Master's Mandate" (D. Ministry thesis, Western Seminary, 1996), 21-22.

The disciple's dedication to the Word.

The primary source for the disciple, of guidance, wisdom, and direction in living the life he has committed himself to, is the word of God. Bill Hull says that:

The disciple has a commitment to Scripture. Jesus stated earlier, "...If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." (John 8:31) Clearly, Jesus refers to His oral teachings. Equally clearly, He built much of His teaching on the Old Testament; see, for example, the Sermon on the Mount. The distilled twentieth century application says that the disciple is committed to Christ's teachings as found in the New Testament. However, the complete canon of Scripture is considered God's Word; therefore the disciple is committed to the authority of the entire Bible. The only way a disciple can rightly relate to Christ's Word is to demonstrate a commitment to it. This commitment demonstrates itself in the disciple's working knowledge of Scripture.⁶¹

Christopher Adsit contends that true disciples will hunger for spiritual food just as human babies will hunger for physical food, and that, therefore, a desire for God's Word is an evidence, rather than a condition, of discipleship.⁶² While, admittedly, most new disciples will not be aware of what precisely they desire any more than newborns will be able to feed themselves, the disciple, after some necessary initial training, ought to begin to manifest a genuine eagerness to know and obey the Word of God.

It is also necessary for the disciple's already discussed commitment to obedience to Christ that he find out of what his obedience is to consist. This will manifest, in the disciple, in some sort of Bible study, whether it be regular Bible reading, study and meditation on the Scriptures, listening to the preaching of the Word, discussing the truths of the Bible with other Christians, or some combination thereof. There will be some apparent love for the Word of God.

⁶¹ Hull, 62.

⁶² Adsit, 224-227.

The disciple's dedication to prayer.

Jesus' command and example to His disciples was that they ought to always be in prayer, that they were to ask for that which they needed, to watch and pray, to boldly approach God with their requests.⁶³ It is not only that disciples are commanded to pray. In order to abide in Christ and do His will, disciples *must* pray. MacArthur says that “Regardless of how much we have in Christ, we must pray. Prayer is an essential key to spiritual growth.”⁶⁴ MacArthur goes on to compare the necessity of prayer with the necessity of breathing, and contends that a normal, healthy person would never think of not breathing, would, in fact, have to fight not to breathe, and he continues:

The same is true in prayer. Prayer is the natural thing for a Christian. It is the Christian's vital breath. The reason some Christians feel so fatigued and defeated is that they are holding their breath spiritually when they should be opening their hearts to God to accept the atmosphere all about them—His divine presence. The one who is not faithful in prayer constantly struggles against his own spiritual nature. He is holding his spiritual breath. And that is spiritually debilitating.⁶⁵

As with any spiritual discipline, growth in prayer is a process. Maturing disciples will pray as a matter of spiritual warfare, will pray with authority, boldness, and even audacity, and will spend much time wrestling and laboring in prayer over matters of vital spiritual concern.⁶⁶ A dedication and passionate interest in prayer, however, will mark the life of any disciple.

⁶³ See, for example, Matt. 7:7-11, Luke 18:1, John 15:7.

⁶⁴ John MacArthur, *The Key to Spiritual Growth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 118.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶⁶ See Sanders, chapter 13, “The Disciple's Prayer Life,” for a thorough discussion of prayer in the life of a maturing believer.

The disciple's dedication to the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, in speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the *paraklete*, the Helper: “the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”⁶⁷ The work and role of the Spirit is spoken of prominently in various other places in Scripture. The Holy Spirit, of course, is God, the omnipresent and indwelling Third Person of the Trinity, who works in conversion and salvation and comes, in a spiritual sense, to live in the hearts of Christians upon their salvation. He performs an enormous number of tasks in the life of the Christian, including empowering for service, convicting of sin, teaching the truths of the faith, unlocking the mysteries of the Word of God, calling teachings to remembrance, testifying to and glorifying Christ, guiding disciples in their service for God, giving gifts for service, cleansing, purifying, and sanctifying.⁶⁸

The gift of the Holy Spirit fulfills Christ's promise that He would abide in the disciples as they were to abide in Him. The third aspect of abiding in Christ for the disciple, after dedication to the Word of God and dedication to prayer, is dedication to, and cooperation with, the work of the Holy Spirit in his life.

James Price summarizes what it means to cooperate with the Holy Spirit:

Every Christian must learn to walk by faith and not by sight. The Apostle Paul commands us to walk in Him, just as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord (Col. 2:6). Because we received Christ by faith, we are to continue living the Christian life by faith. When we walk by faith, we allow the Holy Spirit to direct our paths. We are commanded to not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). When we are filled with the Spirit, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit, including such qualities as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

⁶⁷ John 14:26, NASB.

⁶⁸ see Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 872ff, for a discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian.

faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). Furthermore, we are commanded to not only be filled with the Spirit, but to also live, walk, and be led by the Spirit. When we live in this manner, we will not carry out the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-18, 25). The key to keeping the Mandate is to allow the Holy Spirit to control the direction of our lives. We must learn to submit every area of our lives to God, allowing Him to have His way with us.⁶⁹

The disciple surrenders control of his life to the inner control of the Holy Spirit.

Calvin Miller says that:

As love marks our lives in Christ, so does the inner control of the Holy Spirit. Thus Christians differ from non-Christians at this very crucial issue of inner direction and guidance. When we are controlled by God's Spirit, we begin to care about the things that He cares about. And what are they? The Spirit's first concern is the exaltation of Christ. Jesus said, 'He will remind you of everything I have said to you' (John 14:26), and 'He will bring glory to me' (John 16:14). Thus, whichever way he points our individual destiny or careers, the Holy Spirit will direct each of our lives to exalt Christ.⁷⁰

Therefore, it may be seen that the third aspect of abiding for the disciple, dedication to the leading of the Holy Spirit, goes hand-in-hand with the disciple's practices of submission, obedience, and following Jesus. Indeed, it may be said without exaggeration that following the Spirit's leading⁷¹ is equivalent to being a disciple, since Jesus the Lord and Master is present within the disciple in the person of God the Spirit, and leads, as it were, from within.

Bearing Fruit

One of the clearest evidences of discipleship given in Scripture is what is known as bearing fruit. Jesus said "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and

⁶⁹ Price, 21.

⁷⁰ Calvin Miller, "The Marks of A Christian", in *Practical Christianity*, 23-24.

⁷¹ The precise nature of the leading of the Holy Spirit, and its manifestation in the lives of individual Christians, is not easily defined, and beyond the scope of this project to attempt. See Bill Bright, [William Bright] *The Holy Spirit: The Key to Supernatural Living*, (Orlando, FL: New Life Publications, 1980), 49-116 for an extended discussion of many facets of "being led by the Spirit."

so prove to be my disciples.”⁷² This bearing of fruit was a result of the abiding in Christ previously mentioned, and bearing fruit clearly separates the disciple from the non-disciple.⁷³ Shortly before, Jesus had said “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”⁷⁴ The question remains, what does it mean to bear fruit?

J. Oswald Sanders has a remarkably concise and insightful explanation of the fruit the disciple is to produce. He is quoted here at some length:

This passage [John 15:7-8] reveals the *upward* view of discipleship. A fruitless disciple of Christ is a contradiction in terms. If there is no real fruit in our lives, we cannot claim to be true disciples. What constitutes the “fruit” of which the Lord spoke? Primarily the fruit is for God and His glory, and only secondarily for man. It is manifested in two areas.

Fruit in Character—in the inward life. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control” (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV). The fruit of the Spirit’s working in our lives is expressed in nine winsome graces. A tree is known by its fruit. The disciple is recognized by his likeness to Christ in inward character. It was to this end that Paul toiled. “I see the fruit that increases to your credit” (Philippians 4:17, RSV).

Fruit in Service—in outward ministry. “Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now

⁷² John 15:8 NASB.

⁷³ The connection between fruit of the Spirit, *karpos tou pneumatou*, and gifts of the Spirit (*pneumatikon*, lit. “spirituals”) deserves some consideration. While both are obviously the results of the activity of the Spirit in the life of the Christian, the manifestations and purposes differ. Hodge comments on I Corinthians 12 that “with regard to spiritual gifts, the apostle, after reminding the Corinthians that the possession of these gifts was one of the distinctive marks of their Christianity, as distinguished from their heathen state, teaches that all these extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Ghost have a common origin; that they were all given, not for the exaltation of those who received them, but for *the edification of the church*, and that they were distributed according to the good pleasure of God.” (Charles Hodge. *An Exposition of I Corinthians*. In *The Master Christian Library* [CD-ROM]. (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1997), 18, emphasis this writer’s.) Rendell, in writing on Galatians 5, claims that the fruit of the Spirit mentioned by Paul is that which exhibits harmony with the spirit of the law, and thus concerns itself with behavior towards fellow man. (W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. *The Expositor’s Greek New Testament, Vol. 3. “Galatians”* by Frederic Rendell. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 188). It may be stated, therefore, that the fruit of the Spirit is produced in Christians to manifest Christlikeness, exemplified and evidenced by their relations to the world, while the gifts of the Spirit are God’s magnanimity to His church, enabling it to do the work to which it has been called.

⁷⁴ John 15:5 NASB.

he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may be glad together” (John 4:35-36, NIV). Fruit is seen when souls are won for Christ, disciplined by concerned disciples, and led on to spiritual maturity.

The fruit-bearing that is an authentic mark of discipleship is not automatic but conditional. Jesus made this clear when He said, “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (John 12:24, NIV). He thus links fruit-bearing with the cross.⁷⁵

Therefore, the fruit the disciple is to manifest is primarily concerned with growth in Christlike character, and with evangelism and the making of disciples. Timothy George contends that “the concept of fruitfulness is well attested in Paul’s other writings as well as throughout the Old Testament.”⁷⁶ He goes on to identify love as the greatest of the manifold graces produced by the action of the Holy Spirit, and to say that

...when Christians forget this [living together in love], then two horrible consequences invariably follow: the worship of the church is disrupted as the gifts of the Spirit are placed in invidious competition with the fruit of the Spirit, as happened at Corinth; the witness of the church is damaged as unbelievers stumble and fall over the obvious lack of love within the body of Christ.⁷⁷

This fruit is only made possible by abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in the disciple; that is, this fruit is a manifestation in the life of the Christian by the indwelling Holy Spirit. As may be seen, only true (abiding) disciples *can* bear this fruit, and authentic disciples *will* bear this fruit. This is not to say that non-disciples may not have some good or even exemplary qualities to their character; the life of the disciple, however, will be in some significant manner different, because of the power of the Holy Spirit within, producing qualities and characteristics impossible for a sinful human being to manifest unaided.

⁷⁵ Sanders, 30-31, emphasis Sanders’.

⁷⁶ E. Ray Clendenen, ed. *The New American Commentary*. Vol. 30. *Galatians*, by Timothy George. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 397.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 400-401.

William Bright, on the futility of living the Christian life in human strength, speaks about it thusly:

In our own strength we are helpless, powerless. We are like branches cut off from the vine if we try to live our lives in our own strength and ability. ...according to the Lord Jesus, the only way we can show that we are truly following Him is to produce fruit, which includes introducing others to the Savior as well as living holy lives. And the only way we can produce fruit is through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸

The disciple's character.

Arguably the most significant of the fruits⁷⁹ of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 is love.⁸⁰ In I Corinthians 13:13, the apostle Paul says that the greatest of the Christian virtues is love, and in the words of the Lord Himself, "By this will all know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."⁸¹ Jesus' followers were to love each other with the kind of love He had shown towards them.

This love is an evidence of discipleship, of the indwelling Spirit. Calvin Miller says that "when God lives in us, we cannot help but love Him and each other."⁸² This love is not a sentimental, emotional matter. Love for God involves sacrifice, worship, obedience, and dedication. Similarly, love for others is an act of the will, not the emotions. The kind of love Christ demonstrated towards mankind His disciples can

⁷⁸ Bill Bright [William Bright], *The Holy Spirit: The Key to Supernatural Living*, (Orlando, FL: NewLife Publications, 1980), 165-166.

⁷⁹ Strictly speaking Galatians 5 refers to only one fruit of the Spirit, Christlike character, which is manifested in the nine listed virtues. See Boice, *Gospel of John*, 1130-1132, for a brief discussion on these matters. For convenience's sake, however, the nine virtues are often discussed as nine fruits.

⁸⁰ The Greek word here, of course, is agape, which refers to a benevolent, selfless love, contrasted with the words phileo (brotherly, reciprocal love) and eros (romantic, sexual love).

⁸¹ John 13:35 NKJV.

⁸² Miller, 23.

demonstrate in acts of humble sacrifice and service to others.⁸³ The disciple's life is to be characterized by demonstrating this manner of love to God and to others.

Although love is the primary virtue the disciple is to display, other virtues are also part of the "fruit of the Spirit" that is to be apparent in the disciple's life as a test of his or her discipleship. These are all indications of Christlike character, and are evidences that the Holy Spirit is transforming the disciple into the likeness of His Lord. We turn to James Boice for a masterful summary of the virtues of the Christlike character:

Joy is the virtue that corresponds in the Christian life to mere happiness...but happiness is dependent on circumstances...while joy is not thus dependent. A Christian can be joyful, therefore, even in the midst of great suffering.

Peace is God's gift to mankind, achieved by Him at the cross of Christ. ...We are to show the effects of that peace in all circumstances through what we would call "peace of mind."

Patience is the virtue of putting up with others, even when that virtue is severely tried.

Kindness is that attitude out of which God acts toward men. If the Christian is to be kind, he must act toward others as God has acted toward him.

Goodness is similar to kindness, but it is most often reserved for situations in which the recipient does not merit the goodness. It is linked to generosity.

Faithfulness is trustworthiness or reliability...it is the virtue that will make a servant of Christ die rather than renounce his profession or, to put it on a less exalted plane, will make him suffer great inconvenience rather than go back on his word.

Gentleness is the virtue of the man who is so much in control of himself that he is always angry at the right time (as against sin) and never angry at the wrong time.

The final manifestation of the Spirit's fruit is *self-control*, that quality that gives victory over fleshly desires and that is therefore closely related to chastity both of mind and conduct.⁸⁴

In the life of the disciple, these character traits will be, if not fully formed, at least evident and developing. "Discipleship is learning to be like Christ. Knowing Christ, instead of just knowing about Him, results in a spiritual transformation in life and heart

⁸³ See MacArthur, 110-115, for the characteristics of the love the disciples are to show.

⁸⁴ Boice, *The Gospel of John*, 1130-1131.

that reflects Christ to all we encounter.”⁸⁵ These virtues that the Spirit would develop in the life of the disciple are all evidences of growth in Christlikeness.

The disciple as disciple maker.

Jesus’ command to His disciples was to go and make disciples. Therefore, a fruit or product of the disciple is other disciples. Keith Phillips speaks of the necessity of the disciple to reproduce:

A mature disciple must teach other believers how to live a life pleasing to God and must equip them to train others to teach others. No person is an end in himself. Every disciple is part of a process, part of God’s chosen method for expanding His kingdom through reproduction. We know this because Christ disciplined men and commanded His disciples to make disciples (Matthew 28:19).⁸⁶

A hallmark of the disciple is that he will be inclined to evangelism and making disciples. William Bright writes that:

Witnessing is an overflow of one’s life in Christ. The apostle Paul wrote, “For Christ’s love compels us” (2 Cor. 5:14). So before we can fulfill the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations, we must keep the great commandment, which is to love. We love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Then, compelled by His love, we love our neighbors and our enemies, and we tell them about Jesus. We do that as an expression of the will, by faith.⁸⁷

A great lack in the church today, at least in this writer’s limited experience, is of men and women who are not only committed to evangelism but also committed to nurturing and developing disciples. Leroy Eims refers to the example of the apostle Paul, and says that “the ministry of making disciples takes time and effort, but the results are

⁸⁵ Sneed, 96.

⁸⁶ Phillips, 21.

⁸⁷ William Bright, “Ways to Witness” in *Practical Christianity*, 640.

lasting.”⁸⁸ In the life of the maturing disciple, there will be a passion and a desire to see others won to Christ and led to become maturing disciples themselves.

It may be observed that this emphasis on evangelism and discipleship is closely related to other areas of the disciple’s profile. It is contended that all of these areas are inter-related, that denial of self and love of the Word lead to fruit-bearing, and that making disciples leads to increased love of God, and so forth. The various aspects of the disciple’s life are complementary and parts of a larger whole.

The true disciple will prayerfully seek opportunities to make disciples, and will study and train to increase his skills at being a witness and a maker of disciples. This may manifest in different fashions, as gifts, personalities, and opportunities differ, but a concern for the salvation and growth in the Christlikeness of others will be evident in the life of the disciple.

Victory over Sin

The final area of the disciple’s profile relates to the difficulties Christians have in living the life of the disciple. This is due to what is known as the sin nature. William Bright introduces the matter in this way:

Through all of our lives, the old flesh wars against the new nature. We have to decide whom we are going to serve—whether we are going to allow Satan through the old nature to influence our lives, or if we are going to draw upon God’s strength through the new nature to live according to the Word of God.⁸⁹

Because Christians are sinners, saved by grace, they are always going to struggle with the sin nature, and giving in to it breaks fellowship with God and cuts the would-be

⁸⁸ Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple-Making*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1978), 46.

⁸⁹ Bright, “Keys to a Dynamic Christian Life,” 45.

disciple off from the power and guidance he needs to live the disciple's life. Howard Hendricks puts it this way:

When I sin, fellowship with my heavenly Father is broken. There is a difference between fellowship being broken and a relationship being broken. ...sin affects my fellowship with God but not my relationship with Him. ...Christian living is a matter of right choices and decisions. We must remember, however, that though the choice is ours, the power is God's. We choose to do something [pleasing to God], but then the Lord does it through us. If this were not the case, none of us could be Christians.⁹⁰

Arguably the most common sin, and indeed the root of all sin in the life of the Christian, is disobedience to the commands and leading of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. It must be understood, however, that keeping the commandments "will not give life, nor will it produce spiritual vitality. ...A life of faithful obedience comes as a result of having been touched by the grace of God. Obedience will not result in spiritual life, but is a response to having already received it through Christ."⁹¹

Jesus calls for "personal repentance [of individual Christians] in the church. He told us to have and maintain a receptive and clean heart so that much fruit can be born in our lives (Matt. 13:3-23; cf. Lk. 8:4-15). The Bible suggests that such repentance must occur on a fairly consistent basis in the life of the believer."⁹² This repentance consists of being convicted by the Holy Spirit of sin, feeling sorrow over sin, confessing sin, repentance (turning), and rededication of the disciple's life to the Lord.⁹³

A disciple, then, is to work to maintain a clean, obedient heart before God, repenting of sin when he has failed, because harbored (unrepentant) sin grieves the Holy

⁹⁰ Howard Hendricks, "What Happens When I Sin," in *Practical Christianity*, 498-499.

⁹¹ Price, 18.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

Spirit and hinders growth in discipleship. Furthermore, disciples are called to be victorious over sin. This brings the model back full circle to submission. Michael

Wilkins speaks of his own growth in discipleship:

I committed myself to learning how to walk with Jesus in an intimate way every moment of every day. ...Discipleship is becoming like Jesus as we walk with Him in the real world. And the real world begins in my home, in my closest relationships, in the moment-to-moment circumstances of life. ...increasingly I am aware that discipleship in the way that Jesus directed it is...multidimensional. Jesus impacted the whole person in every area of life. ...Discipleship was not simply a program through which Jesus ran the disciples. Discipleship was life. That life began in relationship with the Master and moved into all areas of life. Discipleship was not just development of the religious or spiritual dimension, discipleship was directed toward the whole person.⁹⁴

Through moment by moment submission to the will of God, by the power and guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the disciple will live a life, if not of perfection, then at least of noticeable improvement and triumph in overcoming his sinful, self-willed tendencies by the grace of God.

