

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN INTRODUCTION TO A MODEL FOR TEACHING SPIRITUAL FORMATION
TO STUDENT-ATHLETES IN A CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

A Thesis Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

SPIRITUAL FORMATION: AN INTRODUCTION TO A MODEL FOR TEACHING SPIRITUAL FORMATION TO STUDENT-ATHLETES IN A CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007

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This project is an attempt to provide a biblical foundation for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. A brief history of Liberty University and its athletic achievements are presented in this paper; also included are some of the people and circumstances God is using to teach athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. The process God uses for teaching those things is interwoven throughout the paper. Practical problems that are associated with spiritual formation are addressed, and the final chapter of the paper places special emphasis on some of the outcomes of the thesis.

Abstract includes 131 words

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In society today, right or wrong, athletics has become a major arena for all types of platforms in college life today; and serious consideration needs to be given to the role athletics play in a university setting. A number of questions need to be asked and answered about college athletics. These are questions that many people are asking.

1. Are college athletics to teach student-athletes about teamwork, self-worth, loyalty, competition, character, and endurance?
2. Have college athletics steered student-athletes away from the primary purpose of attending a school of higher education?
3. Is the role of athletics and academics out of balance and therefore needs to be honestly re-evaluated?
4. Are college athletics superfluous to campus life?
5. Are student-athletes spending too much time on sports instead of participating in other areas of campus life?
6. Have big-time college sports become a financial risk and an academic drag?
7. Is a major purpose of college athletics to attract attention and enthusiasm to the college or university?
8. Is there a difference between Christian Universities and non-Christian Universities when it comes to the relationship between athletics and academics?
9. Is there a need at a Christian university for a plan to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes through Whole-Person Development?

This thesis project will give attention to the last two questions, but the primary focus of the project will be on the last question.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The story is told about a young man from New Bedford, Massachusetts. He is one of eleven children - five brothers and five sisters. Most of the kids in the Gomes family played basketball except for two of them. Six out of the eleven children earned full scholarships to play basketball on the college level. When you mention the name Gomes in New Bedford, it is synonymous with basketball. It has been said, "The Gomes family is probably the one family that has contributed more to the game of basketball in the city of New Bedford."¹ If you were to have walked into the Gomes' family living room, you would see enough trophies and plaques to open up a small business of sort. Those trophies and plaques represent years of hard work on the basketball court.

In 1971 a situation arose in the city of New Bedford that sparked a race riot which created all kinds of racial problems within the city. Some white kids were passing through a predominantly black neighborhood in an automobile and wanted to see if the shotgun that one of them had in his possession worked. After the shot was fired from the automobile, it hit and killed a young man by the name of Lester Lima. A riot broke out in the city after that incident. Buildings were burned and looted as racial tension began to mount. It was during this time that the Black Panther movement began to pick up steam around the country.

While all this was taking place, there were two young men who stood out like sore thumbs in the mind of this young man from New Bedford as he began to watch those two guys very closely. It was like God had aroused his curiosity because of what he saw

¹ Statement was made by a friend of the family at a basketball banquet in 1973.

in those guys' lives. Their names were Russell and John. They were a few years older than the boy whose attention had been grabbed by what he witnessed in their lives.

This young man looked at them and wanted to get what they had, but didn't know how to get it. The two men had peace and purpose in life. They were not like many of the people who were just following the crowd of the day, nor were being persuaded like many of the young kids were during that time. The young man didn't know what it was, that they had, but whatever it was he wanted to find out about it.

One hot day summer day in June or July, the two guys approached this curious young man and his friends after they had just finished playing basket ball for a few hours at a nearby playground. They were sitting on a wall about three feet high drinking orange juice and a soda pop. It was during that time that Russell and John began to share with boys what they had and how they got it.

In a nutshell, what they had was a born-again experience with God and they were reflecting it through their lives during a very confusing period of history in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The young man remembers that day because all of his friends thought that Russell and John came from another planet. Some of the boys began to mock the two men who were sharing their testimony, but this young man was listening and watching very intently. Two weeks later he went to John's house for a visit to hear more about what had been shared. It was at that place where this young man accepted the gift of salvation from God, and he began to know and experience what it was Russell and John had communicated to him and his friends on that summer day after their basketball game.

That day was the beginning of a new chapter; things began to change in the life of that curious young man. Family, friends, teachers, police officers and many others began to notice changes. The thing that was number one (basketball) no longer held that position, and this transformed individual knew when he gave his trophy representing the most valuable player award to someone on the losing team during a summer basketball league championship, something had changed.

In fact the young man was convinced that basketball was no longer number one in his life, because of what had just transpired. That was a shock to many who knew the young man and his family prior to accepting Christ. One who grew up believing that playing basketball was the best thing since sliced bread now realizes that the game of basketball can be a tool to bring glory to God and influence others. Life as a Christian became a little puzzling for this new convert as he wondered during his senior in high school why basketball scholarships were being offered to some of his friends, but not him.

Later on the young man realized that it was God who was closing the doors around him because He had other plans which involved giving up a scholarship to a junior college to go to a Bible school that didn't even have a gym class. So if there was no gym class, you know there was no basketball program. Little did the young man know that during his time at the one-year Bible school, God had a purpose for him that He was about to unveil.

To make along story short, a man named of John Cartwright played one game of basketball with the young man while he attended the Bible College in Rhode Island. John was in the process of finishing up his Navy career in Newport Rhode Island. Little did

the young man know that he was a starting quarterback for the Navy football team. After finishing his navy career he entered Lynchburg Baptist Theological Seminary to prepare for the ministry. At that time he met the basketball coach who asked him if he knew anybody who could help jump start a new basketball program at a Christian school in Lynchburg where he was going to be attending seminary. John said he couldn't think of anybody but if he did he would contact him. On the way back to Rhode Island to wrap things up John remembered a young man that he played one game of basketball with.

This was the same man whose curiosity God had aroused through Russell and John 1971, and then in 1973 was attending a Bible school with no gym class. At that time John contacted the coach at Lynchburg Baptist College in Lynchburg, Virginia to give him the name of that young man who realized after salvation there was more to life than just winning basketball games. The head basketball coach contacted the referral (who was in his second semester of Bible College) first by phone and then via letter to invite him visit Lynchburg on an official visit.

In the meantime one professor at the Bible College discouraged him from making the visit while the older professor encouraged him to make the visit. The young man made the visit and God opened the door for him to receive a full basketball scholarship to attend Lynchburg Baptist College at the beginning of 1974.

The rest is history because at this point in the young man's life he begins to understand why some doors were closing and other were opening. God brought a young man to a Christian university because He planned to use the school's mission, people and circumstances to change his life forever in preparation for future ministry.

During his college and seminary days to follow, God used people to mold and shape him for a ministry of working with athletes. As the young man looks back to his college days he is convinced that God has fulfilled the school's mission in his life through people that God allowed him to come in contact with. God used the professors, fellow students, administrators, and many who were associated with the college at that time, but the two people who made the greatest impact on his life were his basketball coaches Dan Manley and Dr. Dale Gibson.²

This story was so easy to share as the young man being written about is now writing an introduction to a model for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes in a Christian educational setting. To God be the glory for what He has done, is doing, and will continue to do to impact others through athletics.

INTRODUCTION TO LIBERTY UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL

At Liberty University, chancellor Dr. Jerry Falwell has said for years, "There are two languages that young people understand and respond to today and they are athletics and music."³ The one question that this thesis will attempt to answer is: Is there a difference between Christian Universities and non-Christian Universities when it comes to the relationship between athletics and academics? If there should be a difference, what should the difference be? That question should be answered in the affirmative for the Christian university. On the other hand there could be some similarities in athletics and academics that would be comparable at both Universities. For example, a student-athlete at a non-Christian University could get a good education, develop social skills, have a

² See Appendix A.

³ Quote given during a student athletic convocation in January of 2002.

very successful athletic career, grow spiritually, and help the university achieve its mission and goals.

However, athletics and academics at a Christian University should reveal some key distinctions between the two universities. Some of the distinctions at a Christian university would be a biblical view of creation, a biblical perspective of God's Word, a biblical world view, a biblical purpose for athletics, and most important, a biblical understanding of how athletics is used as a platform to glorify God through evangelism and discipleship at a Christian University. The more intriguing question is there a need at a Christian university for a special plan to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes?

The purpose of the thesis is to provide rationale that would support a need for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes in a Christian educational environment and the content for such a program.

New Position Created

The full-time position of Director of Spiritual Development with the Liberty University Football program is a position that was created in 2001, one year after head Coach Karcher arrived. That was the first time in the history of Liberty University Football a full-time Director of Spiritual Development staff position was established within the football program.⁴ The position was created because of the spiritual needs of student-athletes and a genuine desire on the part of the head coach to use football as a tool to influence young men through whole-person development according to Luke 2:52.⁵ It was also an opportunity to fulfill both the university and football mission and goals

⁴ See Appendix B.

⁵ See Appendix C.

while using football as a platform for teaching spiritual formation through the head coach,⁶ coaches,⁷ support staff,⁸ and student-athletes.⁹

The Director of Spiritual Development for Football at Liberty University has been given the responsibility to oversee, coordinate and implement spiritual disciplines that create an environment for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. The four areas of whole person development include the social, physical, mental and spiritual well being of student-athletes in the football program. Luke 2:52 reads, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and Man," (NKJ).¹⁰ The role of Director of Spiritual Development involves a day-to-day relationship and communication with the head coach, defensive and offensive coordinators, special team's coordinator; assistant coaches, support staff, players, and other university departments.

When Christian universities seek to honor God through athletics, that provides a possible course of action that could be used as a platform for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes and reflect the mission of the university. In order for that to happen, it is suggested that the university's mission and goals and the individual athletic team mission and goals be reviewed regularly.

⁶ See Appendix D.

⁷ See Appendix E.

⁸ See Appendix F.

⁹ See Appendix G.

¹⁰ Luke 2:52 All scripture references will be cited from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

The mission of Liberty University is “To produce Christ-centered men and women with values, knowledge, and skills required to impact tomorrow’s world.”¹¹

In support of its Philosophy and Mission, Liberty University seeks to provide its students with intellectual and cultural pursuits that: Contribute to a knowledge and understanding of other cultures and of international events; Promote an understanding of the Western tradition and the diverse elements of American cultural history, especially the importance of the individual in maintaining democratic and free market processes; Foster university-level competencies in writing, speaking, reading, appreciation of the arts, analytical reasoning, computer literacy, and library research; Convey the different ways of acquiring knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences; Enable them to engage in a major field of study built on a solid foundation in the liberal arts; Explore the moral dimensions and ethical implications in the disciplines offered by the University; Assist in developing competence and determination in their approach to their vocation, including encouragement in choosing and following their vocation as a calling to do the will of God through all of life; Promote the synthesis of academic knowledge and Christian values in order that there might be a maturing spiritual, intellectual, social and physical behavior; Cultivate a sensitivity to the needs of others and a commitment to the betterment of humanity; Encourage a commitment to the Christian life, one of actively communicating the Christian faith, personal integrity, and social responsibility which, as it is lived out, points people to Jesus Christ as the Lord of the universe and their own personal Savior.¹²

The university football mission is “ To utilize football as a unique tool to proclaim and explain the biblical meaning of life through whole-person development that encourages team work and winning on and off the field.”¹³ The whole-person development components are: Athletically prepare physically and mentally to compete on the playing field, Socially appropriate interaction with students, faculty, and community, Academically acquire an education after football, Spiritually foster growth through

¹¹ Liberty University Catalog, 2005–2006.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Available from <http://www.libertyflames.com/football/page.asp?page-id=6.html>.

spiritual and biblical character development.¹⁴ The mission and goals need to be clearly stated and articulated in such a way that university and athletic personnel understand the correlation between the mission and goals of the university and individual athletic teams. The correlation of the mission and goals provide unity of purpose; therefore, a biblical foundation for teaching spiritual formation through athletics can become a reality. Peter F. Drucker says, "A mission statement has to focus on what the institution really tries to do. . . . The mission is something that transcends today, but guides today, informs today."¹⁵

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A Good Question

Someone could possibly ask, "Why attempt to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes through athletics?" Well, as one begins to understand how spiritual formation encompasses all of life, maybe the question should be why not use athletics as a platform to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes?

In the book, *Invitation To A Journey*, Robert MulHolland shares a great insight: "Spiritual formation has become one of the major movements of the late twentieth century."¹⁶ That being the case, using athletics as a platform provides a normal avenue to teach spiritual formation as a normal part of life. After all, a lot of time and money is given to athletics these days; why not use it to teach spiritual formation. This model will provide hands-on experience with the head coach, assistant coaches, support staff and

¹⁴ See Appendix H.

¹⁵ Janel M. Radtke, Article on How to Write a Mission Statement.

¹⁶ M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., *An Invitation To A Journey* (Dowers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Prologue.

players of the Liberty University Football program over the last five years. Coach Karcher, prior to training camp would articulate very clearly to the football coaches, staff and players his commitment to fulfill the mission and goals of the university and football program by using football as a tool to glorify God and developing biblical character in the lives of the student-athletes. He was committed to leading the program by example in all areas of practice. Terry Wardle says, " God has committed to using all that life brings as an opportunity for His transforming touch. This process of development does not happen as a result of striving or effort, but as an act of His incredible grace upon the lives of people."¹⁷

Some of the things that will be shared in this project will hopefully reflect what the football program is attempting to do at Liberty University. This project seeks to provide practical suggestions that can be used with any athletic program that desires to use athletics as a platform to introduce spiritual formation to its coaches, support staff, and players.

The Intent of the Project

The introduction of spiritual formation will focus on the how, where, when, who and what of spiritual formation and athletics. A biblical basis for spiritual formation will be developed in order to compliment the project at hand. There will be a clear definition of what spiritual formation is and how it applies to athletics. The objective of the project is to provide biblical and practical tools on how Christian universities can use athletics as a tool to glorify God by seeing lives changed through the teaching of spiritual formation

¹⁷ Terry Wardle, *The Transforming Path* (Siloam Springs, AR: Leafwood Publishers, 2003), 19.

and biblical character throughout its entire athletic program. Throughout the paper the reader will see how spiritual formation compliments whole-person development.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

This project will focus on the subject of spiritual formation of student-athletes. Included in the paper will be a little on spiritual discipline, character development and whole-person development. Whole-person development involves the four major components of our football program. The Liberty football program gives serious attention to each one of those areas; however, this project will not treat the mental, physical, or social areas of the student-athlete, but will give attention to spiritual formation and the student-athlete.

THEORETICAL BASIS

It is important to remember at Christian universities, just like other universities there are all kind of student-athletes with different needs. The needs reflect the different backgrounds of our student body population. In order to meet the spiritual needs of our student-athletes, there has to be an understanding by those who work with athletes that God desires to use people to influence them in all areas of life. In order for the needs of student-athletes to be met, people must also believe that God desires to use their present positions and persona as a vehicle to help meet the spiritual needs of student-athletes.

If coaches, assistant coaches, support staff, players, faculty, and administrators are steadfast in using their position and personality within the university, God can use them

to impact student-athletes in a positive way. When people allow God to use them, they become tools in the hand of a loving God.

The project seeks to provide answers to the following questions: Why is there a need to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes in a Christian educational setting? How does spiritual formation apply to athletics? What is the biblical basis for teaching athletes spiritual formation? How are spiritual disciplines related to student-athletes? Why is it necessary for the football mission and goals to compliment the university mission and goals? Why is it necessary to be committed to whole-person development? How can God use football to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes?

How is whole-person development related to spiritual formation? Who does God use to teach spiritual formation? What are the results of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes? What is whole-person development? How does spiritual formation apply to the mission and goals of the university and football program? How do you measure spiritual maturity of student-athletes? How do you relate spiritual formation to different levels of spiritual maturity? How does character development and spiritual formation go hand in hand? Where do spiritual disciplines fit into the athletics?

The results of answering these questions will provide a wealth of practical and biblical information to strengthen the commitment of using athletics as a tool to glorify God by teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes.

STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the project will provide an outline of the major areas that relate to spiritual formation and the student-athlete. This process will focus on key areas

that will be interrelated to the topic chosen. The details within each chapter will contribute to the theme of the undertaking through athletics.

The first chapter will include the basic components that have helped to develop a systematic approach to the overall direction of the project. In this chapter the statement of the problem (why the topic is needed), the limitations for the project (what would not be covered in the project), the historical perspective of athletics at Liberty University (how and when athletics started at Liberty), the methodology to be used in developing the project (what will be included in each chapter), and the literature review of material to be used in the project (what materials that will be used to compliment the project) will be covered. The first chapter highlights the groundwork necessary to complete the project.

The second chapter will include brief highlights of the early beginnings of the university and football program at Liberty. Included will be points of interest from the humble beginnings of the school and athletic program. Some of the people and achievements along the journey of faith while will be noted in the chapter.

The third chapter will be a biblical basis for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. The chapter will focus on the biblical mandate to utilize God's Word as a standard for developing the biblical foundation for teaching spiritual formation. The material in this chapter will not be limited only to the subject of spiritual formation, but will include three other areas spiritual discipline, whole-person development and character development that are interrelated to teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes.

The fourth chapter will be a brief look at the variety of people God uses as instruments in the lives of student-athletes to encourage them to pursue spiritual

formation. This section will include all kinds of people from all different walks of life who have been and are in contact with the student-athletes on a regular basis. These people, from a biblical perspective, would be considered vessels of honor that God has allowed to be a part of the ongoing development of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes in a Christian environment. Included will be key components needed to be lived out by those God would use to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation.

The fifth chapter will look at the process God uses in the journey of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. An introduction of the three different stages of spiritual maturity among student-athletes will be presented. In this chapter characteristics of student-athletes will be given to better identify the three different levels of student-athletes spiritual interests. Included will be some of the principles necessary to compliment the different processes God uses to teach student-athletes life changing truth about spiritual formation.

The sixth chapter will deal with some of the realistic problems encountered when attempting to help student-athletes in their quest to spiritual maturity by teaching about spiritual formation. Practical solutions to some of the challenges people encounter when working with student-athletes spiritually will be shared. Tools that can enhance the opportunity to teach about spiritual formation will be included as well.

The final chapter will deal with the product of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. Throughout the chapter the by products of teaching spiritual formation, character and whole-person development to student-athletes will be expressed. Included in the chapter will be things that compliment the original purpose of the paper. A brief

summary of conversations with other chaplains from I-AA Christian schools will be included.

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature for this thesis will integrate the following four areas of study: spiritual formation, spiritual disciplines, whole-person development and character development.

Kenneth Boa in his book *Conformed To His Image* attempts to bring together in one volume a clear and concise overview of those things that God uses to conform His children into the image of His Son. The twelve areas he deals with are called the twelve facets of spirituality. Kenneth Boa writes, "I want to present a synthetic and comprehensive approach to the spiritual life that will expose you to a number of beneficial facets. Each of these has value as a part of a greater whole, and it is my hope that this book will stretch your thinking and encourage you to "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."¹⁸

In the book titled *The Upward Call*, four authors have come together to address the relationship between spiritual formation and the Holy Life in the Wesleyan point of view. The book consists of five parts. The first part of the book deals with Finding the Path. In this section there is an emphasis on the grace of God and how it relates to people. In the second section of the book there is an emphasis on Finding Resources for the Journey. In this section the emphasis is on the practices the believer uses in his journey of spiritual formation. The third section of the book focuses on Finding the Companions on the Way. The emphasis is on the role the community plays in the

¹⁸ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 16.

process of spiritual formation. The final section in the book focuses on Finding Ways to Serve Others on Our Journey. This section puts the believer in contact with those passages in the in New Testament that relate to spiritual formation.

In the book *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*, Mel Lawrenz seeks to help those who are in positions of leadership within the church gain a better grasp of their role of teaching others about spiritual formation. The writer tries to not only encourage those who are in so-called full-time ministry, but those who are in any type of ministry. The author provides some foundational principles of what spiritual formation is all about. He uses the biblical concept shared by Paul from the book of I Corinthians on how the physical body functions. He also shares how spiritual formation involves other people in our lives. Mel explains in a very clear manner how spiritual formation is not just limited to one person's life, but it is also associated with other people in our lives. In short, the writer believes," spiritual development includes the progressive integration of all who we are and also all of what life is"¹⁹

In the book *The Pastor's Guide to Spiritual Formation*, the different contributors present different ways God is and has used them as spiritual leaders to impact their followers though biblical insight related to the topic of spiritual formation. The book starts with encouragement to those who are in leadership positions of ministry in and outside the church. It provides insights on how to maintain a growing relationship with God through the process of spiritual formation. The transformation that takes place in the life of leaders involves the whole community of believers and those outside the Christian

¹⁹ Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000), 38.

community. In the book, one of the writers talks about a rule of life. A rule of life is a discipline that one engages in that God uses to develop Christ-likeness in the believer.

Morris Weigert says, "A rule of life is a personal orderliness (regulation) of daily living that increases the likelihood (possibility, probability) that grace will shape and mold my life into a visible (discernable, noticeable, detectable) Christ-likeness in order that I may be a resource of grace to others as I represent Christ in His grand reconciling program."²⁰ The writers offer practical ways in which spiritual leaders can develop an intimate relationship with God by practicing those daily things that lead to a more godly way of life.

In the book by Terry Wardle titled *The Transforming Path*, Terry begins with what happens at the moment of conversion of the new believer. This is where spiritual formation starts for the babe in Christ. In the beginning of the book he reflects back to what it was like when he was first converted to Christ. The writer expressed his gratitude for the changes that took place at conversion and those who God used to help him get on his feet spiritually; however, he raises some concern about having communicated to him the reality of the Christian life.

Terry states, "A new believer should receive clear instruction regarding the place of difficulty, doubt, and trial in forming a person in Christ Jesus."²¹ The author shares those things that walk a believer from spiritual birth to ultimate victory in glory. He presents a realistic view of what the Christian should experience in the Christian journey of spiritual formation.

²⁰ Morris Weigert, *The Pastor's Guide to Personal Spiritual Formation* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005), 39.

²¹ Terry Wardle, *The Transforming Path*, 11.

In the book *Invitation to a Journey*, Robert Mulholland gives the readers hope and encouragement as he approaches the topic of spiritual formation from a biblical perspective. He challenges his readers to understand spiritual formation in light of those things about life that relates a person's comfort zone. Robert shares that many times Christians limit their spiritual formation to a individualized context of life, instead of allowing God to use other people and situations outside their comfort zone of life.

He illustrates throughout the book how God's word helps us to understand the ways in which God grows us as followers of Christ. The writer clearly states that the Christian life is a journey, and there are no short cuts on the journey.

Mulholland says," Holistic spirituality is a pilgrimage of deepening responsiveness to God's control of our life and being."²² Thoughts about what and who God uses to grow His children are presented throughout the book in ways that help the reader to know that God is very interested in the maturity of His children.

In the book titled *The Christian Educators Handbook on Spiritual Formation* the authors provide a very comprehensive treatment on the subject of spiritual formation. He defines what spiritual formation is and looks like by incorporating the topic applying it to many different areas of life and ministry. Walter A, Elwell say's," It is not often that a book combining adequate coverage of the subject, accurate information, and genuine spiritual insight appears, but *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*

²² Robert M. MulHolland JR., *Invitation To A Journey*, 12.

does just that. It draws together theoretical insight on spiritual formation for the academician and practical help on growing spiritually for the layperson.”²³

In the book *Living in God's Presence*, Michael Fonseca provides some practical advice for those preparing a possible weekend retreat to focus on developing a person's vertical relationship with God. This book can also be used in small group studies. A topic is given with questions that can be used for group discussion. In chapter one the writer provides the reader with an idea of what to expect from the book. The second and third chapters give the readers an idea of how the vertical relationships are related to our horizontal relationships in life. Chapter four further teaches the reader about the need for a relationship that involves a trust factor between the Father and His children. The 5th chapter is about the role that discipleship plays in the life of the believer. The final chapter is about maintaining and sustaining the personal relationship with God.

The book *Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard says, "The perceived distance and difficulty of entering fully into the divine world and its life is due entirely to our failure to understand that the way in is the way of pervasive inner transformation and to our failure to take the small steps that quietly and certainly lead to it."²⁴ Dallas Willard challenges the reader to realize that real and lasting transformation flows from within each person's inner most being. He says, "Christian spiritual formation is focused entirely on Jesus. Its goal is an obedience or conformity to Christ out of an inner

²³ Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, *The Christian Handbook On Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), back cover.

²⁴ Dallas Willard, *Renovation Of The Heart* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 10.

transformation accomplished through purposive interaction with the grace of God in Christ.”²⁵

In the book by Dallas Willard titled *Devine Conspiracy*, the author attempts to engage the reader in a more dynamic and personal approach to understanding who and what an intimate relationship with Jesus is all about. He begins with addressing some of the wrong approaches to understanding and knowing Jesus. The challenge is given to follow and reflect Christ-likeness qualities in everyday life of the believer. Richard Foster, who is a leading authority on the subject of spiritual formation, states,

I am struck by the comprehensive nature of the book, the breath of the issues covered is astonishing, and the analysis of the contemporary scene is quite remarkable and comprehensive. His challenge to believers today is to take what Jesus said and do something about it in our daily walk with Him. Dallas says “the biblical pattern is, from beginning to end, “Be doers of the word, and not hears only.”²⁶

In the book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster shares how spiritual disciplines are the door to a more liberated life for the believer,” The disciplines are God’s way of getting us into the ground; they put us where he can work within us and transform us. By themselves the spiritual disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God’s means of grace.”²⁷ The book provides insight into three areas of a Christian’s life: Inward Disciplines, Outward Disciplines, and Cooperate Disciplines. Eugene H. Peterson writes,” Like a child exploring the attic of an old house on a rainy day, discovering a trunk full of treasure and then calling all his brothers and sisters to share the find, Richard Foster has ‘found’ the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Dallas Willard, *The Devine Conspiracy* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1997), 311.

²⁷ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1988), 7.

spiritual disciplines that the modern world stored away and forgot, and has excitedly called us to celebrate them. For they are, as he shows us, the instruments of joy, the way into mature Christian spirituality and abundant life.”²⁸

In the book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald Whitley expresses his heartfelt thanks for those who God has used to impact his life in the area of spiritual disciplines. In his book he provides some very helpful definitions on what spiritual disciplines are and what they are not, and also provides strong biblical insight from the scriptures and relates them to everyday life for the Christian. He presents the positive and negative aspects of personal and spiritual discipline throughout the book. This author shares nine practical areas that relate to the topic of spiritual disciplines; he also shares a concern for undisciplined believers in that he states, ” So many Christians are so spiritually undisciplined that they seem to have little fruit and power in their lives.”²⁹ Donald provides encouragement and exhortation to all who read the book in helping them to better understand the correlation between spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation.

In the book titled *Character Counts*, Rod Handley shares the results of a few men that gathered together to help each other grow in their vertical and horizontal relationships. Rod shares a three-fold purpose of the book. The first purpose defines accountability by breaking down the who, what, where, and why issues. The second section breaks down the ten questions that our group answers each week. Each chapter ends with a special story, lesson or poem which ties back to the chapter topic. Ideally, you will get through this book in a few days and have a solid basis for beginning your

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Donald S. Whitley, *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 21.

group with ideas to put together. The final section is an appendices filled with practical tools, as well as a section on FCA ministry. Ron Brown, former University of Nebraska Assistant Football Coach says, ” Rod wonderfully inspires the horizontal accountability needed to be a champion on God’s team – man to man. This helps motivate me to have the all–important vertical fellowship with my ‘Coach’ – Jesus Christ.”³⁰

In the book by Bill Hybels titled *Who You Are When No One’s Looking*, the writer takes ten character qualities and shares how they relate to the daily life of every believer. He uses the word of God to give a biblical basis for the character qualities. Throughout the book he illustrates the character quality with life examples. The book is very short in length, but is loaded with life-changing application on how to demonstrate godly character in this day and age.

In the book titled *Growing: Training vs. Trying* by John Ortberg, Laurie Penderson and Judson Poling relate spiritual formation of the Christian to the disciplines an athlete uses in training to become a better athlete. They present ten core values of spiritual formation from their perspective. The definitions that are given on what spiritual formation looks like in the life of a believer are educational in nature. Spiritual formation,” Is essential, not optional, for followers of Christ, is a process, not an event, is God’s work, but requires my participation.”³¹ The book also includes a combination of spiritual disciplines and how they are related to the topic of spiritual formation.

³⁰ Rod Handley, *Character Counts* (Grand Island, NE: Cross Training Publishing, 2002), Testimonials.

³¹ John Ortberg, *Growth Training vs. Trying* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 9.

In the book *Competent Christian Counseling*, Tim Clinton and George Ohlschlager present biblical insight on the topic of spiritual formation. The authors seek to balance the vertical and horizontal practices of spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines in the life of the believer. They share ways in which Christians can use principles of spiritual formation in daily counseling sessions and life.

In the book readers are reminded of basic truth, "Whenever we fail to develop spiritually, our inner life suffers. Instead of listening to God and walking with God, we lose almost all sense of God's presence in our lives; our hearts become deadened and God's voice is barely audible to our souls."³²

In the book *The Heart of Mentoring*, David S. Stoddard defines what mentoring is not and what mentoring is from a biblical perspective. His desire is to encourage others to become passionate about investing in others through a mentoring relationship. He uses those he has mentored as examples of what can happen when two people commit to the process that he has laid in the book of mentoring others. The author states, "My desire throughout this book is not to just to provide you with information. In the so-called "communications age", we already feel consumed by more information than we could ever use. I want to help in moving you to action, providing you with fundamental principles for getting started in this exciting adventure."³³ David Stoddard shares about motives for mentoring and the different ways of mentoring others. He concludes by sharing ten principles for effectively mentoring other believers.

³² Tim Clinton and George Ohlschlager, *Competent Christian Counseling* (Colorado Springs, CO: Water Brook Press, 2002), 120.

³³ David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring* (Colorado Springs, CO: 2003), 40.

SUMMARY

Throughout this chapter this writer has attempted to provide an overview of the fundamental components comprising this study and statement of the limitations, theological basis, definition of terms, and description of the methodology and review of literature. While none of the aforementioned components comprising this study were considered in depth, a more comprehensive treatment of each component will be provided in each of the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND HIGHLIGHTS OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL

LYNCHBURG BAPTIST COLLEGE: 1971 – 1975

In the early days of Liberty University (then Lynchburg Baptist College), how many people would have believed that a college of one hundred and fifty-four students would one day participate in Division I-A and I-AA athletics? How many people envisioned an athletic program that would compete on the highest level of competition of NCAA athletics? Who would have thought of the dream of building a world class university that would one day provide the foundation for athletes to participate on the professional level of sports? Did anyone ever dream that a football program that rented the Lynchburg City Football Stadium and played their first collegiate football game in a local high school stadium would no longer need to use those facilities because now Liberty University has its own 12,000 seat football facility on campus? Who would have thought that the groundwork that was being laid in the early days of the football program would provide a larger arena to influence others for the cause of Christ?

Dr. Falwell has stated on numerous occasions, "Music and sports are two things in life that speak more to young more than anything else,"¹ These two avenues are used for evangelism and edification of the student-athlete. Well, for all those who did not believe at the inception of the school that football and other sports would one day

¹ Given during student-athlete convocation on April of 2005.

compete in Division I-A and I-AA athletics, they must conclude what was talked about has become a reality today.

Dr. Falwell shared from the very birth of the school his dream,” was to build a world class evangelical university that would one day become what Notre Dame is for Roman Catholics and what Brigham Young is for Mormons.”²

It began with a vision. Jerry Falwell made the announcement to the congregation of Thomas Road Baptist Church in January of 1971. He wanted to build a distinctively Christian, world-class university where young people would receive a quality education in a Christian environment. He wanted a school that would establish a tradition of developing Champions for Christ – those who could go into all areas of life and impact their world for Jesus Christ. Just 8 months later, Dr. Falwell saw his dream take form when Lynchburg Baptist College officially opened with 154 students and four full-time faculty members.

Dr. Falwell says,“ Faith and discouragement are opposites. Faith is taking God at His Word no matter how bleak the circumstances appear to be. Discouragement is focusing on distressing circumstances in spite of what God has said. Learn to trust God. Believe when you cannot see, hear, or feel. Then you know you are pleasing God.”³

A tremendous journey of faith had begun. The Athletic teams at Lynchburg Baptist College were already being noticed in the 70’s in their green and yellow colors. The school colors changed in 1975 to the patriotic red, white and royal blue in honor of the name change from Lynchburg to Liberty Baptist College. The main focus of athletics in the beginning was soul winning and outreach to the teams they played against. From

² Given during student-athlete convocation on April of 2005.

³ Dr. Jerry Falwell, *Keys to Daily Living* (Milwaukee, WI: Ideals Publishing), 4.

its beginning, immediate growth developed. In 1973 a six-story hotel was purchased in downtown Lynchburg to house student and hold classes.

In 1973 Lynchburg Baptist Theological Seminary began classes. Dr. A. Pierre. Guillerman was named president of both the college and seminary. Almost 1,500 students attended the college by 1974 and it was apparent that a new building was necessary, but the school faced heavy debt and possible closure.

LIBERTY BAPTIST COLLEGE: 1976 – 1985

By 1976, Lynchburg Baptist College was renamed Liberty Baptist College in honor of the future home of the college on Liberty Mountain. During this time 150 male students were housed at the Kennedy House and the college also rented a floor of the Ramada Inn. Up to eight students could be found living in one room in the hotel downtown and each morning, crowds of students were seen lining up every morning outside the hotel as they waited for their morning bus ride to classes that were held on Liberty Mountain.

The Liberty Home Bible Institute began that same year and in 1977 LBC was granted Candidate Status with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Women's sports were not very popular but the men's sports received a lot of attention. In 1977, 78, and 79 the Wrestling team won the NCAA National Championship under Coach Bonheim. The Track team did the same in 1979 and the Basketball team followed suit with their win of a Division I National Championship.

On January 21, 1977, 2,500 students, faculty and administration met on Liberty Mountain for a prayer meeting. They prayed that all of the debt would be cleared and construction would begin on the mount for school buildings. Less than one month later

2.5 million dollars was received to erase the debt and in another month the building program began on Liberty Mountain for the new school buildings. By the end of the year, two classroom buildings and 12 dorms were completed and ready to use.

