

Liberty University School of Divinity

**Dirty Discipleship:
The Essential Nature of Recovery Ministry in Fulfilling the Great Commission**

A Thesis Project Submitted to
The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated first and foremost to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has loved me at my most unlovely times in life. He has gifted me for his glory. He has blessed me beyond my best hopes and dreams. He has guided and given me the passion to help those who are hurting.

This project is also dedicated to my wonderful wife, Amy. She has walked with me through the hard times and good times. She has sacrificed much so that I could go to school. She has given up having extra things so we could pay for school, books, and travel to and from school. She has sacrificed vacations so I could take summer classes. She has, at times, had to be the main parent when I would work all day and study all night. She has shown me what true grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love are all about. She has helped me know the love and grace of my God in a tangible way. She is my best friend and has my heart.

This work is also dedicated to my two wonderful children, Chayton and Ella. I have been going to college their entire lives. They have lived a life of always seeing their dad with a book in his hand and an assignment on his mind. They have experienced the disappointment of not being able to go to events or travel because dad has to be at home working on school. I am looking forward to the new life that will come with the completion of my doctorate degree.

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ABSTRACT

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Christians are commanded to bear one another's burdens with the specific purpose of restoring them in fellowship with God and others. One of the greatest areas of slavery in America is found within issues related to abuse, abandonment, and addictions. Recovery ministries seek to help people who have been broken by these issues. The Great Commission commands believers to make disciples of every nation. Recovery ministry is discipleship in the hardest areas of life and is dirtier and messier than many Christians wish to get. The purpose of this project is to present the need for every church to be involved in the dirty discipleship of recovery ministry, discover the reasons why some churches and Christians do not support recovery ministry, and present a supplement recovery ministry that focuses more on redemption and freedom from strongholds rather than behavior management.

Abstract Length: 140 words

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Statement of Limitations.....	3
Theoretical Basis.....	3
Statement of Methodology.....	6
Review of Literature	8
Books	9
Dissertations/Theses	18
Scriptures	19
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND FOUNDATIONS	26
Personal Testimony and Background	26
Ministry Setting and Experience.....	29
Discipleship	31
World’s Definitions of Addictions	35
Disease	36
Genetics.....	38
Brain Chemistry	38
Environment.....	40
Biblical Definitions of Addictions.....	41
Slavery to Sin.....	42

Drunkenness.....	43
Idolatry	44
Spiritual Strongholds	45
Spiritual Disciplines.....	46
Confidence in the Gospel for Salvation and Sanctification	49
CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH SURVEY.....	52
Methodology.....	52
Hypothesis	52
Collected Data.....	53
Summary.....	77
CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION OF DATA	79
Demographics	79
Discipleship	79
Recovery Ministry	81
Addictions.....	85
Spiritual Disciplines.....	87
CHAPTER 5: PROPOSED SUPPLEMENT FOR RECOVERY MINISTRY	90
Power of the Pulpit	90
Make the Most of Mentoring.....	93
Intentional	93
Biblically Based and Spirit-sensitive	95
Focus on Freedom.....	97
Identity	98

Grace.....	98
Truth.....	99
Answer the “Why?”	100
Train for Godliness	102
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	105
Hypotheses Results	105
Opportunities for Further Development	107
Larger Sample Size for Study.....	107
Broader Demographics	107
More Detailed Questions	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	110
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL.....	115
APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	116
APPENDIX C: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION	126

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 - Q2: Gender	53
Figure 2 - Q3: Age	54
Figure 3 - Q4: Race/Ethnicity	54
Figure 4 - Q5: Relationship Status	55
Figure 5 - Q6: Education.....	56
Figure 6 - Q7: Spiritual Beliefs.....	56
Figure 7 - Q8: Size of Church.....	57
Figure 8 - Q9: Denomination.....	58
Figure 9 - Q10: Church Attendance.....	58
Figure 10 - Q11: Recovery Ministry.....	59
Figure 11 - Q12: Participation in Recovery Ministry	60
Figure 12 - Q13: What Prevents Recovery Ministry	61
Figure 13 Q14: Discipleship Offered by Churches.....	61
Figure 14 - Q15: Personal Experience with Discipleship.....	62
Figure 15 - Q16: Impact of Discipleship	62
Figure 16 - Q17: Love for God.....	63
Figure 17 - Q18: Obedience to God.....	63
Figure 18 - Q19: Great Commission.....	64
Figure 19 - Q20: Participants' Personal Struggles	65
Figure 20 - Q21: Known Struggles of Others.....	65
Figure 21 - Q22: Struggles in Society.....	66