Enablement by the Holy Spirit

It may be observed that there seems to be some confusion between what the individual disciple is to do (submit and obey) and what the Holy Spirit does (produce fruit), particularly in the area of bearing fruit, in which the disciple is commanded to bear spiritual fruit, and yet credit is given to the Holy Spirit for the work accomplished.

There is, however, no real mystery or contradiction here. In salvation, the follower of Jesus has been put to death and resurrected by the power and work of the cross of Christ, and no longer lives his own life. He may say with Paul "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life

⁹⁴ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 123-125.

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.”⁹⁵ *Everything* good that happens in the life of the disciple is due to the grace of God and to the life of Christ abiding in him, and the characteristics of the disciple’s profile are only those visible evidences which may be expected in the life of a follower of Christ.

Conclusion

Simply put, the life of the disciple is characterized by his continual, complete submission to the will and Lordship of Jesus Christ. This submission manifests itself in public testimony, in obedience to Christ’s commands, in a vital life of prayer and love for the Word of God, and in acts of worship of God and loving service to men. The evidences of the disciples are the growth in Christlike character, particularly the manifestation of Christlike love, and the making of converts and disciples. Perhaps most importantly, it needs to be kept in mind that the growth, character, obedience, and fruitfulness of the disciple are only possible as a result of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

These various traits of the disciple’s profile will form the basis on which the discipleship assessment test is to be built. These aspects will be broken down into component items, and cast into measurable terms in order to enable individuals to determine where they are in comparison to the profile of the ideal disciple.

⁹⁵ Galatians 2:20, NASB.

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT OF A DISCIPLESHIP MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Introduction

The major portion of this project is the creation of an instrument to measure conformity to the disciple's profile. This will owe much in form and content to the principles of psychological assessment testing. A particular debt of gratitude in this effort must be acknowledged for the gracious help and counsel provided by Dr. Irving Tucker, chair of the Department of Psychology of Shepherd College, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

This project relies heavily on the expertise of others, and, while it is concerned to a degree with testing methodology, it is not intended to present a comprehensive introduction to the field of psychological assessment testing, but only those small portions of the discipline that intersect the needs of this project. A brief glossary of statistical and assessment terms may be found in Appendix B.

This chapter will first deal with the foundational philosophical question of the appropriateness of adapting psychological principles to a discipleship model. Next, the process and methodology of creating this particular test will be detailed. The conclusion of this phase of the project, the first draft of the "Discipleship Assessment Test," is included in Appendix C.

It must be noted that this portion of the project will not result in a finished test. In order to validate a test in the eyes of the academic and professional community, it must

undergo field testing and then revision.⁹⁶ Chapter Four, “Administration and Evaluation of the Instrument,” will contain the process of revising the test into a finished form. This represents a change from original plans, when it was hoped to take essentially a finished test out to administer, and then possibly merely to fine tune it. This is not a realistic goal. Every effort will be made to have a reliable and valid test prior to its initial administration to would-be disciples, but the process itself demands testing on actual subjects, and then revision, before a finished test can be constructed.⁹⁷

Application of Test Construction Principles to Discipleship Assessment

A philosophical question arises whenever principles and methodology that have been developed for use in secular disciplines are applied to religious or spiritual matters. In such areas as education, administration, worship, and leadership, the use of “worldly” methods in the church has been vigorously debated down through the years. It is not intended to enter this debate to any great extent. The question, however, must be asked in light of attempting to apply psychological assessment to a measurement of discipleship: Should principles that were developed without consideration of the unique God-man relationship be used in a matter intimately concerning that relationship, and, if so, how?

Considerable caution is advisable here. It is contended, and is virtually a truism, that all truth is God’s truth⁹⁸, and that truths concerning psychological principles or

⁹⁶ see Lewis R. Aiken, *Questionnaires & Inventories* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc: New York, 1997), 145ff for a discussion on establishing norms, reliability, and validity for a given test.

⁹⁷ Per conversations with Dr. Irving Tucker, chair, Department of Psychology, Shepherd College, 2003.

⁹⁸ Attributed to Miguel de Cervantes.

statistical methodology, discovered by honest men and women using the minds God has given them, are not necessarily incompatible with revealed Truth. Nevertheless, “the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God,” and it is a constant temptation to Christian educators, Christian counselors, Christian management consultants, and Christian psychologists to depend more heavily on their secular skills and training than on God’s leadership. John Drakeford illustrates some of the problem, from a slightly different perspective:

Students of religion have generally not had a training geared to behavioral research. Most of their studies are carried on in the areas of language, literature, philosophy, and theology. With this background and with little or no training in behavioral research methods, the religious scholar frequently finds it difficult to undertake objective research in psychology of religion. He often finds himself bothered by the threats of irreverent and iconoclastic researchers who fail to appreciate the past and the traditional legacy of religion.⁹⁹

Discipleship concerns the commitment of the individual Christian to his or her Lord, Jesus Christ. It is only made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit—the behavior and attitudes the Christian is to demonstrate are literally impossible for the non-Christian to manifest, save perhaps superficially for periods of time. This assessment, then, needs to measure that which no secular test can concern itself with—the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

This project is possible, however, because discipleship presents evidence of itself. Jesus said in John 13:35 that “all men would *know* you are my disciples, if you love one another.” That which can be known by men must be observable; that which can be observed can be measured; that which can be measured can be analyzed. These are the principles on which psychological analysis, and thus, assessment testing, are based. It

⁹⁹ John W. Drakeford, *Psychology in Search of a Soul*. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964), 5.

may be concluded that, properly, carefully, and even reverentially applied, principles of assessment testing may be useful to Christians seeking to examine themselves and measure evidences of discipleship. Once again, Drakeford lends support to the process:

Psychology and religion do not have to be antagonistic, and both disciplines have been oversensitive about the relationship. Religion, anxious to conserve the values of the past, has been defensive in its attitude towards psychology but really needs its probings and questionings. ...Psychology makes a penetrating analysis and seeks to debunk cant and hypocrisy. Christ did the same as he denounced the hypocrisy of the leaders of his day and poured out his scorn upon their failure to discern the true issues facing men and women. Psychology is opposed to the type of religious fervor which diverts attention from the reality of everyday responsibilities. Christ had a similar attitude as he condemned religious practices such as corban, in which a religionist evaded his normal everyday responsibilities. Psychology is the enemy of rituals which bind people and prevent them from reaching their potential. So was Christ as he broke through such practices as sabbath laws to insist that the welfare of man was more important than mere religious observances.¹⁰⁰

The nature of discipleship, specifically the nature of the discipleship profile, will shape the test. The discipleship profile, developed from the Biblical material in chapter two of this work, has been designed to list those evidences of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit discernible to either the disciple, those around him, or both. It specifically concerns itself with that which can be perceived and measured, including traits, attitudes, actions, and evidences of commitment.

It is essential that Christians examine their own spiritual health. The apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 13:5, commanded the church to examine themselves, to test to see whether they were in the faith. By extension, this can be taken to mean to look for evidences of their salvation and walk with Christ. While that particular command was in the context of addressing a serious disruption in the Corinthian church, the principle is applicable to all Christians. There are many references in the Bible to God's people and

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

their works being tested, examined, and tried (e.g. Psalm 66:10, I Corinthians 3:13, James 1:12), and so, since all disciples will be tested by God, it is surely the path of wisdom to test oneself, to see how one measures up to God's standard.

Psychological testing provides many tools, that, if used reverently, prayerfully, and cautiously, may allow a disciple much insight into himself. There are various aspects of assessment methodology developed by professionals in the field that are useful to deal with matters of this sort. Certain aspects of the methodology are inappropriate to this particular endeavor, while other areas will need to be heavily adapted. This will be covered more fully in the section on creating the test itself.

Creating the Discipleship Assessment Instrument

The Target Audience

The target audience for the instrument, and the normative sample which shall be used in the field-testing of it, shall consist of professing evangelical Christians who affirm Biblical authority, who freely acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and who desire to be disciples. Unlike many conventional tests, the discipleship assessment test will measure conformity to the descriptions of the disciple found in Scripture, rather than comparing results with the general population. It is essential, therefore, that those taking the test be in agreement concerning these general fundamentals of the faith. The instrument shall be tested in various churches and, hopefully, in the student body at Liberty University of Lynchburg, Virginia.

The Nature of the Test

The subject matter of the assessment test, in many ways, simplifies the process. As the goal is to determine the correlation of the individual disciple's characteristics with

the disciple's profile, the instrument shall need to be criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced. There is little point in measuring one's discipleship in comparison to one's neighbor, friend, or relative, although this is indeed a common error. It is a frequent, unspoken assumption by immature disciples that they are not doing too badly compared with other people they know, if indeed they think about it at all,¹⁰¹ although the precise magnitude of this phenomenon is unknown. If comparison with others were indeed the measure of discipleship, then a norm-referenced test, in which a disciple might be found to be more mature than, say, 80% of the population, would be appropriate.

The standard for discipleship, however, is the criteria laid down by the Lord Jesus and given to the church through His Word, the Bible. Therefore, the instrument, insofar as it is possible for a human instrument to do so, shall be criterion-referenced, measuring conformity of the individual disciple to the "Profile of An Ideal Disciple," the creation of which was detailed in Chapter Two.

It must be noted that it is expected that very few disciples will be found to have a high degree of conformity to the profile. The purpose of this project is exhortative and instructive rather than comforting. It is surmised that many if not most Christians are aware that they fall significantly short of where they ought to be. The goal of this project is to help them determine where and to what extent their deficiencies lie.

Reliability and Validity

The Discipleship Assessment Test is designed with the intent of seeking evidences of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual disciple. The method is to compare the disciple's own self-assessment with a model of

¹⁰¹ see Wilkins, *Following the Master*, pp. 27-29, on perceptions of discipleship.

an ideal disciple built from Scriptural precepts. The purpose and goal of the test is to diagnose the degree of discipleship commitment and maturity in the life of the believer, with the hope of providing motivation and direction for change and growth.

The question of validity of the test should not be troublesome in this project. It is intended, on the face of it, to measure conformity to a predetermined profile. As long as results are interpreted, and action plans are conceived, in light of that profile the test will be valid for its purposes. The matter of reliability is considerably more involved. That is, whether the test does indeed measure what it purports to measure is the single most significant part of this project. Test items will need to be rigorously subjected to field testing, feedback, and analysis to insure a reliable final test; this process shall constitute a major part of the time involved with this project.

As has already been noted, there is no such thing as a perfectly reliable test; some form of measurement error is always present in any human instrument. Because the purposes to which this instrument is to be put are largely motivational rather than evaluative or discriminatory in nature, because the nature of attitudinal testing is itself a hindrance to high reliability, and because time and resources prohibit extensive re-testing and re-evaluation in field work, a certain degree of perceived disparity between self-perception and test results shall be regarded as acceptable.¹⁰²

It is assumed, in the matter of reliability, that individuals taking the test shall be reasonably honest with themselves, and that they are motivated to find a true gauge of

¹⁰² For instance, an individual may have a fairly low score on “bearing fruit,” but may be aware of extenuating circumstances that may skew the results (perhaps having unavoidably limited contact with others, thereby limiting personal interactions and witnessing opportunities). So long as the test is still perceived to be enlightening in the sense of showing the individual where he or she measures vis-à-vis the disciple’s profile, it shall be assumed to be fulfilling its purposes.

their level of discipleship commitment, in order that they may know where improvement is needed. Unlike more conventional criterion-referenced aptitude tests, there is little possibility of avoiding deliberate fraud in this assessment. Since deliberate dishonesty would negate the value of the assessment to the test-taker, it is assumed that there is sufficient motivation to respond to the instrument as accurately as possible.

The test shall be administered in such a way as to provide for privacy and confidentiality in the answers thereof; in other words, no one will see test results or the evaluation thereof save the person taking the test. Hopefully, this will prevent any attempts to impress the test administrator with either unjustifiably high or low scores. Item construction shall be managed to avoid, insofar as possible, unintentional exaggeration (see below.) In addition, the test itself will be administered confidentially, with the testee scoring his or her own work and being enabled to interpret the results. It is hoped that this privacy and confidentiality may lend itself to greater forthrightness.

Item Construction

The test will be self-report and subjective in nature, out of necessity, although there should be significant correlation between an individual's self-perception and the perception of others. Test items shall be carefully weighted and balanced to minimize the excessive reporting of hypocrisy and spiritual pride on the one hand, and the under-reporting of false modesty on the other.

The format for the test items shall use a variation of the Likert scale¹⁰³, in which testees are asked to respond to a series of questions or statements with “strongly agree,

¹⁰³ named for its inventor, Rensis Likert, of the University of Michigan, who first published this approach to attitude surveys in 1932. (source: Raymond J. Corsinii and Alan J. Auerbach, eds. *Concise Encyclopedia of Psychology*. John Wiley & Sons: New York, 1996. 527 and others.)

agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree.” Possible responses shall be “strongly agree, agree, mildly agree, mildly disagree, disagree, strongly disagree,” leaving no room for a neutral option on any question. This writer has done considerable research and seeking of advice regarding the format,¹⁰⁴ and this seems to be the most appropriate manner to report such personal information. Items shall cover both attitudinal and behavioral factors, and shall be correlated with the different aspect of the disciple’s profile.

Testing to the Profile

The remainder of this chapter shall detail the construction of test items correlated to the various aspects of the disciple’s profile, and the process of interpreting the results. The initial test may be seen, as has already been noted, in Appendix B of this work. The preliminary scoring and interpretive guide may be seen in Appendix C, “Interpreting the Discipleship Assessment Test.” The introductory material for the initial test shall note that it is a preliminary work, and not a finished product. Similarly, the preliminary scoring and interpretive guide shall include a section for feedback on the test, which shall not be part of the final product. It is intended to solicit input from test takers as to their impressions of the reliability of the test, i.e. how closely their self perception matches the scored results, with the hope of improving the test. It is in the comparison of feedback, i.e., perceptions and opinions of test takers of what their test results should have been, and actual test results that most of the statistical analysis of this work shall be involved.

¹⁰⁴ see the bibliography for various sources. In addition, conversations with Dr. Irving Tucker, Dr. Mike Normoyle (pastor of Browntown Baptist Church, Bentonville, Virginia), Dr. Chuck Jolley, (pastor of Main Street Baptist Church, Luray, Virginia), Dr. Parker Thompson (pastor, North Fork Baptist Church,

Introduction to the Test

Test takers will need to be briefed on what the discipleship assessment test does and does not purport to accomplish prior to taking it, and this will form part of the introductory material. Ideally, the assessment will be used as part of a larger study on the nature of discipleship itself. Primarily, disciples will need to be reminded that the test is looking for evidences of their commitment to Christ, and evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. This is not a temperament or personality test in which the individual may modify his attitudes or behaviors by strength of will. It is, instead, an attempt to ascertain where an individual is in his walk with Christ, characterized by the degree of transformation the Holy Spirit has worked in him.

Willingness to Follow Christ

From the Disciple's Profile (see Appendix A) we find the first characteristic of the disciple: "The disciple is characterized by an absolute willingness to follow and obey the Lord Jesus wherever that may take him and whatever it may cost." Items measuring this characteristic of the disciple will be concerned with a basic attitude towards values and personal priorities, with the idea of measuring the general submissiveness of the person. Items do not include "if I felt Jesus was leading me to" or variations thereof because it is felt that testees would have difficulty being objective in self-reporting under those circumstances. One might as well ask something along the lines of "Are you living as a disciple?" Such a question would too obviously imply right and wrong answers with it, and would only "reveal" what the disciple already clearly knew about his or her own attitude. Instead, the test attempts to measure a general attitude of submissiveness to

authority, with the understanding that this will govern the disciple's response to the absolute authority of Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁵

It is understood that individuals who are less settled in their lives (college students, singles, younger persons generally) may have an easier time with this idea of availability towards the Lord than perhaps more established persons might be. Different situations come with different strengths and different temptations.

Sample items in this category (to be responded to with agree, disagree, etc.) may include the following statements.¹⁰⁶ Please note that some of these (and subsequent) will be "reverse-scored;" that is, a "strongly agree" on them would count the same towards the final score as a "strongly disagree" on other items. This is due, obviously, to the positive/negative duality of many of the items.

I am usually willing to try new experiences.

I am reluctant to try new experiences.

I am uncomfortable with following someone else's plan.

I respond well to leadership.

I would be comfortable moving far from home if it seemed best.

I would strongly dislike leaving my home.

I do not like being told what to do.

I enjoy being in charge of things.

I usually know better than people around me.

I take advice well.

It would be hard for me to give up some of my favorite things.

I am smart enough to take care of myself.

I am easily satisfied.

I worry about a lot of things.

I am very set in my ways.

¹⁰⁵ This follows from the principle expounded by the apostle Paul in Romans 13:1-2, when he identifies all authority as being God-ordained. A person rebellious against human authority is also rebellious against divine authority. It is assumed then, that a person who easily follows the leadership of human agents will not have great difficulty in following the authority of the Lord Jesus, assuming (as is true for all professing disciples) that he has already given his allegiance to Christ.

¹⁰⁶ In the interests of space, explanation and justification for the inclusion of these and subsequent individual test items are not part of this paper. It is hoped that the reasoning behind most of the test items is self-evident; some will no doubt be deleted or altered in test revision as not useful to the finished product.

Public Identification with Christ

The second qualification of the Disciple's Profile is that "the disciple will, in some clear manner, identify himself with Jesus Christ publicly, and will continue to do so in the course of his discipleship." This is a basic step of discipleship, and a fairly straightforward one for which to test. Sample items may include the following:

I have made a public profession of faith in Christ.
I attend church regularly.
My immediate family knows that I am a Christian.
My extended family knows that I am a Christian.
My friends and acquaintances know that I am a Christian.
I talk about my spiritual life with people I know.
I look for ways to talk to others about Jesus.

Possessing a "Teachable" Attitude

The next aspect of the Disciple's Profile concerns his nature in being taught to obey. "The disciple is always willing to change, grow, and learn to obey the leading and the commands of Jesus Christ." The disciples of other masters may look forward to the time when they can become masters themselves, but the disciples of Jesus Christ are to always remain humble and open to new learning and change. Opposite characteristics of "teachability" are arrogance, closed-mindedness, and stubbornness, and the test items are intended to reveal these traits. Test items may include the following:

I am always willing to learn something new.
Some people might say I am opinionated.
There are many things about the Bible I don't understand.
I can learn something from just about anyone.
I frequently find that I am mistaken about something.
I enjoy talking through differences of opinion.
I believe that if the Bible says it, that settles it.
I am often reminded that God knows better than I do.
Some people would call me stubborn.
I have lots of practice admitting to mistakes.

Being Obedient to Christ's Leading

The next, and largest, aspect of the Disciple's Profile is multifaceted: "Three areas of obedience shall be evident in the life of the disciple; denial of self, abiding in Christ, and bearing fruit." Denial of self shall primarily be measured as an attitude, as this will manifest differently in the life of every individual disciple. Abiding in Christ has specific actions associated with it: devotion to the Word, to prayer, and to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Bearing fruit, that great work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, shall be demonstrated by character traits in the life of the believer and by evangelistic concern.