Not all the buildings were complete so a 3,000-seat tent was used as a meeting place for chapel services. The 80's decade would bring even more growth than the first. In 1980 LBC received its first accreditation from SACS and four years later SACS would also accredit the Graduate programs in Religion and Education. The nursing program was heightened with the expansion of a new lab which facilitated clinical experience.

In 1981, LBC was accepted by NCAA at the Division II level and Track won another national title. Baseball became a Division I sport in 1982 and with the school's achievement of university status in 1988, all 16 men's and women's sports obtained NCAA Division I status. In 1982, 25 buildings were on campus, including 18 dorms, 4 classroom buildings, a multi-purpose center, administration building and the prayer chapel. Among these was the dedication of the B.R. Lakin School of Religion Building that would train more than 1,000 students for full-time Christian service. In 1985 the campus was made up of 47 buildings with 5,930 students enrolled for the academic year.

What started as a vision has developed into a full-bodied campus that only continues to expand. As the campus began to develop and the number of students continued to climb, the reason students sought to attend the college became apparent. The quality Christian education that was offered became more and more appealing to students. In the fall of 1985 Dr. and Mrs. Falwell lead 5,000 students on an 11.6 mile walk-a-thon, raising more than \$500,000 for the Liberty Trust Fund. On May 6, 1985, was graduation day for 668 LBC students.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY 1986 –

PROGRESS OF UNIVERSITY

After 14 years of praying and waiting, it was also the day Dr. Falwell's dream of opening a university came true. Liberty Baptist College officially became Liberty University. During Liberty's first year as a university, enrollment jumped to 5,930 students, up from 4,500 students the year before. Liberty University now offered an AA, BS, MA, and MBS due to the founding of the Liberty School of Life Long Learning program, or LUSLLL.

The Arthur S. DeMoss Learning Center was erected during the year to accommodate the growing number of students and programs. In 1987, LU was approved by SACS to offer Liberty's first doctorate degree, the Doctorate of Ministry, and a Master's of Business Administration. In 1988, Liberty was beginning to be recognized and was named the largest private university in the state of Virginia, with nearly 11,000 students in both resident and adult education programs, representing 50 states and more than 30 foreign nations, and 268 faculty. Enrollment continued to climb throughout the 90's and reached an all-time high of 9,178 students.

Programs were becoming stronger and Liberty University was increasingly gaining attention because of their academic programs. Huge steps were made to strengthen academics in 1998 with the Information technology Resource Center receiving approval as an official Microsoft Training Center, the Teacher Education Program being re-certified and the Nursing Program becoming re-licensed. The first Student Center opened in 1989 in memory of David DeMoss.

In 1989, ground broke for the 12,000-seat Williams Stadium and Sam Rutigliano began as the football coach. That November, the Track and Field facility was completed and the following October the Vines Center was finished. The 10,000-seat Athletic center became home to the men and women's basketball teams and volleyball team in 1990. It was May of 1991 when LU was invited to become a member of the Big South Conference and in 1994; Men's Basketball won the Big South Title.

A 12,000-seat football stadium was built in honor of Mr. And Mrs. Arthur Williams and the Reber-Thomas dining hall was completed in 1992. The Big South tournament was hosted at home with a record breaking attendance of over 18,000 fans! That same year Track and Field also won the Big South Conference. Today, more than 4,400 acres on Liberty Mountain are the home to a total of 76 dormitories, administration and classroom buildings.

1995 was a landmark year for Coach Rutigliano and four of his players. After going to trial to fight the NCAA ruling that prohibited kneeling in the end zone, the coach and his players won the battle to allow players to express their faith on the football field. Liberty's Debate Team claimed the Nation Championship title from 1994 to 1997. Dr. A. Pierre Guillerman retired as president of the school in 1997 and the state-of-the-art library was named for him in honor of his 22 years of dedication and service to Liberty. Dr. John M. Borek, Jr. would take over as president to lead the school into the new millennium. As long as we remain a university, academics will continue to receive attention as Liberty trains young men and women to be cutting edge in their fields as they carry the Gospel into the workforce. In 2001 the second accredited doctorate program was added in Counseling.

While education became increasingly important, another part of Dr. Falwell's dream started to take shape. Tennis would join Liberty athletics in 1999 and the new millennium would bring Coach Ken Karcher to the football team. Dr. Falwell had a vision and it was certainly to provide a quality Christian education, but he also wanted his school to be the best at everything they did, including athletics. Dr. Falwell wanted Liberty to "Reach major college athletic status where they would play Notre dame and other nationally ranked athletic powers."⁴

The turn of the century would also mark the fifth consecutive Big South Conference title for the Women's Basketball team. And that year women's hockey joined the athletic family. Through all the titles, championships and wins, there have been defeats but Liberty University Athletics has remained committed to excellence and continue to be blessed and rise to the top because of their faithfulness.

Just like Dr. Falwell has always said, "If it's Christian, it ought to be better."⁵ One thing that cannot be denied, from the classroom to the court, whether under a leaky roof or just a tent, God has guided the path of what was once Lynchburg Baptist College, into what it is still becoming now as Liberty University. Liberty students from the first days in 1971 to 2007 share at least one thing in common – we are accustomed to seeking God for our needs. Three additional floors have been added to DeMoss Hall, a food court in the courtyard, the new LaHaye Student Life Center and Ice Hockey rink as well as many new dormitories are taking shape on campus as the university prepares to increase the number of students

⁴ Given during student-athlete convocation in April of 2005.

⁵ Student - faculty - staff Wednesday convocation in the Vines center on September of 2006.

We walk upon a miracle campus and construction still surrounds us. We've experienced the birthing pains and the growing pains that have come out of a developing university. The days of wading in ankle-deep mud and freezing underneath a chapel tent are gone, but there are constant reminders that there are still new heights to be reached on Liberty Mountain. Through it all, God has been the Source forcing us to our knees. The people who have contributed to making Liberty University what it is today have shared in this miracle and watched the dream unfold. They've been a part of its purpose.

They have shared in its triumphs and sorrows. Some have dedicated their lives to fulfilling this dream, while others have gone out and are living it in their daily lives through it all, the hand of God has remained on this school and the lives that have been devoted to building it for God's glory. Liberty's distinctiveness does not directly stem from the fact that we are a Christian school. It does not come from our size, our academic programs or our athletic achievements. Liberty University stands out because we have been blessed by God.

For 36 years we have watched this school develop with His guidance and divine intervention. With God's direction and Hand of provision Liberty University can strive to achieve and continue to be the most exciting university in the world. Remembering our past and asking God to direct every step of our future, we can say by the grace of God, "We've come this far..." Thirty six years have passed since the first classes were held at Thomas Road Baptist Church and what has taken place in the past three decades is deemed nothing less than a miracle.

The Liberty University Athletics Department is one of just two athletics departments in the history of the Big South to have claimed the title of five-time Big

South Sasser Cup champions. Liberty has claimed the title five out of the last nine years, while Coastal Carolina picked up its eighth Sasser Cup championship this past season. Since becoming an NCAA Division I program in 1988. The Liberty University Athletics Department has raised the bar of success, striving to achieve a higher level of success each year. Each one of Liberty's 18 sports has contributed to the overall success of the athletic department. Here are some highlights of the past, present and future accomplishments of Liberty University football.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF FLAMES FOOTBALL IN THE 1970'S

Lynchburg Baptist College was founded by Dr. Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church, and Dr. A. Pierre Guillermin in 1971. Lynchburg Baptist gains affiliation with the National Christian Collegiate Athletic Association 1972.

Lynchburg Baptist College fields its football team. The head coach was Lee "Rock" Royer. The team practiced on Treasure Island and played its games at Brookville High School and Lynchburg City Stadium. The schedule was mainly composed of junior varsity teams. LBC finished the season with three consecutive wins and posted a 3-3 record in August 1973.

The Flames first opponent was Massanutten Military Academy. Lynchburg Baptist dropped the contest, 42-32. The Flames first win came over Ferrum College, 29-7, in the fourth game of the season in September 1973.

Lee "Rock" Royer died tragically in a plane crash, and John Cartwright, assistant coach, was named Lynchburg Baptist's second head football coach in November 20, 1973. Cartwright finished his first season with a 5-4 record. This was LBC's first

winning season with a schedule made up of primarily junior varsity teams in November 1974.

Lynchburg Baptist College was renamed Liberty Baptist College with the colors becoming Red, White and Blue. The Flames also joined the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics as an associate member. Liberty Baptist played its first full varsity schedule and finished with a 4-5 record in 1975. Cartwright posted the first winning season at the varsity level, 5-4-1 in 1976. Tom Dowling is named LBC's third head football coach. Cartwright concludes his career with a 14-13-1 record. The first full-time assistant coach, Lee Kaltenbach was hired as the offensive coordinator. Kim Raynor and Scott Goetz were selected to the Churchmen's All-American team, LBC's first football all-Americans in 1977. Dave Hertzler, Ed Landis, Rupert Wright, Rod Gladfelter and Steve Kearns were all named Churchmen's All-Americans in December 1978.

LBC posted its best record at 9-1-1. Steve Kearns, a tight end, is drafted by the British Columbia Lions of the Canadian Football League and became the first Flame to play at the professional level in 1979.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF FLAMES FOOTBALL IN THE 1980'S

LBC joined the National Collegiate Athletic Association at the Division II level as an associate member. The Eagle was chosen as the official mascot. Glenn Inverso signed a free agent contract with the New York Jets to become the first Flame in the National Football League. LBC played its first NCAA I-AA opponent, James Madison University, losing, 30-14 in 1980. LBC won its first NCAA Division I-AA game vs. Morehead State University, 23-20 on November 8, 1980.

LBC joined the NCAA Division II ranks and became eligible for NAIA postseason competition. The Flames Sports Network began with Jerry Edwards handling the play-by-play duties as the “Voice of the Flames,” in 1981.

Liberty Baptist finished the 1982 season with a 7-4 mark and was ranked 19th in the NAIA Division I Poll. Mitchell Clark earned first-team NAIA All-American honors, and John Sanders was named the first Kodak All-American at LBC in the college division. Mike Forslund and Jeff Brown were the first Flames drafted by United States Football League, signing with the Washington Federals in November 1982.

LBC was ranked 17th in the NAIA preseason poll, marking the first time the Flames earned a preseason ranking in August 29, 1983. LBC was accepted as a member of the East Coast Athletic Conference in 1983. Liberty dropped its NAIA membership and became eligible for NCAA Division II postseason action. Dowling finished his career with a 33-38-2 record in 1983.

Morgan Hout became LBC’s fourth head football coach in the school’s history. He finished his first season with a 5-6 mark in May 30, 1984. LBC was renamed Liberty University. Fred Banks, a wide receiver, became the first Flame to make an NFL roster, signing with the Cleveland Browns in 1985. Liberty defeated James Madison, 9-3, to post its first win over an NCAA I-AA team from the state of Virginia on September 21, 1985. Treasure Island, the Flames practice facility, was washed away in a flood, causing the team to cancel the remainder of the season on November 6, 1985. Kelvin Edwards, wide receiver, played in the Blue-Gray All-Star Game, becoming the first Flame to play in a college all-star game on December 25, 1985.

Kelvin Edwards was selected in the fourth round by the New Orleans Saints in 1986. Wayne Haddix was named Liberty's first All-American by the National Strength Coaches of America. He also played in the Blue-Gray Game and the Senior Bowl, becoming the first Flame to ever play in the Senior Bowl in December 1986. Mark Mathis was named to the American Football Coaches Association's Division II All-American team. He became the first Flame to receive this honor in December 7, 1986. Mickey Paige was named first-team All-American at the Division II level by Football News Gazette in December 1987. Liberty became an official member at the NCAA I-AA level in September 1, 1988. Liberty finished with an 8-3 record for the first year at the NCAA Division I-AA level. The Flames were ranked 20th in the nation by the Football News Gazette in 1988.

Mickey Paige earned third-team All-American honors, and Paul Johnson was named honorable-mention All-American by the Football News Gazette. Morgan Hout was named VaSID state "Coach of the Year." in December 1988. Morgan Hout finished his career with a 20-29-1 record.

Sam Rutigliano was named Liberty's fifth head football coach. School officials announced plans for a new stadium to be built and ready for the 1989 season in 1988. Groundbreaking for the stadium took place on LU's old practice fields in May 8, 1989. Liberty defeated Eastern Michigan University, 25-24, in Ypsilanti, Mich., to post its first win against an NCAA Division I-AA opponent on October 14, 1989. Liberty University Stadium was opened in front of a record home crowd of 12,750. The Flames defeated Towson State, 37-18 on October 21, 1989.

Liberty finished with a 7-3 record for the second season in NCAA Division I-AA. The Flames were ranked in the NCAA Division I-AA Top 20 for four straight weeks, including a ranking as high as ninth. Eric Green was selected a second-team All-American by the Associated Press in November 1989.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF FLAMES FOOTBALL IN THE 1990'S

Eric Green was selected to play in the Hula and Senior Bowls, and Donald Smith was selected to play in the Martin Luther King All-American Classic. Sam Rutigliano was also selected to coach in the Martin Luther King All-American Classic in 1990. Eric Green was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the first round and was the 21st pick overall in the NFL draft. Green was Liberty's first player ever chosen in the first round. Donald Smith was drafted by the Minnesota Vikings in the 10th round in 1990.

Liberty finished with a 7-4 record in its third year of Division I-AA action. The Flames were ranked in the NCAA Division I-AA Top 20 for three straight weeks, including a ranking as high as eighth. Leroy Kinard signed a free-agent contract with the N.Y. Jets in November 1990. Eric Green was selected as AFC Rookie of the Year, and Wayne Haddix was chosen to play in the Pro Bowl.

Pat Nelson received second-team All-American honors from Associated Press and honorable-mention All-American accolades from The Sports Network in 1991. Pat Nelson signed a free agent contract with the New York Jets, and Sebastian Barrie also signed as a free agent with the Green Bay Packers in May 1992.

Liberty finished the 1992 season with a 7-4 mark. The Flames were ranked 19th in the nation at the NCAA I-AA level by the NCAA Poll in November 1992. George Nimako was drafted in the fourth round by Toronto of the Canadian Football League in

March 1993. James McKnight signed a free agent contract with the Seattle Seahawks, and Dwayne Carswell also signed as a free agent with the Denver Broncos in 1994.

Liberty finished the 1995 season with an 8-3 mark. The Flames were ranked 19th in the nation at the I-AA level by the Football Gazette and 27th by The Sports Network Poll in 1995. The Flames were preseason ranked as high as ninth, but finished with a 5-6 record due to injuries. Damon Bomar was named third-team All-American, and Jesse Riley and Craig Henry were selected to the Football Gazette's honorable-mention All-American team in 1996.

The Flames finished the 1996 season with a 9-2 record, tying the school record for most wins in a season. They were ranked number-19, 20, and 21 by The ESPN/USA Today Poll, The Sports Network and the Football Gazette. The defense led the nation in turnovers forced with 40 and was second in turnover margin in 1997.

Rodney Degrade was named third-team All-American by The Sports Network and second-team All-American by the Football Gazette. Jesse Riley was named second-team All-American by the Football Gazette. Torrey Rush and Jerome Wicker were named honorable-mention All-Americans by the Football Gazette. Jarrod Everson was named CoSIDA/GTE Academic All-American second team, the first since 1982 and LU's first at the NCAA Division I-AA level on December 1997.

Dwayne Carswell, captain of the special teams for the Denver Broncos, became the first Liberty football player to play and win the NFL Super Bowl in January 1998. Ben Anderson signed a free agent contract with the New York Giants, and Andrew McFadden and Trey Sartin both signed free agent contracts with the Indianapolis Colts in April 1998.

Jesse Riley became Liberty's first Associated Press first-team All-American and was also selected third-team All-American by the Football Gazette. Jarrod Everson became Liberty's first football player to be named a CoSIDA/GTE Academic All-American and first two-time selection. He was also named to the inaugural NACDA Academic All-Star team in November 1998.

Dwayne Carswell, captain of the special teams for the Denver Broncos, became the first Liberty football player to play and win his second straight NFL Super Bowl in January 1999. Rodney Degrade signed a free agent contract with the Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League in May 1999.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE FLAMES IN 2000

Sam Rutigliano, the winningest coach in the football program's history, announced his retirement. Rutigliano posted a 67-53 record during his 11-year tenure at the helm of the Flames' football program in January 13, 2000. Ken Karcher was announced as the sixth head coach in the history of the football program in 2000. Torrey Rush signed a free agent contract with the Barcelona Dragons of the NFL Europe league in March 2000. Liberty announced that the football program would be joining the Big South Conference with competition set to begin during the 2002 season. Biff Parson signed a free agent contract with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League April 2002. Liberty and Gardner-Webb play the first-ever Big South Conference football game in Lynchburg, Va., with Gardner-Webb walking away with a 31-21 victory on October, 5 2002.

Liberty wins its first-ever Big South Conference game with a 31-17 victory over Charleston Southern in Lynchburg on October 19, 2002. Liberty places four players on

the first-ever Big South Conference first-team all-conference team and one on the second-team all-conference squad on December 16, 2002. Aaron DeBerry was selected to participate in the 2004 I-AA All-Star Classic, hosted by The Football Network on October 29, 2003. Liberty defeats Coastal Carolina, 38-21, and posts its first-ever winning record in Big South Conference play as the Flames finish second in the league with a 3-1 record on November 15, 2003.

Dre Barnes becomes the first player in school history to be named Big South Offensive Player of the Year, while Barnes is joined by five other members on the first-team all-conference squad and three other on the second-team all-conference team on December 9, 2003.

An official groundbreaking ceremony for the Williams Football Operation Center was held prior to kickoff against Charleston Southern in October 30, 2004. Jay Cline was named to the *CoSIDA/ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American*® second team, becoming the second football player and the ninth student-athlete in school history to be named an Academic All-American on December 3, 2004.

Sam Gado signed a free agent contract with Kansas City Chiefs of the National Football League in May of 2005. Sam Gado signed with Green Bay Packers of the National Football League to be on their practice squad on Oct. 17, 2006. Sam Gado was traded to the Houston Texans of the National Football League on September 13, 2006.

Zach Terrell becomes the first player in school history to be named Big South Freshman of the Year, while Terrell is joined by six other players on the Big South all-

conference team in November 30, 2005. Danny Rocco was announced as the seventh head coach in the history of the football program on December 2, 2005.⁶

SUMMARY

The writer of this project has had the privilege of being a student-athlete in the early days of the school. There are many things that were said during that time in the history of the school that have become a reality today.

Dr. Fallwell said then and still says today, “ Faith is making real what cannot be seen or sensed with human faculties. It is giving substance, or body, to what we cannot touch or define. Faith is believing what God says in spite of difficulties. Faith is simply taking God at His Word.”⁷ To God be the glory for what He has done, is doing and will continue to do.

⁶ Liberty University Athletic Media Archives.

⁷ Dr. Jerry Falwell, *Keys To Daily Living*, 7.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BIBILCAL BASIS FOR TEACHING SPIRITUAL FORMATION TO STUDENT-ATHLETES

When beginning to develop a biblical basis for teaching spiritual formation, it is breathtaking to know that there are absolutes that compliment the subject at hand. Those absolutes provide the authority, reliability, credibility, and the eternal blueprint needed to establish the biblical underpinning for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. This biblical philosophy is rooted and grounded in God and God's Word.

The first building block for teaching spiritual formation is an awareness of who God is. This is critical because to not have a proper understanding of the person of God or character of God, spiritual formation cannot be lived out to its fullest in and through the lives of people. On the other hand, to have a proper understanding of the person of God or character of God is to realize that God is very interested and actively involved in the process of spiritual formation in the lives of people. Rick Warren says, "What God wants most from you is a relationship."¹ To be confused about who God is leads to bad theology, bad theology leads to bad behavior and bad behavior doesn't augment the process of spiritual formation in the lives of student-athletes.

Once a proper belief system about God has been established there is another foundational block that must also be in place to properly develop a biblical foundation for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes in the 21st century. That second

¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 70.

foundational building block is God's Word. God's Word provides the *standards* and *principles* necessary for a student-athlete to go from spiritual poverty to spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity. Robert MulHolland Jr. writes, "The Word is truly the mediator between us and God. The Word is 'for us' with respect to God, and it is also 'for God' with respect to us. The dual purpose introduces the intrusive nature of the Word of God. The Word breaks into the midst of life."² This takes place when the standards and principles that are found in God's Word are applied from the beginning to the end of one's spiritual journey.

When the student-athlete embraces the whole-person development concept's found in Luke 2:52 which say's," And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."³ The athlete places himself or herself in a posture where God can use other people, circumstances, character development and spiritual disciplines to grow the student-athlete in Christ, therefore reflecting attitudes and actions that are Christ-like in all areas of life.

Embracing whole-person development has to do with buy in. Buy in is believing that what is being lived out and taught by those who are teaching can be life-changing if mixed with faith and action in all four areas of whole-person development. John Maxwell has written," People don't at first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthwhile causes."⁴ As leaders live out the concepts of Whole Person Development in front of student-athletes they provide the example athletes need

² Robert MulHolland, Jr. *Shaped By The Word*, 41.

³ Luke 2:52.

⁴ John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 146.

to see in everyday life by those who are leading them. The example provides the spiritual oomph needed to revolutionize a student-athlete's life - revolutionary because the character of God, which is Christ-likeness, is being manifested in and through the lives of their leaders. God's Word not only provides the standards and principles to build a biblical philosophy for teaching spiritual formation and life, but God's Word also provides the standards and principles to *evaluate* the philosophy of spiritual formation and life being lived out in the community of the believers and unbelievers.

In preparation for developing a biblical foundation for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes, there are *four* preliminary things that need to be addressed. The first thing to be addressed when teaching about spiritual formation is God's *desire* for developing an intimate relationship with the student-athlete. Rick Warren writes, "You were made by God and for God – and until you understand that, life will never make sense."⁵ Secondly, God's *process* for growing the student-athlete in personal character that leads to spiritual maturity. MulHolland says, "Every event of life is an experience of spiritual formation."⁶ Thirdly, God's *method* of transforming student-athletes into the image of Christ on a daily basis. Fourthly, God's *manner* of preparing the student-athlete for future service and ministry.

Once the foundational blocks are cemented in the minds and hearts of those seeking to be used by God to teach athletes about spiritual formation, then one is ready to study the examples of people in the Bible who have both modeled the realities of what spiritual formation is all about in real life. It will be from this background that a biblical and practical basis for teaching spiritual formation will be developed.

⁵ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 19.

⁶ Robert MulHolland Jr., *Shaped By The Word*, 25.

PAUL'S EXAMPLE OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

PAULS'S PRE-CONVERSTION STAGE: NO SPIRITUAL LIFE

One of the most dramatic illustrations of spiritual formation in the New Testament is the apostle Paul. There are three stages that will be used to illustrate from start to finish what Spiritual formation is all about in Paul's life. Chuck Swindoll pens these words about Paul," He hated the name of Jesus. So much so, he became a self-avowed, violent aggressor, persecuting and killing Christians in allegiance to the God of heaven. Shocking though it may seem, we must never forget the pit from which he came. The better we understand the darkness of his past, the more we will understand his gratitude for grace."⁷ These three stages represent three distinct stages in a person's life. These stages in the life of Saul who later was called Paul will be used in this chapter to point out where spiritual formation begins, what spiritual formation is and what it looks like in everyday life from a biblical perspective.

The three stages are as follows, the Pre-Conversion stage, the Conversion stage, and Post-Conversion stage. The first area of study deals with the pre-conversion stage of his life. This stage has to do with who he was prior to salvation. Another way of describing this stage in his life would be called the stage with *no spiritual* life. Chuck Swindoll writes," The first pen portrait of Paul (whom we first meet as Saul of Tarsus) is both brutal and bloody. If an artist were to render it with brush and oils, not one of us would want it to hang framed in our living room. The man looks more like a terrorist than

⁷ Chuck Swindoll, *Paul* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 4.

a devote follower of Judaism. To our horror, the blood of the first martyr splattered across Saul's clothes while he stood nodding in agreement, an accomplice to a vicious crime,"⁸ This stage demonstrates spiritual poverty. Spiritual poverty is living life without a personal relationship with God. It is important to note that during this stage Paul is known as Saul.

The following information gives the backdrop and biblical evidence for this stage in Saul's life. In Chapter six of the book of Acts there was a complaint that was brought to the attention of the apostles. This complaint had to do with some physical needs of certain believers within the local assembly not being met that should have been met by the church. The apostles responded to this complaint by asking the local group of believers to appoint people within the church to oversee the problem that was brought to their attention.

It wasn't that the apostles did not want to respond to the complaint personally, rather it was a matter of them safeguarding their roles and responsibilities as the spiritual leaders in the church, and therefore others were selected for a part in the work of the ministry. It was a good example of leadership development on their part by involving others in the ministry as seen in Eph. 4:12. Stephen was one of the first deacons chosen by the church (Acts 6). Being the evangelist that he was, Stephen was one of many people that Saul may have heard communicating the life-changing gospel in a very clear and understandable manner.

STEPHEN — one of the seven deacons, who became a preacher of the gospel. He was the first Christian martyr. His personal character and history are recorded in Acts 6. "He fell asleep" with a prayer for his persecutors on his lips (7:60). Devout men carried him to his grave (8:2). It was at the feet of the young

⁸ Ibid., 3.

Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, that those who stoned him laid their clothes (comp. Deut. 17:5–7) before they began their cruel work. The scene which Saul then witnessed and the words he heard appear to have made a deep and lasting impression on his mind (Acts 22:19, 20). The speech of Stephen before the Jewish ruler is the first apology for the universalism of the gospel as a message to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. It is the longest speech contained in the Acts, a place of prominence being given to it as a defense.⁹

When Saul's original mission in life is examined, it becomes very evident that he is very anti-Christian in his mission in life by his attitudes and actions towards Christians. One thing worth noting in Acts 7:58 is that Saul was holding the clothes of those who were stoning Stephen to death after the powerful and convicting message Stephen delivered.

Saul at the Stoning Of Stephen

It is assumed, if he was asked to hold the clothes of some of those who were stoning Stephen, there had to be some type of relationship with them. The level of the relationship isn't the main concern here at this time, but the fact that he was holding the clothes of those stoning Stephen indicates some kind of association.

They *covered their ears* and yelled out so as not to hear any more of the supposed blasphemy. The mob was unable to wait for the niceties of a trial, and without officially pronouncing a verdict or sentence they dragged *him out of the city and began to stone him*. By the fact that *the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul*, the reader learns not only that Saul was present, but also that he was not one of the witnesses against Stephen. Similarly, in 8:1, the fact that the text explicitly mentions his *approval* probably means that he did not actively participate in the stoning. Interestingly, it also numbers Saul as among those about whom Stephen prays *do not hold this sin against them*, echoing the words of Jesus in Lk. 23:34, 46.¹⁰

⁹ M.G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

¹⁰ D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

Those people who were stoning Stephen at this time were reacting to the convincing and convicting message that Stephen delivered to them in Acts 7:1-53. The message was historical and personal in content and very direct in its application. The message was indeed something that they all could relate to and understand because of its Jewish historical content. The previous verses give us a good understanding of Saul's possible association with those who had just stoned Stephen.

In Acts 8:1-3 the scripture provide insight into the heart and mind of Saul during this time. He agrees with what has just happened to Stephen; he continues to move forward with the same belief system of those who killed Stephen. There is nothing about his actions at this time that indicate any kind of remorse from what has just taken place. He gives no kind of hint that let's the readers know that he disapproves of what has happened to Stephen by words or actions and associations.

There are other verses in the book of Acts to support the conclusions that have just been given about Saul's belief and behavior after the death of Stephen. The one thing that is clear about the mission Saul was engaged in during his early journey through life is there was no spiritual life or energy in him to confirm he was born again; made a genuine bible-based decision to accept what Christ did for him on the cross. His life at this time indicates spiritual poverty.

The Book of Acts and the epistles give sufficient data for a sketch of Saul's early life. He was born in Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 22:3), a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" (see 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5), the "son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6), and a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37; 22:25-28). He was educated in Jerusalem by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) and became a devoted Pharisee (Acts 26:4-5; Phil. 3:5). Measured by the Law, his life was blameless (Phil. 3:6). He was one of the most promising young Pharisees in Jerusalem, well on his way to becoming a great leader for the Jewish faith (Gal. 1:14). Saul's zeal for the Law was displayed most vividly in his persecution of the church (Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:6). He really thought that persecuting the believers was one way of serving God, so he did it

with a clear conscience (2 Tim. 1:3). He obeyed the light that he had and, when God gave him more light, he obeyed that and became a Christian! In what ways did Saul persecute the church? He “made havoc of the church,” and the verb here describes a wild animal mangling its prey. When Christ spoke to Saul on the Damascus road, He compared him to a beast! (Acts 9:5) The stoning of Stephen, which Saul approved, shows the lengths to which he would go to achieve his purpose. He persecuted both men and women “unto the death” (Acts 22:4), entering both houses and synagogues (Acts 22:19). He had the believers imprisoned and beaten (Acts 22:19; 26:9–11). If they renounced their faith in Jesus Christ (“compelling them to blaspheme”—Acts 26:11), they were set free; if they did not recant, they could be killed. In later years, Paul described himself as “exceedingly mad against them” (Acts 26:11), “a blasphemer [he denounced Jesus Christ], and a persecutor, and injurious [violent]” (1 Tim. 1:13). He was a man with great authority whose devotion to Moses completely controlled his life, and almost destroyed his life. He did it “ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13), and God showed him mercy and saved him. Saul of Tarsus is the last person in Jerusalem you would have chosen to be the great apostle to the Gentiles! ¹¹

Spiritual poverty is living life without a personal relationship with God. The attitudes and actions of Saul confirm what God’s word says about those who have never been born again according to I Cor. 2:14. Saul’s actions and attitudes make it clear that the mission that He was pursuing at that time in life was contrary to the Bible and therefore had no biblical support for his actions and attitudes that he and others demonstrated during the time of Stephen’s stoning.

The following verses are used to confirm the pre-conversion stage of Saul’s life are as follows; Acts 8:1, 9:1-2, 13-14, 21, 22: 4-5, 26:9-11.

So ends the witness of Stephen. But there was another there that day whose story was just beginning. Luke introduced Saul for the first time at the stoning of Stephen. He was the young man who watched over the garments of the witnesses as they stoned Stephen (v. 58). There is no indication that Paul himself actually lifted a stone, but he was in total agreement with the action (8:1). Paul likely had a deeper involvement with the whole incident than appears in these brief references. He was himself a Greek-speaking Jew, a Cilician, who perhaps had argued with Stephen in the Hellenist synagogue in Jerusalem (6:9f.) We

¹¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

would like to know if he heard the speech. If he did, it would be eloquent testimony that Stephen's words did not fall only on deaf ears; for ultimately no one carried out more fully the implications of Stephen's words than did Paul. The incident of Stephen's martyrdom in any event surely had a profound effect as Paul himself later attested (Acts 22:20).¹²

There are some good questions that need to be raised but not necessarily answered at this time in the Pre-Conversion stage of this chapter. Who was God using during this time in Saul's life? What was Christ doing during this time in Saul's life? What was the Holy Spirit doing during this time in Saul's life? What were believers doing during this time in Saul's life? What were people doing about the message during this time in Saul's life? What was the Devil doing during this time in Saul's life? How was God using people and circumstances during this time in Saul's life? What was Stephen trying to say by what he was preaching during this time in Saul's life? What does the scripture tell us about what is happening during this time in Saul's life? What do people's attitudes and actions tell us about what is happening during this time in Saul's life? What was God trying to communicate to others by what was happening during this time in Saul's life?

Questions with Application for Today

By way of application for people who are seeking to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation today, there are some similar questions that can be asked during the Pre-Conversion stage of a student-athletes life. What is God attempting to do in the life of the student-athlete? What is Christ attempting to do in the life of the student-athlete? What is the Holy Spirit attempting to do in the life of the student-athlete? What are other

¹² John B. Polhill, *Acts*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

players attempting to do in the life of the student-athlete? What are coaches attempting to teach the student-athlete? What is the Devil attempting to do in the life of the student-athlete? Who are some people outside the sport that God could be using to communicate truth? How is God using circumstances in the life of the student-athlete to bring him or her to Christ? What does the scripture tell us about what is happening in the life of the student-athlete? Has there been any resistance to gospel presentation?

What do the attitudes and actions reveal about what is happening in the life of the student-athlete? Is the student-athlete open to hearing the gospel? How has God been speaking to the student-athlete about the need to receive Christ as his or her personal Savior? Who has God used in the past to present the gospel to the student-athlete? Who is God using presently to speak to the student-athlete about the need to receive Christ as personal Savior? How is the student-athlete responding to the gospel presentation? Is there someone else who can better communicate the gospel to the student-athlete? Am I watering seed, planting seed, sowing seed, or reaping from what seed someone has sown in the life of the student-athlete? How can the door be kept open for someone else to present the gospel to the student-athlete? Does the student-athlete want to receive Christ as his/her personal Savior at this time?

During the Pre-Conversion stage it is imperative to be attentive, sensitive, and alert to what it is God is trying to reveal to the student-athlete during that time. To ask those questions in this stage of the student-athletes life will only help fulfill the will of God in his/her life. The following questions are beneficial to ask because according to II Pet. 3:9 it is not God's will that any student-athlete should perish without knowing Christ personally.

One of the blessings of asking the questions and living out the godly character qualities before the student-athlete helps the person being used by God to better understand what and how God is using him/her in the process of introducing the student-athlete to Christ. Those three ministry principles (attentiveness, sensitivity, alertness) are consistently lived out in the life of our Savior in many different situations during His earthly ministry with many different people. Those ministry principles can also be used when talking to recruits. This may not be the place to discuss the philosophy of recruiting at a Christian university, but that is another area where the ministry principles can be lived out by those God is using to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation.