Figure 22 - Q23: Struggles in the Church.....	67
Figure 23 - Q24: Root Cause of Addictions	68
Figure 24 - Q25: Primary Source of Healing.....	68
Figure 25 - Q26: Most Important Area of Treatment	69
Figure 26 - Q27: Addictions	69
Figure 27 - Q28: Reasonable Expectation of Healing and Freedom	70
Figure 28 - Q29: Influence of Self-view.....	70
Figure 29 - Q30: Self-view and Relapse.....	71
Figure 30 - Q31: Church Preparedness for Recovery	72
Figure 31 - Q32: Your Church Preparedness.....	72
Figure 32 - Q31: Church Greatest Help.....	73
Figure 33 - Q34: Likelihood to Attend a Recovery Ministry	74
Figure 34 - Q35: Likelihood to Recommend Recovery Ministry	74
Figure 35 - Q36: Personal Practice of Spiritual Disciplines	75
Figure 36 - Q37: Spiritual Disciplines and Negative Behaviors.....	76
Figure 37 - Q38: Spiritual Disciplines and Negative Behaviors.....	76
Figure 38 - Q39: Spiritual Disciplines, Temptations, and Negative Impulses	77

ABBREVIATIONS

HCSB	<i>Holman Christian Standard Bible</i>
BWC	<i>Biblical Wellness Center</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

America is a nation in need of recovery. Approximately 15-20% of the population is chemically dependent with an estimated annual cost to society of over \$160 billion.¹ Anxiety disorders are now the most commonly diagnosed mental health illness with approximately 30% of the adult population suffering in some form.² People are increasingly being taken advantage of and suffering some form of emotional, verbal, physical, or sexual abuse. Abuse leaves scars that are usually unseen, but last a lifetime. These types of issues, combined the increased pace of life, and unreasonable expectations of trying to obtain the American dream have led to an increase of a myriad of mental health illnesses such as eating disorders, depression, sleep disorders, and panic disorders.³

People are hurting and suffering. The church is called to help. However, many churches do not view recovery ministry as an essential part of the Great Commission. It seems that many see recovery ministry as only a ministry that super churches do as an alternative or supplemental ministry. For this reason, many churches do not make recovery ministry a central focus nor do they have confidence in its effectiveness. This lack of attention has resulted in the American church effectively overlooking a large area of brokenness within society.

¹ Christopher Dyslin, "The Power of Powerlessness: The Role of Spiritual Surrender and Interpersonal Confession in the Treatment of Addictions," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2008):41.

² Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins, *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2011), 201.

³ Cynthia Franklin and Rowena Fong, eds., *The Church Leader's Counseling Resource Book: A Guide to Mental Health and Social Problems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 179.

Recovery ministries are typically viewed as tailored to addicts and alcoholics. However, recovery is a ministry that helps people from any walk of life struggling with any number of issues. Wilkerson attempts to encompass the broad nature of recovery by using the terms abuse, addiction, and assorted troubles.⁴ In this work, this will be expanded to include other issues such as anger, anxiety, and abandonment.

Some churches also like to see results and be able to present clean cut ministries. Recovery ministry is not a clean ministry. It is emotionally messy. It is filled with people who are not fixed by quoting a few bible verses or giving one-line solutions to life-consuming problems. Recovery ministry is dirty discipleship. Most discipleship models are nice and neat. The discipler gets to teach a lesson or have coffee with a person and then remain largely unaffected by the struggles of the disciple. Recovery ministry is different. It is messy. Those seeking to help others in recovery are affected. As they help others bear their burdens, they have to wade through the muck and mire of the problem with the person who is struggling to get free. They are faced with questions that are hard to answer and will force them to reevaluate and reinforce their own faith.

The purpose of this project is to present the need for every church to be involved in the dirty discipleship of recovery ministry, discover the reasons why some churches and Christians do not support recovery ministry, and present a supplement to a recovery ministry that focuses more on redemption and freedom from strongholds rather than just behavior modification.

⁴ Mike Wilkerson, *Redemption*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 22.

Statement of Limitations

This project is designed to understand perceptions of efficacy of recovery ministry by Christians and non-Christians. These perceptions are based on individual opinions and may not represent facts. However, perception is often more powerful than reality. If Christians view recovery ministry as an ineffective method of healing, then they will seek help from worldly sources and they will not invite others who are struggling with recovery related issues.