Possible test items in this category may include the following:

I am a self-disciplined person.
I am a self-indulgent person.
What happens to me is not important to me.
I wish more people shared my concerns.
I am willing to change my ways.
Church attendance makes a difference in my life.
I regularly read and study the Bible.
The Bible is a source of guidance for me.
I enjoy hearing the Bible taught.
I pray often and at length.
My prayer times bring me peace and strength.
I am aware of God's guidance in my daily life.
I ask God often what He wants me to do.
Others would describe me as compassionate.
In honesty, there are people I hate.
I get angry easily.
I sometimes say things I shouldn't.
I am usually upbeat and cheerful.
I am patient when things don't go my way.
Others would describe me as gentle.
Others would describe me as caring.
Others would describe me as loyal.
I carry a lot of resentment inside.
I am often anxious and nervous.
I cope well with troubles and misfortune.

Being Victorious Over Sin

Struggling with the sin nature is an ongoing issue with the disciple, and one that must be diligently faced. The final aspect of the Disciple's Profile that can be covered by a survey is that "the disciple is to work to maintain a clean, obedient heart before God, repenting of sin when he has failed, because harbored (unrepentant) sin grieves the Holy Spirit and hinders growth in discipleship." It is difficult to test for specifics in this area, as different Christians are tempted by different things, but a growing disciple will be aware of his or her own areas of weakness, and will strive to overcome them.

It may be seen that a person who is cognizant of areas of weakness, and aware of frequent temptation, is more closely aligned to the Disciple's Profile than one who is not possessed of this awareness. This is due to the scripturally based concept that all Christians face constant temptation and struggle with certain sins; therefore, the mature disciple is one who faces this reality and this struggle honestly and boldly. The immature disciple may not be aware of struggling with sin and temptation because the immature disciple is not struggling, but instead habitually gives in to temptation and harbors sin in his life.

Possible test items in this area may include the following:

- I have areas where I struggle in my Christian life.*
- I am often tempted to certain types of sin.*
- I sometimes can overcome temptation with prayer.*
- I sometimes can overcome temptation with Scripture.*
- I give in to temptation.*
- I am aware of temptation in my life.*
- I ask for forgiveness when I give in to temptation.*
- I enjoy some things that Jesus probably wouldn't do, but I still do them.*
- I trust God to help me overcome temptation in my life.*

Scoring and Interpreting the Test

The completed scoring and interpreting guide for the Discipleship Assessment Test may be found in Appendix C of this work. The following material details some of the factors involved in scoring this particular test and interpreting the results thereof.

Scaling

Scaling, in psychological assessment testing, is “the process of setting rules for assigning numbers in measurement.”¹⁰⁷ This refers to giving numerical values to various test answers, for the purpose of quantifying them. In a modified Likert scale, as this assessment test is using, this is simple in concept—an answer of “strongly agree” would receive five points, while an answer of “strongly disagree” would receive no points, except, of course, on the reverse scored items, where the opposite is true.

The majority of the test items shall follow this fairly simple format. Some items shall be scored differently; that is, an “agree,” and a “mildly agree” might receive the same number of points, and so forth. Other items will receive points only, for instance, for a positive answer. While some of these distinctions may seem somewhat arbitrary, they in fact reflect a measured judgment and interaction with the material concerning the significance of certain items, based on the amount each item contributes to its particular factor in the disciple’s profile. Not all test items are equally significant at determining discipleship level. This weighting and scaling may change as the test is refined, in light of feedback given.

Test Results

The results will be grouped into seven profiles—four main categories and three sub-categories (related to “obedient to Christ”), and the interpretive guides will be keyed to these seven. A test taker, then, will receive a comparison of how he or she measures relative to the Disciple’s Profile in seven areas, with the goal of motivating towards greater yieldedness to Christ’s leading in those areas of weakness.

The interpretive guide shall be written in a suggesting rather than a positively stating manner. For example, a test taker might be told “you may be holding on to sinful habits in your life,” rather than “you are holding on to sinful habits in your life. (Repent, you sinner.)” The nature of attitudinal testing and the impossibility of testing to specifics when so many variables are present would make it inadvisable to be too declarative. Furthermore, while the test is intended to be motivational and exhortational, it can not be judgmental, again due to the impossibility of offering more than general guidelines and suggestions to individuals taking the test. Two individuals might have similar profiles, and thus similar levels of discipleship commitment generally, but differ wildly in specifics.

If and when the test is rendered reliable, the goal is for the test results to hold a mirror up to the disciple’s life. A person ought to be able to look at his results, and recognize himself. As such, and assuming he is already motivated to change, (otherwise he would have had little interest in taking the test) honest and clear evaluation should be sufficient to accomplish the purposes of the instrument.

¹⁰⁷ Cohen, 219.

Feedback

Feedback shall be solicited in two areas—item construction and test results. Four questions shall be asked on the feedback form: 1. Were there any test items that were unclear? (The individuals shall have access to a copy of the test.) 2. Did you consider your assessment test results to be accurate? 3. If your test results were not accurate, please describe the inconsistencies. 4. Would you be open to discussing this with Henry Styron, the developer of the assessment test? (Individuals shall be requested to provide contact information.) The nature of the feedback shall determine the remainder of the project's course.

Conclusion

The process of creating this instrument (which is named the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test, in honor of the church this writer serves) has been arduous but instructive. The end result seems very small for the time, labor, and expertise of many persons that have gone into it. It is hoped that the Holy Spirit may make some small use of this to spur the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to a greater degree of yielding to Him, that He may transform their lives for the work of His kingdom, to His honor and glory.

The next stage of this project is the field-testing of this instrument, with the aid of many fellow believers willing to assist in this effort. Chapter Four, "Administration and Evaluation of the Instrument," shall, in its first part, read as an account of this field-testing and solicitation of feedback. In the evaluation of the test, the feedback and test results shall be subjected to analysis. Finally, a finished test and scoring/interpretation guide shall be produced.

Chapter Five, "Conclusions," shall give a rather more personal account of what has been learned from these experiences, and shall give some idea of a plan for the future of the Summit Point Assessment Test and the results obtained from it, particularly as it is hoped to implement the information gained in varying churches.

CHAPTER 4

ADMINISTRATION AND EVALUATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

Introduction

Field testing is an essential part of any test development process. Because the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test is intended to be administered primarily in church settings, it was essential that it be tested largely in churches. Ronald J. Cohen and Mark Swerdlik briefly explain this principle:

Having created a pool of items from which the final version of the test will be developed, the test developer will next try out the test. The test should be tried out on people similar in critical respects to the people for whom the test was designed. Thus, for example, if a test is designed to aid in decisions regarding the selection of corporate employees with management potential at a certain level, it would be appropriate to try out the test on corporate employees at the targeted level—and inappropriate to try out the test on introductory psychology students.

...[t]he test tryout should be executed under conditions that are as identical as possible to the conditions under which the standardized test will be administered. This means that all instructions, and everything from the time limits allotted for completing the test to the atmosphere at the test site, should be as similar as possible...In general, the test developer endeavors to ensure that differences in response to the test's items are due in fact to the items, not to extraneous factors.¹⁰⁸

Since the test is intended to be used in church settings, typically within the one hour time frame most churches allot for their Sunday School, Discipleship Training, or midweek Bible study activities, the field testing was held almost exclusively in

¹⁰⁸ Cohen, Ronald Jay and Mark E. Swerdlik. *Psychological Testing and Assessment: An Introduction to Tests and Measurement*. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 1999), 230.

churches¹⁰⁹ and held to a one hour time frame. The one element in the field-testing process that will not be included in the final version of the test is the solicitation of feedback for the purpose of improving the test; otherwise, the field testing was designed to be virtually identical to the eventual administration of the test as a useful instrument, and, in the later stages, hopefully it was nearly as useful to the test participants.

Trial Administration of the Instrument

The first draft of the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test was administered in the Wednesday night Bible study time of Summit Point Baptist Church, Summit Point, West Virginia, on August 27, 2003. Particular and heartfelt appreciation is expressed to eight members of Summit Point Baptist Church who took part in the first trial run of the test.¹¹⁰

The format for the session was as follows: A brief presentation was made on the disciple's profile and the purposes and goals of the test. The test itself was administered, then self-scoring, interpretation, and feedback guides were distributed. It had been decided to provide means by which individuals could score their own tests, as a way of assuring confidentiality and hopefully greater honesty. Feedback sheets were distributed to solicit comment on the test itself, with the intent of improving the instrument through field-testing.

The trial run of the test demonstrated that there was still a great deal of work to do, even during the taking of the test. Most of the test items seemed to be seen as clear and pertinent, although there were a few questions asked on specific ones. The self-

¹⁰⁹ With the exception of one testing session with the students at Liberty University.

¹¹⁰ Mary Lee Bevan, Roby Bevan, Elwood Cheshire, Leroy Cheshire, Nora Drish, Violet Hadley, Tom Jackson, and Don Johnson.

scoring guide, however, proved to be unwieldy and confusing, and in great need of simplification. While most participants could work their way through it, it was cumbersome and difficult. Again, thanks are expressed to the small group who labored through this first effort.

After the initial field run, time was spent reworking the test, and a considerable amount of effort was expended on reworking the scoring guide. On Sunday, August 31st, the material for the test was delivered to the Rev. Daron Osborne, associate pastor of Harbor Baptist Church, of Charlotte, North Carolina. Original plans had been to administer the test in Harbor Baptist Church on that day, but this proved unworkable; therefore, Rev. Osborne was instructed in the use of the material with request to administer it himself to his congregation at a suitable time, and solicit feedback from individuals taking the test.

On Sunday, September 7th, 2003, the test was administered, with an updated version of the scoring guide, to 21 persons in the Sunday School hour at North Fork Baptist Church, of Purcellville, Virginia. The presentation of the material was changed, with the test being administered first, and then presentation of the material on the disciple's profile¹¹¹, and then the self-scoring and interpretation guide was introduced. Immediate feedback, while mostly positive, again indicated that the self-scoring guide still required some work.

¹¹¹ It had also become apparent in the trial run of the test that teaching on the Disciple's Profile prior to the administration of the test had the unfortunate effect of alerting test-takers to the specific material which the test covered, and this therefore unintentionally influenced answers. The test was administered first to allow test takers to approach it with an open mind. Furthermore, in the interests of time (the material is intended to be presentable within the one-hour session most churches use for their Sunday School, Discipleship Training, or Bible study programs), the presentation of the discipleship profile could be started while some of the slower test takers were still working, without disruption. No negative effects have been observed at this point from beginning with the administration of the test.

The same version of the test and scoring guide were administered that evening, September 7th, to the Discipleship Training Program of Main Street Baptist Church, in Luray, Virginia, with 10 persons present. The overall immediate reaction to the test was very positive, although there was some very strong and outspoken complaint, again about the self-scoring guide.¹¹²

At this point it became apparent that the difficulty with the self-scoring guide was proving a significant hindrance to the benefit test-takers might receive from the Discipleship Assessment, and was, indeed, hindering the progress of the project. Many test-takers were elderly, and, while few had great difficulty taking the test itself, many became very confused when attempting to self-score it, which led to inaccurate and decidedly unhelpful results.¹¹³ It was debated whether or not to abandon the self-scoring concept with the idea that the administrator would score test results, but, in the continued interest of privacy, as well as the logistics involved with one person trying to score multiple tests and return them in the same session so that results could be discussed, it was determined to continue with efforts to improve the guide itself.

Many tested had, however, been able to self-score without great difficulty, and thus it was possible for substantial feedback to be received concerning the test itself.

¹¹² Virtually all of this, however, came from one person with whom this writer has had prior experience, and he is inclined to take into account certain negative aspects of her personality when evaluating her reaction.

¹¹³ One delightful lady at Main Street Baptist Church, who was about 4'8" tall, somewhat plump, and in the vicinity of 90 years old, clearly had little idea what was going on, but demonstrated a marked desire to please the "nice young man" who was teaching that evening. She kept calling the test administrator over, and repeatedly asked questions along the lines of "Is this right, dear?" and "Am I doing okay, dear?" Her test, unfortunately, was a hopeless muddle, with several questions marked multiple times and others left blank entirely. She was eventually informed that she was doing fine, which seemed to satisfy her. No further feedback was received from her, but there seems little reason to be concerned about her level of discipleship commitment.

While the feedback was mostly positive, several test items had been called into question, and it was suggested that certain categories might benefit from having more items included. An updated version of the test was produced, with some items removed, some altered, and several new items added, and a substantially more user-friendly self-scoring and interpretation guide was prepared.

On September 21, 2003, the test was administered in the Sunday School hour of Calvary Baptist Church of Winchester, Virginia, with 39 persons present. This was an overwhelmingly positive experience, and seemed to be the first real validation of the test as a potential motivator towards greater discipleship. The self-scoring guide still presented a degree of difficulty, but not so much that individuals were unable to work their way through it and still arrive at accurate scores in a reasonably receptive frame of mind. While at this point it was still hoped to further improve and refine the self-scoring portion of the test, it had been demonstrated to have been sufficiently simplified that the test itself, and the interpretive guide, could be of some use.

The reactions to the test were enthusiastic. Requests were made for more copies of the material, so that individuals not present could take the test. Other individuals approached later with personal requests for a copy of the test, having heard of it by word of mouth.¹¹⁴ The phrase used most often to describe the test was “eye-opening,” which, since the goal of the project was to demonstrate to individuals where their own levels of discipleship commitment were with the hope of motivating them towards a greater degree

¹¹⁴ Copies of the material were subsequently sent to the Rev. Allen Acker, minister of youth and education at Calvary, with permission to make as many copies of the test as necessary for the needs of Calvary Baptist Church. It was Rev. Acker who had been so kind as to arrange this opportunity to demonstrate the test.

of commitment, was very gratifying. This may be said to have been a very good day in the life of the project.

One concern, statistically insignificant, was generated by an anonymous feedback sheet that was mailed along with several others some days after the event. One test-taker, in responding to the question “Did you consider your assessment results to be accurate? Please feel free to elaborate.” wrote only, “Yes, but I didn’t know I am so worthless” (*sic*). There was no other comment or identifying information on the page, leaving no context with which to interpret the remark. It could indicate that the writer was under deep conviction for sin, or it could be indicative of an unproductive depression, or it could simply mean only that the writer was insulted. No response was possible because it was promised that the feedback sheets would be treated with confidentiality, used only to improve the test. To seek to discover the identity of the writer to attempt to clarify things, or even to mention the response to the pastors of the church, would violate the spirit of the contractual agreement. The intent of the test was, after all, to shake would-be disciples up a bit; the tone of the response seems disturbing, but nothing can be done about it. This is the only such response generated so far by the test.

There was constructive feedback. There was concern still expressed over the self-scoring guide; while no longer a barrier to accurate interpretation of the test, it was still seen as inconvenient and difficult. Although there is yet room for improvement, much of the difficulty remaining seems to stem from individual carelessness; the majority of test-takers had no problem with the scoring. A few concrete suggestions were given as to how it could be improved.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ At least one suggestion was beyond the resources of this project. It was mentioned that some tests make use of a “punch-out” answer sheet, which is then overlaid on a scoring guide. While this would,

Much of the feedback concerned individual test items. While the majority of the response was very positive, some felt that certain items were either misleading or inappropriate. A few specific responses bear mentioning, to give some idea of the process. One anonymous feedback sheet questioned the concept of “self-denial,” and wondered what it really meant for Jesus to say we should deny ourselves. Regrettably, due to the anonymity of the response, exploration of the theological understanding behind the musings was impossible. Another anonymous feedback sheet requested that no “trick questions” be used. What this referred to is unknown; nevertheless, further examination and revision of the test was called for.

At this stage, there are some reservations about the anonymity of the process. The feedback sheet contained the question “Would you be open to discussing this [the test and results] with Henry Styron, the developer of the test?” It also asked for contact information for those so willing, and several persons responded enthusiastically. Most of the feedback sheets received, however, have been anonymous, and several comments (although by no means all or even a majority) have been a bit cryptic, like those already referenced. Without opportunity to explore the meanings behind the unclear statements, these comments must be disregarded in revising the test. This is somewhat frustrating, because good input could be used if the thoughts behind the comments could be explored. While he is unwilling to abandon the anonymity of the process, the developer plans to courteously emphasize in future testing that comments must be clear to be helpful.

indeed, greatly simplify the scoring, cost and time factors prohibit the use of something so sophisticated in a test that is still going through revision. When the test reaches what may be regarded as a final form, a more professional presentation may be adopted, in the event the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test ever reaches widespread use. For now, the more modest limits of the test development phase require only that the self-scoring portions be reasonably simple and easy to use by individuals taking a certain amount of care.

On Thursday evening, September 25, 2003, the Assessment Test was field-tested at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. The campus pastor, Dwayne Carson, had graciously arranged to use as a focus group several student volunteers, and Josh Soto, a student working in the campus pastor's office, acted as coordinator of the session. There were 19 students present at the session, and the dynamics were interestingly different from prior sessions, in which the material had been presented exclusively in churches.

The Liberty students, perhaps more accustomed to the give and take of formal classroom settings, asked more questions about specific test items during the session itself than did test takers in other sessions. What proved extremely thought-provoking, however, was that this focus group evidenced virtually no difficulty understanding or using the self-scoring guide, perhaps reflecting a greater level of accustomization to the test-taking process in general than their counterparts in church settings.

One trait this group did not demonstrate was the informal feedback following the test session that was characteristic of all previous sessions. While the test administrator had issued a specific invitation to remain after the session and dialogue about the test itself, no one at this session took him up on it, as opposed to at least two or three (and often several) persons at the church settings. It may be that the administrator was viewed as more of an authority figure in this session, and students were thus slightly intimidated and reluctant to open up, as opposed to the church sessions, in which regular church attendees are accustomed to dialogue with ministers about any of a number of matters. It may also be that, due to the lateness of the hour, the students simply had other pressing matters to attend.

On Sunday, September 28, 2003, the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test was field-tested in the Sunday School session of Browntown Baptist Church, of Bentonville, Virginia. Eighteen persons took the test, with two persons who had been working with children during the session requesting copies of it afterwards.¹¹⁶ Reaction to the test was initially very positive, and little difficulty was experienced with the self-scoring portions.

Much productive dialogue occurred after the test with Dr. Mike Normoyle, the pastor. His judgment had been for some time that the overall level of discipleship in the church was very low. Based on some “choir room conversations,” apparently many persons’ test results unflatteringly compared them to the disciple’s profile, and found them badly wanting. According to the pastor, who may be assumed to be in a position to know, this was an accurate assessment of the profiled individuals. This may be taken as a further validation of the reliability of the instrument itself.

A question was asked on whether it would be possible to get an overall discipleship score for a church using the test, suggesting a possible future application of the material. Individuals could anonymously turn their scores on the instrument in to the minister of a congregation. This would maintain privacy, but would also enable the church to have a picture of the level of discipleship in the church, which would allow it to tailor its teaching and preaching ministries to meet the areas of greatest need. A church that had a large percentage of responses weak in “abiding in Christ,” for instance, could begin emphasizing the spiritual disciplines in its educational and pulpit activities, to strengthen this area. A church that was weak in discipleship generally could make that an

¹¹⁶ Browntown Baptist Church averages about 60 persons in worship, so this represented a significant portion of the church’s adult population.

issue of prayer, corporate repentance, and seeking revival. The diagnostic nature of the test, and the fact that it was generated by an “outside authority,” could make it invaluable for ministers seeking to demonstrate to their congregations precisely where they were falling short and most needing to work.