PAUL'S CONVERSION STAGE: NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE

The second area of study deals with the Conversion stage of Saul's life. This stage has to do with who he became at the point of salvation. Another way of describing this stage in Saul's life would be called the stage with *new spiritual* life. Chuck Swindoll says this about Paul's conversion experience, "If we are going to think about remarkable conversions, though, there's been none more notorious than Saul of Tarsus. Few conversions in the history of Christianity can even compare to what transpired on that road outside Damascus. That is true because few opponents of Christianity ever reach such a degree of despicable notoriety as Saul."¹³ This stage demonstrates spiritual infancy. Spiritual infancy begins when a person has a genuine born again experience. It is important to note that during this stage Saul is now known as Paul. Mel Lawrenz says, "Spiritual birth means an awakening to God based on a relationship with God that is

¹³ Chuck Swindoll, *Paul*, 21.

radical that it is called the difference between death and life.”¹⁴ There are some things that are worth noting that give us biblical confirmation about this stage in Paul’s life and ministry.

We notice in this stage of Paul’s life the circumstances God used to get Saul’s attention in Acts 9:3-9. While in route to find and incarcerate Christians, Jesus speaks to Saul in a very personal manner, in that Jesus was revealing not only who He was, but Who it was that was speaking to Saul while on his way to Jerusalem to locate those who were followers of Christ. It is also worth noting here that God has a way of using all kind of unique people and circumstances to communicate His will and way regarding salvation.

During this stage in Saul’s life God the Father was using God the Son to be the tool who is communicating the will of the Father. God also has a way of using the right person at the right time with the right message in the right way to communicate the gospel to others. As was stated earlier, God was using people and circumstances like Stephen and his stoning experience in the Pre-Conversation stage to prepare Saul’s heart for the decision he made in the Conversation stage of his life. There is another example in the Bible when God used a person and situation to communicate the plan of salvation to someone in Acts 8:26-35. It is clear from the scripture that God communicated the message across to Saul in an understandable way.

The following verses provide the biblical evidence to support this stage in Saul’s life and to confirm the decision of Saul to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior; Acts 9:6, 11, 15, 17, 22, 26, 27, 29, 31, 22:6-11, 26: 12-28.

¹⁴ Mel Lawrenze, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*, 30.

Evidence of Genuine Salvation

The first thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is a new *message* to proclaim according to Acts 9:20. The message that Saul begins to embrace and proclaim is the need for a personal relationship with God that is based on a personal encounter with Jesus. That message is grace-centered and not works-centered in its proclamation. It was a declaration that has the power to change lives just like it changed Saul's life and others. The message complimented the plan of redemption that God has provided for mankind through Jesus Christ. It was an affirmation of hope and reconciliation for mankind throughout all ages. The message that Saul communicated to others after his Damascus road experience was about the life God provides to those who accept what Jesus did on the cross. The central person and theme of Saul's presentation from that point on was Jesus and Jesus alone.

The second thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is a new *motivation* for proclaiming the new relationship with God through Jesus Christ. His motivation for doing what he did was no longer captivated by getting people to do things by using fear tactics. His newfound faith in Christ empowered him to use a motivation that was based on a genuine love for God and people. There was no longer a motive to do things that simply pleased people based on wrong motives, but now there was a motivation to do things that pleased God with the right heart motivation. The motives for proclaiming the truth that Saul came to know personally was no longer self-centered, but now Christ-centered in its approach. It was a motivation that drove him to state publicly that his old motivation for ministry had been replaced with a new motivation for ministry. He was passionate about the love of God

and the need to help others understand and know that the central theme of life and ministry is rooted and grounded in the person of Jesus Christ.

The third thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is a new *mission* as a new convert of Christ. His new mission gave him the foundation and purpose in ministry that he would now be engaged in as he served God and others. This newfound mission provided Saul with the inner strength to overcome the obstacles he would face while traveling to different places and speaking to different people as a preacher of the gospel. Saul's new message, motive, and mission for doing the work of the ministry provides the strong evidence of the transformation that took place in his life through a divine encounter with Jesus while on the Damascus road.

The fourth thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is the *response* of those who knew Saul during the Pre-Conversion stage. It was obvious to those who knew Saul that something dramatic had happened in his life because his message had changed right before their very own eyes and they could not deny what took place in Saul's life according to Acts 9:21. Swindoll says, "So many things within Saul's thinking changed – and changed completely. He changed his mind about God, about Jesus, about the Resurrection, about those who followed Christ. He must have shaken his head for days. He thought Christ was dead. Now he is convinced Jesus is alive. This One who knew his name also knew what he'd been doing. The raging rebel had finally met his match and there was no place or way to hide,"¹⁵

The fifth thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is the same *hatred* that he was inflicting on the followers of Jesus is the same intense hatred that they inflicted on him from the outset of Stephens's message

¹⁵ Chuck Swindoll, *Paul*, 25.

according to Acts 9:23-24. The exact animosity that he displayed prior to salvation is the same animosity that he began to experience once becoming a follower of Jesus. This, again, gives biblical evidence that something had taken place in Saul's life, and because of it people who were outside the faith reacted with passion to eliminate the message from the face of the earth by attempting to kill Saul. One of the greatest manifestations of a person experiencing genuine salvation is a changed life or what others have called the exchanged life. This new life is a gift from God through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

The sixth thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is the very *people* Saul sought out to imprison are the same people who came to his rescue when others sought to snuff out his life by death according to Acts 9:25. Instead of believers running away from Saul to avoid his hatred and desire to stop the message they were proclaiming about new life in Christ, they are now doing the very opposite thing for the one who pursued them once upon a time.

The seventh thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is the disciples who *questioned* the sincerity of his salvation were given confirmation by one of their own disciples that Saul had been born again in Acts 9:26. The reason why there was serious doubt about Saul's conversion was because of his past life. Saul's past lifestyle did not compliment the will of God in word or deed. In fact, most of what Saul was committed to in his past life was contrary to what God was providing for people through Christ. The old message was about what people can do to earn God's favor; the new message was about what God provides for people through Jesus Christ. Saul's old message was about religion; Saul's new message was about a

relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Saul's previous message put an emphasis on the outer person; Saul's new message placed an emphasis on the inner man.

The eight thing that becomes apparently clear from the outset of Saul's genuine salvation experience is the *fear* that once gripped the hearts of the saints, no longer was an issue after the conversion of Saul. They feared that Saul was only professing a new life change in order to further his original purpose of finding and putting Christians in prison for their faith according to Acts 9:26. After Barnabas assured fellow believers that Saul's decision was real, and then believers began to feel more at peace about Saul's new found relationship with God Acts 9:27-31.

WHEN Paul arrived in Jerusalem he found himself regarded with the gravest suspicion. How could it be otherwise? It was in that very city that he had made havoc of the Church and had dragged men and women to prison. We have seen how at crucial moments in his career certain people were instrumental in winning Paul for the Church. First, the Church owed Paul to the prayer of Stephen. Then the Church owed Paul to the forgiving spirit of Ananias. Now we see the Church owing Paul to the large-hearted charity of Barnabas. When everyone else was steering clear of him, Barnabas took him by the hand and stood sponsor for him.¹⁶

Questions To Ponder During This Stage

The transformation was the beginning of a spiritual journey that embraces what spiritual formation is all about in the life of a follower of Jesus Christ. There are some good questions that need to be raised but not necessarily answered at this time in Conversion stage of this chapter. Who was God using during this time in Saul's life? What was Christ doing during this time in Saul's life? What was the Holy Spirit doing during this time in Saul's life? What were believers doing during this time in Saul's life?

¹⁶ William Barclay, *Acts of The Apostles*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

What were people doing about the message during this time in Saul's life? What was the devil doing during this time in Saul's life? How was God using circumstances and people during this time in Saul's life? What was Stephen trying to say by what he was preaching during this time in Saul's life? What does the scripture tell us about what is happening during this time in Saul's life? What do people's attitudes and actions tell us about what is happening during this time in Saul's life? What was God trying to communicate to others by what was happening during this time in Saul's life?

Questions for Application for Today

By way of application for people who are seeking to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation today, here are similar questions that can be asked during the conversion stage of a student-athletes life. What has God done in the life of the student-athlete? What has the Holy Spirit doing in the life of the student-athlete? How can other players help in the life of the student-athlete? How can coaches help the student-athlete? What is the devil attempting to do in the life of the student-athlete? How has God used circumstances in the life of the student-athlete to bring him or her to Christ? What does the scripture tell us about what is happening in the life of the student-athlete?

What do the new attitudes and actions reveal about what has happened in the life of the student-athlete? How can the student-athlete be helped in understanding what happened in his or her life? How has God been spoken to the student-athlete about the need to receive Christ as his or her personal Savior? What are some changes that have taken place in the athlete's life after conversion? Who did God used in the past to present the gospel to the student-athlete? Who did God use presently to speak to the student-athlete about the need to receive Christ as personal Savior?

How is the student-athlete responding to the new found faith? Who is someone that can become big brother or sister to the student-athlete? Who watered the seed, who planted the seed, who sowed the seed, or who reaped from the seed that was sown in the life of the student-athlete? How can the athlete take what has happened and share it with others? Does the student-athlete have a bible? Does the student-athlete attend church anywhere? Who is someone that can help the student-athlete understand what happened spiritually? What are some areas in the life of the student-athlete that might need some immediate attention? What are some character qualities that the student-athlete might need to give attention do in his or her life? Kenneth Boa says, “The spiritual life is an all-encompassing, lifelong response to God’s gracious initiatives in the lives of those whose trust is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

During the conversion stage it is also imperative that people who are being used by God be attentive, sensitive, and alert to what it is God has revealed about what happened in the life of the student-athlete. To demonstrate those character qualities in this stage of life will only help better understand how the will of God in the athlete’s life is being fulfilled during this stage in life. One of the benefits of asking the appropriate questions and living out the character qualities provides a better platform to help the student-athlete begin to grow in his/her relationship with God. The ministry values and questions can be used to locate where future student-athletes are at in their spiritual journey as well.

¹⁷ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed To His Image*, 19.

PAUL'S POST-CONVERSION: SUPER-NATURAL LIFE

The third area of study deals with the Post-Conversion stage of his life. This stage has to do with who Paul was becoming after salvation. Another way of describing this stage would be called the stage of *supernatural* life. Chuck Swindoll says, "The conversion of a soul is the miracle of a moment, the manufacture of a saint is the task of a lifetime. No person, no matter how bright or how sincere or how submissive, comes to Christ and enters a world of instantaneous spiritual maturity."¹⁸ This stage demonstrates the process to spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is living life under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. There are some things that are worth noting that give us biblical confirmation about this stage in Saul's life and ministry.

As you look at who Saul was during the Pre-Conversion period of his life, it becomes evident that something needed to happen that would change the course of his life for all eternity. On the other hand when you look at the Conversion period of his life, it becomes apparently clear something significant happened to him that altered the way he conducted his life and ministry. Chuck Swindoll says, "For three years, Saul lived somewhere in the desert, cut off from his former manner of life. I'm convinced it was there, in that barren place of obscurity, that Paul developed his theology. He met God, intimately and deeply. Silently and alone, he plumbed the unfathomable mysteries of sovereignty, election, depravity, the deity of Christ, the miraculous power of the resurrection, doctrine of the church, and future things.... Everything changed."¹⁹

¹⁸ Chuck Swindoll, *Paul*, 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

The following verses give affirmation of the Post-Conversion stage of Saul's life; Acts 9:19, 27-31, 11:25-26, 30, 12:25, 13:1-3, 13:4-7, 14:1, 4-7, 20, 15:3-4, 22, 25, 36, 16:3-4, 19, 25, 17:2, 16-21, 18:22-23, 19:8-10, 20:1-3, 7, 16-38, 21:18-20, 24:14-21, 26:12-18, 27:19, 24-32, 82:17-20. Paul's process from going to spiritual poverty to spiritual maturity may not be the normal process of spiritual growth for a believer, but one must remember a person doesn't become a spiritual giant over night. The Post-Conversion stage of life deals with learning how to apply truth from God's Word to everyday life situations.

Mel Lawrenze writes, "As mysterious and as wonderful as spiritual birth is, spiritual growth is no less so. Growing means increase – of knowledge, of experience, and of maturity – but it also means formation. It is a process of integrating all aspects of life, and even when crises breaks us down, God's grace is there to put the pieces back together in brand new forms. And God puts the church there as the instrument of soul-shaping."²⁰ The progression is a concept about life and growth that Paul speaks about in Philippians 4:11-13. The Post-Conversion stage also gives attention to personal character qualities in life that correspond with the Christ-like qualities that are seen in the life and ministry of Jesus and Paul. During this stage in the spiritual journey, the focus is on spiritual growth. It's taking the athlete from spiritual poverty to spiritual maturity in his/her walk with God.

That process is called "sanctification." Kenneth Grider says sanctification is, "something that God does in us."²¹ The term is synonymous to 'holiness,' the term can have a different meaning depending one's theological and denominational background.

²⁰ Mel Lawrenze, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*, 46.

²¹ Kenneth Grider, *Entire Sanctification* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1980), 42.

It's important to remember when trying to understand what spiritual maturity is all about, people may not define it the same way, but what must be obvious is a lifestyle that reflects Christ-likeness in attitude and actions. The Post-Conversion stage gives attention to the process of how the student-athlete grows as a new believer. This development involves the ability to understand before salvation, what happened, at the moment of salvation and then what is happening after salvation. The progression of spiritual maturity is a moment by moment, day by day, month by month, and a year by year commitment to God, God's Word, and God's people. There are no shortcuts in this process.

The Post-Conversion stage is the arena in life where the student-athlete not only gives inward evidence of the conversion, but also outward evidence of the inward transformation that has taken place in his/her life. The believer demonstrates and lives out who he or she is in Christ by reflecting Christ-Likeness. In this stage of the athlete's spiritual journey there are spiritual commitments to God, self and others that have a way of shaping the way he/she thinks about God, self, and others.

Not only will the process of spiritual maturity become a reality because of the correct thought patterns, but the progression toward spiritual maturity will be enhanced when the student-athlete understands how God uses people and circumstances that are good or bad, helpful or hurtful, controllable or uncontrollable and ones he/she agrees with or does not agree with to teach about spiritual formation. The student-athlete can choose to surrender to God, thus allowing God to conform him/her to Christ through people and circumstances or the athlete can decide not to allow God to use the people and circumstances to conform him/her into the image of Christ. This is also a time when the

athlete gives attention to personal character qualities that need to be developed in order to continue the process of spiritual growth. When one begins to study the three different stages listed in this chapter, hopefully, it becomes apparent that there is a process of spiritual maturity in Christ.

The primary reason this stage is so critical to the topic of spiritual formation is because it is here where intimacy and community meet. Intimacy has to do with the athlete's relationship with God. We would call that the vertical relationship or the inward aspect of the spiritual journey. Donald Whitley says, "Spiritual Disciplines are scriptural paths where we may expect to encounter the transforming grace of God."²² This relationship is usually not as visible when being developed. The intimacy piece focuses on spiritual disciplines and inner attitudes of the heart in the Christian life that lead to Christ-likeness.

Community has to do with the athlete's relationship with people. We would call that the horizontal relationship or the outward aspect of the spiritual journey. The relationship is usually visible when developing or not developing. This community piece focuses on accountability, personal character development and outward actions of the heart in the Christian life that lead to Christ-likeness. Robert MulHolland writes, "Perhaps the most difficult aspect of genuine spiritual formation is accepting the fact that it is inseparable from our relationships with others."²³

The choices that need to be made and processed in the Post-Conversion stage of life involve salvation, sanctification, service, discipleship, mentoring, sin, suffering,

²² Donald Whitley, *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian*, 32.

²³ Ibid., 28.

personal testimony, reputation, character, local church, missions, light and salt, accountability, spiritual development, horizontal relationships, finances, thought patterns, evangelism, reproduction, identity in Christ, disappointments, spiritual disciplines, vocation, and forgiveness and ministry. If these areas are not properly processed with God's help, God's Word and God's people, they will lead to patterns in life that will limit the supernatural ability to reflect Christ-likeness in attitudes and actions to others. When an athlete receives Christ as his/her personal Savior, there are major changes that take place; however, everything does not change at the moment of conversion. It is those areas that did not change that God expects the student-athlete to apply God's power and principles from His Word to be transformed into the image of Christ.

When unhealthy thought patterns about God, self or others surface prior to salvation, God expects the athlete to commit to a personal spiritual game plan that will lead to change in the area of thought or behavior. Keith Anderson says, "What strength conditioning, cardiovascular conditioning and stamina development are to running, spiritual disciplines are to spiritual formation."²⁴ There are other times when the student-athlete may have to involve someone else who is spiritually mature to help hold him/her accountable in following through with the spiritual game plan to be used in the transformation process. Accountability is needed because a believer could conclude, if God wanted a particular area to be changed, it would have changed at the moment of conversion, therefore attitude or action does not need to be changed. Obviously, any mature Christian would immediately realize that the reasoning is incorrect and therefore needs to have a changed.

²⁴ Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 128.

The following insights are meant to remind all who are involved in the process of spiritual formation that any athlete can allow old patterns from the past life to be a part of the new life in Christ; and think victory is possible in daily life. That may work for a little while, but eventually the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God must be allowed to be the primary agents or tools God is going to use in the process of changing lives to live out what spiritual formation is all about in the life of the student-athlete. Remember, in the Post-Conversion stage that is the place in life where Christ-likeness is being developed and where the athlete is moving toward spiritual maturity. There are no shortcuts in the spiritual journey that lead to spiritual transformation.

One may ask, "What is the process one goes through when moving from no spiritual life, to new spiritual life, and then onto supernatural life as a Christian? The process begins with a born-again experience. Once the student-athlete has been born again, there is an exchange of new life in the heart of the believer. It is at this point that the athlete needs to begin the discipleship process with another growing believer who is committed to helping the spiritual baby athlete grow in the basics of the Christian life.

During this stage in the process of spiritual maturity a relationship is being established between the disciple and the discipler. The discipler puts into practice the ministry principles already mentioned earlier in this chapter that allows him/her to know what areas of personal character and the priority of spiritual disciplines to be followed with the person he/she is trying to help grow.

Allen Hadidian says discipling is, "The process by which a Christian with a life worth emulating commits himself for an extended period of time to a few individuals who have been won to Christ, the purpose being to aid and guide their growth to maturity

and equip them to reproduce themselves in a third spiritual generation.”²⁵ This process is very time consuming and takes faithfulness and patience on the part of the discipler and discipled in moving from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity. Once the discipler is confident that the disciple (student-athlete) is at the point in his or her spiritual journey where what has been taught and lived out in front of the athlete can be shared with others, the discipler begins to engage the athlete in taking baby steps to help other athletes in their newfound faith in Christ. At this stage the discipler is coaching the disciple in the reproduction process of life and ministry.

The reproduction model for ministry is found in II Timothy 2:2. One can see in capsule form how Saul becomes a Christian, and after conversion someone comes alongside of him and helps him in his newfound faith. He then begins to grow and passes on what was given to him and now things have gone full circle spiritually. In a nutshell he went from no life, to new life, and now to a supernatural life that impacted others for eternity. Remember the process from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity is a lifelong process; it doesn't happen over night. In the book titled *Spiritual Mentoring* it states, “Mentoring has a trajectory, an aim, a target and a purpose. It is not mindless or soulless meandering but a journey that recognizes itself as pilgrimage, a journey with a spiritual or devotional purpose.”²⁶ As mature believers help younger believers grow in their walk with God, mentors will continue to have a very active role in the spiritual development of younger followers of Christ.

²⁵ Allen Hadidian, *Successful Discipling* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1979), 29.

²⁶ Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring*, 48.

Howard Hendricks and William Hendricks in their book, *As Iron Sharpens Iron* give ten marks of a mentor, “Seems to have what you personally need, Cultivates relationships, Is willing to take a chance on you, Is respected by other Christians, Has a network of resources, Is consulted by others, Both talks and listens, Is consistent in his life style, Is able to diagnose your needs, and is concerned with your interests.”²⁷

Questions to Ponder during This Stage

By way of application for people who are seeking to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation today, there are some similar questions that can be asked during the Post-Conversion stage of a student-athletes life. What is God doing in the life of the student-athlete? What is Christ doing in the life of the student-athlete? What is the Holy Spirit doing in the life of the student-athlete? What is the devil attempting to do in the life of the student-athlete? How can other people help the student-athlete spiritually? How can coaches help the student-athlete spiritually? How is God using people to conform the student-athlete in the image of Christ? How is God using circumstances to conform the student-athlete in the image of Christ? What does the scripture tell us about what is happening in the life of the student-athlete spiritually? What does the scripture tell us about what is not happening in the life of the student-athlete spiritually?

What does the scripture tell us about what should be happening in the life of the student-athlete spiritually? What attitudes or actions need to be developed in the life of the student-athlete? Who can help the student-athlete understand what is happening in his or her life spiritually? Who has God used in the past to help the student-athlete spiritually? Who is God using presently to help the student-athlete spiritually? How is

²⁷ Howard and William Hendricks, *As Iron Sharpens Iron* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 63.

the student-athlete responding to those who have and are helping spiritually? Are there any areas of resistance in the life of the student-athlete? Who is someone that can become big brother or sister to the student-athlete? Does the student-athlete have a Bible? Does the student-athlete attend church? Is the student-athlete accountable to anyone spiritually? Does the student-athlete have a spiritual game plan to grow spiritually? Is the student-athlete helping anybody else grow spiritually? Does the student-athlete have a mentor? What are some character qualities the student-athlete needs to give attention to? Where does the student-athlete attend church? What character qualities is the student-athlete working on? What are some areas in the life of the student-athlete that need some immediate attention? Does the student-athlete have a ministry in the local church? Is the student-athlete helping other athletes grow spiritually?

How Are the Three Stages Linked to Spiritual Formation?

How are the Pre-Conversion, Conversion, and Post-Conversion stages in the spiritual journey of life linked to the topic of spiritual formation? The first way in which they are linked is they give us a credible starting point in the journey of spiritual formation. Robert MulHolland says, "Once we understand spiritual formation as a process, all of life becomes spiritual formation. Cooperation with God's gracious work moves us toward the wholeness of Christ."²⁸ The scriptures provide us with a story of a man named Paul, whose life was dramatically changed through the redemptive process God provides to all through Jesus Christ. Paul was used as the example to illustrate each

²⁸ Robert M. MulHolland, *Invitation To A Journey*, 16.

of the three stages of life in the project. His life-altering experience can be examined in a number of ways to attest to the veracity that the spiritual journey begins at the moment of salvation. Paul's life story can be scrutinized, analyzed, and philosophized from a number of perspectives, but there will be one significant conclusion made at the end of the story, his life was dramatically changed. The outcomes from the three stages used in the study will bring together the necessary data to confirm biblical truth, thus providing a link for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes.

The second way in which the three stages are linked to spiritual formation is they establish a model to use when attempting to define and illustrate what spiritual formation looks like in everyday life. The link provides a good understanding of some of the inner dynamics that are related to the study of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. Robert MulHolland writes, "So spiritual formation is not something that we do to ourselves or for ourselves, but something we allow God to do in us and for us as we yield ourselves to the work of God's transforming grace."²⁹

The third way in which the stages are linked to spiritual formation is they illustrate in real life the power of the gospel to impact the way people are transformed and made whole. The renovation that takes place in the life of the person has an eternal application for all stages of life.

The fourth way in which the three stages are linked to spiritual formation is they provide a real life picture of the plan that God the Father initiated, God the Son demonstrated through life, death and the resurrection, and God the Holy Spirit applied in the hearts and lives of those who were a part of the spiritual journey.

²⁹ Ibid., 32.

The fifth way in which the three stages are linked to spiritual formation is they provide hope and salvation for all people regardless of ethnic, social, geographical, or religious backgrounds a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The sixth way in which the three stages are linked to spiritual formation is they provide a biblical standard for the process of spiritual growth that is consistent with natural and spiritual laws of spiritual maturity for those who desire to maintain an intimate and growing relationship with God.

In the book titled, *The Pastor's Guide to Personal Spiritual Formation*, Steve Harper says, "More than anything else, Christ wants to establish and maintain His relationship with us on the basis of deep and personal interaction."³⁰ The different stages in the spiritual journey help to establish the biblical groundwork for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes in a Christian educational setting.

When attempting to develop a Bible-based philosophy on how to teach spiritual formation to athletes, the greatest example in the Bible that one can use is Jesus. Jesus lived out what spiritual formation is every day of His life. He also defined what spiritual formation is by the example He set for his disciples and others who would follow Him later in life. All the terms that are used to explain what spiritual formation is were lived out in front of His disciples. Jesus not only preached about it, but he practiced it before those who were close to Him and those who watched from a distance. Jesus used many different life illustrations to help those He was ministering to understand what spiritual formation was all about. If there were ever a group of people in the New Testament that Jesus tried to teach the core values of spiritual formation to besides His disciples and

³⁰ Steve Harper, *The Pastor's Guide to Personal Spiritual Formation* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Press, 2005), 10.

other followers of Jesus, it would be the religious leaders of that day. That group of people would include the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and all other religious groups of people that overemphasized things that were external in nature. Jesus used a lot of natural things in life to teach about the most important issues that have to do with the inner attitudes and actions of a person's heart.

Jesus, at times, illustrated the truth He was teaching by performing miracles in places that revealed the true nature of the religious crowd. The gospels are very clear and consistent with examples of this type of approach of the life and ministry of Jesus. There were instances when Jesus went counter-cultural to teach people that one of the most important things in life are not those things that go into a person, but rather those things that come from within the person's inner being (the heart) which mold and shape the person into the image of God. Jesus would use those teachable moments with His disciples to teach that the greatest influences in life flow from the innermost being of the person. When Jesus attempted to teach those who placed a bigger emphasis on the temporal things of life, He would get them to realize that the things that really count in life are those things that unite the internal and eternal matters of life. It wasn't that Jesus ignored those things in life that were temporal or external; He just tried to help people understand that the basis of real transformation comes from within the person's inner being

When that takes place, then it is possible for genuine spiritual formation to become a reality in the life of the student-athlete who desires it. It did not make a difference what Jesus was using to drive this point home; He would time and time again continue to share the realities of spiritual formation in many different ways. It was a part

of who He was and what He lived out throughout His life and ministry while on earth. People who came in contact with Jesus went away amazed about who He was and what He offered to others. When He spoke to people about those things that focused on the inner person and had eternal significance, they were blown away by what He said He would provide for them. It was a part of life that could only be offered and given to mankind by God.

The gift of salvation includes the necessary power and authority to experience the abundant life Jesus promised to all who believe. The abundant life is the overflow of an intimate relationship with God that begins when one receives the gift of salvation God provides through Jesus Christ. It is there where the journey of new life begins. The new life that God offers has the ability to take what was once used to fulfill Satan's plan in the person's life, but now begins to fulfill God's plan in that person's life. Outside of Christ there is no spiritual life; spiritual life is a gift from God. God's desire is that believers utilize the gift of salvation that has been given and use it to be the light and salt in a world that so desperately needs to see it. Spiritual formation not only impacts the individual athlete, but it also impacts others as well. Regeneration is what occurs in the life of the new believer at the moment of salvation. At this stage in the spiritual journey of the athlete he/she moves from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God.

Now the realities of spiritual formation can begin to yield fruit. During this phase of the athlete's walk before God and others, God is using people and circumstances to transform inward attitudes that are not reflecting Christ-likeness to others. This supernatural life begins to become obvious to all who are associated with the student-athlete as he/she allows God to use the things of God to bring about the transformation.

The three different stages in the life of Paul become the catalyst for developing the biblical word picture for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. The life and ministry of Jesus also provide a backdrop for understanding what spiritual formation is all about as well. If there was one word that would summarize what spiritual formation is all about it would be the word change. People who have experienced the new birth have given evidence of change. People who have had an genuine encounter with Jesus experience change. One of the greatest evidences of genuine salvation is change. It is the testimony of Saul and every other person who has been born again who gives witness to the power of the gospel to transform.

Key Verse on Spiritual Formation

A key verse in the New Testament that sheds light on the subject of spiritual formation and provides support for a biblical foundation for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes is Gal. 4:19 where Paul says, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you."³¹ The verse gives us greater insight about what spiritual formation is from a biblical perspective.

Before looking at the content in the verse, any student of the Word would agree that the Apostle Paul was not only concerned for those who were lost as seen in Rom. 9:1-4 and 10:1, but also concerned for those who were saved and growing in their relationship with God as observed in Acts 15:36. Paul knew first hand what it was like to go from having no spiritual life, to experiencing the super-natural life as a follower of Christ. Warren Wiersbe says,

³¹ Galatians 4:19.

This is what Paul was experiencing as he tried to help the Galatian believers with their confused spiritual lives. When he had first come to them with the Gospel, he had “travailed” spiritually to see them turn to the Lord. But, after all, the Lord Jesus had travailed on the cross to make possible their salvation (Isa. 53:11), and Paul’s travail was nothing in comparison. But now the Galatian Christians were falling back into legalism and a “second childhood” experience; and Paul had to travail over them again. He longed to see Christ formed in them, just as we parents long to see our children mature in the will of God.³²

Two of the following questions that have been addressed in this paper have been, How does a person go from spiritual poverty to spiritual maturity? Where does the spiritual journey begin for the believer? It has already been stated that new life for a person begins at the moment of genuine salvation.

After conversion, the spiritual journey begins to take on new shape in the life of the new believer. Hopefully, after conversion the new convert comes to a place of surrender according to Rom. 12:1-2 and yields his/her life to Him, therefore allowing God to take the process of sanctification to a new level of consecration in the life of the new Christian. Kenneth Gangel says, “A transformation must take place within the person in order to become a disciple and to continue becoming a follower of Christ. This transformation comes through regeneration and grows as one learns about the character of the Lord we follow.”³³

The process is described by Lyle Dorsett in his book on C.S. Lewis titled, *Seeking The Secret Place*, “The transformation into Christ-likeness, holiness or Christian maturity – whatever rhetoric one chooses to use – is realized in different ways by each person. But the rapidity and depth of the process is directly related to a person’s willingness to

³² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

³³ Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, *The Christian Educator’s Handbook On Spiritual Formation*, 16.

cooperate with the Holy Spirit's guidance, and most certainly spiritual growth is nurtured or hindered by the quality of teaching and mentoring one finds."³⁴

In Gal. 4:19 Paul expresses his heart felt concern for the spiritual journey of believers in the local assembly. He addresses them as his children, indicating a relationship with them. He moves from calling them children to the progression of becoming spiritually mature children. Matthew Henry sheds some light on what Paul was expressing through the words he used in the verse,

He calls them *his children*, as he justly might, since he had been the instrument of their conversion to the Christian faith; yea, he styles them his *little children*, which, as it denotes a greater degree of tenderness and affection to them, so it may possibly have a respect to their present behavior, whereby they showed themselves too much like little children, who are easily wrought upon by the arts and insinuations of others. He expresses his concern for them, and earnest desire of their welfare and soul-prosperity, by the pangs of a travailing woman: *He travailed in birth for them*: and the great thing which he was in so much pain about, and which he was so earnestly desirous of, was not so much that they might affect him as *that Christ might be formed in them*, that they might become Christians indeed, and be more confirmed and established in the faith of the gospel. From this we may note, 1. The very tender affection which faithful ministers bear towards those among whom they are employed; it is like that of the most affectionate parents to their little children. 2. That the chief thing they are longing and even travailing in birth for, on their account, is that Christ may be formed in them; not so much that they may gain their affections, much less that they may make a prey of them, but that they may be renewed in the spirit of their minds, wrought into the image of Christ, and more fully settled and confirmed in the Christian faith and life: and how unreasonably must those people act who suffer themselves to be prevailed upon to desert or dislike such ministers! 3. That Christ is not fully formed in men till they are brought off from trusting in their own righteousness, and made to rely only upon him and his righteousness. Paul provides a word picture of a mother in pain going through the process of child birth. In the present context he showed how deeply invested he himself was in their spiritual struggles. This he did by comparing himself to a mother who must go again through the pangs of childbirth for the sake of her children. This is a striking metaphor without parallel in any other Pauline writing. A similar motif occurs in 1 Thess 2:7, where Paul likened himself to a nurse (*trophos*) caring for her little children. More common still is the image of Paul as a father begetting sons and daughters in Christ through the preaching of the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 4:15; 2 Tim 1:2; Phlm 10). Only here in Galatians does he appear in the role of a mother,

³⁴ Lyle W. Dorsett, *Seeking The Secret Place* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 25.

a mother who willingly undergoes the ordeal of pregnancy and delivery all over again in order to secure the well-being of her children. This image bears witness to the deep personal anguish Paul was experiencing over the defection of his spiritual offspring in Galatia. Paul had endured the first round of labor pains during the initial evangelization of the Galatians. Later he would remind them that he still bore in his body the “marks of Jesus” (Gal 6:17), a permanent vestige of the persecution he endured as a consequence of his faithful proclamation of the gospel. But the labor pains he was now experiencing were not the result of external pressures and attacks; they stemmed rather from the inner anguish and exasperation Paul felt because his Galatian converts had been careless with the truth of the gospel.^b The verb “to suffer the pains of childbirth” (*ōdinein*) occurs only two other times in the New Testament, once again in this same chapter (4:27) and a final time in Rev. 12:2. In an insightful exegetical study of this concept, B. Gaventa has observed that “*Odinein* ... never refers to the mere *fact* of a birth, but always to the accompanying anguish.” With reference to Gal 4:19, she argues that “Paul’s anguish, his travail, is not simply a personal matter or a literary convention ... but reflects the anguish of the whole created order as it awaits the fulfillment of God’s action in Jesus Christ.”³⁵

Paul uses the image of a mother going through childbirth to describe the process of growing to spiritual maturity as a Christian. In Paul’s metaphor, the word “formed” provides illumination on the subject of spiritual formation. This word “CHANGE implies making either an essential difference often amounting to a loss of original identity or a substitution of one thing for another.”³⁶ Knowing where the spiritual journey begins, it is important to understand there is a method of attaining spiritual maturity. Spiritual formation involves a surrendering of one’s will to the known will of God, as best one understands the will of God to be for him/her. As student-athletes follow the path to spiritual maturity, there is a death to self that one must experience on a daily basis. Surrender only enhances the procedure of change one experiences as a believer. Kenneth Wuest writes,

³⁵ Matthew, Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

³⁶ Merriam-Webster, Inc: *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Eleventh ed. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003.