The method of study used for this project is an online survey. The participants are connected to this author via Facebook either as friends or friends of friends. While the target audience for the survey is not Southerners, the results will likely reflect the views of people mostly living in the southern United States because most of this author's Facebook friends are Southerners. This relationship will also mean that most of the people taking the survey will likely either be Christians or people who are familiar with Christianity.

The proposed supplement to recovery ministry developed from this study will not be a completely new or original model. Instead it will be a conglomeration of best practices from present models already in use in many churches. The goal is not to create something entirely new, but to develop a resource that can be used to supplement, expand, and improve recovery ministries already in place.

Theoretical Basis

If Christians lack confidence in recovery ministries where does this lack of confidence come from? The Bible promises redemption, restoration, and reconciliation to followers of Christ. There are biblical examples of people whose lives were radically changed by God

through redemption. Churches are full of many people who have been released from the powerful grip of destructive habits, yet, still, Christians doubt. Why?

The lack of confidence in redemption stems from the church embracing secular ideas about recovery related struggles such as alcoholism and addictions. The world has convinced many people that addictions are diseases.⁵ This is commonly referred to as the medical model. The biggest promoter of this view has been Alcoholics Anonymous. In what is commonly known as the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, the author describes that by understanding alcoholism as disease, he was free from the guilt and shame associated with it.⁶ However, there are no medical tests that are used to diagnose a person as an alcoholic or addict. There are no bacterial or viral causes. There is no blood test that says a person is an addict. The only way a person is diagnosed is by examining their behavior. In addition, there is no medical cure for this supposed medical problem.⁷ There is no pill or injection that can be prescribed to fight it.

The danger of the disease model is that it leaves the person struggling with addiction in a hopeless position. In the process of removing guilt and shame, it also undermines accountability and the will to change.⁸ The person struggling with addiction is left with the belief that he will never and can never fully overcome the addiction.⁹ He is now relegated to a life of being an

⁵ Mark Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2008), 14.

⁶ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 2001), 7.

⁷ Franklin and Fong, *Counseling Resource Book*, 29.

⁸ David Myers, *Psychology*, 8th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2007), 298.

⁹ Shaw, *Heart of Addiction*, 14.

addict. Out of this mentality has sprung the phrases, “once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic” and “once an addict, always an addict.” The person’s self-identity becomes inseparably connected to addiction. For instance, in many twelve step models, participants begin their meetings with a mantra that reinforces their identity with their struggle. They say, “Hi, my name is _____ and I am an alcoholic.” The disease or medical model fundamentally robs the person of hope and changes their self-identity.

For Christians, however, worth and identity are not tied to behavior, but are found in Christ. The Bible presents that all people have a sin nature. People are born in a depraved state and desire evil pleasures.¹⁰ However, at the moment of trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior over one’s life, the sinner is given a new heart and the Holy Spirit comes to reside within him.¹¹ It is also at that moment when the believer is redeemed, set free from the penalty of sin and death, and given the power to overcome any struggle he faces.

So when Christians adopt a secular perspective on addictions and cause of recovery related issues, they are turning away from the truth of Scripture. In the process, they look for sources of healing other than Christ. Their confidence in the power of Christ to set them free is diminished and they look to the world’s perspective to find their savior. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (HCSB) the believer is told that Scripture is the place to find teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training so he can be complete. When a Christian seeks a secular source of healing for spiritual

¹⁰ Stanton Jones and Richard Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 268.

¹¹ Elmer Towns, *Theology for Today* (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2008), 419-420.

problems, he is expressing a reduced trust in the Word of God as the place to find truth and healing.

Looking through the lens of Scripture, addictions are simply a symptom of a deeper, true problem.¹² Substance abuse is a way to self-medicate a deeper pain. The deeper pain is the true cause of the addiction. Clinton and Hawkins list five causes of addictions: emotional, relational, physical, cognitive and behavioral, or spiritual.¹³ When there is healing at the source of the pain, then the person's behavior will change easier. The person struggling with addiction seeks help because of what they are doing: their behavior. Recovery ministry helps them answer the question, "Why do I do what I do?" When this happens, healing begins as they are transformed from the inside out and their behavior changes.

The project will discover Christians' confidence in Christ to provide healing in all areas of life. If most Christians are running to false saviors, it is no wonder they are not finding healing. When the true source of healing is sought, then real healing can take place.