On Wednesday, October 1st, the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test received its final field test at Marlow Heights Baptist Church, in Front Royal, Virginia, with thirty-nine adults participating. The testing session at this meeting was condensed to forty-five minutes in length. This gave a slightly more rushed feel to the presentation, and the presentation of the disciple’s profile material was shortened somewhat to compensate. This seems to have weakened the benefit received from the session.

Interestingly, when the material was presented at Liberty University, the session was completed within forty-five minutes with no sense of being hurried, but this was no doubt due to the current familiarity of the college students with testing in general; they moved through the test and self-scoring guides much more quickly and easily than did the unacclimated test takers at Marlow Heights.

Nevertheless, the overall impression received was very positive, again confirming the belief that the instrument is useful and meaningful. The test as presented at Marlow Heights was in very nearly the final form in which it is included in this project; and therefore was virtually a finished product. After the session, feedback was received from several persons on how “eye-opening” the test was for them, and on how accurately it read them.

A lengthy conversation with the Rev. Jim Bunce, pastor of Marlow Heights Baptist Church, followed the session, in which the test itself, and future plans for it, were

discussed. Rev. Bunce had also been impressed by the test and, like Dr. Normoyle of Browntown, wondered if there could be some means by which churches could be made aware of the information gathered from the test. He indicated that he himself probably didn't know where the bulk of his congregation would test in their commitment levels, and that this information would be very useful to him.

Evaluation of Field Testing

Overall, the experience of field testing the instrument was very positive, but there was a significant concern with the number of people tested. Referring to the opinion of Cohen and Swerdlik, it would seem that too few persons were involved in the field-testing process:

Equally important as questions concerning *whom* the test should be tried out on are questions concerning *how many* people the test should be tried out on. There are no hard-and-fast rules here, but some have recommended that there be no fewer than five subjects, and preferably as many as ten subjects, for every one item on the test. In general, the more subjects in the tryout the better; all other things being equal, ten subjects per test item is better than five because of the lessening of the role of chance in subsequent analyses of the data, particularly in factor analysis. A definite risk in using too few subjects during test tryout comes during factor analysis of the findings, when what we might call “phantom factors”—nonexistent factors that are actually artifacts of the small sample size—may emerge.¹¹⁷

According to this rule of thumb, since there are 72 items on the “final” version of the test, the minimum test group should have been about 350 persons, with 700 persons being preferable. In actuality, fewer than 200 participated in the test tryout phase, even counting rough estimates from persons who made extra copies for absentees and who administered the test later.

¹¹⁷ Cohen and Swerdlik, 230.

This particular aspect of the test evaluation process could not be regarded as having gone according to plan. With one or two happy exceptions, turnout for the test at the various locations was considerably less than had been anticipated or hoped for, and a few expected opportunities for administering the test failed to materialize.¹¹⁸

Participation was entirely voluntary, and much gratitude is felt for the many who went out of their way to be gracious, courteous, and helpful.

Nevertheless, there is an insufficient pool of test respondents to permit conventional statistical analysis to be applied; even granted that there is no firm rule about how many persons must participate in testing tryout, more people should have been tested according to the considered judgment of professionals in the field. Confirmation of the reliability of the test must be achieved by somewhat different means.

The Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test is a criterion-referenced test.

Robert M. Kaplan and Dennis P. Saccuzzo discuss this concept:

The traditional use of tests requires that we determine how well someone has done on a test by comparing the person's performance to that of others....A *criterion-referenced test* compares performance with some clearly defined criterion for mastery. This approach is popular in individualized instruction programs. For each student, a set of objectives is defined that state exactly what the student should be able to do after an educational experience. For example, an objective for a junior-high algebra student might be to solve linear equations with two unknowns. The criterion-referenced test would be used to determine whether this objective had been achieved. After demonstrating this knowledge, the student could move ahead to another objective. Many educators regard criterion-referenced tests as diagnostic instruments. When a student does poorly on some items, the teacher knows that the individualized education program needs more focus in a particular area.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ With one invitation being withdrawn with less than a week's notice, giving insufficient time to schedule a substitute.

¹¹⁹ Robert M. Kaplan and Dennis P. Saccuzzo. *Psychological Testing: Principles, Applications, and Issues*. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1997), 169-170.

The Discipleship Assessment Test has a predetermined set of criteria: the Model of the Ideal Disciple. Rather than comparing disciples one with another, they are compared to a Biblically-based picture of discipleship. The test is diagnostic in nature, and seeks to lead individuals towards improvement in areas where they fall short.

There is a process called confirmatory factor analysis which meshes well with criterion-referenced tests, and which allows for analysis to be performed on the test itself, rather than on the results. Timothy Keith and Lea Witta discuss this tool:

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is an excellent method for determining whether a test really measures the abilities or constructs its authors believe it measures. It is, in other words, an excellent method for evaluating the *construct validity* of a test...CFA often starts with a picture—a model—that describes the researcher’s theory of what the test measures; this picture is often based on the researcher’s reading of what the test is designed to measure...The next step in CFA is to test the model against some data to determine whether the model does an adequate job of explaining the test...Given a good fit of the model to the data, the [final] step in CFA is to interpret the findings of the analysis.¹²⁰

Using principles of modeling, describing, and picturing from this approach, it is possible to perform item analysis on the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test, related to the seven areas of the “Profile of the Ideal Disciple” previously discussed. The determining factors then become how closely the various test items relate to the criteria of the profile, and whether the resultant analysis of the individual test taker accurately reflects their conformity to each individual criterion. In other words, the test itself, rather than the results of the test, is the subject of the analysis. Feedback from test-takers can be used beneficially as a guide and reference in this process; since the test results themselves are not being subject to statistical analysis, it is possible to proceed without depending on the population sample that would otherwise be inadequately small.

¹²⁰ Timothy Z. Keith and E. Lea Witta, writing in Cohen and Swerdlik, *Psychological Testing and Assessment*, 311-312.

Item Analysis

The original version of the Discipleship Assessment Test consisted of 66 items, statements to which the test taker was to respond with answers according to a modified version of the Likert scale.¹²¹ These items were selected to correspond with the seven measurable attributes of the Disciple's Profile.¹²² Item analysis took place in the field-testing of the instrument, in which individual responses were solicited (and obtained, in large numbers) concerning the clarity, pertinence, and relevance of individual test items.

The final test consists of 72 items, and has a substantial amount of similarity to the original test. Fully two-thirds of the items on the first draft of the assessment remain on the final test in their original form. Some items were added to certain categories in order to produce a fuller picture of those aspects of the disciple's profile. Other items were rewritten for greater clarity, while others were rewritten to facilitate the scoring process.¹²³ A very few items were removed entirely, whether because of being superfluous to their category, being irredeemably confusing, or being inapplicable to the purposes for which they were intended.

No attempt is made here to report detailed item by item analysis, in the interests of a desirable brevity, but the process of item examination of the whole may be illustrated by a few examples of the evaluative process:

Item number 5 on the original test, "It would be hard for me to give up some of my favorite things," became item number 19 on the final test, "I would be miserable if I lost some of my favorite possessions." This item relates to the aspect of the disciple's

¹²¹ Strongly Agree, Agree, Mildly Agree, Mildly Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

¹²² See Chapter Two and Appendix A for these attributes.

¹²³ See below, "Self-Scoring Analysis" for greater detail.

profile “absolute willingness to follow and obey Christ,” and is included based on the rationale that disciples are not to be materialistic, and are indeed not to overly accumulate “treasures on earth,” as Matthew 6:19 indicates.¹²⁴ The reason for the alteration, discovered during field-testing, was ambiguity in the original statement. “Favorite things” could include homes, vehicles, heirlooms, mementos, and so forth, and “it would be hard for me” is rather vague; it would be inhuman to expect persons to have *no* sentimental attachment to any items in their lives. The second statement is rather more clearly worded, and gives the clue that, if the Christian would be “miserable” about losing a *possession*, then there is an unhealthy attachment to the things of this world, as opposed to having one’s sights set on Christ.

In a similar vein, item number 13, “I would be comfortable moving far from home if it seemed best for me” became item number 23, “I would be comfortable moving far from home if it accomplished something important.” This item, also tied to “willingness to follow and obey Christ,” was attempting to measure a disciple’s attachment to his current circumstances, and his willingness to change. Moving far from one’s home is one of the most drastic changes a person can make; although many followers of Christ are called to serve Him in the community in which they find themselves, following Christ means being willing to follow Him anywhere. The question was changed because it was unclearly worded and confusing. While putting “I would be comfortable moving far from home if Jesus wanted me to” would have been rather too obvious, “if it seemed best for me” was generally perceived as vague. Changing the phraseology to “if it

¹²⁴ Although this verse has at times been poorly exegeted to justify an ascetic or even monastic lifestyle.

accomplished something important” clearly and successfully required test takers to determine where their personal comfort ranked in their priorities.

A few items were removed for vagueness and unfixable ambiguity. For instance, “I am smart enough to take care of myself,” item 6 on the original test, was tied to the “teachable attitude” portion of the disciple’s profile—a disciple is always willing to change, grow, and learn. This item was negatively scored, and was originally intended to measure how much a disciple knew that he should not rely on his own judgment, but should, instead, rely on the leading and guidance of the Lord. Unfortunately, the statement turned out to have many different possible interpretations, and was generally seen as somewhat confusing. This particular item, and a few others that experienced similar trouble, were removed from the final test.

One item that experienced a certain amount of resistance was retained. Item 27 on the original test, “I respond well to leadership,” moved a few places to item 29 on the finished test, and changed to “I respond well to human leadership” but otherwise remained. This item was also keyed to the disciple’s “teachable attitude,” and reflects the willingness of the disciple to place him or herself humbly under authority. Comments were received on this one, along the lines of “Do you mean God’s leadership or human leadership? Because it would make a difference in how I respond.” The desire for clarification is valid, hence the change, but it shouldn’t make any substantial difference in response whether it is human leadership or divine leadership that is in question.¹²⁵ A person who is unwilling to follow the authority of a legitimate leader will also be reluctant to follow God’s leading. This is one of the fundamental problems with many so-

¹²⁵ Hebrews 13:17 entreats to “obey them that have the rule over you,” and Romans 13:1 reminds one that all authority is of God, and that legitimate leaders were ordained by God.

called disciples in churches today; they think they would be willing to follow a burning bush, but they show great reluctance or even stubbornly refuse to follow any sort of human leadership.

It is hoped that these few examples illustrate some of the process that has gone on in evaluating and analyzing the items of the Assessment Test. Much more could be written and reported, but it would seem to be belaboring the point. A comparison of the two versions of the test¹²⁶ should be sufficient to give a general indication of the processes that went on, and individual items may be discussed should the occasion arise. Again in the interests of space, no attempt is made to present the intermediate stages of the test that represent its evolution from start to finish.

Analysis of the Self-Scoring Material

Somewhat counter-intuitively, slightly more time and labor was involved in improving the self-scoring portions of the test during the test tryout period than was spent improving the test itself.¹²⁷ It had been discovered early on that the Discipleship Assessment Test, although in need of revision and improvement, was fundamentally sound; that is, if it could be scored accurately, test-takers could get a reasonably adequate picture of their discipleship level. The great difficulty and frustration experienced by most people was in the scoring process.

Quite a lot of the problem came from the hour-long format available in which to take the test. Although the material had been designed so that test-takers could take the

¹²⁶ Found in appendices C & E of this project.

¹²⁷ Although substantial amounts of time were spent on both, not to mention a great deal of secretarial work simply making copies of the test and scoring/interpretation guide for the various test tryout opportunities.

scoring and interpretation guide with them and finish it at their convenience, the majority wanted, quite understandably, to be able to get their results during the session itself. The early drafts of the self-scoring guide, although usable enough to a person taking time and care with it, were neither particularly user-friendly nor designed to be easily managed by persons in a hurry. Much frustration resulted from the attendant errors, and the difficulties this caused with trying to get accurate results. Needless to say, discussion of the results of the assessment test took place in a flustered and harried atmosphere not at all conducive to an uplifting, motivational exhortation to discipleship.

It was therefore necessary, for any benefit to be derived from the test during the session, to spend a great deal of work improving the self-scoring guide, for speed and ease of use.¹²⁸ The “final” result has incorporated many suggestions for improvement given by takers of the test. It has been demonstrated to be usable by persons taking a reasonable amount of time and care, although it is still not proof against carelessness.¹²⁹

One specific change in the scoring guide needs to be mentioned, as it directly affected the test items themselves. Certain items are “reverse scored;” that is, a positive answer yields fewer points than a negative answer.¹³⁰ In the original version of the test, very few items were reverse scored, so that an answer of “Strongly Agree” would usually

¹²⁸ The necessity for the guide to be *self-scoring*, as opposed to being scored by the administrator or another person, has already been discussed. In any event, even if privacy were not the issue, it would be very difficult for one administrator to score multiple tests and return them so that they could be discussed within a one-hour session. This option would be more workable if the Discipleship Assessment process were carried out in a local church over multiple sessions; during the test tryout phase, we did not have that luxury.

¹²⁹ And, indeed, even the early versions of the self-scoring guide were usable by persons being sufficiently careful in the scoring—the guide itself had never been unnavigable or inaccurate, merely unwieldy.

¹³⁰ A test item such as “Others would describe me as compassionate” would have a higher value for a positive answer than for a negative one, while the test item “I get angry easily” would be *reverse scored*; a negative answer would score higher than a positive one.

yield the maximum number of points while “Strongly Disagree” would yield the minimum. The difficulty came when test-takers didn’t look carefully enough at the scoring guide, and started counting *all* the “SAs ” for the maximum points, without taking account of the few reverse scored items. This led to some inaccurate results. The solution that worked was to rewrite several of the test items from a negative perspective, so that there were a considerably greater number of reverse scored items. This had the desired result of keeping test takers from assuming that all the “Strongly Agrees” were positive, because they didn’t get in the pattern of a long, unbroken chain of answers where that was indeed the case.

The final version of the self-scoring and interpretation guide, at least in so far as the beginning phase of the life of the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test is concerned, may be found in Appendix F of this project. It has been suggested, as has already been mentioned, that there are more professional and sophisticated scoring technologies available, which would greatly simplify obtaining results from the test. Should the test ever achieve a wider publication it is entirely possible that some of these more advanced methods of scoring may be adopted; during the development phase of the test, however, it was not feasible in terms of either time or economy to invest in commercially prepared scoring guides for a very small number of copies of a test that was being altered on a weekly basis.

The results of improving the self-scoring guide could be seen immediately. When the difficulties with scoring were minimized, the atmosphere became much more relaxed and convivial, and the administrator was able to turn his attention to discipleship, motivation, and exhortation, which was the business of the test in the first place. This

resulted in a much more beneficial experience in the testing done in the latter part of the process.¹³¹

Evaluation of the Interpretive Guide

Interestingly, of the usable feedback¹³² received, there have only been two comments questioning the accuracy of the interpretive guide itself, and literally dozens of responses affirming its accuracy. One favorite response was “The results were more accurate than I would have believed possible from a test like this,” although this may not have been an entirely complimentary remark from the responder about the test. Of the only two specific comments received to date concerning the interpretive guide itself, both have affirmed the overall accuracy of the guide, but have taken exception to their interpreted results in the “Teachable Attitude” category. Both felt that their scores were lower than their actual attitudes would indicate.

In administering the test, participants were cautioned that the interpretive guide was general in nature and could not address specific issues. They were asked to use their results as a guideline only, something to get them thinking and praying, and they were also asked to remember that there might be factors in their individual circumstances that could skew their results one way or another. In short, they were warned not to take the

¹³¹ This writer has given, as he had promised, updated versions of the material to many of his early test subjects, to enable them to have the benefit of the process with which they greatly assisted.

¹³² By “usable feedback,” it is meant comments that are specific and to the point, or at least comments that provide contact information so ambiguities can be explored. One feedback sheet, an excellent example of “unusable” feedback, responded to the question “Did you consider your assessment test results to be accurate? Please feel free to elaborate” with the one word answer “No.” For the question “Would you be open to discussing this with [the test writer]...?” the answer was, again, “No.” There was no other writing on the sheet. Other than possible use in an argument to scrap the entire project and start over, this feedback can not be incorporated into the project. Fortunately, this sort of response was in a very small minority.

diagnostic and prescriptive portions of the interpretive guide dogmatically, but only as general indicators of overall spiritual health.

Confirmatory analysis as well as the anecdotal and positive response from the overwhelming majority of test takers would indicate that the items related to the “teachable attitude” portion of the profile were valid and applicable for its purposes. Given this, it is preferred to speculate that the interpretive guide was probably fairly accurate even in these two cases, but that the difficulties these two individuals had with this portion of the test stemmed from the difficulties they may experience being “teachable” in their overall discipleship.

A somewhat haughty spirit might blind a person from being informed that he has a haughty spirit. Another possibility is that these individuals interpreted the results overly literally, and did not heed the caution to examine their own lives; they may be in circumstances that would have caused them to address statements in such a way as to make them appear arrogant and unteachable when in fact that was not the case. A third possibility is that the interpretive guide is off, but given the weight of support on the side of its accuracy, that does not seem to be the case.

Overall, the interpretive guide seems to be both accurate, useful, and stimulating. It is certainly not written in a manner that can make great revelatory statements about an individual, but it does appear to give a generally faithful picture of a person’s discipleship level, sufficient apparently to stimulate a good many to remedial action. As Rev. Bunce observed, “It probably doesn’t tell anybody anything about themselves they didn’t already know, but there’s something about having it in your hand in black and white that makes you face it.”

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test has been some time in the making. It grew out of the personal experiences of the pastor of a small church, in which there was limited evidence of life-changing commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the lives of the congregation. From studying discipleship in the Bible, and reading of the work of the Holy Spirit and the followers of Jesus Christ in the history of the church and the current writings of godly men and women, it seemed that something vital and important was missing in the experience of church members.

Bill Hull, who writes from a practical, pastoral perspective rather than a scholarly one, and thus perhaps speaks plainly to the pastor's heart and understanding, describes a disciple in this manner:

The most important factor in defining a disciple is the teaching of Jesus. He was the disciple maker; He was speaking to the disciples when the Great Commission was issued. Jesus' definitions are head and shoulders above any other. Jesus defined a *disciple*, and we will consider that profile in detail...

We can summarize Jesus' teachings on disciples as follows. A disciple:
Is willing to deny self, take up a cross daily, and follow Him (Luke 9:23-25).

Puts Christ before self, family, and possessions (Luke 14:25-35.)

Is committed to Christ's teaching (John 8:31).

Loves others as Christ loves (John 13:34,35).

Abides in Christ, is obedient, bears fruit, glorifies God, has joy, and loves the brethren (John 15:7-17).

If a person is not willing to make such commitments, Jesus declares emphatically three times, "He cannot be my disciple" (*see* Luke 14:25, 26, 33).