The word *formed* is from *morphoō* (μορφοῶ) which refers to the act of giving outward expression of one's inner nature. We use the English word *form* in that way sometimes. For instance, "I went to the tennis match yesterday. The winning player's form was excellent." We mean by that, that the outward expression which he gave of his inward ability to play tennis, was excellent. In our Galatian verse, Paul refers to the outward expression of the Lord Jesus in the lives of the Galatian Christians. These to whom Paul was writing, were truly saved. The Lord Jesus was resident in their hearts. But there was little of His beauty in their lives. The word *again* tells us that at one time He was clearly and abundantly evident in their experience. But now He ceased to be seen in the lives of the Galatian Christians. The reason is found in the fact that the Judaizers in placing the Galatian Christians under law, had caused them to substitute self effort in an attempt to obey a newly imposed law, for their previous dependence upon the Holy Spirit for the production of a Christ-like life in and through them. The passive voice of the verb "be formed," tells us that the Lord Jesus dwells in the heart of a Christian in a passive way, and thus does not express Himself through the Christian. He has given that ministry over to the Holy Spirit. He said, referring to the Spirit, "That One shall glorify Me" (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit was not being recognized and depended upon by the Galatians. Consequently He was not able to minister the Lord Jesus to and through the Galatians in a full measure. What havoc the Judaizers were working in the Galatian churches³⁷

The Apostle Paul used the word 'form' to describe a process of transformation in the life of a believer. The basic meaning of the word is change, to shape, or form. This process of transformation is seen in the life of a caterpillar. The caterpillar goes from being one thing to becoming another thing as a result of the process called metamorphosis. Metamorphosis is described as," a striking change in appearance or character or circumstances; the metamorphosis of the old house into something new and exciting."³⁸ Gangel writes, "Regeneration describes a work completely carried out by God whereas spiritual formation requires the believer's cooperation with God."³⁹ Mel

³⁷ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest Word Studies*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

³⁸ www.wordreference.com/definition/metamorphosis.

³⁹ Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, 41.

Lawrenze says, “Spiritual development includes the progressive integration of all of who we are and also all of what life is all about.”⁴⁰

As student-athletes allow God to work His will through everyday life experiences, He will use those experiences to shape and mold His children. The transformation God’s Word speaks about is the super natural by product of developing patterns of life that God uses to change a person. The following verses found in the New Testament also shed light on the topic of spiritual formation Matt. 17:2, Rom. 8:28-29, Rom. 9:20-23, Rom.12:1-2, II Cor 3:18, 4:16, Gal. 2:20, Col.1:28-29, Phil.3:10

There are some very important questions that every student-athlete needs to ask him/herself when it comes to determining the kind of spiritual journey they want to be engaged in as a follower of Christ. Where am I in my spiritual journey? How am I developing my spiritual journey? Where do I want to go in my spiritual journey? Do I need some help in developing my journey? Are there things in my journey that I need to let go? Do I have someone to whom I am accountable in my spiritual journey? What are something’s that should be a part of my spiritual journey? Am I allowing God, God’s Word and God’s people to transform me into the image of Christ?

The following questions are important because they help me identify where a person is in his/her spiritual journey and where they need to go. These questions are important not only because they help define one’s spiritual journey, but also they provide the opportunity to evaluate the journey. The acid test question would be, how am I reflecting Jesus in my walk before Him and others? Do others see Jesus in me?

⁴⁰ Mel Lawrenze, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*, 38.

The Pre-Conversion, Conversion, and Post-Conversion stages of Paul's life provide a clear picture about the realities of life before and after conversion. Paul gave testimony about his past life as well as his life after salvation. Not only did Paul share details about his life before conversion, but others also gave testimony about the impact the gospel had in their lives. The three different stages illustrate the realities of the journey of the Christian life before salvation and after salvation.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FORMATION?

There are a variety of good people from different religious and theological backgrounds who have given many excellent definitions on the subject of spiritual formation long before this chapter was written and long after this chapter will be completed. The following quotes are a few examples of what some have said about spiritual formation, "Spiritual formation is the reshaping of the inner man – that is, being formed spiritually from the inside out – transforming from selfish and carnal existence to a holy and joyful one."⁴¹ "Spiritual formation, understood biblically, means to join daily with the Holy Spirit to worship, celebrate, commune, and live in His presence."⁴²

In the attempt to define the meaning of spiritual formation there are some key words that are linked to its definition. Words that have a close association are intentional, process, effort, God's grace, inward person, whole person, cooperation, lifelong, conforming, growth, action, personality, transformation, discipline, motivation, Holy Spirit, character, holiness, sanctification, salvation, obedience, will and truth. These words embody the definition of spiritual formation. David Benner says, "Aligning

⁴¹ Tim Clinton and George Ohlschlager, *Competent Christian Counseling*, 130.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 134.

ourselves with God to be more aware of his presence and receptive to his will is central to the task of Christian spiritual formation.”⁴³

The Starting Point of Spiritual Formation

When a person receives Christ as their personal Savior, God places a new desire and interest in spiritual things at that moment of salvation that is life-changing. This starting point of new life in Christ is where spiritual formation begins. Wesley Tracy writes, “The critical encounter with Christ in saving grace is the exclusive entrance into spiritual formation.”⁴⁴

That process involves God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is a continuation of what God the Father planned before eternity. It is a part of the plan that God the Son fulfilled by coming, living, dying and rising again for the whole world. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit applying truth to the hearts and lives of those who have responded in a positive manner to the gift of salvation. Spiritual formation is the continuing work and power of God in transforming the student-athlete into the image of Christ moment-by-moment, day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, and year-by-year. It is the intentional yielding of self in the direction of the God’s will. Wesley Tracy says, “There is no possibility of spiritual formation apart from ‘intersecting’ or encounters with God. That is to say, spiritual development is not a matter of self-achievement, self-help, or self-discipline.

⁴³ David G. Benner, *Sacred Companions*, 107.

⁴⁴ Wesley D. Tracy, *The Upward Call*, 37.

It is strictly a matter of a relationship with God.”⁴⁵ When trying to describe what spiritual formation is, all Christians must keep in mind that spiritual formation involves a choice on the part of the one who desires to allow God to use His word and His people to make the transformation. The choice to participate in spiritual formation involves God’s enablement to be a part of the life-changing experience of being conformed to the image of Christ. Spiritual formation combines the responsibility of the student-athlete and the desire of God to bond the divine with the human element through everyday life. Maxie Dunnam says, “Spiritual formation is the deliberate, intentional effort to live our whole life in the context of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.”⁴⁶

In other words, there is a responsibility of Christians to put his/her self in the right place, right posture, right heart attitude and with the right people so that God can take what they are doing and apply it to what He is doing and the end result is a continually changed student-athlete before others. Wesley Tracy writes, “When we lose the ability to trust God and others, we die in isolation.”⁴⁷

Spiritual formation primarily involves an inward transformation of the inner person, resulting in the outward change of the outer person. These changes take place as the person allows God, God’s Word, and God’s people to be the change agents He is using to bring a believer to spiritual maturity. David Benner writes, “There can be no genuine transformation if we seek some external meeting place. God’s intended home is our heart, and it is meeting with God in our depth that transforms us from the inside

⁴⁵ Ibid.,17.

⁴⁶ Maxie Dunnam, *Alive In Christ* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 106.

⁴⁷ Wesley D. Tracy, *The Upward Call*, 31.

out.”⁴⁸ Spiritual formation encompasses the whole person. It includes every element of the student-athlete’s being.

If spiritual formation is going to be properly understood there must be a clear understanding of what it entails in all of life, not just certain parts of life. Spiritual formation is a product of God’s grace. God’s grace begins the process of spiritual formation; God’s grace continues the process of spiritual formation; and God’s grace completes the process of spiritual formation. Wesley Tracy says, “All of spiritual formation is a function of the grace God has granted to us.”⁴⁹ To simplify the progression it starts and ends with the free gift of salvation from God that enables one to embrace the path of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is a lifelong adventure.

Michael Gemignani says, “Spirituality is the aspect of my faith that serves to guide me in how I conduct my life. It is the framework within which I operate in my desire to be faithful to God.”⁵⁰ It isn’t something that begins and then stops at a certain age in the life of the athlete, rather it is an ongoing adventure that continues throughout the student-athlete’s life and then for the rest of his/her remaining years after college life. Places and people may change in the life of the person, but the journey of spiritual formation does not stop.

In fact, it should not stop unless the Christian athlete chooses to allow him/her self to become self-sufficient or become complacent about their relationship with God during the spiritual journey. Spiritual formation is about conforming to the person of

⁴⁸ David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself*, 109.

⁴⁹ Wesley D. Tracy, *The Upward Call*, 124.

⁵⁰ Michael Gemignani, *Spiritual Formation for Pastors* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2002), 15.

Christ. It is about reflecting Christ-likeness in our inward and outer attitudes; it's also about demonstrating Christ-likeness in what we say and do in life. Spiritual formation not only deals with reflecting Christ-likeness in attitudes or actions, but also includes the ability to properly respond to people who are not reflecting Christ-likeness through their attitudes and actions. Robert MulHolland writes, "Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ, a journey into becoming persons of compassion, persons who forgive, persons who care deeply for others and the world, persons who offer themselves to God to become agents of divine grace in the lives of others and their world – in brief, persons who love and serve as Jesus did."⁵¹

The student-athlete has a responsibility to ask God for wisdom, grace, courage and faith to possibly communicate with the person who is not living out what spiritual formation is all about. Authentic spirituality assumes responsibility for behavior that doesn't reflect Christ-likeness to others. When that happens, the athlete demonstrates humility throughout the duration of the failure and afterward. The humble spirit gives evidence of fruit worthy of repentance. Henri Nouwen writes, "When our insecurity does not lead us to others for help, how often does it lead us against others in self-defense."⁵² If there is true humility, then there will be an honest confession to God that is followed by a sincere apology for not reflecting the Christ-likeness quality that should have been revealed. If that takes place (which it should), then there is a four-keys to victory for rebuilding the attitudes or actions that allow God to use what happened to grow the

⁵¹ Robert MulHolland, *Invitation To A Journey*, 25.

⁵² Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out* (New York, NY: Image Books, 1996), 39.

athlete. David Benner says, “Intimate relationships with others prepare us for intimacy with God.”⁵³

The process begins with identifying the *problem* - the attitude or action that was not Christ-like.⁵⁴ It is important in the process of transformation to locate the negative reflection. This discovery takes place in two ways. The person looks upward and then looks inward to identify the negative expression or the person looks upward and then looks outward and allows someone else to identify the negative expression.

The second stage has to do with identifying the *project* that will be implemented to change the attitude or action that needs to be changed. This has to do with what the athlete will do to change negative reflection. The following plan of action is an example of one way the director of spiritual development utilizes people and circumstances to bring about change in the life of student-athletes.⁵⁵

The third stage is to remember the *praise* that comes as a result of applying God’s word and spiritual disciplines to the present situation. This area has to do with the outcomes of putting into practice those things that lead to the transformation.

The fourth stage deals with remembering the *process* that the athlete works through while transforming the negative attitude or action. During this stage the athlete focuses on the different people, circumstances, character qualities and spiritual disciplines that will be used to assure that the transformation that will take place. This four-step process sums up the practice of what spiritual formation is all about in the life

⁵³ David G. Benner, *Sacred Companions*, 41.

⁵⁴ See Appendix I.

⁵⁵ See Appendix J.

of the student-athlete. This progression incorporates spiritual disciplines, character development and whole-person development concepts necessary to see transformation that leads to Christ-likeness. Spiritual formation is a spiritual and inward response to God, God's Word and God's people in the life-changing process of spiritual formation.

One extreme view of defining the process of spiritual formation is that a believer must wait for God to change what needs to be changed in a person's life. This view believes God does it all by Himself. The opposite extreme view of defining the same process is that a believer must not wait for God to change what needs to change in a person's life. This view believes that the person does it all and there is no need to depend on God, God's grace, God's Word or Gods people. The person thinks that he/she must do everything a part from connecting the vertical with the horizontal relationships in life to experience what spiritual formation really means. Kenneth Boa writes,

In a culture that promises instant gratification, it can be wearisome for us to wait patiently for God's timing. Many of us are tempted to bypass grace and take matters into our hands as we seek some method, technique, seminar, or experience that will give us the results we want when we want them. But we are as incapable of changing ourselves through our own efforts as we are on manipulating God to transform us more quickly. In His grace the Lord invites us to cooperate with the formative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives by engaging in the disciplines of faith, repentance, and obedience and by trusting in His ways and in His timing.⁵⁶

In reality spiritual formation takes place when there is a balanced approach that includes the divine and human aspects of transformation. Genuine spiritual formation happens when the student-athlete allows God to use whomever and whatever He wishes to utilize in the process of helping athletes reflect Christ-likeness through athletics and life. That's when legitimate transformation of the inward person takes place, resulting in

⁵⁶ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed To His Image*, 258-259.

outward expressions of Christ-like inward attitudes and actions in the life of the student-athlete

What Areas Are Impacted by Spiritual Formation?

Once a practical definition of spiritual formation has been established, it is beneficial to have some kind of idea of what areas are impacted by spiritual formation? One of the immediate areas to be impacted is the student-athletes personal life. A student-athletes personal life should be the first area to be impacted by the spiritual formation progression. The reason why it should be the first area to be impacted is because spiritual formation has a direct association with student-athletes relationship with God. If the student-athlete cooperates with God in developing an intimate relationship with Him, the end result will reflect the meaning of spiritual formation.

The second area to be impacted is the student-athlete's social life. This piece of the spiritual formation puzzle is the arena where the student-athlete lives. It's the area that people observe on a daily basis. This is the area where the student lives out his relationship with God in front of others through the process of spiritual formation in everyday life. In this area the student-athlete reflects attitudes and actions that are Christ-like or are not Christ-like. This is where the salt and light of the athlete's life are mirrored through course of spiritual formation and whole person development. Terry Wardle says, "We are invited to journey through life with Jesus Christ and be continuously changed by the power of His presence."⁵⁷ In the social area of the athlete's life there is a great opportunity to influence other athletes by the way one lives and how

⁵⁷ Terry Wardle, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*, 15.

one relates to teammates. This area is crucial because it is in this area that athletes who have committed to the model of spiritual formation become aware of spiritual needs of teammates.

The third area to be impacted is the student-athletes academic life. Living a life that is of committed to the process of spiritual formation in all areas of life will show up in classroom as well. The classroom is one of those places where the athlete lives out his relationship with God. It is a part of the laboratory of life, the classroom being a setting where attitudes and actions are reflected. Those attitudes can be both positive and negative.

The fourth area to be impacted is the student-athletes athletic life. The impact is observed in the way the student-athlete practices. How the athlete works out in the weight room is another way his work ethic reflects his relationship to spiritual formation.

The fifth area to be impacted is team members. There are different needs of team members that surface at different times during the season. There are needs that become apparent during the off-season as well within the sport the athlete is participating in. Some of those needs are spiritual, emotional, physical, and psychological in nature.

One of the interesting observations of athletic teams is all the unique personalities, talents, habits, attitudes, perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and stories that each athlete brings to the team. Each one is very unique in its own way. David Benner writes, "Our challenge is to unmask the Divine in the natural and name the presence of God in our lives."⁵⁸ David Benner shares, "Making spiritual matters a critical focus ... is aided by recognizing that people do not have to be talking about God to be expressing

⁵⁸ David Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 10.

something about their spirituality.”⁵⁹ The reason why it is essential for all to demonstrate those character qualities that were stated in a previous chapter is God desires to use a lot of different people to teach others about spiritual formation. Others areas to be impacted are family members of athletes, fellow students, faculty, and all other people throughout the university.

How are Spiritual Disciplines and Spiritual Formation Connected?

Spiritual disciplines are the daily patterns in a Christian’s life that God uses to form good habits that emulate Christ-likeness in attitude and actions of the believer. Spiritual disciplines are the external practices that shape inward attitudes of the heart. Disciplines that are spiritual in nature produce a spiritual protective armor over the heart and mind of the follower of Jesus Christ. That protective armor is developed over a period of time as one walks in obedience to the will and way of God everyday. They are tools the Holy Spirit uses to bring about transformation in the heart and mind.

Richard Foster writes, “The Disciplines are God’s way of getting us to the ground; they put us where he can work within us and transform us.”⁶⁰ Donald Whitley also says, “The Spiritual Disciplines are the God-given means we are to use in the spirit-filled pursuit of godliness.”⁶¹ The results of living out God’s Word in everyday life provide the opportunity to develop Christ like patterns in life. Those patterns were observed in the life and ministry of Christ, and give a plethora of support for the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁶⁰ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 7.

⁶¹ Donald Whitley, *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life*, 17.

connection of spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation. One of those spiritual disciplines that were seen in the life of Jesus was the practice of Solitude. Donald Whitley says, “Solitude is the Spiritual Discipline of voluntarily and temporarily withdrawing to privacy for spiritual purposes.”⁶² Jesus at different times withdrew from ministering to people in order to spend time in solitude, alone with God. Jesus was fully engaged with those in need of His touch of tenderness and love.

The touch for some meant just being in their presence, for others it meant physical healing. For some it meant deliverance from demonic possession and oppression. For others it was salvation and a host of other things. Jesus gave full attention to the needs of people He came in contact with everyday and. Dallas Willard writes, “The revolution of Jesus is in the first place and continuously a revolution of the human heart or spirit.”⁶³

Jesus was fully engaged in daily ministry with people, but at times disengaged Himself from people to spend time in prayer. All kind of assumptions can be made about what He prayed about. One thing we know, Jesus developed a pattern of getting alone for prayer. John Ortberg says, “Following Jesus simply means learning from Him how to arrange my life around activities that enable me to live in the fruit of the Spirit.”⁶⁴ That discipline of solitude will transform anyone’s life. It is a model that every follower of Jesus Christ needs to model his/her life after. It is a pattern that balances the divine with human responsibility to meet the needs of others.

⁶² Ibid., 184.

⁶³ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of The Heart*, 15.

⁶⁴ John Ortberg, *The Life You Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 49.

Ruth Barton says, “The habits and disciplines we use to shape our desire form the basis for spirituality.”⁶⁵ Intimacy is a position believers place themselves in, where attitudes of the heart can be developed. It is the place where inward transformation takes place. Tom Nelson says, “A spiritual discipline is an activity we practice in obedience to Jesus Christ that enables us to accomplish what we cannot do by direct effort.”⁶⁶

The original question was, how are spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation connected? The spiritual disciplines become the vehicle God uses to lay the foundation of the heart. Spiritual formation becomes the result of practicing spiritual disciplines. Spiritual formation is the result of every Christian allowing God to use whatever and whomever He desires to use in transforming the life of the Christian.

How Are Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Disciplines Connected?

Spiritual formation is the transformation of the inner person of the heart. The process of transformation takes place by utilizing spiritual disciplines. Dallas Willard says, “Spiritual formation for the Christian basically refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.”⁶⁷ Spiritual formation is the inward evidence of the inner man being renewed day by day. The inward attitudes of the heart express themselves through the outward attitudes and actions of people. What we reflect to others give an outward indication of what is being transformed or what still needs to be transformed in the heart

⁶⁵ Ruth Barton, *Scared Rhythms* (Dowers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 14.

⁶⁶ Tom Nelson, *Five Smooth Stones* (Grand Island, NE: Cross Training Publishing, 2001), 73.

⁶⁷ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of The Heart*, 22,

of the person. Robert MulHolland writes, “Once we understand spiritual formation as a process, all of life becomes spiritual formation. Cooperation with God’s gracious work moves us toward the wholeness of Christ.”⁶⁸ Reflections of the heart indicate the patterns we are developing or not developing.

Dallas Willard says, “Spiritual formation is focused entirely on Jesus. Its goal is an obedience or conformity to Christ that arises out of an inner transformation accomplished through purposive interaction with the grace of God in Christ. Obedience is an essential outcome of Christian spiritual formation.”⁶⁹ The process of spiritual formation embraces the practice of spiritual disciplines for cultivating a heart that is open to what ever needs to be changed. Dallas Willard shares, “Everyone must be active in the process of their salvation and transformation to Christ-likeness. This is an inescapable fact. But the initiative in the process is always God’s, and we would in fact do nothing without his initiative.”⁷⁰ It is imperative for every Christian to allow God to use the Word of God, things of God and the people of God as instruments in shaping and molding us into the image of God. If that happens, genuine spiritual formation will be a reality in the life of every Christian.

⁶⁸ Robert MulHolland, *An Invitation To A Journey*, 16.

⁶⁹ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of The Heart*, 22-23.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

How Are Character and Whole-Person Development Connected?

When a person looks at the whole-person development model, one quickly notices the word character in each area of the model.⁷¹ The word character is there because character is a very important element in the model. The connection between character development and whole-person development are like a good peanut butter and jelly sandwich after a good meal. Character helps develop good habit patterns necessary to be successful in all four areas of whole-person development.⁷² Mel Lawrenz says, “A good pattern progressively builds you up, but a bad pattern relentlessly erodes our humanity, like ocean waves pounding a coast. Being unaware of our life patterns is about the biggest gamble any of us can take.”⁷³

For example, if you were to ask any student-athlete, does he/she every morning feel like getting out of bed to go to a 7:00 a.m. basic study skills class for no credit, what do you think the answer would be? If the student is truthful the answer will be no. The point of the question is, when you don’t feel like doing something that should be done, character must be the difference maker. Kenneth Boa says, “As habits grow, they guide our behavior in such a way that it becomes more natural for us to live out our identities in Christ.”⁷⁴ He also says, “It takes the touch of God on our lives for us to form habits that are alive and pleasing him.”⁷⁵ Ask the football player if he physically feels like lifting weights everyday and his answer will be no, if he is honest. Again, character must be the

⁷¹ See Appendix K.

⁷² See Appendix L.

⁷³ Mel Lawrenze, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*, 22-23.

⁷⁴ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed To His Image*, 79.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

difference maker. There is nothing wrong with having those feelings, but you can't always draw conclusions about what you should do based on how you feel. If you were to ask the preacher if he feels like reading his Bible everyday, if he is honest he will say no. Feeling can be misleading at times and that is another reason why character needs to be developed. Kenneth Boa writes, "Without a personal to inward change, believers will be dominated, motivated, and manipulated by the cultural network of their society."⁷⁶

You can ask many other questions that relate to making decisions that are based on how a person feels. The bottom line in all four areas of whole-person development is a need to exercise character. The more character that is developed in those areas the better one will become at doing what is supposed to be done regardless of how one feeling physically. Dallas Willard writes, " But godly character now brings about a different quality of hope. Character is a matter of our entire personality and life, which has now been transformed by the process of perseverance under God."⁷⁷ Dallas Willard also say's," Our character is that internal, overall structure of the self that is revealed by our long-run patterns of behavior and from which our actions more or less automatically rise."⁷⁸ As a result of combining personal character with the whole-person development model, student-athletes will be able maximize their potential for God and help others in the process.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 77.

⁷⁷ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of The Heart*, 130.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 142.

Rick Ezell says it well, “The basis for character is not determined by the majority of peers or by the output of our glands but by the mandate of our Father in heaven.”⁷⁹

SUMMARY

The correlation between spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development are seen in the life of Jesus. Jesus modeled all three of these areas in front of his disciples and those he came in contact with on a daily basis. If Jesus modeled all three areas, it should be something every one of His followers should model. There is a correlation of all three areas in the life of the student-athlete as well. If the student-athlete understands and applies them to his/her college life, the result will be a fulfillment of the mission of Liberty University.

⁷⁹ Rick Ezell, *Defining Moments*, 88.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PEOPLE AND CIRCUMSTANCES USED TO TEACH STUDENT-ATHLETES ABOUT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Throughout history there have been circumstances and people from all walks of life that have been used by God to help people look at life from a divine and human perspective. Chuck Swindoll writes, “In the early 1960, as I was finishing my first year at Dallas Theological Seminary, I took a course from Dr. Howard Hendricks that would mark my life and ministry forever.”¹ Not only is that true in history, but throughout the Bible there are many biblical examples of people and circumstances that God has used to teach His people and others outside the faith about spiritual formation. The same phenomenon is true for student-athletes. God in His sovereignty uses all kinds of people and circumstances in the lives of student-athletes to teach them about the role spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development play in their everyday lives.

On the flip side of this dynamic there are people that God desires to use who are not even aware of what He is attempting to do through them during their time with the student-athlete. It is very important for those who God is using to be aware of what is taking place around them – that is called alertness. “Alertness is being aware of what is

¹ Howard Hendricks and William Hendricks, *Living By The Book*, Forward.

taking place around me so that I can have the right responses to them.”² Not only is it an imperative to be alert, but one must also be attentive to the athletic, academic, social and spiritual needs of the student-athlete which embraces whole-person-development. That is called attentiveness. “Attentiveness is showing the worth of a person by giving my undivided attention to their words and emotions.”³

On many occasions people and circumstances cross paths in order for God to teach that life has a vertical and horizontal dimension to it, and they are sometimes linked together. Bob Reccord writes, “Just as critical parts for airplanes and other machines are shaped and strengthened by submitting them to heat and then hammering and pressing, often even forming them in die, so God lovingly shapes, strengthens, and prepares each of us for ultimate use.”⁴ Oh, that people would understand, realize and believe that God is very interested in using people and circumstances in the lives of the student-athlete to reveal His will through them for the benefit of teaching them something related to spiritual formation, character development or whole-person development!

People God Uses to Teach Student-Athletes

Following is a catalog of people with continuous influence throughout a student-athlete’s life that God could possibly use to teach the student-athlete how spiritual formation and character development and whole-person development possibilities weave their way through athletics and life.

² Characterthatcounts.org/aboutusnew.html.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bob Reccord, *Forged By Fire* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holmes Press, 2000), 7.

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Family members
- Christian friends
- Non-Christian friends
- Coaches
- Players
- Teachers
- Deans
- Resident directors
- Resident assistants
- Spiritual life directors
- Prayer leaders
- Fellow students
- Law enforcement officers
- School administrators
- School support staff
- Pastors
- Sunday school teachers
- Others⁵

⁵ See Appendix M.

In the Old Testament one biblical example of God using one person to speak to another person is found in Exodus 4–11. There are other instances when God used one individual to speak to the masses. Moses was the mouthpiece for God during this time in Jewish history. “Moses indeed fulfilled his task as spokesman well, working to the benefit of God and the people. In fact, he is so often a spokesman for someone else that very often we lose sight of his own personal needs and desires. So apparently it must be with a prophet and a national leader.”⁶

He was the man who was given the responsibility to proclaim a message to Pharaoh, a ruler who had allowed pride and a multitude of other reasons to keep him from letting the children of Israel worship God in the wilderness. Moses was the one who God used to communicate His will and way to Pharaoh. In this biblical story we have a great illustration of how God works through a person to communicate His intentions and standards that compliment spiritual formation and character development in the life of people. How this Bible lesson can be applied today is that God uses people and circumstances (like the catalog of people already listed) to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development, whole-person development or life in general. If anyone is going to be used by God to influence others through athletics, there are some basic ministry patterns and character qualities that the person must display in order to be an effective tool for God. The ministry patterns and character qualities will be described in more detail later in the chapter.

Not only is there a biblical example of the way God communicates His plan to people student-athletes and through other people; another successful way that God

⁶ Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

communicates to people (student-athletes) is through circumstances and sometimes the athlete doesn't even understand who and what God is using to teach the him/her at that time in life.

A biblical example of this is found in the same story involving Moses and Pharaoh in Exodus 4–11. God used circumstances called plagues to get Pharaoh's attention and at the same time communicate His will to him so that Pharaoh would allow the children of Israel to go out into the wilderness to freely worship God without restrictions. God cunningly used things that spoke to what was meaningful to the Egyptians in order to get their attention. The plagues also expressed God's displeasure with Pharaoh's stubbornness and pride.

The lesson to be learned from this biblical example of God's method of communication is that God used Moses and circumstances as the instruments to teach Pharaoh and the Egyptians about life and its relationship to God and others, therefore God can also teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development, whole-person development and life in general through the people and circumstances He places in their pathway of life.

In Exodus the miraculous signs are events which in their nature, extent, and/or timing are recognized by observers as supernatural in character. God did use natural phenomenon such as locust swarms and winds in causing the miracle. But the devastating nature of the events and their appearance at Moses' command, as well as their removal at his word, made the supernatural character of the events clear to all. It is foolish to argue that in a "pre-scientific age" people could not tell the difference between natural and supernatural events. They obviously could make distinctions—and the Egyptians ultimately did.⁷

There are patterns of ministry and character qualities that the person being used by God must demonstrate in order to properly understand why God is using specific

⁷ Larry Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, Logos Bible Software, Silver Edition.

people and circumstances in the life of the student-athlete. Following is a list of possible reasons why God may use circumstances in a student-athlete's life to teach him/her how spiritual formation; whole-person development and character development possibilities weave their way through athletics and life

Circumstances God uses to Teach Student-Athletes

- To lead a person to Christ
- Increase one's faith
- Reveal an area of disobedience
- Discipline a believer
- Re-establish positive patterns of life
- Reveal insecurities
- Build character qualities
- Confirm God's love
- Help one look at life from another point of view
- Reveal a blind spot
- Reveal needs in others
- Reveal a need to seek professional assist
- Confirm God's will
- Preparation for the future
- Make restitution
- Reveal an area in life that needs attention
- Re-evaluate a decision to be made
- Develop humility

- Reveal an unfinished area
- Evaluate proper thinking patterns about God, self and others
- Restore a broken relationship
- Test one's faith
- Build a life message
- Make a past wrong right
- Help make wise choices
- Evaluate motives
- Learn how to attach new meaning to people and circumstances and life
- Prevent something negative from happening
- To show a need for accountability
- To show me something about me⁸

After considering the biblical example of God using Moses the *person* and the plagues the *circumstances* to speak to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, there is a question that needs to be raised and then answered at this point in the chapter. The question focuses on how God uses people and circumstances to communicate His principles and standards to and through people in everyday life.

Pre-Requisites for Being Used by God

In order to understand how the question is associated with teaching spiritual formation or character development and whole-person development to student-athletes, one must begin with a mindset that believes God does indeed speak through people and

⁸ See Appendix N.

circumstances. Rick Warren says, “Real servants don’t try to use God for their purposes. They let God use them for His purposes.”⁹ When that correct belief system is a foundation block for being used by God to teach others, the attitude and actions of the person being used by God will be noticeable throughout the process. John Maxwell writes, “When a person feels encouraged, he can face the impossible and overcome incredible adversity.”¹⁰ Along with the proper mindset, the person who desires to be used to teach spiritual formation and character development and whole-person development must ask some other basic questions about the student-athlete while working through the early stages of the dialogue. John Miller says, “Conversely, turning our thinking around and asking more personally accountable questions is one of the most powerful and effective things we can do to improve our organizations and lives.”¹¹

The first question that should be asked is “Who are some of the people that God may have used in the past to speak to the student-athlete?” The second question could be “Who is God presently using to speak to the student-athlete?” The reason these questions are so vital in the early stages of the conversation is because they can provide some very important information about people God may have used in the past or is using in the present to help the student-athlete understand what is going on in his/her life.

The questions can be a very good tool in helping to assess the situation from a divine and human viewpoint. They can reveal how the student-athlete is responding or not responding to those he/she has talked with about a situation. The questions can

⁹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 266.

¹⁰ John Maxwell, *Becoming A Person Of Influence* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 47.

¹¹ John Miller, *The Questions Behind The Question* (Denver, CO: Denver Press, 2001), 3-4.

possibly disclose ways that God is using people and circumstances to teach the student-athlete about spiritual formation or character development. Some of these people could be good or bad people, Christian or non-Christian, or people that are known or unknown to the student-athlete. The most important thing to keep in mind is not what or who God is using, but how the person is responding. There is biblical evidence in scripture to show people reacting to people and circumstances God was trying to use to get the person's attention. One of those examples is found in Genesis 4:1-10. There are other examples where people responded to the people and circumstances God was using to get their attention, Jonah is one in the Old Testament and the Prodigal son is another in the New Testament.

When people react there are visible signals that confirm the attitudes and actions of the person being spoken to by God. Such signals include blaming others, holding things in, defending self, living in a dream world, behavior that is not normal, incorrect thought patterns about God, self and others, thoughts of suicide, resorting to a negative comfort zone and many more visible signs. Negative reaction to people and circumstances lead to a "no hope" situation and nobody wins. Rick Ezell writes, "Not all crises that occur in our lives come from God, but God can take the frustrating experiences that are beyond our control and teach us a lesson. He can take the rough roads we travel and paint road signs along them that will instruct us and change us for the better."¹²

On the other hand when people properly respond to the people and circumstances God is trying to use, there are positive visible signals that confirm the proper attitudes and actions of the person are correct. Some of those visible symbols include looking at life from God's perspective, a teachable spirit, confession to God, asking the proper

¹² Rick Ezell, *Defining Moments* (Dowers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 25.

questions that have an upward, inward and outward focus, willingness to seek forgiveness, a situation that leads to people growing and winning that produces hope, genuine desire to makes past wrongs right, and asking the right questions that are based on a proper view of God, self and others.

There are very important questions that characterize a positive response by the student-athlete when God is using people and circumstances in his/her life: What are you trying to *teach* me through the people and circumstances that have come my way? Once the question has been asked, there needs to be a practical assignment given to the athlete that involves the person or persons associated with the present circumstances. The assignment would include the following items.

First, make a list of what God is attempting to teach the student-athlete through the people and circumstances. Secondly, confess anything to God and apologize to anyone, if necessary. Thirdly, offer thanks to God for the process and for what He is teaching you through the person or situation. Once this has been done, then you are ready to move to the second important question in properly responding God's way. The next question is, What character quality are you trying to *show* me I need to apply to my situation? Once the question has been asked, there needs to be a practical assignment given to the athlete that involves the person or persons associated with the present circumstances. Rick Ezell writes, "Out integrity is the script that determines our response to failure, mistreatment and pain."¹³ The assignment would include the following items. Check off from the list of character qualities given the character qualities that apply to the present situation. Secondly, write out the character quality to be worked on. Thirdly,

¹³ Ibid.,72.

begin to memorize, mediate, apply and review the character quality working on.