Statement of Methodology

This thesis will develop a working model of recovery ministry that will be applied at Wildwood Baptist Church in Mesquite, TX. It will also be designed to be flexible enough to be applied in other ministry settings to support and augment existing recovery ministries. The goal is to help churches be as effective as possible at ministering to people seeking recovery. It will

¹² Erik Guzman, *The Gift of Addiction* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 4.

¹³ Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 20.

also help churches, who currently do not have recovery ministries, recognize how recovery ministry is an essential part of the Great Commission.

The applied research will be conducted via Survey Monkey. The recruitment of participants will be conducted through open invitations via Facebook. The survey includes forty questions relating to discipleship, perceptions of need and efficacy of recovery ministries, and spiritual disciplines. The goal of this approach is to have as many people as possible participate between July and August of 2016. The hope is to have at least 100 people, with a mix of Christians and non-Christians, participate in order to develop a well-rounded understanding of how discipleship and recovery ministry are viewed.

The data will be examined to discover trends. The trends will hopefully yield obvious areas of strengths and weaknesses within the church related to discipleship and recovery ministry. These will contribute to the development of the proposed model for recovery ministry.

The overall project is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the subject matter. It includes the already read statement of the problem: that many churches do not view recovery ministry as an essential part of the Great Commission. It also includes the statement of limitations to set boundaries on what the project is not trying to accomplish. The theoretical basis presents why it is dangerous for Christians to adopt a secular worldview of recovery. The statement of methodology presents the project's design and goals. Lastly, the review of literature provides a summary of books, dissertation/theses, and Scriptures that relate directly to recovery ministry.

Chapter two presents the background and foundations for the project. It presents this author's testimony, background, and ministry setting that has led to this project. It covers the

foundational biblical truths of discipleship, spiritual disciplines, the sufficiency of the Gospel for salvation and sanctification, and explores the biblical understanding of addictions.

Chapter three explores the results of the forty question survey. The survey question and responses are presented. The responses are used to discern trends about how different people view recovery ministry and its effectiveness.

Chapter four interprets the trends from chapter three. The data will be compared to scripture to determine where churches can be more effective in presenting biblical truth and helping people find freedom in recovery. Theories about why the trends exist are explored.

In chapter five, the results of the survey and biblical data will be used to present a working model of recovery ministry. The goal will not be to create an entirely new recovery ministry model, but to provide helpful insight and suggestions to make any recovery ministry more effective. The working model could be viewed as a supplement to recovery ministries already in place. A unique characteristic of this working model will be the focus on redemption and freedom from recovery related issues instead of management through behavior modification.

Chapter six concludes the project. It provides an overall review and summary of the project. Conclusive results from the applied research are presented. Opportunities for further development in recovery ministry are proposed.

Review of Literature

Other authors have contributed significantly to the subject of recovery. Their works were consulted to develop an understanding of different perspectives. A biblical worldview of recovery is also developed through the exploration of pertinent passages and teachings. The following is a description of important works and Scriptures that were used as a foundation for

understanding current recovery approaches and best practices. They are presented based on the type of work.

Books

An important book for understanding a biblical approach to recovery is *Recovering Redemption* by Matt Chandler and Michael Snetzer. This book provides a simple presentation of biblical recovery through redemption in Jesus Christ. The authors present a powerful explanation of the sources people run to in the pursuit of recovery: self-effort, others, the world, and religion.¹⁴ None of these can provide the redemption which only comes through Jesus Christ and, therefore, always leaves the person with a sense of hopelessness. The book contributes significantly to understanding gospel-centered recovery through the lens of biblical redemption. The goal of recovery ministry is not to recover a life before they struggled, but to recover the relationship that existed between man and God before sin entered the world.

Mike Wilkerson's book, *Redemption*, presents redemption through the lens of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.¹⁵ The book is the curriculum for redemption groups, a ministry that helps people find freedom in many areas of life.¹⁶ It presents addictions as idols of which people unknowingly worship. Redemption is the process through which people are set free to worship God rightly and heal from the wounds they have been dealt. Jesus is where redemption is

¹⁴ Matt Chandler and Michael Snetzer, *Recovering Redemption* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2014), 25-36.

¹⁵ Wilkerson, *Redemption*, 33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

found.¹⁷ Wilkerson presents three main themes of redemption: deliverance, ransom, and renewal.¹⁸ Every chapter presents real life stories of people who have experienced bondage and great pain, but have found redemption. The book contributes significantly to the area of recovery by teaching and demonstrating the sufficiency of Christ to bring healing in all of life's problems.