To draw the conclusion that Jesus made no distinction between believing on Him and commitment to Him is to ignore the facts. Jesus spoke to many about

the importance of eternal life. To Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and the thief on the cross, He did not mention the rigors of discipleship. He emphasized belief and trust; “Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). John 6:25-29 and John 11:25 also provide Jesus’ teaching on salvation as distinct from His teachings on the requirements of being His disciple. Jesus does make a distinction between the need for faith, leading to eternal life, and the need for commitment, leading to following Him and being His disciple.¹³³

Hull therefore differentiates between those who have saving faith in Christ, and those who, while being saved, are also living as committed followers, disciples, of Jesus. This reflects the experience observed in many churches. There are a great many who, thankfully, have given evidence of having experienced salvation through faith in Jesus Christ who, nevertheless, are not living the life of the disciple described in Scripture. Michael J. Wilkins comes at the issue of discipleship from a more scholarly, historically oriented perspective:

Discipleship in the ancient world was a common phenomenon. It primarily involved commitment of an individual to a great master or leader. The kind of commitment varied with the type of master. The important feature for us to understand is that when Jesus came and called for men and women to follow him, not all understood him in the same way. Not all understood the apostles in the same way when they went into the furthest reaches of the known world calling for men and women to become disciples of Jesus. Depending upon the background of the audience, some might have heard quite a different thing than what was meant by Jesus or his apostles.

Jesus took a commonly occurring phenomenon, discipleship, and used it as an expression of his kind of relationship with his followers. Yes, Jesus’ form of discipleship was misunderstood, even by some of his closest followers. But Jesus patiently taught his disciples what it meant for them to be his kind of disciple, his kind of follower.¹³⁴

Wilkins goes on to relate what it truly meant to be a follower of Christ:

Once Jesus extended his call, a response had to be made. That response was the pivotal point of the person’s life. From that point, a person was either a disciple of Christ or turned away from him. It was an either-or situation, because Jesus said that “he who is not with me is against me” (Lk. 11:23a). The response

¹³³ Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 57-58.

¹³⁴ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 93.

to Jesus' call involved recognition and belief in Jesus' messianic identity (Jn. 2:11; 6:68-69), obedience to his summons (Mk. 1:18,20), and a personal commitment that was undertaken after counting the cost of allegiance to him (Mt. 19:23-30; Lk. 14:25-33).

Once the response was made, it marked the beginning of a new life; it meant losing one's old life (Mk. 8:34-37; Lk. 9:23-25) and finding new life in the family of God through obeying the will of the Father (Mt. 12:46-50).¹³⁵

It may be seen, then, that discipleship is evidenced, among other things, by men and women wholly committed to the person, Lordship, priorities, and work of Jesus Christ, and it was the lack of this manner of discipleship in a local field of ministry that provided the impetus for this project.

The original idea for this project, before it took its current shape, was to develop a discipleship emphasis program in Summit Point Baptist Church. Conversations with thesis mentor Dr. Dan Mitchell of Liberty University caused the scope of the project to be considerably narrowed. This has proved to be a wise action, and gratitude for Dr. Mitchell's prudent counsel is hereby expressed.

Summit Point Baptist Church, like many churches, is slow to change.¹³⁶ Not having had an intensive discipleship program for a long time, it would be difficult to institute one quickly, particularly one of the scope necessary to accomplish the sort of radical change envisioned, to turn merely moral, decent Christians into fully-committed disciples. People do not like to change, and not without reason: "Pain is one of the universal side effects of change. Whether the change is bad or good, it is always accompanied by discomfort for some of the people in the organization."¹³⁷ It would be

¹³⁵ Ibid., 108. Note, however, that this drastic change marks only the *beginnings* of a new life. See Sneed, *Transformational Discipleship*, 27ff, for a discussion of the gradual growth of a disciple.

¹³⁶ "All institutions have a natural tendency to resist change, especially religious institutions." Leith Anderson, *Dying for Change*. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1990), 110.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 117.

unproductive, and indeed probably harmful, to bring a major change of emphasis to a change-resistant church without significant preparation.

Furthermore, it would be very difficult to develop a comprehensive, one-size-fits-all discipleship program for a church because individual disciples are different, and require different training and development. Christopher Adsit, an experienced maker of disciples, concludes that

[b]ecause of the various gifts, abilities, skills, backgrounds, education, capacities, likes and dislikes each of us were blessed with, mature disciples are as unique as snowflakes. . . . There are some characteristics which are meant to be held by all who walk with Christ . . . but you'll also need to be aware of the *special* qualities, convictions, and habits that characterize your disciple in unique ways—and you'll need to know how to help him develop them.¹³⁸

While a plan to disciple two or three individuals in the working timetable could presumably have been developed, it would have been difficult, within the limitations of the project, to have given the necessary attention to even such a modest-sized number of people as comprise Summit Point Baptist Church to the depth required for intensive discipling.

It was therefore decided to restrict this project to diagnostic and motivational purposes. The ultimate goal of making disciples is hardly forgotten, but motivation to change is a necessary first step. Furthermore, it was hoped, by creating an instrument by which any Christian could measure his or her transformation and growth in discipleship, that the benefits of this project might extend beyond this one congregation.

¹³⁸ Christopher Adsit, *Personal Disciplemaking*. (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1988), 37-38.

Motivation

The stated and explicit goal of the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test has been to demonstrate to individuals the current level of their discipleship commitment, as evidenced by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, reflected in several different areas of discipleship gleaned from Scripture. The hope is that this demonstration, along with the prescriptive exhortations contained in the interpretive portion of the test, shall motivate those lacking in certain areas of their discipleship to do something about it. Regrettably, extensive and detailed follow-up in this area is beyond the scope of this project, but it is gratifying to hear personal accounts of renewed dedication from test participants.

That great theologian and pastor, Johnathan Edwards, describes the process of *religion*, by which he means roughly what we mean when we speak of a commitment to discipleship, thusly:

The Holy Scriptures clearly see religion as a result of affections, namely, the affections of fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal.

The Scriptures see religion as the result of *holy fear*. Truly religious persons tremble at the Word of God. It is his holiness that makes them fear. The fear of God is a great part of godliness.

So also, *hope* in God and in the promises of God, according to the Scriptures, is a very important part of true religion. It is mentioned as one of the three great things of which religion consists (I Cor. 13:13). “Happy is the one whose hope is in the Lord” (Ps. 146:5). It is spoken of as the helmet of the Christian soldier, “the hope of salvation” (I Thess. 5:8). It is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19).

So also, *love* is given a high place in the Scriptures as a proper affection. We are called to love God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and our neighbor. The texts that speak of the importance of love are too many to mention. The contrary affection—hatred—is also a part of true religion, but in the sense that we hate sin and evil: “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (Prov. 8:13).

Also, *holy desire*, which finds its expression in longing and thirsting after God, is also a part of true religion. “As the deer pants after the watering stream, so my soul pants after you, O Lord” (Ps. 42:1-2). Jesus also said, “Blessed are they

who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). This holy thirst is spoken of as a condition of participation in the blessings of eternal life.¹³⁹

Edwards was a Calvinist, and believed that “Christian experience was a gift of God,”¹⁴⁰ lending his own considerable authority to the argument that it is God (in the person of the Holy Spirit) Who transforms the believer and enables the Christlike life of the disciple. It is hoped that the test may, in some small manner, fill a prophetic function, stirring the hearts of men and women towards greater faith in God. People are motivated to change when their heart, emotions, and affections are engaged, not merely their knowledge. If persons can get an accurate, “eye-opening” picture of themselves from the Discipleship Assessment Test, then it will have done all that it can be expected to do. It is hoped, and at least in the case of Summit Point Baptist Church, planned, that pastors will use the information as a springboard for further discipleship development.

The question must be asked: If discipleship is a product of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, and if the assessment test seeks to measure evidences of that transformation, then where is the room for human agency in the process? In other words, if the Holy Spirit is doing the work, then what is the use of pointing out to individual disciples where they are falling short? How can they, by whatever means, affect the process of their own transformation at all?

Millard Erickson addresses this question:

This life in the Spirit is what God intends for the Christian. Paul in Galatians 5 contrasts life by in the Spirit with life in the flesh. He instructs his readers to walk by the Spirit instead of gratifying the desires of the flesh (v. 16). *If*

¹³⁹ Johnathan Edwards. “Excerpts from *Religious Affections.*” In *Devotional Classics*, ed. Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith, 19-25. (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 21.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

they heed this instruction, the Spirit will produce in them a set of qualities which are collectively referred to as the “fruit of the Spirit” (v. 22)...These qualities cannot in their entirety be produced in human lives by unaided self-effort. They are a supernatural work. They are opposed to the works of the flesh—a list of sins in verses 19-21—just as the Spirit himself is in opposition to the flesh.¹⁴¹

Erickson’s conclusion is that Christians are free to either walk in the Spirit or to walk in the flesh. Scripture as well as common sense dictates that, while it is only by the Holy Spirit that Christians are able to produce these Christlike qualities, persons have free will and are therefore responsible for their actions. The resolution of the apparent tension between man’s free will and God’s sovereignty has occupied brilliant minds throughout history,¹⁴² and will certainly not be satisfactorily settled here. Nevertheless, if it is possible for human obedience to please God, and human disobedience to displease Him, then there must be something intrinsically in the human will capable, in some small fashion, of doing that which pleases God.

It would seem that persons have the ability to choose how much of their lives they will or will not yield to the control of the Holy Spirit. While it would be a much simpler matter if this could be a once-for-all decision, if one could simply make a commitment and thereby surrender the free exercise of the will forevermore, God in His own good purposes has given humans the continual ability, and the continual responsibility, to choose to follow Him or choose to reject Him. Apparently this ability must be exercised constantly, and apparently it can be exercised in degrees. Partial obedience (by which is meant also a degree of disobedience) seems to be possible in the life of the Christian. It goes without saying that disobedience to God’s will brings with it consequences.

¹⁴¹ Erickson, 875, emphasis this writer’s.

¹⁴² e.g. Pelagius, Zwingli, Luther, Arminius, Calvin, *et al.*

The ultimate goal of the Discipleship Assessment Test is to reveal to persons areas in their lives where they may be incompletely yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit, with the desire that they may begin to choose to yield to Him more fully, that He may begin to produce transformation and spiritual fruit in their lives. The will to change brings a commitment to yield, which allows the Holy Spirit to work.

Application of the Disciple's Profile

Much of the resistance experienced in the course of this project has come from men and women who have been reluctant to expose their lives to any sort of examination, even one designed with the anonymity and objectivity of the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test. Great care has been taken to avoid making extreme statements and specific pronouncements. Nevertheless, the Assessment Test does challenge individuals to examine their own Christian obedience and level of discipleship commitment. The “profile of the ideal disciple” is unabashedly held up and claimed to be a model to which all Christians ought to strive to conform. Some have taken offense and insult at suggestions that they might need to change; no doubt, if this test is propagated, more will be offended.

It seems advisable to give a brief apologetic for insisting that individuals conform to a biblical model of discipleship.¹⁴³ 2 Corinthians 13:5 contains the apostle Paul's exhortation to “test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (NASB) David Garland expounds on this text:

If some in Christ are asking what proof Paul can provide that Christ speaks in him, he turns the question around and challenges them to conduct a

¹⁴³ For justification and argument that the “profile of the ideal disciple” is a Biblical model, please see Chapter Two of this work. For the profile itself, please refer to Appendix A.

spiritual audit on themselves to see how they check out as Christians: “Test yourselves”; “Prove yourselves.” They should be examining themselves, not cross examining him. Paul plays on the verb “to prove” (*dokimazo*, 13:5, see 8:9, 25) and the adjectives “proven” (“approved,” *dokimos*, 13:7; see 10:18) and “unproven” (“fail the proof,” “unapproved,” “counterfeit,” *adokimos*, 13:5,6,7). He tells the Galatians that each one should test (*dokimazo*) his own work, then he might have a boast, but only in himself, not by comparing himself to someone else (Gal. 6:4). Paul uses the adjective *dokimos* to refer to Apelles who is “tested and approved in Christ” (Rom. 16:10, NIV). He tells the Corinthians that he beats his body to make it his slave “so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified (*adokimos*) for the prize” to warn them that no one can slide by God’s judgment (I Cor. 9:27; see 3:13). Hebrews 6:8 contains a vivid picture of what “failing the proof” entails: “But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless (*adokimos*) and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.”

Betz ties the parallel challenge in Gal. 6:4, “Each one should test his own actions,” to the famous Delphic maxim, “know yourself.” He comments that “self-examination meant the scrutinizing of one’s own conduct of life...exclusively, not a comparison with others.”¹⁴⁴ This is Paul’s answer to those who dare to commend themselves by comparing themselves to others. They are to know themselves in Christ and to examine themselves by the faith.¹⁴⁵

We see, therefore, that it is a Scriptural imperative to test and examine oneself.

This wisdom is echoed even by pagan philosophy.¹⁴⁶ It was apparently a not uncommon failing in the church of Paul’s day, and doubtless in the church of modern times as well, that nominal disciples assumed that they were in the right, and were doing all right, and were not in the habit of self-examination that might prove otherwise. When one is assured of one’s fitness and competency, self-questioning, or, worse, questioning by others, may be seen as unnecessary and insulting.

No doubt it is uncomfortable having one’s level of Christian commitment held up to an ideal for comparison, and we certainly sympathize with those who have undertaken

¹⁴⁴ H.D. Betz, *Galatians*. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 302, quoted by David A. Garland, 2 *Corinthians*, Vol. 29 of *The New American Commentary* ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 546.

¹⁴⁵ Garland, 545-546.

¹⁴⁶ It was Plato who was credited with saying “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

it with some reluctance. The process of self-examination which this project has compelled its creator to undertake, while beneficial, has not been particularly enjoyable.¹⁴⁷ The anecdote is told, however, of the woman who was diagnosed with cancer when she went to her doctor, and was immediately put on a difficult, inconvenient, and arduous regimen of chemotherapy and radiation treatment. In the midst of the suffering this produced, she was overheard to observe that she wished she hadn't gone to the doctor, so that she could have avoided all of this. The point of the story need not be belabored.

The principle here seems similar. The Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test, like a doctor's examination, does not necessitate a particular course of remedial action; it only reveals the particular infirmity that in and of itself necessitates the action. That the process may be unflattering and indeed perhaps even offensive is regrettable but unavoidable, although pains have been taken to make the interpretation of the results as gentle and non-confrontational as possible. Assuming that a person is serious about wanting to live a life pleasing to the Lord Christ Jesus, then it would make sense for the individual to want to know how well he or she was doing at meeting his or her goals.

The diagnosis of problems within oneself, whether medical or spiritual, calls for a course of action, for change. As has already been seen, change is uncomfortable and painful, and in the midst of spiritual warfare, satanic opposition will be lining up against the disciple making positive change. Nevertheless, if the would-be disciple claims to value the person and work of Jesus Christ and truly desires to be His disciple, examination, evaluation, and change are essential.

¹⁴⁷ The writer has not taken the Discipleship Assessment Test himself. It is generally considered impossible for a test developer to get a fair reading when taking his own test.

The Process of Exhortation

In Hebrews 3:12-13, the writer commands to “Watch, brothers, lest perhaps shall be in any one of you a heart of evil unbelief in falling away from the living God. But exhort each other each day, as long as it is being called today, that not any of you be hardened by the deceit of sin.” “Exhort” is a commonly used word in the Bible, and comes from the Greek *parakaleo*, roughly equivalent in its nuances of meaning to the English words admonish, encourage, console, confront, comfort, instruct, and, of course, exhort. One of the titles of the Holy Spirit is *Paraklete*, rendered by the King James Version as “Comforter.”¹⁴⁸ The writer of Hebrews was very aware of the spiritual battle going on in the lives of individual Christians, and also very aware of the constant danger of falling in to sin. Here and in other places in the Scripture, one reads of the duty of Christians to practice the ministry of exhortation.

To exhort is to encourage another in doing right, to admonish him against doing wrong, to warn him when he walks unwisely, and to lovingly rebuke him when he sins. This activity is carried out motivated by Christian love¹⁴⁹ and a desire to see others become what Christ has intended them to be. Exhortation is carried out ever mindful that all Christians are subject to temptation and in danger of falling in to sin.

¹⁴⁸ It is here, though, that one of the discrepancies between modern English and 16th-17th century English may be found. The word “comfort” comes from the Latin *com fortis*, “with strength,” and so the Holy Spirit’s title would better be rendered “Strengtheners” or “Encouragers” in today’s English. In modern times “comfort” usually carries the idea of “make to feel better.” When the KJV was written, that was not the sense of the word at all.

¹⁴⁹ Often, of course, the popular perception of exhortation is that it is not lovingly motivated. A cartoon printed in *Leadership* magazine shows two ministers walking side by side. One, rather grouchy looking, says to the other, “Did you ever have one of those days when you just felt like you had to *rebuke* somebody?”

Exhortation is not, perhaps, a popular activity in many of our churches today. Too many go to the extremes of either caustic, unloving confrontation or timid avoidance of anything smacking of conflict. David Augsburger speaks about exhortational confrontation in the context of one-on-one relationship, but his observations are pertinent to the church as well:

Life without confrontation is directionless, aimless, passive. When unchallenged, human beings tend to drift, to wander or to stagnate.

Confrontation is a gift.

Confrontation is a necessary stimulation to jog one out of mediocrity or to prod one back from extremes.

Confrontation is an art to be learned.

To affront is easy. Examples for being caustic, critical, cutting are available in abundance. "I don't need any lessons to learn how to tell people off. I do it in my sleep."

To confront is hard. Models for being candid, clear, confrontive without being uncaring are unusual if not truly rare. "I could use some help in learning how to confront in a way that doesn't frustrate or alienate."

The ability to offer another a maximum amount of information about their part in relationship with a minimum amount of threat to that relationship is a skill to be learned bit upon bit, new response added to old response.

Giving another feedback on how he or she is coming on can be surprisingly simple when it is offered in a context of caring, supportive acceptance; it can be astoundingly difficult when interpreted as insensitive, non-supportive rejection.

Hearing feedback from another is no problem when one is certain that the other respects, values, cares in spite of all differences; but when respect is unclear and caring is unexpressed, one can feel fed up with another's feedback before it even begins.¹⁵⁰

Exhortation, while a necessary activity for the church, is a delicate matter, and must be carried out in balance. There is a time and place for harsh, prophetic rebuke, as when John the Baptist and Jesus Himself condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. There is also a time and place for gentle admonishment, as when Jesus told the woman

¹⁵⁰ David Augsburger. *Caring Enough to Confront*. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981), 51-52.

caught in adultery to go and sin no more. Both of these are examples of exhortation, but they differ widely in their manner.

This project, in the form of the Discipleship Assessment Test, seeks to instill an attitude of motivation to change, and to exhort Christians to further and greater discipleship. The test was administered in various venues by an outsider and guest, and thus neither the knowledge of individuals nor the authority to deliver stern, critical rebuke of sin were present. Speaking critically must be justified; there are times when persons outside a situation are called to proclaim strong, prophetic rebuke to individuals acting outside God's will, but, without God's blessing and direction on this activity, it usually suffices only to unprofitably antagonize persons and harden them in their sin. Love for them would seem to dictate using methodology that they would be inclined to heed.

Therefore, the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test seeks to be a firm but gentle exhorter and encourager. The desire is to show individuals how they may improve themselves, and to lead them to do so. The exhortational part of the test is linked to the interpretation of test results, and is usually very mildly stated. For instance, if a test-taker achieved a result of "moderate conformity" in the "Absolute willingness to follow and obey Christ" portion of the profile, the interpretive guide exhorts them thusly: "You may need to do some examining as to whether it is God's will or yours that is paramount in your life." A person achieving only low conformity in the same area is told, somewhat more firmly, that

there is very little if any indication that you are willing to change or to accept authority, and little evidence to indicate that you are a willing follower of Jesus Christ at all. You may need to do some study about discipleship itself, and what that involves, and you may need to spend time in prayer about this matter.