Fourthly, look for ways to live it out on a daily basis. The next question is necessary if it involves another person: What *needs* are you trying to show me in the life of the other person? After this question has been asked the assignment would include the following items. Make a list of the needs in the life of the other person. Secondly, begin to pray for those needs on a daily basis if possible. Thirdly, commit the person(s) to God. Fourthly, begin to attach new meaning to person and circumstances. Fifthly, look for ways to attach new thought patterns toward the person and circumstance.

After asking the second major question you are ready to move to the fourth part of responding God's way: What is the *best* approach to communicating to the person about the circumstances? After this question has been asked the assignment would include the following items. Ask myself, "Where is the best possible place to communicate?" Secondly, what are the best words to use when I communicate? Thirdly, what is the best attitude to have when I communicate? Fourthly, what is the best timing to communicate? Fifthly, Do I have the proper attitude to communicate at this time?¹⁴

These simple, but profound steps of action allow God to use people and circumstances to help student-athletes respond instead of react to life situations.¹⁵ The ultimate goal for each person involved would be to reflect Christ-likeness, which is what spiritual formation, character development and whole person-development are all about in the journey of spiritual formation of the believer. Robert MulHolland says, "Our relationships with others are not only the testing grounds of our spiritual life but also the

¹⁴ See Appendix O.

¹⁵ See Appendix P.

places where our growth toward wholeness is Christ happen.”¹⁶ One may ask after thinking about the strategy presented, What if I go through the process and things don’t work out the way I’d hoped they would?

Remember, you are responsible for your part and if the other person(s) doesn’t respond properly, then you must commit the person and circumstance to God so that He can work in the heart of the other person. Ultimately you have to allow God to work His will and way through the persons involved.

Patterns of Ministry

If the process of spiritual formation and character development is going to continue through the people God is using to teach student-athletes, there are patterns of ministry that need to be followed in order to effectively minister through athletics. There are two patterns for effective ministry found in Genesis 40:1-23.

In this story Joseph is placed in a prison setting for something he did not do. When a person looks at the story from a human point of view, there is nothing in the life of Joseph that would suggest that he deserved to be in that place at that time with those people. Anybody who reads the account of what happened would say he was there because someone did not tell the truth. Now on the other hand, when a person begins to look at life from a divine point of view, the perspective is totally opposite of looking at life from the human viewpoint. There are two patterns of ministry that are evident in the life of Joseph during his stay in prison. They both apply to all who have made themselves available for God to use in teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation

¹⁶ Robert MulHolland, *Invitation To A Journey*, 42.

and character development. Alertness and attentiveness are two character qualities that Joseph used to minister effectively to the baker and the butler while he was in prison.

First Pattern of Ministry

In Genesis 40: 6 the first pattern of ministry has to do with the principle of *Observation*. Joseph observed and as a result of his observation he was able to identify some of the needs of those who were in prison with him. The verse says that “he saw,” meaning that he used the eye gates to make the observation. He was able to use the gift of sight that God had given to him at birth. Many times people are looking for ways to minister to athletes but fail to use the natural God given natural gifts to discern the needs of those they are working with. John Maxwell says, “The Law of intuition is based on facts plus instinct and other tangible factors.”¹⁷ Those who are involved in helping athletes; must use the eyes to observe attitudes and actions of those we seek to minister to on a regular basis. Maxwell writes, “Natural ability and learned skills create an informed intuition that makes leadership issues jump out at leaders.”¹⁸ When that observation takes place, it provides the needed approach that leads to asking very important questions about the person’s attitude and actions.

Some of the possible questions to ask when using the *observation* principle are: What is God attempting to do in the life of the student? What am I attempting to teach the student-athlete? Is the athlete reacting or responding to what is being taught? What is the athlete’s attitude toward what is trying to be taught? What is the athlete’s action toward the person who is trying to teach? In what ways is the person reacting to God? In

¹⁷ John Maxwell, *Becoming A Person Of Influence*, 77.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

what way is the responding to God? In what way is the person reacting to the human instrument? In what way is the student-athlete responding to the human instrument? Is there anybody the athlete is responding to on a human level outside the primary people that can help?

These questions allow the person who is attempting to work with the student-athlete to pray and think through the best possible approach in which to teach him/her about spiritual formation or character development.

The Second Pattern of Ministry

In Genesis 40:7 the second pattern of ministry has to do with the principle of *Communication*. Joseph communicated, and as a result of his communication he was able to identify other needs of those who were in prison with him. The verse says “he asked,” meaning that he used the tongue gate to initiate communication with those who were in prison. Joseph was able to ask the necessary questions to ascertain the needs of the Butler and the Baker. When asking questions it is very important to be a good listener as well.

Eric Allenbaugh provides the following tips on listening, “listen with a head-heart connection, listen with the intent of understanding, listen for the message and the message behind the message, listen for both content and feelings, listen with your eyes – your hearing will be improved, listen for others’ interest, not just your position, listen for what they are saying and not saying, listen with empathy and acceptance, listen for the areas where they are afraid and hurt, listen as you would like to be listened to.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid., 91-92.

There must be a process of communication when attitudes and actions surface that affords an opportunity to discover what the needs are in the life of the student-athletes life just life Joseph did while in prison. Someone has rightfully stated “An accusation hardens the will, but a question convicts the conscience.”²⁰

Some of the possible questions to ask when using the *communication* principle are: What observations can I make about what I am asking? What are some good questions I can ask that will help me identify the needs? What attitude is the student-athlete reflecting toward God or the person being used by God? What actions is the student-athlete reflecting toward God or the person being used by God? What do the attitudes toward God reveal about the athlete? What do the attitudes toward the person being used by God reveal about the athlete? Are there any harmful patterns being developed towards God or the person being used by God? Is there anybody the athlete is responding to on a human level? These questions continue to allow the person who is attempting to work with the student-athlete to pray and think through the best possible method in which to teach him/her about spiritual formation or character development.

Model for Ministry

Once the patterns of ministry have been implemented there is a Model for Ministry that can be followed to ensure a positive outcome on the part of the student-athlete. The model of ministry has four components to it.

²⁰ Given by Director of Life Action Ministries during a sermon preached in September of 1976.

Relationship

The first component has to do with establishing a *Relationship* with the student-athlete. Many times when dealing with student-athletes, there is a tendency to not put this aspect of the ministry in its proper place when trying to teach the athlete what it is that he/she needs to learn or know about spiritual formation, character development and Whole-Person Development.

John Maxwell shares five ways of influencing others, “Position, Permission, Production, People Development, and Personhood.”²¹ When seeking to develop a relationship with the student-athlete, one must realize that there is a process of developing a trust factor with each other. Some athletes bring different kinds of baggage with them that sometimes hinders the development of a personal relationship with the people who seek to help him/her sort out life. That is why it is so important to remember that time is needed to develop a growing relationship between both parties. John Maxwell writes, “Believing in people before they have proved themselves is the key to motivating people to reach their potential.”²² It takes creativity, love, and trust on the part of the teacher or coach, dean, or others to begin to discover ways to grow a meaningful relationship that is built on foundational principles of love and trust. Creativity is “applying wisdom and practical insights to a need or a task.”²³ Love is

²¹ John Maxwell, *Becoming A Person Of Influence*, 5.

²² *Ibid.*, 68.

²³ Characterthatcounts.org/aboutusnew.html.

“learning to serve the basic needs of others without ulterior motives or for personal gain.”²⁴ Trust is “believing completely and totally in someone or something.”²⁵

A well-seasoned pastor once said, “You win more people with honey than you do with vinegar”²⁶ and “you earn the right to be heard.”²⁷ There are some who think just because of their position they will automatically be given an automatic passageway into the life of the athlete they are trying to encourage or work with. That may happen once in awhile, but for the most part a lasting relationship between the two is better developed because there is a genuine interest on the part of the person in that position to use the position as a platform to build a lasting relationship with the student-athlete. Someone has rightfully said, “People don’t care how much you know until, until they know how much you care.”²⁸

Possible questions to ask at the beginning of the *relationship* period are: What are some things that interest the athlete? Are there any things that we have in common? What are some practical things that can be done together? Is there a set of questions that can be used to gather personal information about the athlete that will help develop a relationship? Ask questions that relate to family background, hobbies, or how did the athlete find out about the university? These simple but important steps of action in developing a relationship with each other can be used to build lasting and solid relationships. Maybe during the relationship stage person who is working with the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Given during a sermon by Rev. Manual Clavier in August of 2006.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Unknown.

athlete can share a little bit about his/her background as well. It's those kinds of relationships that give passage into each other's lives. The most important questions have to do with building bridges with the student-athlete. The following assessment can be used to better identify where the student-athlete is spiritually.²⁹

Redemption

The second component has to do with *Redemption*. This is very crucial because eternity becomes the primary focus now. In this area one begins to deal with the core issue of the athlete's personal relationship with God. At this stage in the process one becomes more focused on the one area that has the greatest potential to change the athlete's eternal destiny. During this period it is imperative to be reminded that God uses people and circumstances to lead one to Christ, as was shared earlier in the chapter.

Elmer Towns says Friendship Evangelism is, "Reaching others for Christ through natural relationships – our friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors."³⁰ It is good to pay attention to the answers that are given regarding the athlete having or not having a personal relationship with God. Hopefully by now some kind of relationship has been established with the student-athlete in order to begin to ask some questions that are spiritual in nature. If there hasn't been an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with the student-athlete that provides some kind of freedom to ask very specific questions related to where the athlete is in his/her spiritual journey with God, you can go from the

²⁹ See Appendix Q. Disciplemakers@ccci.org

³⁰ Elmer Towns, *Winning the Winnable* (Lynchburg, VA: Church Leadership Institute, 1986), preface.

very simple type questions to the very particular ones. Where are you from? Your general questions may center on what are your likes or dislikes about living in a certain state. You may ask some questions that have to do with a sports team on a college or professional level.

Possible questions to keep in the back of your mind as you walk through this part of the process are; where is the athlete at spiritually? Does the athlete you are talking with have a personal relationship with God through Christ Jesus? Does the student-athlete know without a shadow of a doubt he/she has been a born again? It is also important to remember that it is possible that the athlete could be born again, but not living according to who he/she is in Christ; therefore God could use you to help him/her get back on their feet spiritually.

Remember it is possible during this time in the relationship that you could be used by God to not only lead the athlete to personal faith in Christ, but help to restore his/her relationship with God. It is good to keep in mind during this stage in the relationship to always keep the door open for someone else to be used by God to lead the athlete to Christ. If that is the case you may have to ask yourself some of the following questions: Am I being used by God to sow the seed? Am I being used by God to plant the seed? Am I being used by God to water the seed? Am I being used by God to reap what someone has already sown, planted, or watered? The most important questions have to do with eternity in the life of the student-athlete.

Restoration

The third component has to do with the principle of *Restoration*. This phase deals with helping an athlete restore or reconcile a vertical or horizontal relationship that needs

restoration or reconciliation. During this phase there are four steps of action that need to be focused on in the athlete's life.

The *first* step in helping to bring about a change is to identify the problem.³¹ This step has to do with what I did, that relates to the past. It is important to make sure the problem has been properly identified because that is where hope begins; once it is, then you can move to the second step of action. If there is a car problem you go to the auto mechanic. If there is a plumbing problem you go to the plumber. If there is a foot problem you go to the foot doctor. The point being made is that you go to the person who is going to help you identify the problem so you can begin to resolve the problem. The same thing is true when it comes to spiritual problems. There are some problems that only God can solve and so the athlete needs to be directed to God to resolve the problem. The key question is, what is the problem?

The *second* step of action is to identify the project the athlete will engage in to begin to resolve the problem. This step has to do with what I must do, that relates to the present. This is where the athlete is going to do something while depending on God to correct the problem. This can be done in a number of different ways – one by giving the athlete a homework assignment, involving someone else who is either a part of the athletic team (a coach or a staff member) or utilizing someone who is outside the team (a teacher or student-affairs person) who may be asked to become a part of the team of people who are going to help the athlete work through or help hold the athlete accountable in some way during the project piece of solving the problem at hand.

³¹ See Appendix R.

Another suggestion is to provide a Bible reading assignment or involve another athlete in a book study outside the Bible. The bottom line is to design some practical ways the student-athlete can begin to change whatever area needs to be changed in his/her life. Dr. Jay Adams writes, “Change takes place in concrete ways.”³² The key question is, what must I do about the problem?

The *third* step of action is to remember the praise that will come as a result of applying the plan of action to change behavior. This step has to do with what is included in the journey, this relates to all that takes place from start to finish. This part of the process focuses on the good things that God is doing because of the athlete is putting into action things needed to develop his-her personal character or spiritual life. The praise is a result of applying God’s grace and God’s word to the action plan given to the athlete.

Tim Clinton writes, “Authentic Christian spiritual formation that produces the character of Christ (the fruit of the Spirit) within an individual may be the best way of enhancing the common factors within a counselor (person being used by God) and facilitating an effective relationship.”³³ What a wonderful platform God has provided to teach athletes about spiritual formation and character development and whole-person development through athletics. The key question is, what progress am I making in dealing with the problem?

The *fourth* step of action is to remember the process of changing behavior. This step has to do with what has been done, that relates to the future. The focus during this stage is to understand that there is a starting point, ongoing point, and a changing point in

³² Jay Adams, *Ready To Restore* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), 32.

³³ Tim Clinton and George Ohlschlager *Competent Christian Counseling*, 112.

the process of change. In a nut shell there are no shortcuts when making changes that affect lifestyles or wrong patterns of life without the understanding it is a moment-by-moment, day-by-day, week-by-week and year-by-year things that one must do to develop the Christ-likeness and character that comes from applying God's word to real life circumstances. The key question is, what must I understand about the process of solving the problem?

Possible questions to keep in the back of your mind as you walk through this part of the process are; How is the athlete responding to the instructions that have been given to him/her? Has there been any resistance to what has been communicated to the student-athlete? Is there anybody else that needs to be brought into the discussion? Is there a game plan in place to change the situation? Has the game plan been followed by the athlete? What steps of action have been taken by the athlete to restore the relationship? Have all the right questions been asked to ascertain all the needed information to better understand the problem? How is the athlete responding to the people that are trying to help with the situation? The most important questions have to do with restoring a broken vertical or horizontal relationship.

Rules

The fourth component has to do with the principle of *Rules*. This phase deals with helping the athlete understand the expectation or standard that was not followed. During this phase there needs to be clear communication with the student-athlete what he/she needs to do to change whatever attitude or action that needs to be changed. It's at this point that assessments can be made about the progress that is being made or not

being made during the meeting. A plan of action can also be implemented at this time as well.

Possible questions to keep in the back of your mind as you walk through this part of the process are; Have the expectations been communicated clearly to the student-athlete? Who are some people who could help the athlete understand the expectation? What are the consequences for not following the standard? Is there anybody from outside the program that needs to be brought in to help with the situation? How can we be more creative in communicating the expectations to our student-athlete? What steps of action has the athlete taken to change the situation? The most important questions have to do with communicating the expectation and helping the student-athlete to respond God's way to the person or situation. There are not only ministry components that one must demonstrate when attempting to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, but there are character qualities that must be lived out by the person who God is using to influence student-athletes.

The following catalog of character qualities compliment the work of God through the person being used by God. These qualities are not an exhaustive list, but represent some key qualities the person must live out if he/she is going to be used by God to impact student-athletes. John Maxwell writes, "The need for integrity today is perhaps as great as it has ever been. And it is absolutely essential for anyone who desires to become a person of influence."³⁴

Attentiveness:

Showing the worth of a person by giving undivided attention to his words and emotions.

³⁴ John Maxwell, *Becoming A Person Of Influence*, 19.

Faith:

Developing an unshakable confidence in God and acting upon it.

Patience:

Accepting a difficult situation without demanding a deadline to remove it.

Discernment:

The ability to understand why things happen to me and others.

Fairness:

Looking at every decision from the viewpoint of each person involved.

Wisdom:

Seeing and responding to life from another's point of view.

Self-Control:

Bringing my thoughts, words, actions and attitudes into constant obedience in order to benefit others.

Endurance:

The inward strength to withstand stress to manage what occurs in my life.

Love:

Learning to serve the basic needs of others without ulterior motives or personal gain.

Creativity:

Applying wisdom and practical insights to meet a need or a task.

Sensitivity:

Knowing what words and actions will benefit others.

Gentleness:

Responding to needs with kindness, personal care, and love.³⁵

Mel Lawrenz writes, "Patterning is a focused commitment to making a few habits and character traits the normal, daily, the consistent."³⁶ Mark Rutland says, "Character

³⁵ All the individual quotes above are from Characterthatcounts.org/aboutusnew.html.

³⁶ Mel Lawrenz, *Patterns*, 25.

can still be taught, modeled and cultivated. The threads of virtue can still be found and used to weave a tapestry of character, but we must be intentional and creative.”³⁷

In thinking about what has already been written, there is one word in the chapter that seems to jump out, and that is the word CHANGE. The ability of God to use the Word of God, people of God, and the things of God to transform a student-athlete’s life through athletics is an amazing platform to honor God. When one thinks about that fact, one must come to the conclusion that God has provided all kinds of people, from all kinds of walks of life, in all varieties of places and position to be the instruments of change in lives of student-athletes.

A few of the following mission or goal statements from various departments on the Liberty University campus that God is using to fulfill the mission of our university in the lives of student-athletes are as follows.

The mission of Liberty University,” To produce Christ-centered men and women with values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact tomorrow's world.”³⁸

The goal of Student Affairs,” To promote the synthesis of academic knowledge and Christian values in order that there might be a maturing of spiritual, intellectual, social and physical behavior.”³⁹

The aim of Liberty University professors,” To integrate a Christian worldview into every subject area.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Mark Rutland, *Character Matters* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House Publishers, 2003), 10.

³⁸ Liberty University Catalog, 2005-2006.

³⁹ Liberty.edu/index.cfm?pid=1316.

⁴⁰ Liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=61.

The football mission,” To utilize football as a unique tool to proclaim and explain the biblical meaning of life through whole person development that encourages team work and winning on and off the field.”⁴¹

These are only a few of the departments on campus that are involved in fulfilling the mission of the university through their department. It is great to know that God desires to use a diverse group of people and circumstances to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and Whole-Person Development.

When the lights go out and the music of life comes to a complete silence, there are some very important questions that need to be asked by people who are working with student-athletes. The following questions help the people who are trying to understand what it is God is doing in the lives of student-athletes through people and circumstances.

What is God attempting to teach me through the athlete I am working with presently? What is God trying to teach me about how the athlete is reacting or responding to what is being taught? What is God trying to teach the athlete through me? Do I need to involve family members in the discussion? Is there someone special in the life of the athlete I am working with that can better communicate what I am trying to say or do? Is there anything that I need to do differently that will help me better communicate what I am teaching? What are some natural visual aids that I can use to communicate? Is there anything I need to change about my presentation? Am I listening to what the athlete is saying to me? Am I dealing with a root issue or a surface issue? Is there any insight God is giving me through His word about who and what I am dealing with? Have I sought any counsel about the situation? Have I drawn a conclusion without

⁴¹ Libertyflames.com/index.cfm?PID=13135.

all the facts? Have I asked all the correct questions that relate to the athlete and situation? Can someone else better communicate to the athlete?

What is best for the athlete and program? What precedent does it set for other decisions that may need to be made in the future? What kind of home work can I give the athlete to help sort out what is going on? Is there a need for a time out period? Do I need to apologize for anything that was said or done that did not reflect Christ-likeness? How can I help the athlete make a better presentation of his/her situation? What is the worst possible thing that could happen? What is the best possible thing that could happen?

If people are going to be used by God to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development there are two key questions that are paramount in the process and they are, Who is God using to teach the student-athlete and What is God using to teach the student-athlete about life in those specific areas of the athletes life.⁴² To God be the glory for what He has done, is doing, and will continue to do through those who desire to be used by Him in teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation through the athletics.

SUMMARY

There are many different ways in which God communicates truth today; and two of the ways He chooses to use are people and circumstances. These two ways are consistent throughout the Old and New Testament. As student-athletes properly respond to those methods of communication, God is able to use them in the process of spiritual formation. God also uses student-athletes to teach those who are working with student-

⁴² See appendix S.

athletes as well. This Who question is related with *People*. This What question is related with *Circumstances*. When people properly respond to the What and Who God is using in their lives, God has a way of fulfilling His will in the person's life.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROCESS OF TEACHING SPIRITUAL FORMATION TO STUDENT-ATHLETES

In life there are times when people have great aspirations for doing things that have the potential to impact them personally and others, but never seem to follow through with the practical steps of action that are necessary to see their dreams become a reality. There are those who set goals at the beginning of each New Year, but never do anything about them. Many people go out and buy the most expensive things needed to get in better physical shape, but that is as far as it goes. Those individuals who have been thinking about getting into better physical shape for a long time but don't do anything about it will be in the same shape they were in the previous year.

They did a dream or vision of what they wanted to do physically; they just didn't mix the vision with action. Andy Stanley states, "Visioneering is the course one follows to make dreams a reality. It is the process whereby ideas and convictions take on substance."¹

Yes, the days go by, weeks go by, months go by, and the year goes by and the person is at the same spot physically a year later because the vision lacked action.

¹ Andy Stanley, *Visioneering* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1999), 8.

Andy Stanley says, "Vision is a clear mental picture of what could be, fueled by the conviction that it should be."² The problem with those cases wasn't that the people didn't have the desire or equipment to do it; they just didn't do what needed to be done in order to make the goal a reality.

The same thing is true when it comes to teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation. One can have the mental picture or vision of teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development, but never get to do it because certain foundational pieces are not in place to do it.

Two indispensable pieces of the big picture that must be in place are the university's mission statement and goals and the athletic team's mission and goals if the university is going to be effective in teaching student-athlete's about spiritual formation. John Maxwell says, "When you see the big picture correctly, you serve the team more quickly."³ It is assumed that the Christian university that desires to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes has a mission statement and biblical aims already written out and is very interested in implementing them throughout the entire university athletic program.

In this chapter there will be important questions and realistic answers given to the When, Why, What, Where, Who, and How of teaching spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development to student-athletes in a Christian educational setting. Before answering the When, Why, What, Where, Who, and How

² Ibid., 18.

³ John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 26.

question's there is a need to provide some practical reminders for those who will be the instruments God will use in teaching student-athletes.

The first reminder in understanding the process of teaching spiritual formation is there needs to be a clear and understandable mission statement of the university and athletic team both posted and communicated throughout the whole athletic department. The intention for all who are a part of the athletic program is to live out the university and athletic team mission in every day life. Doing that also assumes the university's mission statement and aims mean something to those who are a part of the athletic program.

Secondly, the university's mission statement needs to be communicated to staff members of the entire athletic department. It begins with the Athletic Director sharing it with the head coaches; the head coaches sharing it with the coaching and support staff; and then coaches sharing it with the athletes and all other personnel on the athletic team. The mission statement should be reviewed regularly. The mission statement should be read and re-read throughout the year so that people within the organization can know and understand how it relates to what each person does on the athletic staff. As leaders take the initiative to promote the mission of the school and athletic program, others will follow their lead. John Maxwell writes, "People don't at first follow a worthy cause. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthwhile causes."⁴ It takes wisdom and creativity to constantly teach the mission statement in a very meaningful way to all who are associated with the athletic program. It is everybody's responsibility to promote the mission. Maxwell says, "If you think you are the entire picture, you will never see the

⁴ John Maxwell, *The 21 Indisputable Laws of Leadership*, 146.

big picture.”⁵ One of the benefits of making the mission statement of the university visible is it provides a reference point for constant evaluation and teaching tool throughout the calendar year. The mission can be posted in certain areas where coaches, support staff and players can observe it and be reminded about it daily. The mission statement can be formatted into a wallet-size laminated card to be kept in a wallet, purse, or somewhere so that it can be easily seen. Having a mission statement provides the university and team focus and direction that can be used to guide it as the program moves forward. By making it visible it becomes a daily reminder to all who are a part of the athletic team. George Barna states, ” The captain is responsible for keeping the team aligned with its vision day after day.”⁶

Having a mission statement can help people who are associated with the university maintain the right focus while participating on the highest level of collegiate athletics and at the same time, teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. To not have or know the mission statement only leads to people doing what is right in their own eyes.

The flip side to having a mission statement is that it provides the potential to keep everybody rowing in the same direction, in hopes of teaching spiritual formation through coaches, players and everybody else who comes in contact with student-athletes. Scott Wilkins says, ” People who are rowing in the same direction don’t have time to rock the boat.”⁷

⁵ John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Team Work*, 17.

⁶ George Barna, *The Power of Team leadership* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Publishers, 2001), 139.

⁷ Unknown.

Not only is it essential to provide a copy of the mission and know the mission, but there must be a genuine commitment on the part of all who are in a leadership roles to not only know it, but live it out in front of each other. When that begins to happen, student-athletes have the needed role models necessary to reinforce what is being lived out through the mission statement. If there has ever been a need for role models in athletics, it is today. Someone has correctly said,

“I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way. The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear, Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear; for to see good put in action is what everybody needs, I can watch your hands in action. And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds, for to see good put in action is what everybody needs. I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done; I can watch you hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run. And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true, But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do; For I might misunderstand you and the high advice you give, But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live. I'd rather watch a sermon than hear one any day.”⁸

What an opportunity to influence young people today through athletics and teach about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. Having a mission and goals that connect with each other ensures the longevity of the university's impact on young people for years to come. Each head coach will need to figure out how the mission and goals of the university and athletic team are communicated to his/her athletic team. Some head coaches communicate it to the coaches, staff and team at the beginning of training camp. It is also repeated again to the coaches, support staff and players at the beginning of the next semester. As mentioned at

⁸ www.a-motive.com/homepage.html.

the outset of this chapter there will be important questions and realistic answers provided for teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes in a Christian educational setting.

Questions to be Answered

The When Question

The first question has to do with “when” - When does a coach, support staff, or any other person connected with the athletic program begin to talk about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development to players? This question has to do with the *timing* of the message being communicated. Everyone who is associated with the athletic program that comes in contact with a potential student-athlete must use wisdom and God-given common sense when it comes to the question of speaking to the “athlete or his/her family” inquiring about the school and athletic program. The book of Proverbs speaks much about wisdom and practical advice for everyday life. Wisdom knows what to say, when to say it and how to say it and that takes wisdom from God. In Proverbs 2:6-7 we are told about the source of wisdom and the promise of wisdom.

Obviously spiritual formation is not the only thing that a coach or staff member would talk to student-athletes or prospective student-athletes about, but at some point in their conversation it needs to come up. It should be just as natural to talk about spiritual formation, character development or whole-person development as it would be for a car salesperson talking to with someone about buying an automobile in the car lot.

The conversation may start out by trying to find out what the prospective student-athlete desires to major in at the university; it could be questions’ concerning how his/her season is going and a hundred other possible subjects before getting to speak about

spirituality and how it is related to athletics at the Christian university. It is possible that the conversation could start out just talking about family, school work, or anything and everything under the sun. That is fine and that has its place in the attempt to speak about things that relate the athlete's spiritual journey.

There is no set time and place when one begins to talk about those matters, but there should be an awareness on the part of everybody associated with the athletic program of the need to talk about whole-person development, character development or spiritual formation and its relationship to the athlete and overall athletic program. Whenever that takes place it will be as natural as a fish swimming in water. How can one claim to be a part of a Christian university and not talk about the relationship between the vertical and horizontal facets of life?

The "when" question goes back to knowing and having a mission statement that reflects a Christian-world view throughout the entire athletic program. The reason why wisdom and common sense need to be used in guiding the conversation is because there needs to be a balance in the overall presentation of the spiritual, social, academic and athletic expectations at the university. Each person needs to ask God for wisdom to know when it is the right time and place to talk about spiritual matters with the present student-athlete or perspective student-athlete.

The Why Question

The second question has to do with "why" - Why should the coaches, support staff and any other person associated with the athletic program talk about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development? This question has to do with the *motive* for communicating spiritual truth to student-athletes. One reason why

it needs to be shared with student-athletes is because it reflects what the Christian university is about. If people within the athletic program are eager to know and live out the mission of the school and athletic program, there will be a commitment to honor God and a desire to share the school's mission and goals in a positive way. Patrick Lencioni writes, "Teams that are willing to commit to specific results are more likely to work with a passionate, even desperate desire to achieve results."⁹ When a person begins to think through the questions being raised in this chapter, one begins to understand quickly that there is something unique about serving God through athletics at Christian a university. There are things about a Christian university that sets it apart from other non-Christian universities around the world.

Another reason for talking about spiritual formation to student-athletes is because it is the biblical thing to do. The Bible speaks about being light and salt in Matthew 5:13-16. The light and salt that should be reflected through athletics should result in bringing glory to God. The opportunity to bring glory to God provides the motivation to share with all potential student-athletes the spiritual dimension of life that is associated with athletics at the Christian University. What a platform to teach student-athletes?

The What Question

The third question has to do with "what" - What should the coaches, support staff and any other person connected with the athletic program be talking about when it comes to spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development? The "what" question has to do with the *content* of the message that is being communicated

⁹ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002), 219.

through athletics. Athletics is a platform that God uses to introduce athletes to a personal relationship with Him through Christ Jesus. It is the most important relationship a student-athlete can have with someone. This relationship with God not only affects the athlete's life now, but for all eternity. This question, like all other questions in this chapter, should represent the university's mission as well as the athletic team mission. Sometimes God uses someone's interest in sports as a tool to present the gospel to the potential incoming student-athlete, therefore there must be an awareness of that opportunity. Kenneth Boa says, "God does invite us to participate in his purposes by being a part of what his Spirit is accomplishing in the lives of people."¹⁰

As a result of developing a relationship with the athlete and family, the possibility of presenting the gospel or asking questions that are spiritual in nature become a little easier to talk about. Sometimes the questions don't always relate to just salvation; there are times when the questions relate to the athlete's life after salvation.

Kenneth Boa writes, "When we are sensitive and responsive to the opportunities God places in our path, we will find ourselves participating in different phases of the process, depending on the individual and the purposes of God."¹¹ There are other times when questions associated with character development or whole-person development surface during the conversation. The thing to remember when asking questions is, 'what is God' attempting to do in the athlete's life or what has God done in the athlete's life? The questions have a way of working themselves back to the mission and aim of the university and athletic team and can be used to solidify the reason for attending the university.

¹⁰ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 392.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 392.

The Where Question

The fourth question has to do with “where” - Where do the coaches, support staff and any other person connected with the athletic program begin to talk about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development? This question has to do with the *place* where the message will be communicated to athletes. Again its important to keep in mind when talking to the student-athletes to be wise in asking some general questions that could lead to more specific questions about the athlete’s spiritual journey. One of the things to look for during the conversation is a natural opportunity to communicate what the university is all about. Remember if the student-athlete is visiting and is trying to assess if this is the school he/she wants to attend for the next four or five years, that could be the opportunity to share what the university athletic program is all about. The place where spiritual matters are communicated can be anywhere, and that could be the moment. It could be done in the home when the family is having a meeting with a recruiting coach. There are other times when the coach combines talking about spiritual matters, while at the same time talking about other aspects of the university. There should be a dependence on the Holy Spirit for guidance when trying to talk about spirituality with the athletes and prospective athletes. Kenneth Boa says, ” Biblical evangelism is a life style to be lived, not a lesson to be learned; it is a process more than a program.”¹²

No matter where the conversation begins, it must weave its way to one of the most important selling points in the process, and that is a Christian university provides a perspective on athletics that no other non-Christian university can provide in the country.

¹² Ibid., 396.

Remember athletics is a tool that can be used to teach young men and women about the horizontal relationships of life, and also how the vertical relationship is connected to the horizontal relationships in life as well. The horizontal relationships have to do with people; which represent community, our relationships with others. The vertical relationship has to do with God, which represents intimacy, our relationship with God.

When the two relationships are working in conjunction with each other, the platform called athletics becomes the means God uses to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. It is at this point that the school's mission and athletic mission statement begin to be realized in the life of the student-athlete.

The Who Question

The fifth question has to do with "who" - Who should the coaches, support staff and any other person connected with the athletic program be talking about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development? This question has to do with the *people* God could use to communicate the message to student-athletes? If the mission of the school is known by all in the athletic program, it becomes everybody's responsibility to be available to communicate the message of hope of salvation and spiritual growth. Remember the message doesn't just relate to the spiritual piece of athletics, but the message focuses on all four areas of whole-person development. If it is all about the spiritual aspect of life and there is no emphasis on the academic, athletic, and social, then the message is not going to compliment spiritual formation, whole-person development, or character development throughout the athletic program. Everybody has to be the eyes, ears and mouth of the program. John Maxwell says,"

Working together means winning together.”¹³ Singing the same song that reflects what the program is all about is the responsibility of all who are a part of the athletic organization. There should be one message communicated by everybody associated with the organization that indicates one voice to others inside and outside the program. The clearer the message, the better people are going to hear and see how the individual athletic team’s mission coincides with the school’s mission; therefore God is honored through the unity of the message that is being shared by those God is using to teach athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development.

The How Question

The sixth question has to do with: “how” - How should the coaches, support staff and any other person connected with the athletic program begin to talk about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development? This question has to do with the *way* the message is communicated. Each person needs to depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance, when it comes to the best way to say what needs to be communicated.

There are basically two ways the message is communicated - verbally and non-verbally. The verbal way the message is shared with student-athletes is through word of mouth. The non-verbal way that the message is shared with athletes is by living it out in front of them. Bill Walton speaking about his former coach John Wooden while at U.C.L.A. said, “John Wooden teaches by example. Coach was always leading and teaching: the underlying themes, his principles, his foundation, his core as a human being, his pyramid; particularly, his belief that basketball, like life, is not a game of size

¹³ John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Team Work*, 205.

and strength but a game of skill, timing, and position.”¹⁴ The message goes fourth at various times and places by people God is using as a tool to share His will and way with student-athletes. It is one thing to say it verbally; it’s another thing to live it out in front of others through non-verbal ways. One of the greatest ways to influence young people today is through non-verbal and verbal communication. John Maxwell writes, “If your life in any way connects with other people, you are an influencer.”¹⁵

The same is true today, as student-athletes hear it and see it lived out in front of them, God takes what they hear and see and uses it as a platform to teach them about spiritual formation. When that begins to happen, athletes’ lives are changed in a very dramatic way; therefore confirming the mission and aims of the university and athletic program through the changed lives of student-athletes. When one starts to consider the questions that have been raised and answered in this chapter, it becomes apparent that when a university and athletic team make a commitment to identify and communicate their mission and goals to all who are a part of the athletic organization, the result is lives are changed for the glory of God. Once the When, Why, Where, What, Who, and How of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes has been addressed properly, then one is ready to look at the three categories of spirituality that make up an athletic team.

Three Spiritual Categories of Athletes

The three spiritual categories of athletes on each team include a High-Interest, Some-Interest, and No-Interest grouping. Each of one these groups will be defined and a list of characteristics that distinguish each group will be cataloged as well. There was no

¹⁴ John Wooden, *They Call Me Coach* (New York, NY: Contemporary Books, 1998), 5-6.

¹⁵ John Maxwell, *Becoming A Person Of Influence*, 3.

scientific approach that was used to identify these three groups of players; however, once the characteristics of each group were identified, athletes were placed in one of the three categories. Included in the process was common-sense reasoning that included observation of all players and communication with fellow players in the High-Interest Group and players in the Some- Interest group that helped develop the model used to establish the three categories of athletes.

High Interest Group

The first category is the High-Interest Group; this group of athletes would be the student-athletes who have given a clear and convincing testimony of genuine salvation and have a good testimony among their peers. Out of 90 guys on the team 25 to 30 players make up this group of student-athletes. The words used in the Bible to support this category of athletes would be “spiritual-minded believers” as found in I Corinthians 3:1. Sumner Wemp writes, “The spiritual man is the Christian who is traveling first class to heaven.”¹⁶ This group would be the athletes who show through conversation and lifestyle a genuine desire to grow in their relationship with God and a desire to see others to grow in their relationship with God. Allen Hadidian says discipling is, “Discipling is the divine strategy for continuation of the work of Christ. It guarantees the passing on of the patterns and principles of His life.”¹⁷ One of the best ways to continue the process is to make disciples.¹⁸

¹⁶ Sumer Wemp, *How On Earth Can I be Spiritual* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1978), 37.

¹⁷ Allen Hadidian, *Successful Discipling*, 6.

¹⁸ See Appendix T. Used with permission as a part of a dissertation by Henry D. Stryon in 2004

Even though these athletes are placed in this category, it doesn't mean that they don't struggle with everyday life issues as a Christian. They could be classified as disciple makers from a biblical viewpoint. A disciple maker is a Christian who is sure about his/her salvation and is committed to developing a growing relationship with God.

Gary Kuhue writes, "Discipleship is the spiritual work of developing spiritual maturity and spiritual reproductiveness in the life of a Christian."¹⁹ The kind of disciple maker is one who bears fruit in different forms. Here is a list of possible characteristics of the High-Interest Group.

Consistent intake and application of God's Word

Focused prayer time

Attempts to help others grow spiritually

Has an awareness of God in daily life

Attends a local church

Lives out the mission of the school

Inwardly motivated to grow

Experiences normal struggles in daily walk

Light and Salt in front of others

Sometimes not the most vocal group player on the team

Assumes some kind of spiritual leadership position in other area of school or church

Set's a good example for others to follow

Sometimes not the most talented player on the team

What the High-Interest Group demonstrates to others

¹⁹ Gary Kuhue, *The Dynamics of Personal Follow-Up* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 130.

Consistent growth

Individual enthusiasm for Whole-Person Development

An interest in spiritual things

An influence on others

An eternal value system

May have been disciplined by someone else

Reasons for being placed in the High-Interest Group

Has been born again

Has consecrated life to God

Has an eternal value system

Has a desire to live out the reality of God in front of others

Has a desire to help others grow

Has an interest in spiritual disciplines

Some Interest Group

The second category is the Some-Interest Group; this group of student-athletes who have given testimony of salvation, but have a bunch of “buts” that could indicate a lack of submission to God or God’s standards for victorious living in the spiritual journey of life. These “buts” could hinder the process of spiritual growth in the life of student-athlete. Some in this group of athletes could be brand new baby Christians, as well. The words used in the Bible to support this category of athletes would be “baby-minded” or “carnal-minded” believers as found in I Corinthians 3:1.

Sumner Wemp says, "The carnal man is the man who travels second class to heaven."²⁰

This group of athletes could be classified as lukewarm disciples from a biblical viewpoint; however some of the "buts" that may surface about the Christian life may be sincere and only indicate where the athlete is in his/her spiritual journey at that given time. Out of 90 guys on the team 40 to 50 players make up this group of student-athletes. Some of the athletes in this category may have a interest in developing their relationship with God or being involved in ministry with others, but just don't know how to go about it. This group gives verbal indication of salvation, but may have some honest questions about spiritual growth and commitment to God, and never been involved in the process of being followed up by an older believer. This group of student-athletes is the biggest of all the three groups. These players may have an interest helping others spiritually, but are not ready to help someone else grow in his/her relationship with God. For the most part they need someone to help them grow in their faith.

Chris Adsit says, "By knowing what should characterize a disciple at each level of growth; we get a better idea of how we can help that disciple in his/her pilgrimage toward maturity."²¹ Athletes in this phase of the spiritual journey can move to the High-Interest.

Here is a list of possible characteristics that identify the Some-Interest Group.

Spiritual Disciplines not a top priority

Temporal things have a tendency to override spiritual things

²⁰ Sumer Wemp, *How on Earth Can I Be Spiritual*, 37.

²¹ Chris Adsit, *Personal Disciple-Making* (Orlando, FL: Campus Crusade For Christ, 1996), 61.

Lives life with a “take it or leave it” approach to spiritual disciplines

Events at certain times may trigger a spiritual interest

No consistent plan for spiritual growth

A hit or miss approach to spiritual things

Worldly things overshadow spiritual things in life

Fear of what others may think

Complacent about spiritual things

What the Some-Interest Group demonstrate to others

Minimal interest in spiritual things

Spiritual values are not a priority in daily life

No lasting influence

No enthusiasm for spiritual things

Spiritual infancy

Little influence spiritually on others

May have never been disciplined by someone else

Reasons for being placed in the Some-Interest Group

Lack of spiritual consecration

Temporary value system

Past failure

Personal defeat in daily life

Wrong thought patterns about God, self and others

No Interest Group

The third category is the No-Interest Group; this group of athletes would be the student-athletes who have not given a clear testimony of genuine salvation. The words used in the Bible to support this category of athletes would be “natural-minded” unbelievers as found in I Corinthians in Chapter 2:14. Dr. Wemp writes, “The natural man is the unsaved man who has never been born again.”²² Some in this group could be the group that indicates some serious doubt about their conversation. Their lifestyle raises questions about not having a genuine personal relationship with God.

This group of student-athletes is the smallest of all the three groups at Liberty. Out of 90 guys on the team, 8 to 10 players make up this group of student-athletes. Even though there is some doubt about whether this category of athletes has been born again, there is an openness on their part to discuss spiritual matters. Some have some hang-ups about life in general, which the Devil uses as excuses to blind their minds, thus keeping them from responding to the gospel in a very life changing way. Here is a list of characteristics that identify the No-Interest Group.

Never been born again

No interest in spiritual things

No interest in attending the local church

Lack of dependence on God

No conscience awareness of God in the daily things of life

Spiritual disciplines are more academic than life-changing

What the No-Interest Group demonstrate to others

²² Sumer Wemp, *How On Earth Can I be Spiritual*, 37.

Never born again

No interest in spiritual things

No spiritual life

No spiritual Influence on others

Reasons for being placed in the No-Interest Group

Never born again

It is very important for everybody who is in the life changing business to be aware of where student-athletes are in their spiritual journey and allow the Holy Spirit to guide them in helping the athlete to develop his/her walk with God by embracing those disciplines that center around spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development.

Principles of Ministry Engagement

The following principles of ministry engagement compliment the process God uses in teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. These principles provide the groundwork for winning the heart and mind of the student-athlete, therefore providing the passageway to his/her heart and life. The reason for approaching the student-athlete this way is because it uses the natural flows of life to assess and meet their needs in a very natural way. Understanding these principles only enhances the possibilities of God using others to fulfill His will through those He is using to influence student-athletes today.

The first ministry principle has to do with building Trust. Trust is the cornerstone for building relationships between the different groups of people God is using to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and

whole-person development. Trust has been defined, "Believing completely in someone or something."²³ The reason why it is essential for trust to be developed with people is because there are times when individuals in the different groups have information, awareness of something going on in the student-athlete's life, or developing relationship with the athlete that could be the key to unlocking the one piece necessary to helping the athlete understand how God is working in his/her life at that particular time.

While on the subject of trust it is important to remember that trust is something that is earned over a period of time. A new CEO stated, "Remember, teamwork begins by building trust."²⁴ While building trust doesn't mean that the confidentiality of both parties in the discussion is taken lightly, it does mean that if something comes up in the conversation that needs to be communicated to someone who is a part of the solution or someone in another group, prayer, wisdom, dialogue and timing need to be thought through before the information is shared with someone outside the immediate conversation. If this is kept in mind while seeking to guide or help the student-athlete, it will not hinder the relationship that is being developed between the parties involved. Patirck Lencioni says, "Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is all but impossible."²⁵ The reason for mentioning the need for prayer, wisdom and dialogue is because there will be times when things surface that need to be shared with someone outside the present discussion.

²³ Characterthatcounts.org/aboutusnew.html.

²⁴ Patirck Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of A Team*, 63,

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.

Remember, God is using all kinds of different people and circumstances to teach student-athletes, therefore an awareness of who and what God is using to teach athletes needs to be kept in mind. Mr. Lencioni declares, "If we don't trust one another, then we aren't going to engage in open, constructive, ideological conflict."²⁶ It is also important for each individual athletic team to talk about the trust that is being built throughout the university so that players understand up front what is being done to establish trust inside and outside the organization. Someone came up with a good acrostic for the word "team" - Together Everybody Achieves More."²⁷ One of the ways trust is developed is by taking the time to genuinely commit to serving the basic needs of others outside the individual athletic team. When the different groups of people make that kind of commitment to one another it just increases the chances of student-athletes being influenced in a positive manner.

The second ministry principle has to do with establishing good communication. Communication has to do with the dialogue between the people God is using to impact athletes. Once there has been a commitment to build trust, then a natural progression that leads to developing avenues of communication begin. The communication brings with it a two-fold prong that includes both positive and negative information. Patrick Lencioni writes, "When team members do not openly debate and disagree about important ideas, they often turn to back-channel personal attacks, which are far nastier and more harmful than any heated argument over issues."²⁸ The information that is received becomes a

²⁶ Ibid., 91.

²⁷ Unknown.

²⁸ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of A Team*, 203.

measurement or reminder on how the program is living out its mission and aims. The thing to remember is wherever and whenever dealing with athletes, there will be components that reflect blessings and testings of life. The key is continuing to establish positive patterns in all areas of the program depend on properly responding to each other as members on the same team. Rev. Manuel Chavier said, "When you see the testing, expect the blessing, and when you see the blessing expect the testing."²⁹ The two rhythms of life are a reality in the life of the Christian.

Communication must begin with those who are a part of the individual athletic team. The communication includes the mission and goals of the university and athletic program. That information will help coaches, support staff and players clearly understand the direction and the expectations of the organization. This allows the program to minimize the distractions it may encounter. The lines of communication from top to bottom of the organization should also be clearly stated. If trust is being built, it will automatically benefit in the way communication is expressed to others. Sometimes the communication may involve people from outside the athletic program that God is using to teach student-athletes. There are times when people on the outside see a different attitudes and actions that need to be confronted or complimented.

One question to ask when trying to help an athlete: "Who is someone outside the program that God could use to speak to the targeted athlete?" That question is so important because there are times when God will bring somebody else into the picture He wants to use to help the athlete change an attitude or behavior pattern that could eventually hurt or help him/her in the future. There are times when a group of people

²⁹ Given during a sermon 2006 of June by Rev. Manuel Chaiver.

such as players, coaches, student-affairs members and family members could be a part of the process of teaching the athlete about spiritual formation.

The third ministry principle has to do with Accountability. Accountability has to do with the standard of excellence to be demonstrated by all connected to the organization. Patrick Lencioni articulates, "Members of great teams improve their relationships by holding one another accountable, thus demonstrating that they respect each other and have high expectations for one another's performance."³⁰

Accountability is one way that everybody is held to the standards and expectations of the university and athletic program. These standards are sometimes convictions and other times preferences that the school or athletic program has agreed to. If the expectations are communicated so that all understand what they are, it will eliminate the double standard which then becomes one of those things that can distract from the mission and goals of the program. What ends up happening, the leaders within the organization begin to spend more time using negative energy on things that could be used to emphasize the good things that players are doing to fulfill the expectations that are placed on them.

One of the benefits of having accountability within the athletic program is that it helps athletes focus on doing the things that will help move the program forward in a positive direction. Patrick writes, "As politically incorrect as it sounds, the most effective and efficient means of maintaining high standards of performance on a team is peer pressure."³¹ It also provides the motivation needed when tempted to deviate from the

³⁰ Ibid., 213.

³¹ Ibid., 213.

prescribed course of action needed to meet the demands in all four areas of whole-person development. Patrick Lencioni states, "The enemy of accountability is ambiguity, and even when a team has the initially committed to a plan or set of behavioral standards, it is important to keep those agreements in the open so that no one can easily ignore them."³² Accountability is something that everybody needs to have in life because there are times in life the mind or body doesn't want to do the things that need to be done to be successful in life. Accountability benefits the process of spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development in the life of everybody.

The fourth ministry principle has to do with Partnership. Partnership has to do with the respect and value that each person brings to the process of influencing student-athletes through athletics. It's recognizing the uniqueness of each individual that God is attempting to use to teach athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. The potential for impacting student-athletes by working in partnership with each other is enhanced immensely.

Stanley Gault say's, "We don't work for each other; we work with each others."³³ The blessing of working in partnership is that God uses the individual life stories of the people involved in the life-changing business of student-athletes. It is about taking those stories of individuals and making them God's stories, and then allowing God to use the individuals' stories to help others with their stories. That is possible because each athlete brings with him/her a unique story that God desires to transform into a life message, that others may be impacted by the life message. When the athlete and persons

³² Ibid., 214.

³³ John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Team Work*, 121.

being used by God relate the four principles listed above in their discussion, the dynamics for seeing lives changed only increases.

Change takes place at different times and seasons in the life of the athlete. It is imperative that people who are involved in the process of change understand that when working with athletes. What a responsibility to put into practice those principles of ministry that are going to increase the opportunities to effectively minister to student-athletes in all areas of life.

SUMMARY

The two most important questions to ask when attempting to minister to student-athletes has to do with the What and Who God is using to bring about change. Once those questions have been asked, then there are two follow up questions that need to be asked about the athlete. What is God attempting to do in the life of the athlete and How is the athlete responding to the What and Who God is using to bring about change in the student-athletes life. Patrick Lencioni say's, "Success is not a matter of mastering subtle, sophisticated theory, but rather of embracing common sense with uncommon levels of discipline and persistence."³⁴ Remember it's about making yourself available for God to use whomever and whatever to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation through athletics.

³⁴ Patirck Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 200.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHEN TEACHING SPIRITUAL FORMATION TO STUDENT-ATHLETES

When attempting to teach spiritual formation to student-athletes it is very important to be cognizant from the outset of some of the problems that can hinder the process. This chapter will include some of the possible problems encountered when attempting such a task. Knowing those things to be true, we are reminded to depend upon the Holy Spirit for guidance in proclaiming truth about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development to athletes. Someone has rightfully said, "Problems are reminders we are not self-sufficient. We need God and others to help."¹

Spiritual Opposition

Spiritual opposition is one of the problems encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. This kind of opposition was true in the life and ministry of Jesus as well as others God used in the Bible to communicate spiritual truth. The same was also true and His disciples, although, at times they were not aware of the spiritual warfare they were encountering. Those same problems were experienced in the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. There are other examples of these kind of realities

¹ Unknown.

in the life and ministry of those God is using today to in meeting the spiritual needs of others.

Kenneth Boa, writes, "From the beginning of the Old Testament to the end of the New Testament, the Bible reveals the existence of a vast, highly ordered, and complex spiritual world that exists between God and us."²

Failure to be aware of spiritual warfare when trying to minister to student-athletes will only lead to frustration and limited success in teaching the student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development.

Kenneth Boa also says, "The Scriptures abound with military images of conflict, warfare, and adversaries in the believer's life. It is not a question of whether we are engaged in spiritual warfare; the question is how effectively we are fighting."³ Not being spiritually alert to the devils tactics can also hinder the effectiveness of assessing and addressing the spiritual needs of student-athletes as well. Rev. Manuel Chavier said, "The devil doesn't have any new tricks; he just keeps using the same old tricks."⁴

To be spiritually vigilant one must depend upon the Holy Spirit for spiritual guidance as well as learn how to look at life, people and circumstances from a biblical viewpoint. Tim Clinton writes about the ministry, "The indwelling and equipping are accompanied by empowerment for ministry, spiritual warfare, and fruit bearing. This work of the Spirit empowers the believer and provides opportunity to foster loving relationships in the community of faith."⁵ There are ways for those who are serving God

² Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 236.

³ *Ibid.*, 429.

⁴ Given during a sermon in June of 1997 by Rev. Manuel Chavier.

⁵ Tim Clinton, *Competent Christian Counseling*, 112.

through athletics and other avenues of ministry to develop the spiritual awareness needed to be used by God to impact athletes socially, spiritually, athletically and academically which is what whole-person development is all about.

There were times when Jesus was ministering to people and His disciples were not fully aware of what He was teaching or why He was teaching those he encountered during the normal activities of His daily ministry. Jesus being the master teacher He was didn't allow what He was trying to teach others to hinder Him in anyway because of His disciples not being spiritually alert to what was taking place around them during that time. However, on occasion, He did use those times as teachable moments to teach them privately and collectively about the realities of spiritual warfare. One of the main reasons why the disciples missed opportunities to learn how to do the work of the ministry when they were with Jesus, is they were pre-occupied with their own agenda and not the agenda of the Master. There are some basic strategies the Devil uses to hinder student-athletes from receiving the blessings from the teachings on spiritual formation.

Self Centeredness and Self Sufficiency

Self-centeredness is one of the problems encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. Athletes allow themselves to believe that life and athletics is all about them. The main problem with that kind of thinking is there is no biblical support for that kind of reasoning. If one follows the patterns that Jesus demonstrated during His earthly ministry it becomes apparent He was about pleasing His Father and not Himself. The focus was on what God was doing and God the Father being praised. It is important to remember the primary focal point of ministry, is not about me, its about what God is doing in me and through me to impact others. The scriptures tell us

that Jesus came to serve, not to be served. It has been said, "A person wrapped up in him/herself is a small package."⁶

Not only do the correct ministry patterns surface in the life and ministry of Jesus, but those patterns are evident in the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. Those are the patterns that teachers, coaches, deans, team mates, and parents should follow as a model for teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation. To be effective in ministering to athletes one must be authentic and approachable so any athlete has the freedom to come and talk about whatever it is that he/she has on their heart and mind. Jesus modeled that kind of pattern of ministry while engaged in ministry no matter who it was or where it was He was ministering. What a challenge and example to model that of ministry style before athletes? One of the over-riding qualities the reader of the Bible notices in Jesus and Paul is their undeniable commitment to always do those things that pleased the Heavenly Father. That kind of spiritual focus in ministry was used by God to meet the most intimate needs of people they ministered to while on earth. They were aware of who and what their ministry was all about as they served God through everyday acts of kindness by meeting the physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs of people. Rick Warren correctly said, "It's not about you."⁷ The primary patterns of the ministry of Jesus and Paul was to serve others, anything short of that falls short.

Thinking incorrectly about God, self and others is another potential problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. The reason why this tactic is so successful is because when the athlete allows him/herself to believe

⁶ Unknown.

⁷ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 17.

the lie, it is only a matter of time before the student-athlete begins to live it out. Tim Clinton says, "It's putting the worst possible face on an event and allowing the negative thought to become the accepted truth by making it the rule of your heart."⁸ Once that happens the Devil knows that faith and obedience are not operating like they are supposed to in the life and mind of the student-athlete. Not only does that tactic hamper the work of God the servant of God is doing, but it places limits on the amount and kind of fruit that comes from the work of God. It should be noted that a student-athlete cannot control all the thoughts that enter his/her mind, but the athlete can interpret the thoughts that remain in his/her mind. The proper way for the athlete to interpret those thoughts is by asking the right questions about God, self and others. To ask the wrong questions about God, self and others, is to get the wrong answers. To ask the right questions about God, self and others, is to get the right answers.

Once the athlete does not have the correct focus then those behavior patterns will automatically show up in other areas in the athlete's life. Failure to think correctly in those three areas will make it hard for the student-athlete to give the proper attention to spiritual formation. Thrall says, "How I view myself is the most revealing commentary of my theology."⁹

Another hindrance student-athletes thinking that change is not possible. In one sense that is true, however, when the student-athlete is utilizing the resources God provides for change to take place in a person's life, change is really possible from a biblical perspective. The simplest formula for change is two-fold, God does His part and

⁸ Tim Clinton, *Before A Bad Goodby* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1999), 190.

⁹ Bill Thrall, *True Faced* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004), 80.

the student-athlete cooperates with what God is doing and the super-natural work of God called transformation takes place in the life of the student-athlete. Remember the goal of the Devil when it comes to spiritual formation, character development or whole-person development is to defeat, destroy, delay, and to detour the process God attempts to use in teaching athletes through the various spiritual disciplines in the Christian journey. It is important to remember what Robert MulHolland said, "The process of being conformed to the image of Christ takes place primarily at the points of our unlikeness to Christ's image."¹⁰

Mis-Understanding of Identity

Not understanding one's identity in Christ is a potential problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. Satan attempts to confuse the athlete about his/her identity in Christ. Understanding one's identity in Christ is the key to a victorious life. The victorious life is called the abundant life for the Christian. When a student-athlete begins to comprehend what it means to know who he/she is in Christ the whole motive for living can begin to change. Kenneth Boa says, "We have been programmed into thinking that our identity is based on what others think or what we think about ourselves rather than what God thinks about us."¹¹

Past failure is another problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. If the student-athlete allows his/her past failure to keep him/her from experiencing present blessing, then the deceptive one is happy. If

¹⁰ Robert MulHolland, *An Invitation To a Journey*, 37.

¹¹ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed To His Image*, 113.

successful, he knows that it will hinder the walk and Christian service the athlete should engage in as a Christian. If the athlete allows past failure to keep him/her from learning from the past, he/she will develop a wrong pattern of life that will not be contagious for spiritual growth. Boa writes, “When we succumb to temptation in thought, word, or deed, we are living beneath the dignity of the new identity we have received in Christ Jesus.”¹²

For example, if a defensive back is in zone coverage, and he should be playing man to man coverage that could mean six points on the score board. In football terms that is called being out of position. If the football player is out of position on the field he can't effectively help his team at that time in the game, the same is true of a Christian who is out of position spiritually. To be out of position spiritually means to not have the power and influence that one should have as an athlete. Keep in mind that God is able to take past failure and turn it into present blessing if the athlete responds to the failure God's way. Rick Ezell writes, “Not all crises that occur in our lives come from God, but God can take the frustrating experiences that are beyond our control and teach us a lesson. He can take the rough roads we travel and paint road signs along them that will instruct us and change us for the better.”¹³

Negative relationships outside the athletic program are another problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. Not having good relationships outside of the individual sport can hinder the process of teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person

¹² Ibid., 119.

¹³ Rick Ezell, *Defining Moments*, 25.

development. John Maxwell says, "Working together means winning together."¹⁴ The reason why negative relationships jeopardize the potential for teaching about spiritual formation is because it shuts out or limits outside people who God desires to use in the progression of teaching student-athletes about things that have a vertical and horizontal relationship. One thing that is good to keep in mind when trying to understand how spiritual formation works is that spiritual formation includes a lot of people from all different walks of life in the process. Robert MulHolland says, "But holistic spirituality, the process of being conformed to the image of Christ, takes place in the midst of our relationships with others, not apart from them."¹⁵

The sooner it is understood by those serving God through athletics, the greater the opportunity to see God transform athletes through the process. There are two areas of life that are related to the journey of spiritual formation and they are intimacy and community. Intimacy has to do with my personal relationship with God, and community has to do with my relationship with people. As these two facets of life come together God is able to use athletics as a platform to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development in a very life changing way. Developing healthy relationships with people within the athletic program and those outside the athletic program is a very important piece in the development of spiritual formation in the lives of student-athletes.

¹⁴ John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Team Work*, 205.

¹⁵ Robert MulHolland, *An Invitation To A Journey*, 43.

Opposing Philosophies of Athletics

Opposing philosophies of athletics can be a problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. A different philosophy between the university and specific athletic coaching and support staff will hurt any athletic program. This problem has to do with having two different ways of viewing the purpose of athletics. This kind of conflict reveals itself in the way the program is being developed and the people (assistant coaches, support staff and players) associated with the individual athletic staff and team. Failure to be on the same page in this area will only lead to conflict, which will eventually trickle down to the players. Patrick Lencioni says, "Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments."¹⁶

In order to avoid this problem it must be clearly communicated by the head coach; then the head coach shares with the coaching and support staff and team the process of communication. This then develops unity and creates energy that will continue to guide the program in the right direction. On the other hand, to not have a clear understanding of the philosophy of athletics at the university will create a ripple effect that will impact everybody associated with the athletic program. One important area that would be affected immediately is the philosophy of hiring coaches and secondly, recruiting athletes to a Christian university. This not only has to do with who will be brought in to lead the athletes (coaches/support staff) but also the type of athletes that will be recruited.

There are two philosophies for hiring coaches and support staff to lead individual athletic programs. The first one is to hire a Christian head coach, but not necessarily hire all Christian assistant coaches and support staff.

¹⁶ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of A Team*, 188.

The second philosophy is to hire a head coach, assistant coaches and support staffs who are all Christians. There are various reasons people have for the two philosophies of hiring coaches and support staff members. Attention will not be given to the first philosophy mentioned; however, consideration will be given to the second philosophy. For the sake of discussion, it will be assumed that the mission of the university has a biblical basis for its athletic program.

It is also understood that the Christian university's mission statement should embrace evangelism and edification of the Christian athlete. If the individual athletic program is going to fulfill the mission of the university, it must begin by hiring a head coach who is a Christian. The reason why the head coach needs to be a Christian is because he/she will be the primary person who will guide the program. The head coach sets the agenda for the staff and players to follow. Gene Stallings said, "My job was to get my team on one heartbeat."¹⁷ Who the head coach is and is becoming will become a part of the team's personality and makeup after a period of time. If the head coach's philosophy doesn't compliment the university mission statement, it will only create division and confusion after a matter of time within the program. Oneness in philosophy leads to cohesiveness between the administration and those who make up the individual athletic team.

Knowing that the head coach's philosophy is in agreement with the university generates an eagerness to share the philosophy with others. The philosophy of recruiting should influence all areas of the athletic program. The mission should be reflected through the recruiting process. Failure to articulate the mission and goals during the

¹⁷ Tom Mullins, *The Leadership Game* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 43.

recruiting process can determine the success or failure of the program. George Barna writes, "When you watch a great organization at work, everything looks easy. The mission and vision of the organization are clear and attractive, the people seem to gladly and effortlessly fulfill their responsibilities, and impressive results appear to emerge on cue."¹⁸ The way recruiting is done tells a lot about the philosophy of the university and individual athletic team. Recruiting should act as a gauge to reveal the kind of student-athlete entering the program. Tom Mullins says, "The ability to recruit top talent is fundamental for any successful team – most leaders understand that. In fact, any average leaders can recognize good potential in players based on past and present performance.

However, the ability to convince recruits to be part of a team is different kind of challenge that only the best leaders do well. This process begins when you determine your recruiting edge."¹⁹ If the mission includes both evangelism and edification, then there is the freedom to recruit athletes who may not be Christians, but are open to hearing and responding to the gospel and understand what the expectations are going to be at the university. These athletes are capable of being brought in because of the amount of salt and light that other athletes on the team reflect. There is a strategic plan of action to win the incoming athletes to Christ during the recruiting process or when they become a part of the team.

Not my responsibility mentality is a potential problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. When people who are associated with the athletic program or team demonstrate by attitude it is only the responsibility of the

¹⁸ George Barna, *The Power of Team leadership*, 115.

¹⁹ Tom Mullins, *The Leadership Game*, 2.

chaplain to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development, there is a serious flaw in that kind of thinking.

It is not only the chaplain's responsibility to be alert and attentive for opportunities to teach, but it is everybody's responsibility to be available to communicate spiritual truth to athletes when the occasion arises. Each person on the staff is to be attentive and alert for the opportunity to share Jesus with those who have not received Christ as their personal Savior and to be available to share a word of encouragement with those student-athletes who know Christ personally. Each staff person needs to ask God for wisdom to know when and where to share the gospel with those who need to hear it. Evangelism and edification is everybody's business. Kenneth Boa says, "God does invite us to participate in his purposes by being a part of what His Spirit is accomplishing in the lives of people."²⁰

Complacency is a potential problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. This happens when coaches and players forget why they are there. Sometimes people get caught up with doing and forget there is a need to combine the "doing" with the being. Doing has to do with activities becoming the primary thing about life and athletics. Being attempts to maintain a balance with doing by living out a personal relationship with God and fulfilling the responsibility of being a staff/team member. One can become complacent in attitude and actions that don't reflect team concept. Complacency can show up by not being responsible for the daily expectations. Patrick Lencioni writes, "If team mates are not being held accountable for the contributions, they will be more likely to turn their attention to their own needs, and

²⁰ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed To His Image*, 392.

to the advancement of themselves or their department. An absence of accountability is an invitation to team members to shift their attention to areas other than collective results.”²¹

Yes, even at a Christian university people can become complacent in his/her relationship with God and his/her relationship with others.

A Wrong Concept of Ministry

A wrong concept of ministry by coaches, support staff and players is a potential problem encountered when trying to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation. In a university setting people sometimes forget that ministry takes place in the area where they are participating in everyday situations. It is in athletics where he/she learns how to do the work of the ministry. What a great platform to help compliment the mission and goals of the athletic team and develop a model for future ministry for coaches, support staff and players. Kenneth Boa writes, “Divine sovereignty and human responsibility mysteriously mesh together in the evangelistic enterprise just as they do in other areas such as prayer.”²² The key for everybody in the program is to make him/herself available for God to use them for evangelism or edification of the believer. God uses people and circumstances to either lead someone one to Christ (salvation) or help someone become more like Christ. The relationships, encouragement and training in the work of the ministry while a part of the athletic program will help prepare the student-athlete for ministry after the college experience. The athlete has the privilege of seeing other athletes come to faith in Christ and grow in their walk with God. Having a proper understanding of ministry while on the team only helps the athlete live out what whole-

²¹ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of A Team*, 2002, 216.

²² Kenneth Boa, *Conformed To His Image*, 393.

person development concepts are all about. Hopefully what they see modeled will be something they will do through their local church when they leave the program. Rick Warren says, "Service is the pathway to real significance."²³

Not utilizing resources available to athletes is a potential problem encountered when trying to teach them about spiritual formation. The ability to make the most of the resources through the people within the athletic program can be a real asset to the athletes during college and after college. Warren says, "Great opportunities often disguise themselves in small tasks."²⁴ They can be used to provide the needed guidance and wisdom to properly prepare for the future after graduation. The time student-athletes spend talking with people inside and outside the athletic program will only enhance their experience as a college student. It is those experiences that will last for a lifetime.

Lack of unity among coaches and support staff associated with the individual athletic team is a hindrance. To not be united in mission and purpose allows the enemy to create confusion and double mindedness on the leadership team. If the leadership doesn't have a united front, it is only a matter of time before it will be noticed by the players. Once players notice the disunity it begins to have a negative impact on them and everybody else connected to the program. When mixed signals are sent to players it takes away valuable time that could be used to focus on positive things that are taking place inside the program. Maintaining unity is essential if the athletic program and team are going to move forward in accomplishing the goals they are striving to achieve.

²³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 232.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 261.

Double Standards

Double standards that are tolerated on an athletic team only hinder a team from giving attention to those disciplines that are needed to help the players maximize their God given potential to succeed in a given season. Double standards cause people to doubt the sincerity of those leading the program. It is possible to realize there are different levels of talent on any given team, however showing favoritism because of a double standard only limits the effectiveness of those God is using to teach student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development through athletics. When players see the inconsistency it begins to interfere with one of the most important ingredients a player must demonstrate as a team member, and that is to be internally motivated to do the things that are necessary to become a productive participant on the team. A double standard is one of those things that eventually sap all the energy from any organization.

Lack of knowledge of the university's mission, athletic team mission and goals by those associated with the program can be a hindrance when trying to teach athletes about spiritual formation. Lacking knowledge of those things becomes a distraction because it chokes the creativity needed to guide the program to newer heights.

Andy Stanley writes, "Visions thrive in an environment of unity; they die in an environment of division."²⁵ To not know what the purpose and focus of the university is, only causes people to institute their own goals and preferences about where the university should devote its energy, attention and money.

Irresponsibility of players not following the instructions given by others God is using to teach about formation can hinder the process of teaching student-athletes about

²⁵ Andy Stanley, *Visioneering* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1999), 16.

spiritual formation. Patterns that don't reflect the mission ultimately sabotage what God is attempting to do in the lives of student-athletes through those He is using to bring about the change. If true transformation is going to be a reality in the lives of athletes anything that hinders that from happening must be avoided. Teaching athletes how to be responsible during the sports event and after the event should work in conjunction with its aims as an athletic organization.

A temporal value system is another problem that hinders teaching athletes about spiritual formation because it contradicts the primary philosophy of the Christian university's purpose for using athletics as a platform to honor God and a tool God uses to change lives. A value system that is temporal in nature lacks the divine anointing and power needed to produce the spiritual outcomes that one would expect from a Christian university. If the athletic program is going to demonstrate spiritual aims it must have a value system that allows that to happen. A temporal value system places its focus on human effort and fleshly results; a divine value system puts the focus on divine effort and godly results through human instruments who are surrendered to His will and method of doing things.