It is granted that this is rather more harshly stated, and certainly not flattering, but neither can it be said to be unyielding or arbitrary, and this is one of the most strongly worded statements in the guide. Other exhortations, following the diagnostic portions of the interpretive guide, tend to follow the lines of “you may need to make this a matter of prayer and repentance,” or “you may need to seek godly counsel in this matter.”

It is hoped that persons who have not become “hardened by the deceit of sin,” as the writer to the Hebrews puts it, will be sufficiently open, with the aid and leading of the Holy Spirit, to take these exhortations in the loving spirit in which they were intended. The desire for this project is that it may be of help to Christians. Unfortunately, a few persons have been encountered, thankfully in the minority, who do seem to be hardened and unreceptive to exhortation, however gently worded. This is observed even making allowances for the fact that the test in which these individuals participated was still a work in progress. Unfortunately, it may be that there are those the test will be unable to help, although God in His great mercy may use it in some small way even with them. Thankfully, there are many who have responded very positively to the motivational and exhortational portions of this project, and, Lord willing, it may be used of God to help these persons on to greater and fuller discipleship.

Future Plans for the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test

This test has been a few years in the developing, and has involved significant amounts of labor and the participation of many persons in field-testing and refining. This test, properly applied, should enable persons interested in discipleship to diagnose their own spiritual health vis-à-vis discipleship, and should likewise motivate, encourage, and instruct these persons in growing in their commitment to actively, completely following

the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The development of the test has been part of this writer's Doctor of Ministry thesis project at Liberty University, a process that is nearing its conclusion as of this writing, and the academic portions of this project will shortly be completed.

The question must be asked, however, as to what is to be done with the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test after this development period is finished. It would seem a great shame to have done so much to produce an instrument of worth and potential value to the cause of Christ, and then to do nothing further with it once it reached what might be regarded as a fully developed stage.

A formal plan for future use of the test is beyond the scope or timetable of this project, but some discussion of possibilities would not be out of place here. Two immediate possibilities have been suggested by highly positive experiences at Calvary Baptist Church and at Browntown Baptist Church.

The first possibility is of course that the test might continue to be made available in roughly the same format as has been done during the development phase, in which it is administered to groups of individuals in the Sunday School, Discipleship Training, or midweek Bible study programs of churches. The total administration of the test can be done comfortably within the space of an hour, and this has seemed to work very well for churches interested in using the material. This would continue the test's work of diagnosis, motivation, and training in individual discipleship.

The second possibility builds on the first, and was suggested by conversations at Browntown Baptist Church, that it would be quite simple to adapt the test scoring in order to give the leadership of a church an idea of the overall discipleship level of their

congregation, with, significantly, specific areas of strength or weakness relating to the discipleship profile. A pastor could then see, for instance, if his congregation as a whole was perhaps weak in witnessing, or in the spiritual disciplines, or just in general understanding of commitment, and could adjust the discipling ministries of the church accordingly to strengthen those areas lacking.

Some decisions would need to be made regarding the confidentiality of the test. At present, no one, not even the developer, sees completed tests other than the test taker and anyone they might choose to show their results to. Although there is nothing in the test itself that mandates this confidentiality, this practice has no doubt resulted in greater honesty and self-disclosure than would have been the case had anyone else been privy to such sensitive personal information. The disadvantage to this, of course, is that church leaders are not aware of the diagnosis made of the spiritual condition of those in their charge.

Whether or not the tests will remain confidential or will become subject to limited disclosure is a matter that will need to be decided. The advantage to continued confidentiality, of course, is that persons will likely be more open and honest; genuine disciples will probably take to heart the diagnosis and exhortation and do something about it anyway, while those “hardened” disciples would be unlikely to listen to exhorting no matter who knew the results. The advantage to partial disclosure is that church leaders could lead and shepherd better if they were made more fully aware of the spiritual condition of their congregants.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Although this writer, being a pastor himself, still tends to believe that most church leaders should have a fair idea of the spiritual condition of their flock without needing a test to confirm it. Even given that, it’s still occasionally useful to have something in writing to give affirmation to what the pastor has probably known for some time.

However the issue of confidentiality is addressed, for the test to ever become more widely utilized it would need to be published in some fashion; other obligations do not allow the developer to continue travelling about personally administering the test. There are various venues available for this, from simple word of mouth to the internet to publishers of curricula and religious material. It would probably be prudent to copyright the material if the intent is to make it public.

Again, if the test is to become public, and, particularly, if it is to be administered by persons other than the developer, some sort of leadership guide would need to be provided. The current format is for the test to be administered, then for a brief presentation on discipleship and the disciple's profile to be made, then the self-scoring and interpretive portions of the test to be given. A guide enabling others to conduct the presentation would need to be written and included with the material if it were to be published; it would need to be fairly involved to cover adequately the supportive discipleship material and the profile.

At this point, specific plans for future use of the test in other venues are not in existence. Some very gratifying word of mouth publicity is already developing, which may suggest some further application soon, but this is not anticipated to amount to anything significant at this time. It is hoped to do more with the material than has been done to date.

Future Plans for Summit Point Baptist Church and Hopes for Other Churches

Summit Point Baptist Church, the congregation which served as the foundation for this project and in whose honor the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test was named, has been an integral if slightly unwitting participant in the test development

process, and, indeed, in the entire Doctor of Ministry program. Although the congregation was warned beforehand that they would be “helping the pastor with his homework,” probably very few of them know the extent to which concepts have been explored and tested in sermons, Bible studies, conversations, and one-on-one ministry. A tremendous debt of gratitude is owed them for their support and availability.

The original intent was not to involve the church directly in field-testing the Assessment Test, but to present the material in the congregation when it had reached more of a final form. The rationale for this decision was that Summit Point Baptist had already served as a testing ground for many projects and ideas, and it was thought to spare them this. However, there was such interest expressed in the thesis project and the Doctor of Ministry program that the mutual decision was made to have the congregation provide the focus group for the first field test of the instrument.

An even greater debt is acknowledged to the church for this, because the initial field test was not a comfortable experience. While the material itself proved fundamentally sound, the format of the test and the self-scoring guide were unwieldy and very difficult to make use of, leading to a very frustrating time for the participants. Without that experience, the test would have been administered in a church less charitably inclined in that frustrating trial run. As it was, although the test and scoring guide were to undergo several revisions yet, they had both reached significantly more usable form by the time of the second administration.

It is planned to readminister the finished test to the church, to a broader number than the original test group, in the hope that they may receive the benefit of the diagnostic and motivational aspects of it. It is planned to combine this with extensive teaching and

preaching about discipleship, even basing a sermon series on the discipleship model. It is also planned to enlist the deacon body of the church in prayer for the moving of God's Spirit, and to lead them to exhort and lift up one another and those in their spiritual care to greater commitment to being disciples of Christ. It is planned to make the test part of an overall emphasis on discipleship in Summit Point Baptist Church. It is also the hope, though there is no means of compelling this, that other church leaders may make the test, when published, part of a larger emphasis in their respective congregations on what it truly means to be a disciple.

Summary of Overall Experience

What Could Have Been Done Differently

It's a well-known saying, of course, that hindsight is 20/20. What is meant by that is that one often understands events and circumstances better and perceives them more clearly when viewing them in retrospect, and this project is no exception. The nature of the project and of the test development process has of course mandated that this had to have been a learning experience, and therefore things are known now that were not apparent from the start. Nevertheless, it may be instructive to evaluate briefly what might have been changed were one given the opportunity to redo the project equipped with the insight and experience possessed now at the end of it.

There certainly could and should have been more persons involved in the test tryout process. More of an effort to enlist larger people groups in the field-testing should have been made,¹⁵² to enable a greater variety of experience, and, certainly, to enable

¹⁵² Although, ironically, two of the larger organizations tested had disproportionately small numbers of people actually participate relative to some of the smaller organizations.

more rigorous analysis of the results to take place. There could, as well, have been more productive effort to secure more places to commit to do the testing.

There could have profitably been more selection in the pool of test-takers. The practice during the development phase was to offer the test to all comers. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the material, it was given during off-peak hours in the life of the church—those times when attendance was not its highest. A fair portion of the churchgoers who came to Sunday School and Wednesday night Bible study were very elderly. This writer has a great love for the elderly, and does not wish his words to be construed as any sort of slight. It is a fact, though, that several of these dear souls are not as quick mentally as once they were, and some had a great deal of difficulty with the taking and scoring of the test. The unfortunate conclusion is that the efforts on their behalf were of little benefit to them, and indeed served mainly to frustrate them, and to generate a certain amount of discomfort in those around them who saw a much loved older person struggling with an assignment with which they could not adequately cope. A similar phenomenon occurred with a few individuals whose education was somewhat lacking, and, again, no slight is intended and it is hoped that none is perceived. A certain amount of screening or preparation at the beginning of the process could have avoided these unfortunate occurrences.

It has also been learned that the test would best serve as part of an overall discipleship emphasis, rather than standing alone. It became apparent in the feedback process that different individuals, often in the same congregation, had widely different understandings of, and exposure to, discipleship, and some were not prepared for a confrontation with a Biblical picture of discipleship. One pastor, although very

complimentary of the material and supportive of the process, spoke of having to do some “debriefing” following the test. Further conversations with him revealed that he felt the need to do education in the church regarding what, precisely, discipleship was. The process would have been less confusing and disruptive had teaching and instruction in what discipleship truly means been part of the church’s overall emphasis; the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test could then have formed an integral part of a larger whole, rather than introducing what was apparently to some a radically new concept.

What Went Well in the Process

The presentations have, overall, gone very smoothly. The administrator has made use of humor to soften some of the demanding nature of the discipleship assessment process. Overwhelmingly, the testing times themselves have been marked by general good-nature and cooperation. The format has worked well, with individuals being able to work at their own pace, with enough going on to keep the attention of the rapid finishers, while not being so content-intensive as to frustrate the efforts of the slower finishers to keep up with the process.

Administering the test in differing churches (and with the students of Liberty University) was an idea that has yielded considerable good result, and it is appreciated that the developer’s home congregation’s gave him the sabbatical time in which to do so. It is difficult to conceive of how this project could have been satisfactorily carried out without the opportunity to do this sort of hands-on research. In addition to merely refining the test, although that was the primary goal, encouragement and insight have been received concerning the future use of the test, and, as a fringe benefit, several

churches and numerous individual disciples have received exhortation and aid in their own discipleship efforts.

The test itself has been demonstrated to be a work of value and benefit. The vast majority of feedback responses have confirmed the general accuracy of the results, with many individuals going out of their way to mention what an enjoyable, enlightening, “eye-opening,” and, in a few instances, “humbling” experience it was. There have been some negative comments, of course, and questions and concerns about specific items, but the overwhelming consensus is that the test itself yields accurate information about the level of discipleship commitment and health. As this is the result that has been aimed for, and for which considerable effort has been spent in achieving, this is a source of tremendous satisfaction.

Concluding Thoughts: What This Writer Has Learned from the Process

I am deeply appreciative of all those who have worked with me in the process of developing the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test. Grateful acknowledgement must be made to Dr. Parker C. Thompson, mentor and friend, Dr. Dan Mitchell, professor at Liberty University and thesis mentor, Dr. Frank Schmitt, director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Liberty University, Dr. Irving Tucker, chair of the psychology department of Shepherd College, the congregations and ministers of Harbor Baptist Church, North Fork Baptist Church, Main Street Baptist Church, Calvary Baptist Church, Browntown Baptist Church, and Marlow Heights Baptist Church, Dwayne Carson, campus pastor of Liberty University, Josh Soto and the students at Liberty, the congregation of Summit Point Baptist, and, certainly not least, my wife Renée and

children Madeline, Margaret, and Isaac, who have endured my absences and long days in the course of this project.

The project has been enjoyable, not least in the interaction it has afforded with godly and devoted brothers and sisters in Christ, and with the opportunity to research the work of gifted writers and scholars in the field. It has, at times, been emotionally challenging and even draining. Circumstances required on several occasions coming face to face with individuals for whom this was a significant experience, and who were deeply moved by it. While I am pleased and humbled that my efforts should have had such effect, it has on occasion caught me off guard and reminded me that I was engaged in more than an academic exercise.

Much has been learned about discipleship, and about the nature of commitment to following the Lord Jesus Christ. Much has been learned about evaluating and diagnosing attributes of the mind and spirit, and something of the methods and means of Christians exhorting one another to grow in Christ. I have learned much about myself, and hopefully I have grown.

Finally, I have learned much of the sustaining grace and guiding hand of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ the Son, and the blessed Holy Spirit, to Whom be given whatever glory and credit may be had for this work, and in Whose name this is submitted for humble consideration to the faculty of Liberty University.

APPENDIX A

PROFILE OF THE IDEAL DISCIPLE

A Complete Commitment

The starting point of being a follower of Jesus Christ is submission, commitment, and absolute surrender to His leading. The essence of being a disciple is always following. Without this humble self-surrender, without a person placing his or her life in a proper, fully yielded servant-Lord relationship to Jesus Christ, there is no real discipleship.

Discipleship may be thought of as a process—we will never arrive at perfection this side of heaven—but, even though God may be pleased with progress, would-be disciples must say with the apostle Paul, “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold on it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13-14 NASB)

1. The disciple is characterized by an absolute willingness to follow and obey the Lord Jesus wherever that may take him and whatever it may cost.

Two Major Aspects

The words of the Lord Jesus, in what is known as the Great Commission: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20, NIV)

It follows then naturally that, if the primary tasks of the maker of disciples are to baptize and teach, then the primary initial characteristics of the disciple are *being baptized* and *being taught*. This fits in with the disciple’s position as a submissive follower; one comes to Christ from a position of weakness, humility, and need, to receive salvation and teaching.

We have, then, two major aspects of discipleship. Firstly, the disciple is to be publicly identified with, and committed to, the person, Lordship, and work of Jesus Christ, and secondly, he or she is to learn to obey all the commandments implicit in that identification. Discipleship involves, as a decisive act, a commitment, allegiance, and loyalty to the person of Christ.

A Public Commitment

The New Testament understanding of baptism was that “being baptized by a person or ‘into his name’ meant becoming his disciple.” It was a means of identifying with the person. Jesus Christ Himself was baptized, despite the discomfort of John the Baptizer, in order to “fulfill all righteousness” and to provide an example for His followers. Baptism, as an act of identification with Jesus Christ, particularly in His death,

burial, and resurrection, is a partial fulfillment of the command of Jesus Christ to confess Him before men. There is no possibility of being a secret follower of Christ allowed in the New Testament. There must be public indication of one's commitment to Christ.

Baptism by water immersion is the best and most fitting means of publicly demonstrating faith in Christ, and it seems to be a matter of simple obedience, but other means may suffice for disciples from different traditions or those for whom baptism by immersion is not possible. The indispensable element is public confession of faith in Christ and identification with Him and His work.

2. The disciple will, in some clear manner, identify himself with Jesus Christ publicly, and will continue to do so in the course of his discipleship.

A Life-long Learner

Along with baptism, a disciple must be taught. This implies on the part of the disciple a "teachable" attitude, a willingness to change, or to allow one's life to be changed, because the things that are to be taught are not simply facts or new information, but commandments. **3. The disciple is always willing to change, grow, and learn to obey the leading and the commands of Jesus Christ.**

The Disciple's Obedience

The major evidence of being a disciple in the life of a person is obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ. These commandments may be found in the recorded teachings of Jesus in the Gospel accounts, in the Holy Spirit-inspired words of the writers of the New Testament, and, when properly understood in the light of the New Covenant, in the laws and teachings of the Old Testament.

Lack of obedience is the greatest hindrance to being a disciple, and therefore the disciple's profile shall be heavily weighted towards obeying Christ's commands. Not every aspect of obedience is covered in the profile, in the interests of space, but such areas as stewardship, control of the tongue, reconciliation with other Christians, and mutual submission, while not spelled out, will be readily practiced by the disciple.

4. Three major areas of obedience shall be evident in the life of the disciple; denial of self, abiding in Christ, and bearing fruit.

Denial of Self

Jesus said to His close friends, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23, NIV) Furthermore, the Lord Jesus made the following startling demand to a great crowd: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple....And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." (Lk. 14:25-27, NKJV)

In the same discourse, His would-be followers are urged to consider the cost of discipleship, the cost of following Him. He summarizes the need for the disciple to deny himself by saying, "whoever of you does not forsake *all that he has* cannot be my

disciple.” Jesus uses the image of the cross as a clear and powerful metaphor of the disciple’s denying of self, to the extent that, in comparison with his commitment to Jesus, he may be said to hate his family, friends, and even his own life.

It may be seen, therefore, that the call of Jesus to deny self, take up one’s cross, and follow is a call to completely and totally give over any claims to one’s own will, rights, prerogatives, possessions, aspirations, goals, or desires. The disciple is called to surrender literally everything to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

4a. The first major act of obedience of the disciple to the commandments of Jesus is to totally, continually surrender himself, his will, and everything he has, to Jesus’ Lordship. How this manifests will differ to some degree from disciple to disciple, as Christ calls His followers to different tasks, but the attitude of denying of self, with resulting action, should be noticeably present.

Abiding in Christ

The crucial thing for one wishing to be a disciple is to *abide* in Christ. The clear commands of our Lord Jesus were to abide in Him, to continue in His love, to remain in Him, to have an ongoing relationship with Him. The word picture given in John 15 is, of course, of a relationship as close as that of a vine to its branches.

4b. The second major aspect of the disciple’s obedience is that he must learn to have an ongoing, vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This will appear in three areas of abiding:

1. The disciple’s dedication to the Word.

The disciple, after some initial training, should develop a genuine eagerness to know and obey the Word of God. This will manifest in some sort of Bible study, whether it be regular Bible reading, study and meditation on the Scriptures, listening to the preaching of the Word, discussing the truths of the Bible with other Christians, or some combination thereof. There will be some apparent love for the Word of God.

2. The disciple’s dedication to prayer.

Jesus’ command and example to His disciples was that they ought to always be in prayer, that they were to ask for that which they needed, to watch and pray, to boldly approach God with their requests. In order to abide in Christ and do His will, disciples *must* pray. As with any spiritual discipline, growth in prayer is a process. Maturing disciples will pray as a matter of spiritual warfare, will pray with authority, boldness, and even audacity, and will spend much time wrestling and laboring in prayer over matters of vital spiritual concern. A dedication and passionate interest in prayer, however, will mark the life of any disciple.

3. The disciple’s dedication to the Holy Spirit

Jesus said, in speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit: “the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to

your remembrance all that I said to you.” The Holy Spirit performs an enormous number of tasks in the life of the Christian, including empowering for service, convicting of sin, teaching the truths of the faith, testifying to and glorifying Christ, guiding disciples in their service for God, giving gifts for service, cleansing, purifying, and sanctifying.

The third aspect of abiding for the disciple, dedication to the leading of the Holy Spirit, goes hand-in-hand with the disciple’s practices of submission, obedience, and following Jesus. Indeed, it may be said without exaggeration that following the Spirit’s leading is the same as being a disciple, since Jesus the Lord and Master is present within the disciple in the person of God the Spirit.