A lack of trust with people outside of the athletic department or individual sports team can hinder the process of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes. Failure to work together by developing trust with those outside the particular sport can only hinder the process of change. If changed lives is going to be important through athletics there needs to be a clear understanding on how the different areas of the university work together as a whole. This happens when each department realizes how each plays a vital

role in teaching student-athletes about the correlation of athletics and the game life. When that concept is working together it only intensifies the potential for change.

Lack of New Birth Experience

Lack of New Birth experience can keep an athlete from understanding what spiritual formation is all about because without having a genuine salvation experience he/she doesn't know what it means? In order to participate in the process of spiritual formation the new birth is a must for any athlete. The student-athlete who has never been born again doesn't have the capacity to understand what spiritual formation is all about.

SUMMARY

Remember there are all kind of tactics the Devil uses to hinder teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation. That is why everybody needs to be aware of the schemes he uses to hinder God's game plan for change through spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development in the lives of student-athletes.

Rick Ezell says it well, "The toughest bout you and I will face is not saying no to a profitable career but saying yes to a divine prompting."²⁶ May each of us allow God to use us to influence student-athletes through spiritual formation.

²⁶ Rick Ezell, *Defining Moments*, 28.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRODUCT OF TEACHING SPIRITUAL FORMATION TO STUDENT-ATHLETES

For everything there is a beginning and an ending. You may have heard over the years how important it is for a plane to get off the ground and the importance of the plane being able to land. Yes, the same is true when it comes to a project of this magnitude. Someone has rightfully stated, “It’s not how you start that counts, but how you finish.”¹

The objective in this chapter is to describe the product (results, outcomes) of the thesis, thus adding credibility to the subject at hand. Attention will be given to the final product of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes.

The Original Purpose of Athletics

The first by product would be to confirm the original purpose and present written mission statement of Liberty University and football program. Dr. Falwell believed that athletics could be used as a platform for evangelism, edification, and a training ground to help student-athletes become “Champions for Christ” as a result of attending Liberty University.

¹ Shared during a conversation with former Liberty University men’s basketball coach Jeff Meyer.

It was preached on a regular basis that,” One day athletics at Liberty University would compete on the highest level of NCAA athletics.”² In fact the founder repeatedly said, “One day Liberty University would compete against Notre Dame in football at South Bend and beat them.” Dr. Falwell also said,” Liberty University would one day come to be for evangelical Christians what Brigham Young is for Mormons, and what Notre Dame is for Roman Catholic kids today.”³

It was clear from the beginning that the founder of the university intended for the athletic program to be a tool that God could use to proclaim the gospel to others through athletics. The writer of this paper heard with his own ears the original purpose for having an athletic program during the early days of the school. There are many young men and women whose lives have been changed through the athletic program from the inception of athletics until the present. God is continuing to fulfill the dream of a young man who dared to believe God for something he could not totally see at the time of the inception of the school.

Dr. Falwell said, “Are you leaving tracks behind as you walk through this life? It is not important how many homes you build, how much money you earn, how many trophies you receive, or how much work you accomplish. The important thing is, in how many lives have you reproduced yourself? How many people are living godly lives because of your influence?”⁴ Bill Walton echoes how his college coach made an impact on his life through basketball while in college,” Coach Wooden taught us everything

² Given during student-athlete convocation in April of 2005.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Jerry Falwell, *Keys To Daily Living* (Milwaukee, WI: Ideals Publishing), 5.

from how to put on our shoes and socks before a game and how to build a foundation for life based on human values and personal characteristics.”⁵

Fulfillment of Original Purpose

It is the testimony of the writer of this paper and many other former athletes who participated in the athletic program, God has indeed used the coaches and programs of athletics to develop men and women into Champions for Christ over the years. The methods may have changed over the years, but the message has not changed in any way, shape or form. God is still doing a marvelous work today through athletics, just like He did in the past, but on a grander scale today. Just like coach Wooden was used to impact young people through athletics, the same is true at Liberty. Athletics is a tremendous platform for communicating the gospel to others who may never attend a church service. In fact the founder of the university said, ” We are to use every available means, at every available time, to reach every available person with the gospel”⁶ The mission of the university was to produce a product of life that not only impacted athletes during their university experience, but influence others in all walks of life after his/her Liberty University experience. There are those who were once student-athletes at Liberty, who are now talking the mission and living it out as professional athletes.

The second by product would be to provide a model for teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development through athletics. The model begins with everybody who is a part of the university athletic program knowing and understanding how the university’s mission statement is directly

⁵ John Wooden, *Coach Wooden’s Pyramid of Success* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2005), Praise.

⁶ Given during student-athlete convocation in April of 2005.

related to the individual athletic teams. Knowing and understanding the mission of the university provides the impetus to use the platforms provided to teach athletes about spiritual formation. John Maxwell says, "A team cannot share values if the values have not been shared with the team."⁷ They also provide the motivation for modeling what the mission of the university is all about is in front of student-athletes they are working with at the university. As the mission is communicated to others it needs to be shared in a very creative way, therefore making it easy for everybody to understand. George Barna says, "A leader succeeds only if his or her followers succeed."⁸ If the mission begins to be lived out by those who represent the athletic department, it will create a culture that represents what the program is about and what the program is trying to achieve through athletics.

Once the need to know and live out the mission has been articulated, then the model begins to focus on spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. Whole-person development is communicated from the top down through the coaches of the specific athletic teams. The coaches then look for ways to illustrate all four areas of whole-person development, character development and spiritual formation. One of the ways it can be communicated is during the start of training camp and reviewed throughout the semester. People from different walks of life can speak to the team about each area of whole-person development, character development and spiritual formation or the coaches can address each one of the areas.

⁷ John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Team Work*, 183.

⁸ George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership*, 20.

Each athletic program has to figure out the best way to get it done and when is the best time to integrate the material into their athletic team. As the whole-person development concept becomes a very important part of the program, it will begin to influence the culture of the program as well. Whole-person development also needs to be lived out by all who are associated with the athletic program. Once that begins to happen, it will become a way of life for everybody associated with athletics. John Maxwell writes, "Never forget that shared values define a team."⁹ The reason why whole-person development is so important is because everything that encompasses the athletic team goes back to one of the four areas of whole-person development

The Development of Mature Leaders

The third by product would be developing spiritual mature football players to become mentors to other players on the team. John Maxwell writes, "Team owners and coaches know that the future success of their team depends largely on their ability to draft effectively."¹⁰ A guideline John Maxwell has used when selecting leaders is called the Five A's of Selecting Leaders to become a part of a leadership team. The following five guidelines are as follows,

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| A. Assessment of needs: | What is the need? |
| B. Assets on hand: | Who are the people already in the organization who are available? |
| C. Ability of candidates: | Who is able? |
| D. Attitude of candidates: | Who is willing? |

⁹ John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Team Work*, 186.

¹⁰ John Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 39.

E. Accomplishments of candidates: Who gets the things done?¹¹

The players who make up the group will set the example for others to follow. Those athletes who have been selected will model for other players what whole-person development is all about as an athlete. The one key characteristic that sets these players apart from all others on the team is they have made a conscientious choice to follow God and live out their relationship before Him and others. George Barna says, “When Jesus began His public ministry, what was His choice of priorities? His top priority was to recruit and train disciples.”¹²

One thing that should be noted, just because they have been chosen to be spiritual leaders doesn't mean that they have it all together spiritually, however what it does mean is they have a desire to grow in their relationship with God and to help others grow as well. These young men have surrendered their lives to God for His service and ministry to others. Once the leaders have been selected then one is ready to move to the next step in the process of building a team of spiritual leaders.¹³

The fourth by product would be for all associated with athletics at the university that it is their responsibility to live out in front of all students, not just athletes, the realities of spirituality. Spirituality is the day to day relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a demonstration of the love for God and others through real life experiences. It means reflecting intimacy with God by influencing others in community. The platform given to

¹¹ Ibid., 3.

¹² George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership*, 162.

¹³ See Three Categories of Athletes on page 134.

teach athletes about spiritual formation and whole-person development bring with it a great responsibility to reflect Christ likeness in everyday life.

If the spiritual baton of leadership is going to be passed on to future spiritual leaders in the athletic program or team there must be a process in place to guarantee that happens. There not only needs to be leadership development in the social, athletic and academic areas of whole person development, but there must also be a core of leaders who are being developed development to meet the spiritual needs of players as well. To not have a system in place means to fall short of ministering effectively. Jesus provided the model for developing leaders who can help fill the vacuum of spiritual leaders on the team. Sometimes those who work with athletes have the greatest opportunity to influence them because of the way athletes see them live out their relationship with God in front of them. John Maxwell says, "Mentors impact eternity because there is no telling where their influence will stop."¹⁴

Spiritual Formation and Whole-Person Connection

The fifth by product would be to show the relationship of spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development and the student-athlete that has been presented throughout this thesis project. Hopefully the connection was clear on how all three areas intersect the student-athletes life at the university. The three components mentioned all play a vital role in the life of the athlete. There are different times when one of the three categories listed play a major role in the life changing process of change that takes place in the life of the student-athlete.

¹⁴ John Maxwell, *Becoming A Person of Influence*, 129.

Ruth Barton writes, "Developing a rhythm of spiritual practices takes time. It takes time to explore a variety of disciplines so that you have some sense of their meaning for your life and how you might incorporate them realistically. It takes time to learn how to arrange them in a way that fits your life and also has beauty, like a dance or a beautifully arranged symphony or the ebb and flow of seasons and tides."¹⁵ As student-athletes begin understand how the three components work together, the quicker the change in the life of the athlete.

The sixth by product would be to provide a model for other Christian universities to use in developing an athletic program that will be used to honor God and help others by teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development. As Director of Spiritual Development at Liberty University, it is an honor to utilize the position provided to involve as many people and departments outside the program to impact our student-athletes. The model begins with:

1. Having and knowing the mission of the university and athletic team.
2. People associated with the athletic program living out the mission in everyday life situations.
3. Developing a group of players who will commit to help mentor other players.

There are many different size schools in different parts of the country, but the principles for teaching student-athletes about spiritual formation, whole-person development and character development never change. The life changing principles are always the same no matter where they are being taught to student-athletes. They are biblical precepts that are unchanging; therefore the results of applying them are life changing.

¹⁵ Ruth Barton, *Scared Rhythms* (Dowers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 148.

Gary Kuhue says, “The Bible promises that we can find true change, i.e., the progressive transformation over time of a person’s characteristic ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. In theological terms such “change” is called “sanctification.”¹⁶

Though the method of communication may vary, the message of each of the three areas never changes. The reason why they are unchanging is because they are based on an unchanging book, the Bible.

Selecting a Plan of Action

The sixth by product would be developing the best plan of action to meet the spiritual needs of athletes. It is very important to ask some of the following questions before starting the process. What material will be used in the discipleship process? How long will the discipleship process continue? When will the mentor meet with the disciple? Where will they meet? Will the meeting take place in an informal or formal setting? How many athletes will meet together at one time? What will be the format to be used when they meet? Will the players come together as a group? The following questions can be used by coaches¹⁷ or players¹⁸ to help evaluate what is happening in the four areas of whole-person development.

After the following questions have been answered and your material to be used has been selected, then you need to decide how you are going to match the players with players to begin the discipleship process. How you match them up could be done by position or relationship to each other. It could be done by seniority or just plain common

¹⁶ Gary Kuhue, *The Change Factor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 11.

¹⁷ See Appendix U.

¹⁸ See Appendix V.

sense. There is no magic formula for determining the process of matching the players with each other. During the selection of partners don't hesitate to get input from other players on the team in order to help make the best possible fit as partners. Chuck Lawless says, "A primary goal of equipping is to prepare believers to do something in the ministry of the local church." As student-athletes begin to help meet the spiritual needs of other student-athletes, it complements the process of teaching spiritual formation.

Taking It with Them

The sixth by product would be to begin a process of spiritual growth and service in the lives of all student-athletes that will continue throughout their lives. After living it out in front team mates, the ultimate outcome of the discipleship journey would be to take what God is doing in and through the lives of athletes and pass it on to others.

What has been learned does not have to be limited to church life; it could be reproduced through a one on one relationship with a fellow believer where the athlete is working after college life. Chuck Lawless writes, "One of the best strategies for equipping believers is mentoring, a God given relationship in which one growing Christian encourages and equips another believer to reach his or her potential as a disciple."¹⁹

This multiplication process is what Paul told Timothy about in II Tim. 2:2. It was taking what someone had given and passing it on to others. Those things that were passed on had to do with everyday life issues that have been processed from God's point of view. Allen Hadidian says, "Discipling is a long-term commitment to the person. It is

¹⁹ Chuck Lawless, *Discipleship Warriors* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002), 122.

spending time with a person until that person is able to stand on his own and begin a ministry in the life of someone else.” The athlete who goes through this process will not only benefit personally, but will help the overall athletic team fulfill the mission of the university and whole-person development concepts. The investment of training others over the long haul will be a win-win situation for all involved.

The seventh by product would be to elevate the need to incorporate spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development into all athletic programs as a normal part of their athletic curriculum. The three areas of concentration are becoming a part of major universities throughout the country. Secular universities are teaching the three components of spirituality under the umbrella of Character Coaches. Character coaches work hand in hand with coaches and all others who are associated with the athletic-team. Character coaches also work with student-athletes who desire to grow in their relationship with God.

After talking with chaplains from other Christian university’s who participate in I-AA football, it became apparent that the role of the Director of Spiritual Development at Liberty University is unique. Unique, because it is surprising to find a full-time chaplain that only works with football on the I-AA level. On the I-A level major secular university’s are calling their chaplains character coaches. This allows the chaplains to minister student-athletes in a secular setting without causing uproar at secular universities.

SUMMARY

There are different words that people use to describe the product of teaching spiritual formation to student-athletes, and that is fine. The key question to be asked

when it is all said and done is, are the lives of student-athletes being changed? Are student-athletes who become a part of our program leaving the program maturing in areas of life that relate to spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development? Kenneth Boa says, "Spiritual formation is the life long process of becoming in character and actions who we already are in Christ."²⁰ If that is happening, the purpose for using athletics to teach about spiritual formation, character development and whole-person development will have been accomplished.

²⁰ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed To His Image*, 257.

APPENDIX A

The Coach's Mandate

Pray as though nothing of eternal value is going to happen
in my athletes' lives unless God does it.

Prepare each practice and game as giving "my utmost for His highest."

Seek not to be served by my athletes for personal gain,
but seek to serve them as Christ served the Church.

Be satisfied not with producing a good record, but with producing good athletes.

Attend carefully to my private and public walk with God,
knowing that the athlete will never rise to a standard higher
than that being lived by the coach.

Exalt Christ in my coaching, trusting the Lord will then draw athletes to Himself.

Desire to have a growing hunger for God's Word, for personal obedience,
for fruit of the spirit and for saltiness in competition.

Depend solely upon God for transformation – one athlete at a time.

Preach Christ's word in a Christ-like demeanor, on and off the field of competition.

Recognize that it is impossible to bring glory to
both myself and Christ, at the same time.

Allow my coaching to exude the fruit of the Spirit, thus producing Christ-like athletes.

Trust God to produce in my athletes His chosen purposes,
regardless of whether the wins are readily visible.

Coach with humble gratitude, as one privileged to be God's coach.

APPENDIX B

Job Description of Director of Spiritual Development

Staff Responsibilities

- Be liaison between head coach, coaches and support staff
- Be available to be contacted by head coach when away from the office
- Coordinate spiritual game plan involving players and coach's when needed
- Meet with coaching staff and support staff for spiritual growth
- Lead weekly coaches and staff Bible study
- Guide new staff through material given to all new staff
- Be available to sit in with head coach and player when discipline is involved
- Inform coaches of any pending discipline regarding their players
- Be available to interview perspective coaches and staff members
- Meet with coaches and players when needed
- Meet one on one with staff as the need arises

Player Responsibilities

- Help coordinate spiritual game plan for player when needed
- Provide opportunities for players to grow spiritually
- Provide ministry opportunities for players to be involved in
- Provide counseling and guidance for players regarding life decisions
- Be available for players during difficult times (death in the family, sickness, etc.,)
- Help players to be accountable on campus and in dormitory
- Be a liaison between players and coaching staff
- Meet one on one with players for various reasons

Meet with player and coaches as needed

Team Responsibilities

Organize team building (Academics, Police, Drugs, Sex, Alcohol

Be attentive and alert to attitudes of players

Be available to help whenever and wherever needed

Campus Responsibilities

Represent football program in the following areas

President's Office

Vice – President of Student Affairs

Dean of Men and Women's office

Student Affairs Office

Be attentive to the way we reflect our mission and goals on campus

Community Responsibilities

Develop a tradition with the Salvation Army to ring the bells during the Christmas season

Develop a tradition with Habitat for Humanity to help build a house in Lynchburg

Practice Responsibilities

Be attentive to attitudes or actions that need attention

Be available for encouragement during practice

Be available to help wherever needed

Game Day Responsibilities

Set up chapel speaker

Meet and introduce Chapel speaker

Sit with chapel speaker at pre-game meal

Be available to help where needed

Recruiting Responsibilities

Meet with each recruit during visit

Meet with parents of recruits during visit

Be available to assist wherever needed with recruiting process

APPENDIX C

Areas Impacted by Office of Director of Spiritual Development

Head Coach

Assistant Coaches

Football Support Staff

Academic Advisor

Players

Parent's of Players

Recruits

Parents' of Recruits

Administration

Faculty

Campus Pastors Office

Deans

Resident Directors

Resident Assistants

Spiritual Life Directors

Prayer Leaders

Resident Housing

Liberty Students

Local Churches

Football Alumni

Community

APPENDIX D

The Head Coach's Expectations of Director of Spiritual Development

To demonstrate character qualities that reflect the mission and goals of our football team

To involve the necessary people when developing a spiritual game plan for a player

To provide analysis when asked to be present in a meeting with another person

To develop a individualized spiritual game plan for players and staff members when needed

To assure that our program balances the divine and human combination for success

To see that our program reflects the mission and goals on and off the field

To develop ministry opportunities for spiritual growth with in the lives of players

To help orientate and guide a new staff member through the basic material

To represent coach at functions on and off campus

To be available to provide counsel to coaches and staff when needed

To hold head coach accountable to the Liberty University Mission

To give feedback after interviewing a potential staff member to head coach

To hold head coach accountable to the Liberty University Football mission and goals

To set up chapel speakers for home and away games

To develop a discipleship strategy for developing student-athlete disciples

To incorporate and oversee Men of Armor ministry

To be a liaison with the Student Affairs department

To Sheppard the staff, coaches and players

To hold head coach accountable for actions, attitudes toward others

To provide ministry tools for staff and coaches

To be available to head coach for a sounding board as the need arises

To be a liaison between the staff, coaches and players

To establish and maintain growing relationships with staff and coaches

To interview perspective student-athletes

APPENDIX E

The Assistant Coach's Expectations of Director of Spiritual Development

To be available to encourage, inspire and listen when speaking with a coach on a daily basis

To keep coach informed with information that is necessary for him to better understand and meet the needs of the players that he is responsible for

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

To involve coach and player, when necessary, in the individualized spiritual game plan given to player

To be available to assist coach in helping a player through a difficult time

To be available to give an update on the spiritual, social and mental state of mind of player from my point of view

To be a liaison between coach and players

To be available to pray with coach on a regular basis

To provide an atmosphere that allows the coach to share whatever may be of his mind and heart

To visit with coaches in their offices on a regular basis for prayer and encouragement

To be available to develop and encourage spiritual growth

To keep coach updated regarding things outside football such as reprimands and tickets a player may have accumulated

To help compliment the mission of Liberty and Whole Person Development through our football program

To help facilitate making families of our assistant coaches feel welcome and make them a part of our program

APPENDIX F

The Support Staff Expectations of Director of Spiritual Development

Be a liaison between staff member and head coach and assistant coaches and players

Be a liaison between staff member's

Be available for counsel and advice when need arises

Be available to assist in situations within the given area

Provide staff members with information when necessary to better understand a situation or person presently dealing with

Be available to be a sounding board, when necessary, and for prayer

To be attentive to attitudes and actions within the given area

To periodically visit for encouragement, feedback and prayer

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

To involve coach and player when necessary in the individual spiritual game plan given to player

To be available to give an update on the spiritual, social and mental state of mind of player from my point of view

To provide an atmosphere that allows the coach to share whatever may be of his mind and heart

To be available to develop and encourage spiritual growth when asked

To help compliment the mission and goals of our football program

APPENDIX G

The Players' Expectations of Director of Spiritual Development

To be accessible and approachable for players

To be allowed the freedom to communicate openly and freely

To be a liaison between assistant coaches and head coach

To be able to speak confidentially, when necessary

To be available for counsel and guidance, when needed

To be a mediator with players for off-the-field situations

To be available to pray with players as the need arises

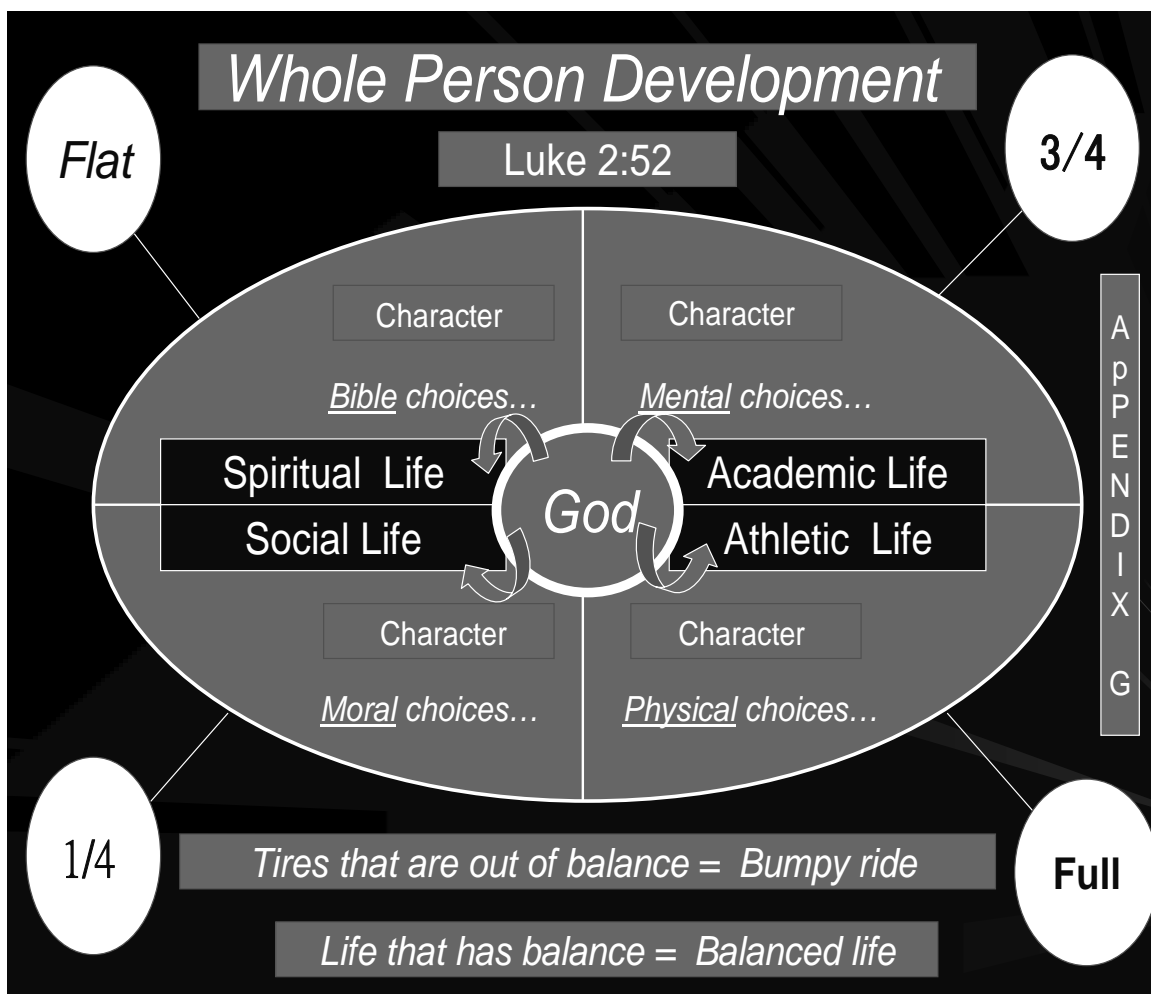
To help develop a individual spiritual game plan for spiritual growth

To be available for one-on-one mentorship and discipleship

To provide opportunities for spiritual growth and ministry

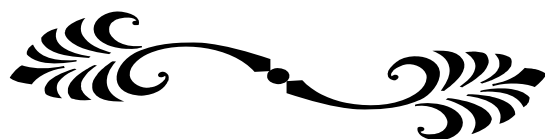
To teach Whole Person Development through football

APPENDIX H



APPENDIX I

Problems Are...



PREDICTORS- They help mold our future.

REMINDERS- We are not self-sufficient. We need God and others to help.

OPPORTUNITIES- They pull us out of our rut and cause us to think creatively.

BLESSINGS- They open up doors that we usually do not go through.

LESSONS- Each new challenge will be our teacher.

EVERYWHERE- No place or person is excluded from them.

MESSAGES- They warn us about potential disaster.

SOLVABLE- No problem is without solution.

APPENDIX J

A Win-Win Game Plan for a Student-Athlete

Director of spiritual development to meet twice a week with student for 30 minutes...

Tuesday and Thursday from 8:15 – 8:45 in cafeteria

Take notes during convocation...

Use the “Getting the most out of what I am hearing sheet”

Sit in the best possible seat in convocation

Work on one character quality at a time...

Will select character qualities that apply to present situation

Will have position coach and director of spiritual development do the same

Will begin to work on memorizing and internalizing one quality every two weeks

A Coach sitting with student during convocation on Wednesday...

Coordinator will assign the coach to sit with student

Work on the relationships with Ra’s...

Will go to Ra’s and ask for practical suggestions to present situation

Will share with Ra’s what student is working on

Work on a Proverb a day study as a devotional...

Will begin to work through a Proverb a day with director of spiritual development

Involve other people in the process...

Coaches / Players / Students outside football / Rd and Ra’s

Involve parents in the process...

Parents will be sent a copy of what we are working on

Coaches and Rd and Ra’s will be given a copy as well

Meet with the position coach once a week for 5 to 15 minutes...

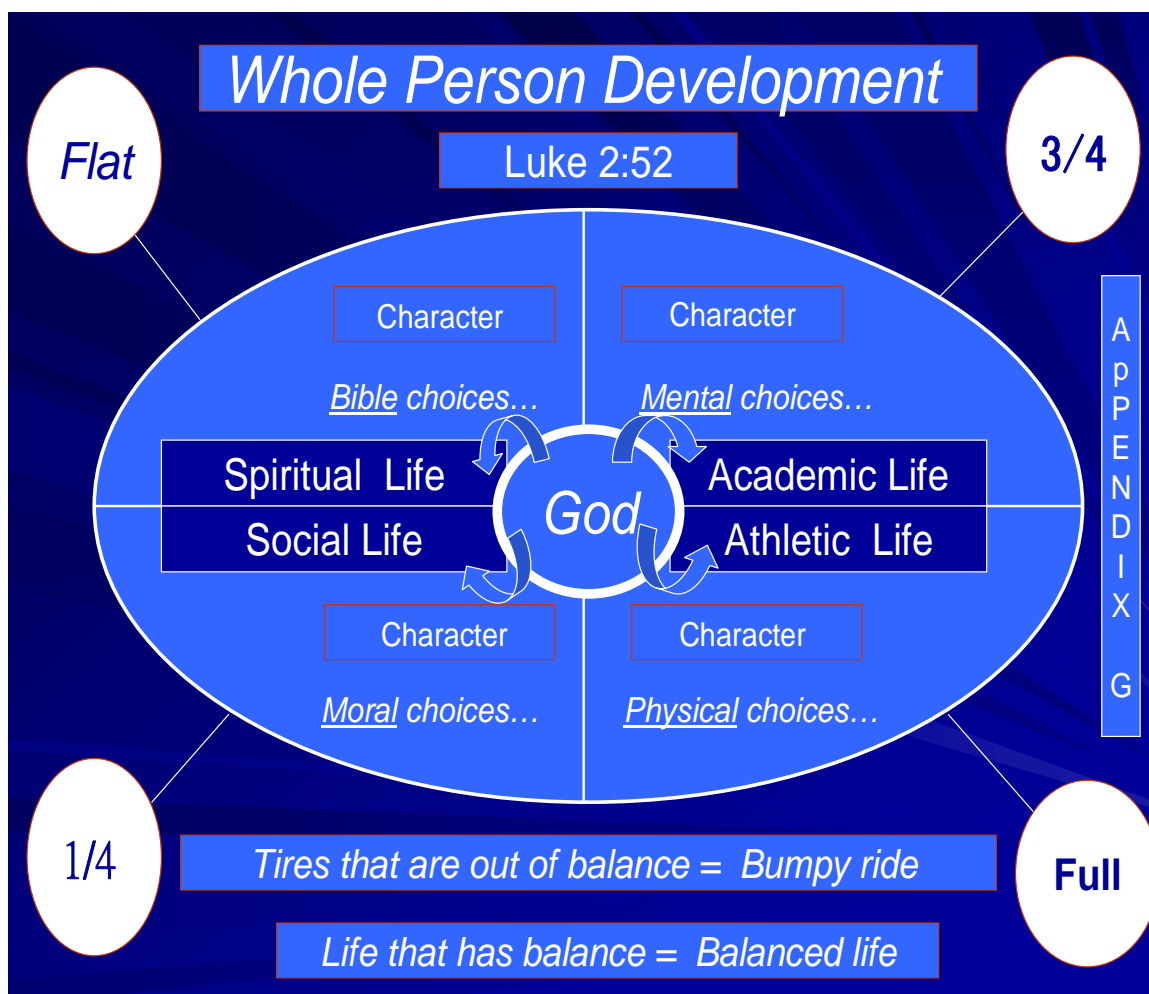
Position Coach will determine the time and place

Position Coach will determine the agenda

Work on attending a local church once a week with someone

This will be attempted to be worked out with another player

APPENDIX K



APPENDIX L

- 1) ATTENTIVENESS – Showing the worth of a person by giving undivided attention to his words and emotions *John 4:7-15*

- 2) OBEDIENCE – Fulfilling instructions so that the one I am serving will be fully satisfied and pleased *Luke 22:39-42*

- 3) CONTENTMENT – Realizing that God has provided everything need for my present happiness *John 1:1-3, Matthew 11:25-30*

- 4) ORDERLINESS – Learning to organize and care for personal possessions *Matthew 10:30, Mark 6:39, Matthew 1*

- 5) REVERENCE – Learning to give honor where it is due, and to respect the possessions and property of others *John 8:49, 5:23*

- 6) FORGIVENESS – Clearing the record of those who have wronged me and not holding their past offenses against them *Luke 23:33,34*

- 7) GRATEFULNESS – Making known in what ways He has benefited my life *John 11:41-44*

- 8) FAITH – Developing an unshakable confidence in God and acting upon it *Matthew 6:29-31 (miracles Jesus did)*

- 9) TRUTHFULNESS – Earning future trust by accurately reporting facts *John 14:6, Matthew 21:21, 31*

- 10) SECURITY – Structuring my life around what is eternal and cannot be destroyed or taken away *John 3:16, Matthew 19:17*

- 11) MEEKNESS – Learning to live with power under control *Matthew 19:13-14*

- 12) CAUTIOUSNESS – Seeing future consequences of present actions *Matthew 6:1*

- 12) CAUTIOUSNESS – Seeing future consequences of present actions *Matthew 6:1*

- 13) PATIENCE – Accepting a difficult situation without demanding a deadline to remove it *Matthew 8:2-4, 24:36-44*

- 14) DEPENDABILITY – Fulfilling what I consented to do even if it means unexpected sacrifice *Mark 14:32-42, John 4:48-54*
- 15) DETERMINATION – Purposing to accomplish goals in time regardless of the opposition *Luke 23:35*
- 16) PUNCTUALITY – Showing respect for other people and the limited time that they have *Luke 23:42-43*
- 17) DISCERNMENT – The ability to understand why things happen to me and others *Matthew 21-26*
- 18) LOYALTY – Using difficult times to demonstrate my commitment to others or what is right *Mark 4:35-41, John 8:1-12,*
- 19) COMPASSION – Investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others by the willingness to bear their pain *Luke 23:44-46*
- 20) ALERTNESS – Being aware of the events taking place around me so that I can have the right responses to them *Luke 8:40-46*
- 21) THRIFTINESS – Not letting myself or others spend that which is not necessary *Matthew 5:43-44, Mark 6:35, Luke 16:1-13,*
- 22) RESPONSIBILITY – Knowing and doing what is expected from me *Matthew 28:16, Luke 13:24-30, Matthew 6:14-15, 5:44*
- 23) VIRTUE – Learning to build personal moral standards which will cause others to desire a more moral life *Matthew 7:1-6, Matthew 4:4,7,10*
- 24) TOLERANCE – Learning to accept others as a valuable individual regardless of their difference *Luke 9:46-50*
- 25) FAIRNESS (EQUITY) – Looking at a decision from the viewpoint of each person involved *Matthew 12:48-50*
- 26) JOYFULNESS – Learning how to lift the spirits and to be pleasant regardless of the outside circumstances *Luke 19:37-40, Luke 24:25-32*
- 27) WISDOM – Learning to see and respond to life from another’s perspective; the application of knowledge *Matthew 22:17-22, Luke 20:3-7*
- 28) SELF-CONTROL – Bringing my thoughts, words, actions, and attitudes into constant obedience *Matthew 8:24-26, Matthew 26-52-54*

- 29) DISCRETION – The ability to avoid words, actions and attitudes which could result in undesirable consequences *John 2:23-25, Proverbs 2:10-11*
- 30) DILIGENCE – Visualizing each task as a special assignment and using all my energies to accomplish it *Matthew 26:36-46, II Peter 1:5,10*
- 31) ENDURANCE – The inward strength to withstand stress to manage what occurs in my life *John 19:30, Matthew 24:13, Psalm*
- 32) DEFERENCE – Limiting my freedom to speak and act in order not to offend the tastes of others *John 8:1-11*
- 33) SINCERITY – Eagerness to do what is right without ulterior motives *Luke 10:30-37, Matthew 18:12*
- 34) GENEROSITY – Realizing that all I have may benefit others *Matthew 15:32-39, Mark 6:30-34*
- 35) HUMILITY – Seeing the contrast between what is perfect and my inability to achieve it *Mark 10:17-28, John 6:38-40*
- 36) ENTHUSIASM – Learning what actions and attitudes please others and becoming excited about doing them *John 20:17-18, Matthew 8:10*
- 37) INITIATIVE – Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it *John 10:17-18*
- 38) LOVE – Learning to serve the basic needs of others without motive or personal reward *John 3:16, 10:17-18*
- 39) CREATIVITY – Applying wisdom and practical insights to a need or task *John 10:6*
- 40) DECISIVENESS – Learning to finalize difficult decisions on the basis of what learning to finalize difficult decisions on the basis of what is right *Luke 22:42, John 12:27-28*
- 41) SENSITIVITY – Knowing what words and actions will benefit others *Luke 8:46, 9:46-48, Matthew 9:4, John 6:14-15*
- 42) THOROUGHNESS – Realizing that each of our tasks will be reviewed; carried out to the fullest extent, done *John 1, Genesis 1:31, 2:1, John 17:1-4, 19:30*

- 43) RESOURCEFULNESS – Wise use of that which others would normally overlook or discard *Luke 16:10, Matthew 15:35*
- 44) FLEXIBILITY – Learning how to cheerfully change plans when unexpected conditions require *Colossians 3:2*
- 45) AVAILABILITY – Knowing and doing what is expected of me *Matthew 20:29-34, 26:47-50, Luke 23:39-46*
- 46) HOSPITALITY – Cheerfully sharing food, shelter, and my life with those whom I come in contact with *Matthew 14:13-21, 15:32, 26:6-13*
- 47) GENTLENESS – Learning to respond to needs with kindness, personal care, and love *John 4:7, Matthew 15:21-29*
- 48) BOLDNESS – Demonstrating the confidence that doing what is right will bring ultimate victory regardless of present opposition *Matthew 21:12-13, Luke 2:42-49*
- 49) PERSUASIVENESS – Using words which cause the listener's spirit to confirm that he is hearing truth *Mark 1:16*
- 50) COURAGE – Fulfilling my responsibilities in spite of being afraid *Mark 3:20-21*

APPENDIX M

People God Uses To Teach Student-Athletes about Spiritual Formation

Parents

Grandparents

Family members

Christian friends

Non-Christian friends

Coaches

Players

Teachers

Deans

Resident directors

Resident assistants

Spiritual life directors

Prayer leaders

Fellow students

Law enforcement officers

School administrators

School support staff

Pastors

Sunday school teachers

APPENDIX N

Circumstances God Uses To Teach Student-Athletes about Spiritual Formation

To lead a person to Christ

Increase one's faith

Reveal an area of disobedience

Discipline a believer

Re-establish positive patterns of life

Reveal insecurities

Build character qualities

Confirm God's love

Help one look at life from another point of view

Reveal a blind spot

Reveal needs in others

Reveal a need to seek professional assist

Confirm God's will

Preparation for the future

Make restitution

Reveal an area in life that needs attention

Re-evaluate a decision to be made

Develop humility

Reveal an unfinished area

Evaluate proper thinking patterns about God, self and others

Restore a broken relationship

Test one's faith

Build a life message

Make a past wrong right

Help make wise choices

Evaluate motives

Learn how to attach new meaning to people and circumstances and life

Prevent something negative from happening

To show a need for accountability

To show me something about me

APPENDIX O

Responding To People and Circumstances God's Way...

GOD, WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO TEACH ME THROUGH THIS?

Make a list...
Confess and apologize if necessary...
Offer Thanks...

GOD, WHAT CHARACTER QUALITIES ARE YOU TRYING TO
SHOW ME I NEED TO APPLY?

Check off character qualities that apply to situation...
Write out character quality to be worked on...
Begin to memorize, mediate, apply and review...

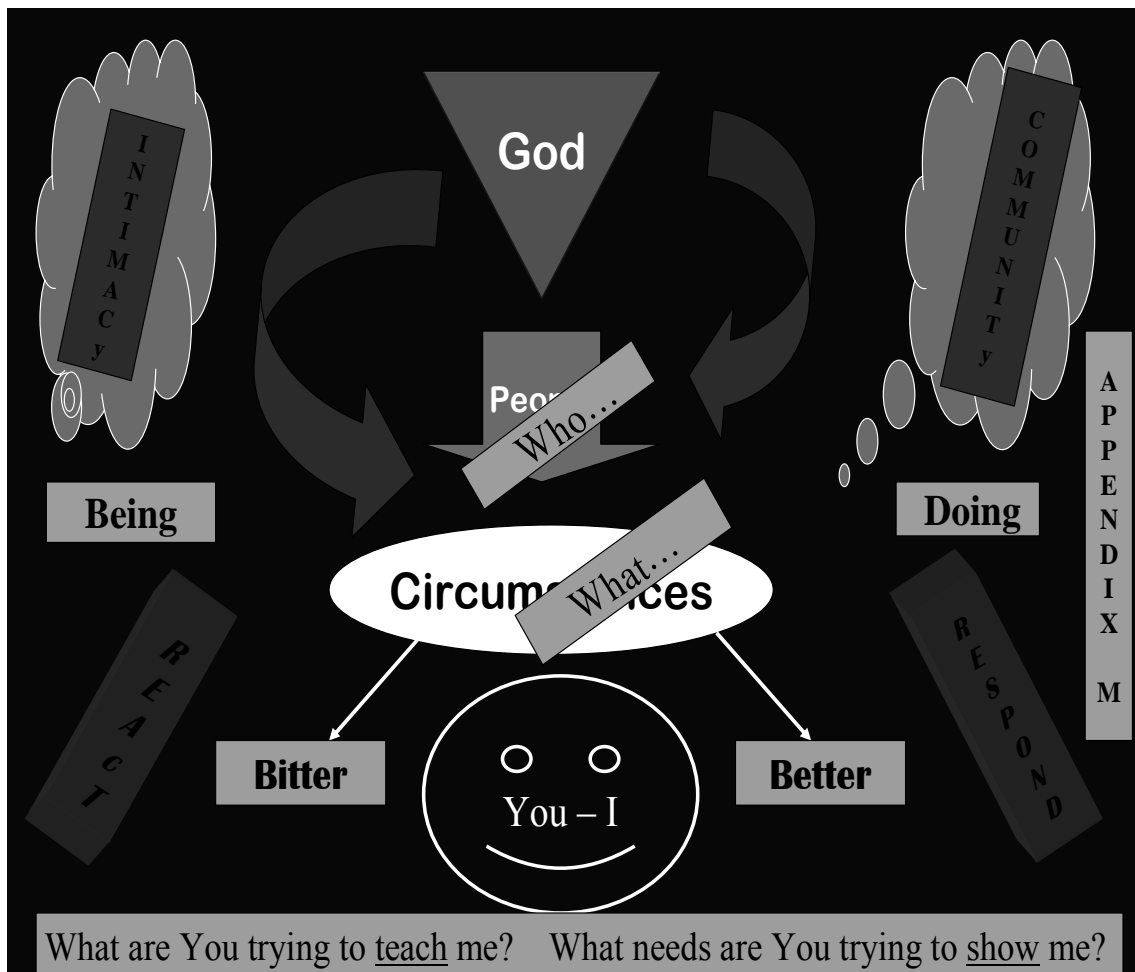
GOD, WHAT NEEDS ARE YOU TRYING TO SHOW ME IN THE
OTHER PERSON'S LIFE?

Make a list...
Pray for the person if possible...
Commit the person to God...
Attach new meaning to the person or situation...
Attach new meaning to the thinking process...

GOD, WHAT DO I NEED TO ASK WHEN ATTEMPTING TO
COMMUNICATE...

Is it the Right Place...
Is it the Right Time...
Do I have the Right Attitude...
Have I selected the Right Words...

APPENDIX P



APPENDIX Q

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ Date _____

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS

Directions: Answer each question by *circling* the most appropriate answer. Don't be tempted to respond untruthfully to put yourself in a more positive light, or say what you think people want to hear—answer honestly. If none of the options are quite right, choose the one that is closest, and put a question mark in the margin next to that question.

1. I am [*not sure, fairly sure, mostly sure, positive*] that if I were to die today, I would immediately go to heaven.
2. I have [*minimal, partial, average, pretty good, thorough*] knowledge of what the Bible is talking about when it says I am a “new creation”.
3. I am [*not sure, fairly sure, positive*] that all my sins have been forgiven.
4. I am [*not sure, fairly sure, mostly sure, positive*] that before I met Christ and invited Him into my life, I was a sinner headed for hell.
5. I am [*not sure, fairly sure, positive*] that my salvation is permanent, and that I will never again be separated from God.
6. I have [*minimal, partial, average, pretty good, thorough*] knowledge about the many important changes that occurred in me after I asked Christ into my life.
7. I have [*minimal, partial, average, pretty good, thorough*] understanding of how to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
8. I have [*minimal, partial, average, pretty good, thorough*] knowledge of the tension that exists between my new nature and my old nature and why I struggle with temptation even though I am a “new creation”.
9. I have [*minimal, partial, average, pretty good, thorough*] knowledge about activities I can undertake that will help me grow spiritually in a balanced, steady fashion.
10. I have [*minimal, partial, average, pretty good, thorough*] understanding of why it is important for me to be involved actively in fellowship with other Christians.

11. I [*never, rarely, sometimes, weekly twice a week*] attend church.
12. I [*never, rarely, sometimes, frequently*] read the Bible.
13. I [*don't understand, have some idea, have a fairly good idea, know very well*] what people mean when they call the Bible the "Word of God".
14. I know that prayer is simply talking to God and I don't have any real difficulty doing it. [*agree, disagree, not sure*]
15. On the average, I have a period of personal, concentrated prayer _____ days a week, each session lasting about _____ minutes.
16. Right now, I could do a [*poor, fair, good, great*] job of telling another person how to become a Christian if the opportunity presented itself.
17. I feel [*petrified, hesitant, willing, strongly motivated*] about telling others how they might come to a saving knowledge of Christ.
18. I am [*not sure, fairly sure, mostly sure, positive*] that adversity is a normal part of the Christian life. When I experience trials, I [*never, rarely, sometimes, often*] get mad at God and [*never, rarely, sometimes, often*] go to Him for help.
19. I [*don't believe, am not sure, know*] that Satan is real and that he seeks my downfall. I have [*no, some, extensive*] knowledge of how to resist him.
20. I have [*no, a vague, a fairly clear, a very clear*] knowledge of what to do to restore fellowship between God and myself when I have sinned.
21. I am [*terrible, fair, pretty good, very good*] at managing my finances, including debt management, a savings plan and giving to the Lord's work.
22. I am [*terrible, fair, pretty good, very good*] at managing goals and priorities in my life.
23. I have [*no, vague, a fairly clear, a very clear*] idea about what I want to accomplish in life.
24. I have a workable program in place that helps me set and reach personal goals successfully while managing my day-to-day activities effectively. [*agree, disagree, "sort of"*]
25. I [*don't see, am not sure, think maybe, know*] that I have talents, skills and gifts that can be used in the advancement of the kingdom of God.

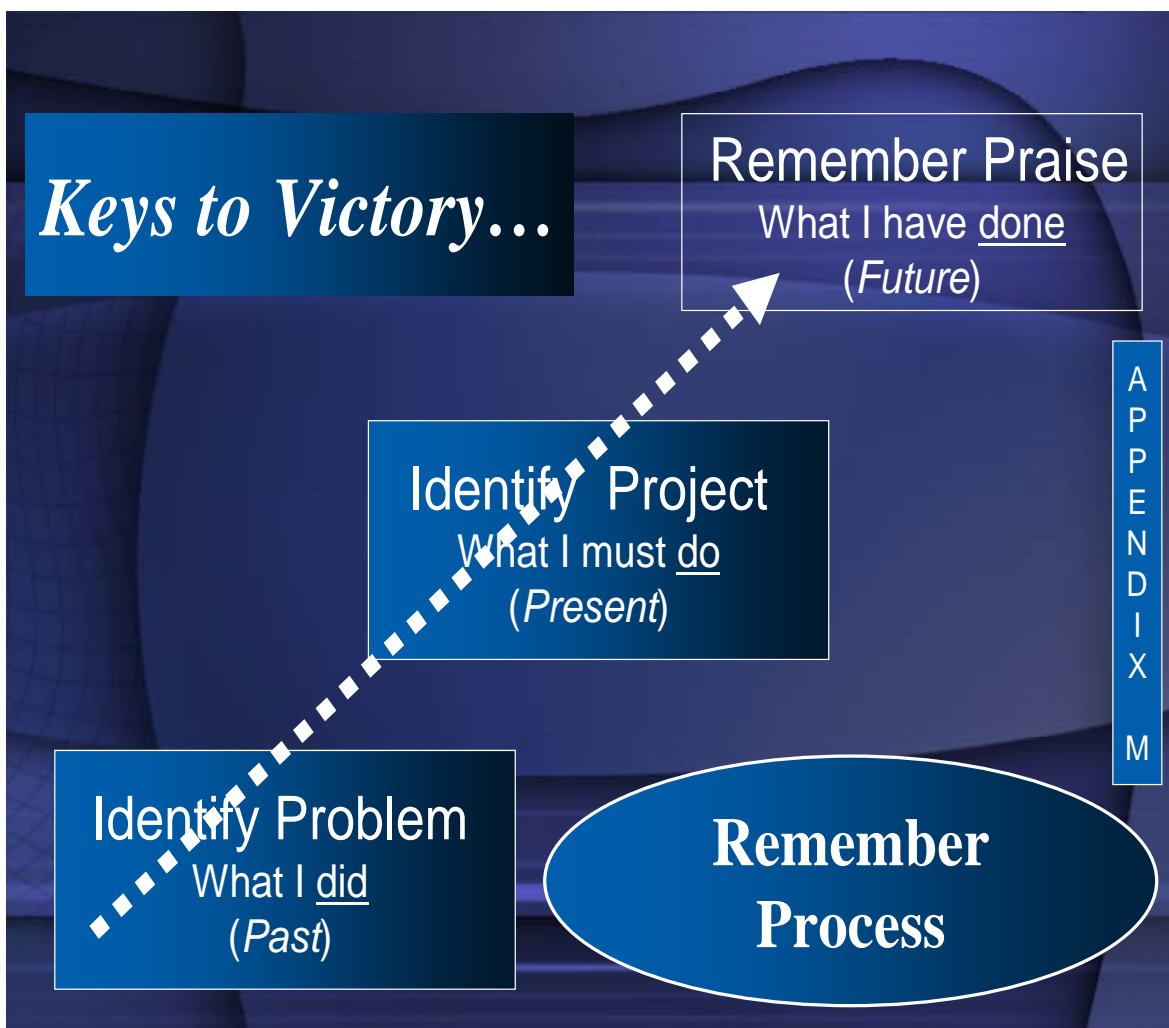
26. I see myself as having the potential of being [*minimally, somewhat, very, extremely*] significant to the advancement of the kingdom of God.
27. I would say at this point I am [*minimally, somewhat, very, extremely*] motivated to actively pursue my spiritual development and my relationship with God.

Classification: FR SO JR SR

Dorm Room Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Dorm Phone Number: _____ Position: _____

APPENDIX R



APPENDIX S

Key Questions

Who is God attempting to
use...(people)

What is God attempting to
use...(circumstances)

APPENDIX T

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: 3, 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. 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 Christ-like character, particularly the demonstration of Christ-like love, and souls won to Christ and discipled.

1. Christ-like character

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control” (Galatians 5:22-23, NW). 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 Christ-likeness 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 Christ-like character, particularly the manifestation of Christ-like 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.

APPENDIX U

Whole Person Development Questions for Coaches to ask

Questions to ask about Athletic Life

Are you making progress in the weight room?
 Who do hold accountable in the weight room?
 Are you getting your proper rest?
 Are you eating properly?
 What are you doing extra to improve your game?
 What specific position skills are you working on?
 Are you drinking plenty of fluids?
 Do you have a year round game plan for progress?
 What are your physical performance goals?
 Are you getting proper treatment?
 Do you have a game plan to meet your football goals?
 Have you shared your goals with another team mate?
 Are you accountable to achieve your athletic goals?
 Have you talked to a coach lately?
 How much time do you spend watching film?
 Are your goals realistic?
 What Character qualities apply?

Questions to ask about Academic Life

Are you studying your play book?
 Are you using your time wisely?
 Are you getting the help with classes?
 Have you talked with the Advisor?
 Are you showing up to class on time?
 Do you know your teachers?
 Are you sitting in the right seat?
 Do you need tutoring in any area?
 Is anybody holding you?
 When do you plan to graduate?
 Is your room good for study habits?
 Have you missed any classes?
 How are your grades?
 Are you thinking?
 Do you need to talk to anybody?
 Are you accountable outside class?
 What Character qualities apply?

Questions to ask about Social Life

Do you have a girl friend?
 How long have you been dating?
 Do you have a set of practical standards for dating?
 Are you making friends on campus?
 Are you applying the character qualities to your life?
 Who are the significant relationships in your life?
 How do you get to meet other people?
 Are you aware of the schools mission?
 How do you decide who you are going to associate with?
 What are some guidelines you use to make wise decisions?
 Do you have a T.E.A.M. card in your wallet?
 Have you shared your dating standards with any adult?
 Who is holding you accountable socially?
 Do you put yourself in any compromising situations?
 Are you aware of what a self report is?
 What Character qualities apply?

Questions to ask about Spiritual Life

What does it mean to be born again?
 Do you attend church anywhere?
 What is your religious background?
 Is prayer a normal part of your life?
 Do you view yourself as a saint?
 Who are you helping spiritually?
 Do you doubt salvation?
 Are you accountable spiritually?
 Do you know you are born again?
 Where is your identity?
 Is there a habit getting you down?
 Are you in any Christian service?
 Is anybody helping you spiritually?
 Do you have a plan for growth?
 Who do you respect spiritually?
 What Character qualities apply?

APPENDIX V

Whole Person Development Questions for Players To Ask

Questions to ask about Athletic Life

Am I making progress in the weight room?
 Do I hold my partner accountable in the weight room?
 Am I getting proper rest?
 Am I eating properly?
 What Am I doing extra to improve my game?
 What specific position skills am I working on?
 Am I drinking plenty of fluids?
 Do I have a year round game plan for progress?
 What are my physical performance goals?
 Am I getting proper treatment for any of my injuries?
 Do I have a game plan to meet my football goals?
 Have I shared my goals with another team mate?
 Who am I accountable to achieve my athletic goals?
 Have I talked to a coach about what I need to work on?
 How much time do I spend watching film?
 Are my goals realistic?
 What Character qualities apply?

Questions to ask about Academic Life

Am I studying my play book?
 Am I using my time wisely?
 Am I getting the help in my classes?
 Have I talked with Academic Advisor?
 Am I showing up to class on time?
 Have I introduced myself to my teacher?
 Am I seated according to learning style?
 Do I need tutoring in any area?
 Is anybody holding me back from?
 When do I plan to graduate?
 Is my room conducive for study habits?
 Have I missed any classes this week?
 How am I grades in each class?
 Am I thinking correctly about myself?
 Do I need to talk to anybody?
 Am I accountable outside of class?
 What Character qualities apply?

Questions to ask about Social Life

Do I have a girl friend?
 How long have we been dating?
 Do I have a set of practical standards for dating?
 Am I making friends on campus?
 How am I applying the character qualities to my life?
 Who are the significant relationships in my life?
 How do I get to meet other people?
 Am I aware of the schools mission?
 How do I decide who I am going to associate with?
 What are some guidelines I use to make wise decisions?
 Do I have a T.E.A.M. card in my wallet?
 Have I shared my dating standards with any adult?
 Who is holding me accountable socially?
 Do I put myself in any compromising situations?
 Am I aware of what a self report is?
 What Character qualities apply?

Questions to ask about Spiritual Life

What does it mean to be born again?
 Do I attend church anywhere?
 What is my religious background?
 Is prayer a normal part of my life?
 Do I view myself as a sinner or a saint?
 Who am I helping to grow spiritually?
 Do I doubt my salvation?
 Who am I accountable to spiritually?
 Do I know I am born again?
 Where do I get my identity from?
 Is there a habit getting the best of me?
 Am I involved in Christian service?
 Who is helping me grow spiritually?
 Do I have a plan for spiritual growth?
 Who on the team do I respect spiritual?
 What Character qualities apply?

Liberty University Football

Manual for Director of Spiritual Development

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Areas Impacted by Office of Director of Spiritual Development

Head Coach

Assistant Coaches

Football Support Staff

Academic Advisor

Players

Parent's of Players

Recruits

Parents' of Recruits

Administration

Faculty

Campus Pastors Office

Deans

Resident Directors

Resident Assistants

Spiritual Life Directors

Prayer Leaders

Resident Housing

Liberty Students

Local Churches

Football Alumni

Community

Director of Spiritual Development Coordinator Responsibilities

Staff Responsibilities

- Be liaison between head coach, coaches and support staff
- Be available to be contacted by head coach when away from the office
- Coordinate spiritual game plan involving players and coach's when needed
- Meet with coaching staff and support staff for spiritual growth
- Lead weekly coaches and staff Bible study
- Guide new staff through material given to all new staff
- Sit in with head coach and player when discipline is involved
- Inform coaches of any pending discipline regarding their players
- Interview perspective coaches and staff members
- Meet with coaches and players as needed
- Meet one on one as the need arises

Player Responsibilities

- Help coordinate spiritual game plan for player when needed
- Provide opportunities for players to grow spiritually
- Provide ministry opportunities for players to be involved in
- Provide counseling and guidance for players regarding life decisions
- Be available for players during difficult times (death in the family, sickness, etc.)
- Help players to be accountable on campus and in dormitory
- Be a liaison between players and coaching staff

Meet one on one with players for various reasons

Meet with player and coaches as needed

Team Responsibilities

Oversee chemistry and winning edge time (Academics, Police, Drugs, Sex, Alcohol

Set up spiritual team meeting Friday before the game

Be available to help whenever and wherever needed

Campus Responsibilities

Represent football program in the following areas

President's Office

Vice – President of Student Affairs

Dean of Men and Women's office

Student Affairs Office

Be attentive to the way we reflect our mission and goals on campus

Community Responsibilities

Develop a tradition with the Salvation Army to ring the bells during the Christmas season

Develop a tradition with Habitat for Humanity to help build a house in Lynchburg

Practice Responsibilities

Be attentive to attitudes or actions that need attention

Be available for encouragement during practice

Be available to help wherever needed

Game Day Responsibilities

Set up chapel speaker

Meet and introduce Chapel speaker

Sit with chapel speaker at pre-game meal

Be available to help where needed

Recruiting Responsibilities

Meet with each recruit during visit

Meet with parents of recruits during visit

Be available to assist wherever needed with recruiting process

The Director of Spiritual Development's Mission Statement

To use the position God has placed me in to build bridges with athletes, so that God can use me to make a spiritual impact in their lives

Liberty University Mission

To produce Christ-centered men and women with values, knowledge, and skills required to impact tomorrow's world

Liberty University Football Mission

To utilize football as a unique tool to proclaim and explain the biblical meaning of life through whole-person development and to encourage team work and winning on and off the field

Liberty University Football Whole-Person Development Components

Athletically

Prepare physically and mentally to compete on the playing field.

Academically

Acquire an education for life after football.

Socially

Appropriate interaction with fellow students, faculty, and community

Spiritually

Foster growth through spiritual and biblical character development

Liberty University Mission

To produce Christ-centered men and women with values, knowledge, and skills required to impact tomorrow's world

Liberty University Football team Mission

To utilize football as a unique tool to proclaim and explain the biblical meaning of life through whole-person development that encourages team work and winning on and off the field

Liberty University Football Biblical basis for Mission and whole-person components

And Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and Man

Luke 2:52

The Head Coach Expectations

To demonstrate character qualities that reflects the mission and goals of our football program

To involve the necessary people when developing a spiritual game plan for an individual

To provide analysis when asked to be present when meeting with another person

To develop a personalize spiritual game plan for players and staff members when needed

To assure that our program balances the divine and human combination for success

To see that the program reflects the mission and goals on and off the field

To develop opportunities for spiritual growth with in the football program

To help orientate and guide new staff members through the basic material

To represent coach at functions on and off campus when asked to

To be available to give counsel to coaches and staff when needed

To represent coach at functions on and off campus

To be available to give counsel to coaches and staff when needed

To hold head coach accountable to the Liberty University Mission

To give feedback after interviewing a potential staff member

To hold head coach accountable to the Liberty University Football mission

To hold head coach accountable to the Liberty University Football Goals

To set up chapel speakers for home and away games

To develop a discipleship strategy for developing student-athlete disciples

To incorporate and oversee Men of Armor ministry

To be a liaison with the Student Affairs department

The Assistant Coach's Expectations

To be available to encourage, inspire and listen when speaking with a coach on a daily basis

To keep coach informed with information that is necessary for him to better understand and meet the needs of the players that he is responsible for

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

To involve coach and player, when necessary, in the individualized spiritual game plan given to player

To be available to assist coach in helping a player through a difficult time

To be available to give an update on the spiritual, social and mental state of mind of player from my point of view

To be a liaison between coach and players

To be available to pray with coach on a regular basis

To provide an atmosphere that allows the coach to share whatever may be of his mind and heart

To visit with coaches in their offices on a regular basis for prayer and encouragement

To be available to develop and encourage spiritual growth

To keep coach updated regarding things outside football such as reprimands and tickets a player may have accumulated

To help compliment the mission of Liberty and Whole Person Development through our football program

To help facilitate making families of our assistant coaches feel welcome and make them a part of our program

The Football Support Staff Expectations

Be a liaison between staff member and head coach and assistant coaches and players

Be a liaison between staff members

Be available for counsel and advice when need arises

Be available to assist in situations within the given area

Provide staff members with information when necessary to better understand a situation or person presently dealing with

Be available to be a sounding board, when necessary, and for prayer

To be attentive to attitudes and actions within the given area

To periodically visit for encouragement, feedback and prayer

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

To involve coach and player when necessary in the individual spiritual game plan given to player

To be available to give an update on the spiritual, social and mental state of mind of player from my point of view

To provide an atmosphere that allows the coach to share whatever may be of his mind and heart

To be available to develop and encourage spiritual growth when asked

To help compliment the mission and goals of our football program

The Academic Advisor Expectations

- To encourage players to maximize what is provided for them through the office
- To keep Academic Advisor informed with information that is necessary for her to better understand and meet the needs of the player she's working with at the time
- To keep personal conversations with Academic Advisor confidential unless given permission to share information with others
- To involve Academic Advisor when necessary in the individual spiritual game plan given of player
- To be available to Academic advisor in helping a player through a difficult time
- To be available to give an update on the spiritual, social and mental state of mind of a player from my point of view
- To be a liaison between Academic Advisor and players
- To be available to pray with Academic Advisor on a regular basis
- To provide an atmosphere that allows Academic Advisor to share whatever may be of mind and heart
- To visit with Academic Advisor on a regular basis for prayer and encouragement
- To be available to develop and encourage spiritual growth
- To help compliment the mission and goals of our football program

The Administration's Expectations

To maintain a consistency in fulfilling the mission and goals of Liberty University

To be available to give an update on the spiritual, social and mental state of mind of player from my point of view, if necessary

To involve administration, when necessary, in the individual spiritual game plan given to player

To be able to contact coaches and staff as the need arises

To be a liaison between administration and players

To encourage administration to attend practice and other football-related activities

To involve administration and player, when necessary, in the individual spiritual game plan given to player

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

To invite administration to practice and other football-related activities

The Faculty Expectations

To maintain a consistency in fulfilling the second team goal

To be available to give an update on the spiritual, social and mental state of mind of player from my point of view, if necessary

To involve faculty and player, when necessary in the individual spiritual game plan given to player

To be able to contact coaches and staff as the need arises

To be a liaison between faculty and players

To keep faculty member informed with information that is necessary to better understand and meet the needs of the player

To encourage faculty to attend practice and other football related activities

To involve faculty and player, when necessary, in the individual spiritual game plan given to player

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

The Dean's Expectations

To be a liaison between Deans and head coach

To periodically visit with Deans throughout the semester for encouragement, feedback and prayer

To have lunch with the Deans once in a while during the semester

To be a liaison between Deans and position coach

To encourage Deans to attend staff meetings and practices

To assist Deans in fulfilling the mission and goals of our school and team

To be available to assist Deans with any concerns that relate to players

To assist student-athlete when self reporting to the Dean's office

To encourage players to live up to the expectations of the Liberty way

Introduce coaches to Deans during a Deans' meeting

Invite Deans to have lunch with the coaches in the cafeteria

To help maintain credibility with the Deans' office

The Players' Expectations

- To be accessible and approachable for players
- To be allowed the freedom to communicate openly and freely
- To be a liaison between assistant coaches and head coach
- To be able to speak confidentially, when necessary
- To be available for counsel and guidance, when needed
- To be a mediator with players for off-the-field situations
- To be available to pray with players as the need arises
- To help develop a individual spiritual game plan for spiritual growth
- To be available for one-on-one mentorship and discipleship
- To provide opportunities for spiritual growth and ministry
- To teach Whole Person Development through football

The Parents' of Players Expectations

To be a liaison between coaches and players

To be available to give counsel and advice when needed

To keep parent informed with information that is necessary to better understand and meet the needs of the player

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

To involve parent and player when necessary in the individual spiritual game plan given to player

To be available to parent in helping a player through a difficult time

To be available to assist parent and player during times of conflict

To be accessible to receive phone calls and e-mails from parent

To assure parent of commitment to the mission and goals

The Recruits' Expectations

To be honest and up front about the Liberty University and the Liberty Football program

To be available to answer any questions a recruit may have while visiting campus

To share with recruits what is available for them to grow spiritually and minister while a member of the football program

To explain the role of Director of Spiritual Development within the football program

To be available to provide advice and counsel in order to help the recruit make the best decision about Liberty

To meet with recruit to talk about our mission and goals as a football program

To be willing to talk with the recruit after recruit has returned home

To provide recruit with materials that will help the recruit make the best decision about Liberty University

To attempt to have recruit meet with Dr. Falwell, if necessary

To help recruit to have a good and informative visit while here

The Parents' of Recruits Expectations

- To be a liaison between coaches and players during and after recruiting experience
- To be available to give counsel and advice when needed
- To introduce parents to Dr. Falwell, if necessary, during recruiting process
- To keep parent informed with information that is necessary to better understand and meet the needs of the player during the recruiting process
- To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others
- To involve parents and player, when necessary, in the individual spiritual game plan to be given to the player
- To be available for parents to answer questions during the recruiting process
- To be accessible to receive phone calls and e-mails from parent
- To assure parents of commitment to the mission and goals
- To help the parents better understand who we are and what is important to us as a football program

The Football Alumni Expectations

To be kept informed about what is happening within the Liberty football program

To periodically stay in touch through e-mails, letters or phone calls with coaches and staff

To be invited to home and away games

To have the freedom to join the team during practice and game-day activities when possible

To have the freedom to contact coaches and staff for prayer and advice as the need arises

To be able to contact coaches and staff for personal references

The Campus Pastor's Expectations

Support spiritual activities on and off campus

Encourage players to get to know the Campus Pastors personally

Remind players to utilize what is available to them through the Campus Pastor's office

Attend and support campus church services

Be available to assist campus Pastors when needed

Extend invitation to attend football staff meetings and practices and other related activities throughout the semester

To be available to assist Campus Pastor with any concerns that relate to our players

To communicate information that will be helpful to better minister to our players

The Resident Director's Expectations

To be available to assist when dealing with a player

To be a liaison between RD's and head coach

To be a liaison between RD's and assistant coaches

To periodically visit with RD's throughout the semester for encouragement and prayer

To have lunch with the RD's once in awhile throughout the semester

To extend an invitation for RD's to join our football staff meetings once in awhile

To be available to assist RD's in fulfilling the mission and goals of our school and team

To be available to assist RD's with any concerns that relate to our players

To encourage players to communicate with their RD if an appeal or question needs to be addressed

Spiritual Life Director's Expectations

To be a liaison between student-athlete and Spiritual Life Director

To periodically visit with Spiritual Life Director in the dorm setting through out the semester for encouragement and prayer

To be available to assist Spiritual Life Director in fulfilling the mission and goals of our school and team

To help Spiritual Life Director see how we are committed to the same goals for our players as they are

To available to assist Spiritual Life Director with any concerns that relate to our players

To communicate information that will help to better minister to our players

To meet with Spiritual Life Directors as a group once in awhile during the semester for prayer and encouragement

The Prayer Leader's Expectations

To be a liaison between student-athlete and Prayer Leader

To be a liaison between Prayer Leader and coaches

To periodically visit with Prayer Leader in the dorm setting throughout semester for encouragement and prayer

To be available to assist Prayer Leader in fulfilling the mission and goals of our school and team

To help Prayer Leader see how we are committed to the same goals for our players, and can therefore can work together

To available to assist Prayer Leader with any concerns that relate to our players

To communicate any information that will help to better minister to our players

To keep conversations confidential unless given permission to share information with others

The Liberty University Student Expectations

To assume consistency in fulfilling the mission and goals of Liberty University and the Liberty football program

To hold players accountable to the same standards on and off the field that non-student athletes are held to

To continue to establish credibility with the student body

To be approachable by the student body during the semester

To give the student body an opportunity to understand what the football program is all about

To be available to mediate possible conflicts between students and players

Invite students to visit practice and establish friendships with players

The Local Church Expectations

To encourage coaches, staff and players to attend, serve and worship in local churches

To utilize Men of Armor ministry to compliment the local church ministries

To utilize coaches in church services by sharing their personal testimonies

To be role models for young people to follow

The Local Community Expectations

To utilize players to support worthy causes within the Lynchburg area

To be role models for young people to follow in the community

Establish a few traditions within the community with a few non-profit agencies

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