Bearing Fruit

Jesus said “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.” (John 15:8, NASB). **4c. The third major aspect of obedience is bearing fruit. The fruit the disciple is to bear is Christlike character, particularly the demonstration of Christlike love, and souls won to Christ and discipled.**

1. Christlike character

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control” (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV). All these qualities will be present, at least to a growing degree, in the life of the disciple, as the Holy Spirit transforms his life from within.

The disciple’s love must particularly be noted. In I Corinthians 13:13, the apostle Paul says that the greatest of the Christian virtues is love, and in the words of the Lord Himself, “By this will all know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35, NKJV)

Love for God involves sacrifice, worship, obedience, and dedication. Similarly, love for others is an act of the will, not the emotions. The kind of love Christ demonstrated towards mankind His disciples can demonstrate in acts of humble sacrifice and service to others. The disciple’s life is to be characterized by demonstrating this manner of love to God and to others.

2. Making disciples

Jesus’ command to His disciples was to go and make disciples. Therefore, a fruit or product of the disciple is other disciples. A hallmark of the disciple is that he will be inclined to evangelism and making disciples.

Making disciples is hard, time-consuming work, but in the life of the maturing disciple, there will be a passion and a desire to see others won to Christ and led to become maturing disciples themselves.

The true disciple will prayerfully seek opportunities to make disciples, and will study and train to increase his skills at being a witness and a maker of disciples. This may manifest in different fashions, as gifts, personalities, and opportunities differ, but a concern for the salvation and growth in Christlikeness of others will be evident in the life of the disciple.

The Disciple's Victory over Sin

The final area of the disciple's profile relates to the difficulties Christians have in living the life of the disciple. This, of course, is due to what is known as the sin nature.

Because Christians are sinners, saved by grace, they are always going to struggle with the sin nature, and giving in to it breaks fellowship with God and cuts the would-be disciple off from the power and guidance he needs to live the disciple's life.

Arguably the most common sin, and indeed the root of all sin in the life of the Christian, is disobedience to the commands and leading of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. This sin does not harm the disciple's relationship to Christ, but it damages the fellowship, and cuts off the power necessary to living a godly life.

5. The disciple is to work to maintain a clean, obedient heart before God, repenting of sin when he has failed, because harbored (unrepentant) sin grieves the Holy Spirit and hinders growth in discipleship. Furthermore, disciples are called to be victorious over sin. This brings the model back full circle to submission.

Through moment by moment submission to the will of God, by the power and guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the disciple will live a life, if not of perfection, then at least of noticeable improvement and triumph in overcoming his sinful, self-willed tendencies by the grace of God.

Summary

Simply put, the life of the disciple is characterized by his continual, complete submission to the will and Lordship of Jesus Christ. This submission manifests itself in public testimony, in obedience to Christ's commands, in a vital life of prayer and love for the Word of God, and in acts of worship of God and loving service to men. The evidences of the disciples are the growth in Christlike character, particularly the manifestation of Christlike love, and the making of converts and disciples.

It may be observed that there seems to be some confusion between what the disciple is to do (submit and obey) and what the Holy Spirit does (produce fruit), particularly in the area of bearing fruit, in which the disciple is commanded to bear spiritual fruit, and yet credit is given to the Holy Spirit for the work accomplished.

There is, however, no real mystery or contradiction here. In salvation, the follower of Jesus has been put to death and resurrected by the power and work of the cross of Christ, and no longer lives his own life. He may say with Paul "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." (Galatians 2:20 NASB) *Everything* good that happens in the life of the disciple is purely and entirely due to the grace of God and to the life of Christ abiding in him, and the characteristics of the disciple's profile are only those visible evidences which may be expected in the life of a follower of Christ.

6. The disciple is enabled to demonstrate these attributes and actions by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ living inside him, and not by his own ability.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS¹

Criterion-referenced test A test that describes the specific types of skills, tasks, or knowledge of an individual relative to a well-defined mastery criterion.

Item A specific stimulus to which a person responds overtly; this response can be scored or evaluated.

Item Construction The process by which test items are written, selected, and analyzed.

Measurement Error The component of an observed test score that is neither the true score nor the quality you wish to measure.

Normative Sample A comparison group consisting of individuals who have been administered a test under standard conditions.

Norms A summary of the performance of a group of individuals on which a test was standardized.

Reliability The extent to which a score or measure is free of measurement error.

Scaling Assigning numbers in accordance with empirical properties of objects or traits.

Statistics Facts or data of a numerical kind, assembled, classified, and tabulated so as to present significant information about a given subject.

Validity The extent to which a test measures the quality it purports to measure.

¹ Material from this section comes from two works, Robert M. Kaplan and Dennis P. Saccuzzo, *Psychological Testing: Principles, Applications, and Issues* (Brooks/Cole Publishing: Albany, NY, 1997) and Ronald Jay Cohen and Mark E. Swerdlik, *Psychological Testing and Assessment: An Introduction to Tests and Measurement* (Mayfield Publishing: Mountain View, CA, 1999). These were chosen as being representative of accredited, generally accepted textbooks in the field of assessment testing, although many other works exist which no doubt would serve the purpose just as well.

APPENDIX C

THE SUMMIT POINT DISCIPLESHIP ASSESSMENT TEST—FIRST DRAFT

Welcome to the first draft of the Summit Point Discipleship Assessment Test. If you are taking this, then you are part of the trial run of this test, and your feedback will be greatly appreciated. It is hoped that this test may be improved, and used by God for His glory to inspire men and women to a fuller discipleship.

This test is diagnostic in nature; it seeks to find out where you are in your discipleship development. It is closely tied to the Model of the Ideal Disciple, and measures conformity to that model. This is not a temperament or personality test in which the individual may modify his attitudes or behaviors by strength of will. It is, instead, a humble attempt to ascertain where an individual is in his walk with Christ, characterized by the degree of transformation the Holy Spirit has worked in him. The test is intended to look for evidence of the Christian's commitment to Christ, and evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian.

Please be as honest with yourself as possible during the taking of the test. False modesty or undue self-praise will skew the results of the test, and limit its usefulness in determining areas where your discipleship may need improvement. Please also understand that this is a human instrument, and, while it has been rigorously and prayerfully constructed, it can not substitute for prayer and self-searching in seeking to more fully follow Christ. It is only a tool to alert you to some possible weak spots of which you may not be aware.

Please respond to each of the following statements with one of these answers:

SA—Strongly Agree—This statement is fully and completely descriptive of me.

A—Agree—This statement is generally descriptive of me.

MA—Mildly Agree—This statement is sometimes descriptive of me.

MD—Mildly Disagree—This statement is rarely descriptive of me.

D—Disagree—This statement is generally not descriptive of me.

SD—Strongly Disagree—This statement is not descriptive of me at all.

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. I am usually willing to try new experiences. | | | | | | |
| 2. I attend church regularly. | | | | | | |
| 3. I usually know better than people around me. | | | | | | |
| 4. I talk about my spiritual life with people I know. | | | | | | |
| 5. It would be hard for me to give up some of my favorite things. | | | | | | |
| 6. I am smart enough to take care of myself. | | | | | | |
| 7. I am easily satisfied. | | | | | | |
| 8. I worry about a lot of things. | | | | | | |
| 9. I have made a public profession of faith in Christ. | | | | | | |
| 10. I am often tempted to certain types of sin. | | | | | | |
| 11. I am aware of temptation in my life. | | | | | | |
| 12. My immediate family knows that I am a Christian. | | | | | | |
| 13. I would be comfortable moving far from home if it seemed best for me. | | | | | | |
| 14. Others would describe me as caring. | | | | | | |
| 15. I am uncomfortable with following someone else's plan. | | | | | | |
| 16. I enjoy some things that Jesus probably wouldn't do, but I still do them. | | | | | | |
| 17. I am always willing to learn something new. | | | | | | |
| 18. Spiritual formation is necessary to experiencing God. | | | | | | |
| 19. I would strongly dislike major change in my life. | | | | | | |
| 20. I give in to temptation. | | | | | | |
| 21. Some people might say I am opinionated. | | | | | | |
| 22. My friends and acquaintances know that I am a Christian. | | | | | | |
| 23. I can learn something from just about anyone. | | | | | | |
| 24. I get angry easily. | | | | | | |
| 25. I frequently find that I am mistaken about something. | | | | | | |
| 26. I enjoy talking through differences of opinion. | | | | | | |
| 27. I respond well to leadership. | | | | | | |
| 28. I am a self-indulgent person. | | | | | | |
| 29. I believe that if the Bible says it, that settles it. | | | | | | |
| 30. I have lots of practice admitting to mistakes. | | | | | | |
| 31. I am reluctant to try new experiences. | | | | | | |
| 32. I am often reminded that God knows better than I do. | | | | | | |
| 33. My extended family knows that I am a Christian. | | | | | | |

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 34. What happens to me is not very important to me. | | | | | | |
| 35. I am very set in my ways. | | | | | | |
| 36. I wish more people shared my concerns. | | | | | | |
| 37. There are many things about the Bible I don't understand. | | | | | | |
| 38. I ask God often what He wants me to do. | | | | | | |
| 39. Church attendance makes a difference in my life. | | | | | | |
| 40. I regularly read and study the Bible. | | | | | | |
| 41. I am a self-disciplined person. | | | | | | |
| 42. I sometimes say things I shouldn't. | | | | | | |
| 43. I take advice well. | | | | | | |
| 44. I enjoy hearing the Bible taught. | | | | | | |
| 45. Some people would call me stubborn. | | | | | | |
| 46. I pray often and at length. | | | | | | |
| 47. I look for ways to talk to others about Jesus. | | | | | | |
| 48. I am willing to change my ways. | | | | | | |
| 49. I am aware of God's guidance in my daily life. | | | | | | |
| 50. Others would describe me as compassionate. | | | | | | |
| 51. In honesty, there are people I hate. | | | | | | |
| 52. I ask for forgiveness when I give in to temptation. | | | | | | |
| 53. I am usually upbeat and cheerful. | | | | | | |
| 54. I am patient when things don't go my way. | | | | | | |
| 55. Others would describe me as gentle. | | | | | | |
| 56. I sometimes can overcome temptation with prayer. | | | | | | |
| 57. I carry a lot of resentment inside. | | | | | | |
| 58. I do not like being told what to do. | | | | | | |
| 59. I experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through regular prayer and Bible study. | | | | | | |
| 60. I am often anxious and nervous. | | | | | | |
| 61. I cope well with troubles and misfortune. | | | | | | |
| 62. I have areas where I struggle in my Christian life. | | | | | | |
| 63. I sometimes can overcome temptation with Scripture. | | | | | | |
| 64. I enjoy being in charge of things. | | | | | | |
| 65. I trust God to help me overcome temptation in my life. | | | | | | |
| 66. Others would describe me as loyal. | | | | | | |

Scoring

A _____

B _____

C _____

D_____

E_____

F_____

G_____

APPENDIX D

FIRST DRAFT OF THE SCORING GUIDE

THE SUMMIT POINT DISCIPLESHIP ASSESSMENT TEST SCORING AND INTERPRETATION GUIDE

To score the test, find the checked box for each question. Add the number of points in the box from the following scoring guide to the category letter that immediately follows the question in bold print. Record the total score for each category in the appropriate blank on page two of the test. Example: For question #1, if the answer is MD (Mildly disagree) then add 2 points to Category A—Willingness to Follow

| | |
|------------|---|
| Categories | A—Absolute willingness to follow and obey Christ |
| | B—Identification with Jesus Christ (“Confessing Him before men”) |
| | C—Always willing to change, grow, and learn (“Teachable attitude”) |
| | D—Total, continual surrender of self to Christ (“Denying self”) |
| | E—Ongoing, vital relationship with Jesus Christ (“Abiding in Christ”) |
| | F—Growing in Christlike character and evangelism (“Bearing fruit”) |
| | G—Having continual victory over the sin nature |

Interpretation of the results follows the score sheet. Please note that these are general categories and can not address specific issues. Individual disciples are urged to take their test-sheets and this information and, preferably with the aid of a minister or wise fellow-believer, use it to examine their own lives before God, with the purpose of confessing sins and shortcomings, and seeking His blessing, guidance, and grace.

| | | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. I am usually willing to try new experiences. | A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2. I attend church regularly. | B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3. I usually know better than people around me. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I talk about my spiritual life with people I know. | B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 5. It would be hard for me to give up some of my favorite things. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am smart enough to take care of myself. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I am easily satisfied. | A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 8. I worry about a lot of things. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I have made a public profession of faith in Christ. | B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 10. I am often tempted to certain types of sin. | G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 11. I am aware of temptation in my life. | G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 12. My immediate family knows that I am a Christian. | B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 13. I would be comfortable moving far from home if it seemed best for me. | A | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 14. Others would describe me as caring. | F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 15. I am uncomfortable with following someone else's plan. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I enjoy some things that Jesus probably wouldn't do, but I still do them. | G | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I am always willing to learn something new. | C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 18. Spiritual formation is necessary to exp. God. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 19. I would strongly dislike major change in my life. | A | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I give in to temptation. | G | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Some people might say I am opinionated. | C | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. My friends and acquaintances know that I am a Christian. | B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 23. I can learn something from just about anyone. | C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 24. I get angry easily. | F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I frequently find that I am mistaken about something. | C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 26. I enjoy talking through differences of opinion. | C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 27. I respond well to leadership. | A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 28. I am a self-indulgent person. | D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. I believe that if the Bible says it, that settles it. | C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 30. I have lots of practice admitting to mistakes. | C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 31. I am reluctant to try new experiences. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. I am often reminded that God knows better than I do. | C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 33. My extended family knows that I am a Christian. | B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

| | | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 34. What happens to me is not very important to me. | D | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 35. I am very set in my ways. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. I wish more people shared my concerns. | D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. There are many things about the Bible I don't understand. | C | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 38. I ask God often what He wants me to do. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 39. Church attendance makes a difference in my life. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 40. I regularly read and study the Bible. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 41. I am a self-disciplined person. | D | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 42. I sometimes say things I shouldn't. | F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. I take advice well. | A | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 44. I enjoy hearing the Bible taught. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 45. Some people would call me stubborn. | C | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. I pray often and at length. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 47. I look for ways to talk to others about Jesus. | B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 48. I am willing to change my ways. | D | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 49. I am aware of God's guidance in my daily life. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 50. Others would describe me as compassionate. | F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 51. In honesty, there are people I hate. | F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. I ask for forgiveness when I give in to temptation. | G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 53. I am usually upbeat and cheerful. | F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 54. I am patient when things don't go my way. | F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 55. Others would describe me as gentle. | F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 56. I sometimes can overcome temptation with prayer. | G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 57. I carry a lot of resentment inside. | F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. I do not like being told what to do. | A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. I experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through regular prayer and Bible study. | E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 60. I am often anxious and nervous. | F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 61. I cope well with troubles and misfortune. | F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 62. I have areas where I struggle in my Christian life. | G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 63. I sometimes can overcome temptation with Scripture. | G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 64. I enjoy being in charge of things. | A | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 65. I trust God to help me overcome temptation in my life. | G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 66. Others would describe me as loyal. | F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

INTERPRETATION

A—Absolute willingness to follow and obey Christ—75 possible points

60-75 points—High conformity. You seem to be very open to new experience, ready to follow leadership wherever it might take you, and not overly attached to your current situation. You should have little difficulty in following the leading of Christ.

45-59 points—Moderate conformity. You may experience some difficulty in changing your circumstances or following leadership, particularly if that involves radical change in your life. You may need to do some examining as to whether it is God's will or your will that is paramount in your life.

25-44 points—Low conformity. You do not seem to be open to new experiences or following any leadership that would require you to change, and you do not appear very willing to follow Christ. You may need to examine your basic commitment to Jesus Christ's Lordship over your life.

Below 25 points—Nonconformity. There is very little if any indication that you are willing to change or to accept authority, and little evidence to indicate that you are a willing follower of Jesus Christ at all. You may need to do some study about discipleship itself, and what that involves, and you may need to spend time in prayer about this matter.

B—Identification with Jesus Christ (“Confessing Him before men”)—35 possible points

28-35 points—High conformity. You seem to have clearly identified yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ as His follower, and you seem to be actively involved in seeking to share your faith with others.

21-27 points—Moderate conformity. You seem to have made no secret of your Christianity, but you may not be as active a witness as you ought to be. You may need to pray for boldness and Christ's leading in confessing your allegiance to Him before others, and you may need to seek more to witness to what God has done and is doing in your life.

10-20 points—Low conformity. You seem to have not clearly identified yourself to the world as a follower of Jesus Christ and a part of His body. You may need to be made aware that you are in disobedience to Christ's commands, and make this a matter of prayer and repentance.

Below 10 points—Nonconformity. There is little evidence or indication that you have identified yourself as a follower of Jesus Christ at all, and you may be in active disobedience to Christ's commands. You need to make this an urgent matter of prayer, repentance, and obedience.

C—Always willing to change, grow, and learn (“Teachable attitude”)—50 possible points

40-50 points—High conformity. You seem to be blessed with a teachable spirit and a healthy awareness of your own limitations and inadequacies which motivates you to change, learn, and grow. You should have little difficulty in being a continual learner of Jesus Christ.

30-39 points—Moderate conformity. You do not seem to be quite as open as you should be to being taught and instructed, and you may have some difficulty admitting to mistakes or ignorance. You may need to make humility a matter of prayer.

20-29 points—Low conformity. You seem to have a great deal of difficulty being a learner, and you may have significant problems with pride or stubbornness. Your attitude may not be that of a humble disciple of Jesus Christ, and you may need to make this a matter of prayer and repentance.

Below 20—Nonconformity. There is little evidence to indicate that you have a teachable spirit at all. You seem to have difficulty with stubbornness, pride, and possibly even arrogance. Your attitude does not seem to be consistent with that of a disciple of Jesus Christ, and you need to make this an urgent matter of prayer.

D—Total, continual surrender of self to Christ (“Denying self”)—25 possible points

20-25 points—High conformity. You seem to have little difficulty, at least in your attitude, in surrendering your will and your desires for a higher good. You do not seem to be troubled with undue self-interest, and should be able to follow Christ without hesitation.

14-19 points—Moderate conformity. You seem to have some reservations about surrendering your personal interests, and you may be having some difficulty being obedient to Christ in the total denial of your self. You may need to make this a matter of prayer, study, and thought.

9-13 points—Low conformity. You seem to be unduly holding on to self-centered interests and concerns, and this may present you with significant difficulty in serving as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You need to make this a matter of prayer, repentance, and seeking God’s leading.

Below 9 points—Nonconformity. Your attitudes concerning your own desires and interests do not seem to be consistent with those a disciple of Jesus Christ ought to manifest. You need to make this a matter of urgent prayer and repentance, and you may need to seek godly counsel.

E—Ongoing, vital relationship with Jesus Christ (“Abiding in Christ”)—40 possible points.

35-40 points—High conformity. You seem to be blessed with a joyous, habitual abiding in Christ, through prayer, love of the Word of God, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. You should experience little difficulty with this foundational attribute of the Christian life.

29-34 points—Moderate conformity. You seem not to have the passionate desire for relationship with Christ that should characterize one of His disciples, and you may need to make this a matter of prayer. You do seem to have some good habits of prayer and Bible study, which should be encouraged and developed.

20-28 points—Low conformity. While you seem to occasionally practice the basic spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, they do not appear to be habitual nor of significant interest to you. Your relationship with Christ appears to be irregular and sporadic, and you should make this a matter of repentance and prayer.

Below 20 points—Nonconformity. There seems to be little or no evidence that you enjoy an active relationship with Jesus Christ at all, and this will cause you significant difficulties in trying to live the life of a disciple. You need to seek godly counsel, and make this a matter of urgent prayer and repentance.

F—Growing in Christlike character and evangelism (“Bearing fruit”)—60 possible points.

50-60 points—High conformity. Your life seems to be marked by ample evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work, and you seem blessed by His grace to exhibit a high degree of conformity to Christlike character. Your witnessing efforts should be aided greatly by your testimony.

40-49 points—Moderate conformity. While there are several areas in your life that seem to be under the Holy Spirit’s control, you seem to occasionally demonstrate certain traits that are not becoming in a disciple of Christ. These traits may be some hindrance to your Christian witness. You may need to study on fruits of the Spirit, and make these unyielded areas a matter of prayerful concern.

30-39 points—Low conformity. While you may or may not exhibit any glaring character flaws, your life does not seem to be characterized by the positive attributes that should mark the life of the disciple. It may be difficult to distinguish your Christian life from that of a basically moral unsaved person. You need to study the fruit of the Spirit, and make this a matter of urgent concern.

Below 30 points—Nonconformity. There seems to be little evidence that your personality and character are yielded to the Holy Spirit at all, and you may be demonstrating very little behavior that is consistent with a follower of Jesus Christ. This is a serious hindrance, not only to your Christian testimony, but to your relationship with Christ himself. You need to make this a matter of urgent prayer and seek godly counsel in this matter.

G—Having continual victory over the sin nature—45 possible points.

36-45 points—High conformity. You seem to be blessed with a strong awareness of where you are vulnerable to temptation, an understanding of sin and repentance, and the desire and grace to fight and usually withstand temptation. You seem to have as a priority keeping a clean and obedient heart before God.

27-35 points—Moderate conformity. You may need to be made more aware of the weak spots in your life, where you are most vulnerable to Satanic temptation. You seem to have some desire to maintain a clean heart before God, but there may be areas in your life where you are harboring sin that you need to address.

18-26 points—Low conformity. You may have areas of habitual sin in your life that you have not identified as sinful. You seem to have a low awareness of temptation and the work of the devil in your life, and you may not be living the victorious life that should characterize the disciple of Christ. You need to examine yourself, and seek God's leading in convicting you of your sins.

Below 18 points—Nonconformity. Your answers suggest that you are living a defeated Christian life. You seem to have little or no awareness of, or resistance to, temptation, and your sinful behaviors and attitudes do not seem to significantly concern you. You need to make this a matter of urgent prayer, and seek godly advice and wisdom.

SUMMIT POINT DISCIPLESHIP ASSESSMENT TEST
Feedback

This is a first draft of this assessment test, and, while I have done my best to make it reliable and relevant, it has not yet been fully field-tested. You are a part of the development process of this instrument, and please accept my heartfelt appreciation. It is my hope that this test may be used by God for His glory, to reveal to men and women where they fall short in their discipleship commitments, that He may use that knowledge to bring them to greater usefulness in His work. It is a limited work, and obviously could have touched on many more areas; I have included those matters that I thought were indispensable to the life of the disciple.

Your further help would be greatly appreciated. Would you take a few more minutes of your time, look over your test and your test results, and answer the following questions for me? This information will be kept fully confidential, and will be used only to perfect the assessment test itself.

Thank you,

Henry Styron

1. Were there any test items that were unclear? If so, which ones? (Specific comments are welcomed)

2. Did you consider your assessment test results to be accurate? Please feel free to elaborate.

3. If your test results did not seem to be accurate, please describe the inconsistencies.

4. Would you be open to discussing this with Henry Styron, the developer of the assessment test? (If so, please provide contact name and contact information.)

APPENDIX E

THE SUMMIT POINT DISCIPLESHIP ASSESSMENT TEST—FINAL DRAFT

This test seeks to find out where you are in your discipleship development. It does not attempt to measure temperament or personality, in which the individual may modify his attitudes or behaviors by strength of will. It is, instead, a humble attempt to ascertain where an individual is in his walk with Christ, characterized by the degree of transformation the Holy Spirit has worked in him. The test is intended to look for evidence of the Christian’s commitment to Christ, and evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian.

Please be as honest as possible during the taking of the test. False modesty or undue self-praise will skew the results of the test, and limit its usefulness in determining areas where your discipleship may need improvement. Please also understand that this is a human instrument, and, while it has been rigorously and prayerfully constructed, it can not substitute for prayer and self-searching in your seeking to more fully follow Christ. It is only a tool to alert you to some possible weak spots of which you may not be aware.

Test Key

SA—Strongly Agree—This statement is fully and completely descriptive of me.

A—Agree—This statement is generally descriptive of me.

MA—Mildly Agree—This statement is sometimes descriptive of me.

MD—Mildly Disagree—This statement is rarely descriptive of me.

D—Disagree—This statement is generally not descriptive of me.

SD—Strongly Disagree—This statement is not descriptive of me at all.

Please check the appropriate box next to each of the following statements. Directions for scoring the test will be given out later.

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. I believe you can be a good Christian without Bible study. | | | | | | |
| 2. I attend church regularly. | | | | | | |
| 3. My extended family knows that I am a Christian. | | | | | | |
| 4. I don’t talk about my spiritual life with other people. | | | | | | |
| 5. I ask God often what He wants me to do. | | | | | | |
| 6. My immediate family knows that I am a Christian. | | | | | | |
| 7. Church attendance makes little difference in my life. | | | | | | |
| 8. I have made a public profession of faith in Christ. | | | | | | |
| 9. I enjoy hearing the Bible taught. | | | | | | |
| 10. Many of my friends and acquaintances probably don’t know that I am a Christian. | | | | | | |
| 11. I experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through regular prayer and Bible study. | | | | | | |
| 12. I am concerned about people who are not Christians. | | | | | | |
| 13. I pray about a lot of different things. | | | | | | |
| 14. I don’t tend to consult the Bible when I need help. | | | | | | |
| 15. I am aware of God’s guidance in my daily life. | | | | | | |
| 16. I pray often and at length. | | | | | | |
| 17. I look for ways to talk to others about Jesus. | | | | | | |
| 18. I regularly read and study the Bible. | | | | | | |

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 19. I would be miserable if I lost some of my favorite possessions. | | | | | | |
| 20. I am easily satisfied. | | | | | | |
| 21. I worry about a lot of things. | | | | | | |
| 22. I am always willing to learn something new. | | | | | | |
| 23. I would be comfortable moving far from home if it would accomplish something important. | | | | | | |
| 24. I would be strongly opposed to major change in my life. | | | | | | |
| 25. Some people might say I am opinionated. | | | | | | |
| 26. I can learn something from just about anyone. | | | | | | |
| 27. I frequently find that I am mistaken about something. | | | | | | |
| 28. I don't get along with people I don't agree with. | | | | | | |
| 29. I respond well to human leadership. | | | | | | |
| 30. There are many things about the Bible I don't understand. | | | | | | |
| 31. I believe that if the Bible says it, that settles it. | | | | | | |
| 32. I rarely admit to being mistaken about things. | | | | | | |
| 33. I am reluctant to try new experiences. | | | | | | |
| 34. I am often reminded that God knows better than I do. | | | | | | |
| 35. I am usually willing to try new experiences. | | | | | | |
| 36. I do not like being told what to do. | | | | | | |
| 37. I enjoy being in charge of things. | | | | | | |
| 38. I take advice well. | | | | | | |
| 39. Some people would call me stubborn. | | | | | | |
| 40. I am very set in my ways. | | | | | | |

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 41. I am often tempted to sin in certain specific ways. | | | | | | |
| 42. I am aware of temptation in my life. | | | | | | |
| 43. Others would describe me as caring. | | | | | | |
| 44. I enjoy some things that Jesus probably wouldn't do, but I still do them. | | | | | | |
| 45. I tend to spoil myself . | | | | | | |
| 46. I give in to temptation. | | | | | | |
| 47. I get angry easily. | | | | | | |
| 48. My own comfort and desires are high priorities for me. | | | | | | |
| 49. I wish more people shared my concerns. | | | | | | |
| 50. I am a disciplined person. | | | | | | |
| 51. I sometimes say things I shouldn't. | | | | | | |
| 52. I am willing to change my ways. | | | | | | |
| 53. Others would describe me as compassionate. | | | | | | |
| 54. In honesty, there are people I hate. | | | | | | |
| 55. I ask for forgiveness when I give in to temptation. | | | | | | |
| 56. I am usually upbeat and cheerful. | | | | | | |
| 57. I am patient when things don't go my way. | | | | | | |
| 58. Others would describe me as gentle. | | | | | | |
| 59. I sometimes can overcome temptation with prayer. | | | | | | |
| 60. I carry a lot of resentment inside. | | | | | | |
| 61. I strongly prefer having things a certain way. | | | | | | |
| 62. I am often anxious and nervous. | | | | | | |
| 63. I would sacrifice for something I believed in. | | | | | | |
| 64. I cope well with troubles and misfortune. | | | | | | |
| 65. I have areas where I struggle in my Christian life. | | | | | | |
| 66. I sometimes can overcome temptation with Scripture. | | | | | | |
| 67. I am hard to please. | | | | | | |
| 68. Temptation is not a big problem for me. | | | | | | |
| 69. I have very definite dreams and goals. | | | | | | |
| 70. I trust God to help me overcome temptation in my life. | | | | | | |
| 71. Others would describe me as loyal. | | | | | | |
| 72. I am a self-indulgent person. | | | | | | |

APPENDIX F

FINAL DRAFT OF THE SCORING GUIDE

THE SUMMIT POINT DISCIPLESHIP ASSESSMENT TEST SCORING AND INTERPRETATION GUIDE

To score the test, find the box that corresponds to your answer for each question on the scoring sheet. Record the number in the box in the appropriate blank at the side of the score sheet. When finished, total up the score for each category at the bottom of the page

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Ex: | Test question #1 | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD |
| | 1. I believe Bible study is necessary in order to know God. | | X | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|----------|
| Scoring guide: SA | | | | | | | A | MA | MD | D | SD | | E |
| 1. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | —————→ | | | | 4 | | |

Interpretation of the results follows the score sheet. Please note that these are general categories and can not address specific issues. Individual disciples are urged to take their test-sheets and this information and, preferably with the aid of a minister or wise fellow-believer, use it to examine their own lives before God, with the purpose of confessing sins and shortcomings, and seeking His blessing, guidance, and grace.

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD | | B | E |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|---|----------|----------|
| 1. E | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 2. B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 3. B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 4. B | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 5. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 6. B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 7. E | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 8. B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 9. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 10. B | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 11. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 12. B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 13. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 14. E | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 15. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 16. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 17. B | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 18. E | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |

Total
 B **E**

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD | | A | C |
|-------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|
| 19. A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 20. A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 21. A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 22. C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 23. A | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 24. A | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 25. C | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 26. C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 27. C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 28. C | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 29. A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 30. C | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | → | | |
| 31. C | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | → | | |
| 32. C | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 33. A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 34. C | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 35. A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | |
| 36. A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 37. A | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 38. A | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | → | | |
| 39. C | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |
| 40. A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | |

Total
 A C

| | SA | A | MA | MD | D | SD | | D | F | G |
|-------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|
| 41. G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 42. G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 43. F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 44. G | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 45. D | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 46. G | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 47. F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 48. D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 49. D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 50. D | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 51. F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 52. D | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 53. F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 54. F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 55. G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 56. F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 57. F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 58. F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 59. G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 60. F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 61. D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 62. F | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 63. D | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 64. F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 65. G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 66. G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 67. D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 68. G | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 69. D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |
| 70. G | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 71. F | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | → | | | |
| 72. D | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | → | | | |

Total ——— D ——— F ——— G

INTERPRETATION

Categories of the Disciple's Profile:

- A—Absolute willingness to follow and obey Christ
- B—Identification with Jesus Christ (“Confessing Him before men”)
- C—Always willing to change, grow, and learn (“Teachable attitude”)
- D—Total, continual surrender of self to Christ (“Denying self”)
- E—Ongoing, vital relationship with Jesus Christ (“Abiding in Christ”)
- F—Growing in Christlike character and evangelism (“Bearing fruit”)
- G—Having continual victory over the sin nature

A—Absolute willingness to follow and obey Christ—60 possible points

- 50-60 points—High conformity.** You seem to be very open to new experience, ready to follow leadership wherever it might take you, and not overly attached to your current situation. You should have little difficulty in following the leading of Christ.
- 40-49 points—Moderate conformity.** You may experience some difficulty in changing your circumstances or following leadership, particularly if that involves radical change in your life. You may need to do some examining as to whether it is God's will or yours that is paramount in your life.
- 30-39 points—Low conformity.** You do not seem to be open to new experiences or following any leadership that would require you to change, and you do not appear very willing to follow Christ. You may need to examine your basic commitment to Jesus Christ's Lordship over your life.
- Below 30 points—Nonconformity.** There is very little if any indication that you are willing to change or to accept authority, and little evidence to indicate that you are a willing follower of Jesus Christ at all. You may need to do some study about discipleship itself, and what that involves, and you may need to spend time in prayer about this matter.

B—Identification with Jesus Christ (“Confessing Him before men”)—40 possible points

- 35-40 points—High conformity.** You seem to have clearly identified yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ as His follower, and you seem to be actively involved in seeking to share your faith with others.
- 29-34 points—Moderate conformity.** You seem to have made no secret of your Christianity, but you may not be as active a witness as you ought to be. You may need to pray for boldness and Christ's leading in confessing your allegiance to Him before others, and you may need to seek more to witness to what God has done and is doing in your life.
- 20-28 points—Low conformity.** You seem to have not clearly identified yourself to the world as a follower of Jesus Christ and a part of His body. You may need to be made aware that you are in disobedience to Christ's commands, and make this a matter of prayer and repentance.
- Below 20 points—Nonconformity.** There is little evidence or indication that you have identified yourself as a follower of Jesus Christ at all, and you may be in active disobedience to Christ's commands. You need to make this an urgent matter of prayer, repentance, and obedience.

C—Always willing to change, grow, and learn (“Teachable attitude”)—50 possible points

40-50 points—High conformity. You seem to be blessed with a teachable spirit and a healthy awareness of your own limitations and inadequacies which motivates you to change, learn, and grow. You should have little difficulty in being a continual learner of Jesus Christ.

30-39 points—Moderate conformity. You do not seem to be quite as open as you should be to being taught and instructed, and you may have some difficulty admitting to mistakes or ignorance. You may need to make humility a matter of prayer.

20-29 points—Low conformity. You seem to have a great deal of difficulty being a learner, and you may have significant problems with pride or stubbornness. Your attitude may not be that of a humble disciple of Jesus Christ, and you may need to make this a matter of prayer and repentance.

Below 20—Nonconformity. There is little evidence to indicate that you have a teachable spirit at all. You seem to have difficulty with stubbornness, pride, and possibly even arrogance. Your attitude does not seem to be consistent with that of a disciple of Jesus Christ, and you need to make this an urgent matter of prayer.

D—Total, continual surrender of self to Christ (“Denying self”)—50 possible points

40-50 points—High conformity. You seem to have little difficulty, at least in your attitude, in surrendering your will and your desires for a higher good. You do not seem to be troubled with undue self-interest, and should be able to follow Christ without hesitation.

30-39 points—Moderate conformity. You seem to have some reservations about surrendering your personal interests, and you may be having some difficulty being obedient to Christ in the total denial of your self. You may need to make this a matter of prayer, study, and thought.

20-29 points—Low conformity. You seem to be unduly holding on to self-centered interests and concerns, and this may present you with significant difficulty in serving as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You need to make this a matter of prayer, repentance, and seeking God’s leading.

Below 20 points—Nonconformity. Your attitudes concerning your own desires and interests do not seem to be consistent with those a disciple of Jesus Christ ought to manifest. You need to make this a matter of urgent prayer and repentance, and you may need to seek godly counsel.

E—Ongoing, vital relationship with Jesus Christ (“Abiding in Christ”)—50 possible points.

40-50 points—High conformity. You seem to be blessed with a joyous, habitual abiding in Christ, through prayer, love of the Word of God, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. You should experience little difficulty with this foundational attribute of the Christian life.

30-39 points—Moderate conformity. You seem not to have the passionate desire for relationship with Christ that should characterize one of His disciples, and you may need to make this a matter of prayer. You do seem to have some good habits of prayer and Bible study, which should be encouraged and developed.

20-29 points—Low conformity. While you seem to occasionally practice the basic spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, they do not appear to be habitual nor of significant interest to you. Your relationship with Christ appears to be irregular and sporadic, and you should make this a matter of repentance and prayer.

Below 20 points—Nonconformity. There seems to be little or no evidence that you enjoy an active relationship with Jesus Christ at all, and this will cause you significant difficulties in trying to live the life of a disciple. You need to seek godly counsel, and make this a matter of urgent prayer and repentance.

F—Growing in Christlike character and evangelism (“Bearing fruit”)—60 possible points.

50-60 points—High conformity. Your life seems to be marked by ample evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work, and you seem blessed by His grace to exhibit a high degree of conformity to Christlike character. Your witnessing efforts should be aided greatly by your testimony.

40-49 points—Moderate conformity. While there are several areas in your life that seem to be under the Holy Spirit’s control, you seem to occasionally demonstrate certain traits that are not becoming in a disciple of Christ. These traits may be some hindrance to your Christian witness. You may need to study the fruit of the Spirit, and make these unyielded areas a matter of prayerful concern.

30-39 points—Low conformity. While you may or may not exhibit any glaring character flaws, your life does not seem to be characterized by the positive attributes that should mark the life of the disciple. It may be difficult to distinguish your Christian life from that of a basically moral unsaved person. You need to study the fruit of the Spirit, and make this a matter of urgent concern.

Below 30 points—Nonconformity. There seems to be little evidence that your personality and character are yielded to the Holy Spirit at all, and you may be demonstrating very little behavior that is consistent with a follower of Jesus Christ. This is a serious hindrance, not only to your Christian testimony, but to your relationship with Christ himself. You need to make this a matter of urgent prayer and seek godly counsel in this matter.

G—Having continual victory over the sin nature—50 possible points.

40-50 points—High conformity. You seem to be blessed with a strong awareness of where you are vulnerable to temptation, an understanding of sin and repentance, and the desire and grace to fight and usually withstand temptation. You seem to have as a priority keeping a clean and obedient heart before God.

30-39 points—Moderate conformity. You may need to be made more aware of the weak spots in your life, where you are most vulnerable to Satanic temptation. You seem to have some desire to maintain a clean heart before God, but there may be areas in your life where you are harboring sin that you need to address.

20-29 points—Low conformity. You may have areas of habitual sin in your life that you have not identified as sinful. You seem to have a low awareness of temptation and the work of the devil in your life, and you may not be living the victorious life that should characterize the disciple of Christ. You need to examine yourself, and seek God’s leading in convicting you of your sins.

Below 20 points—Nonconformity. Your answers suggest that you are living a defeated Christian life. You seem to have little or no awareness of, or resistance to, temptation, and your sinful behaviors and attitudes do not seem to significantly concern you. You need to make this a matter of urgent prayer, and seek godly advice and wisdom.

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