The Recovery-Minded Church is an excellent book to help churches move in the right direction to embrace recovery ministry. It uses the parable of the prodigal son as the foundational model of recovery ministry.¹⁹ However, there are some short-comings with the book that make it important in the discussion at hand. The author, Jonathan Benz, fully adopts a disease model of addiction.²⁰ This conclusion is based upon some considerable assumptions. He presents that addictions are medically diagnosable. His primary proof is that the medical and scientific communities promote it and a vast majority of people believe it.²¹ He does not want Christians to think of addictions in terms of sin because he believes doing so means the addict will not feel loved or helped. He holds to a form of syncretism that tries to merge biblical truth with contemporary opinion. He makes statements to support his view such as: "Dispelling these myths means providing a more faithful interpretation of Scripture and the Christian faith, one

¹⁷ Ibid., 32.

¹⁸ Ibid., 34.

¹⁹ Jonathan Benz, *The Recovery-Minded Church* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 9.

²⁰ Ibid., 64-65.

²¹ Ibid., 64-66.

that accommodates the latest insights from science.”²² This author believes that Benz’s view of addiction is one that many Christians hold and has led to fewer Christians having confidence that recovery is possible through Gospel-centered, biblical approaches.

Edward Welch offers two books that are essential in any discussion on biblical addiction recovery. The first is *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*. In it, Welch explores the subject of addictions head on and compares the different models to Scripture. In Chapter two, entitled “Sin, Sickness, or Both,” he presents that the root of all addiction is sin and tackles the form of syncretism that tries to blend the disease model with the sin model.²³ Basically, some believe that addictions begin as choice and end up a disease. However, Welch proposes that what many are observing as disease in the latter stages of addiction are actually deeper spiritual slavery to the addiction.²⁴ He presents that addictions can be explained biblically by other language such as idolatry, adultery, foolishness, spiritual attack, and even disease or illness.²⁵ This book is beneficial to this study because it offers a solid biblical exposition about the cause of addictions as well as the way to recovery through Jesus Christ.

The second book is *Blame It on the Brain?* Welch examines the phenomenon of people believing they are not really in charge of their actions because their behaviors are caused by

²² Ibid., 65.

²³ Edward Welch, *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R Publishing, 2001), 17-44.

²⁴ Ibid., 37.

²⁵ Ibid., 47-63.

chemical events in their brain, making them do things they do not really want to do.²⁶ Things such as anger, disobedience to parents, worry, drug abuse, stealing, and adultery are being contributed to brain problems rather than sin problems.²⁷ Welch examines the medical research and filters out the societal additives to get to the root of what is really caused by the brain and what are volitional actions of the heart. He examines which things are legitimate brain problems, which things might be brain problems, and which things are not brain problems. This book is helpful in the current study because many of the issues related to recovery such as anger, addictions, and anxiety are being labeled as brain problems by contemporary science. This leaves those who are suffering with these issues with a sense of hopelessness. Welch makes a wonderful point that while programs like Alcoholics Anonymous make the case that alcoholism is a disease, the solution they present is moral.²⁸ This raises an interesting question pertaining to understanding addictions and recovery: if the cause is medically or physically related, how can it be solved by a moral solution? A medical problem should be solved with a medical solution.

No discussion on Christian recovery ministry would be complete without including a discussion on Celebrate Recovery. John Baker's book, *Life's Healing Choices*, details the foundational moorings of Celebrate Recovery.²⁹ The scriptural basis comes from the Beatitudes

²⁶ Edward Welch, *Blame It on the Brain?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R Publishing, 1998), 12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 190.

²⁹ John Baker, *Life's Healing Choices: Freedom from Your Hurts, Hang-ups, and Habits* (New York: Howard Books, 2007), 4.

found in Matthew, chapter five, and is presented in the acrostic RECOVERY.³⁰ Each chapter is full of helpful teaching and stories about people working through recovery issues. This book is beneficial as because it outlines a recovery ministry that has proven to be successful.

Spiritual disciplines help believers experience God on a more intimate level and increasingly find greater freedom in Christ. Part of the research for this thesis will include questions relating to recovery and spiritual disciplines. The goal is to discover if people have confidence in spiritual disciplines as preventative forces and curative pathways in relation to finding recovery.

Two classics dealing with spiritual disciplines were consulted for this work. The first is Dallas Willard's, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. He presents spiritual disciplines as necessities for living in the freedom Christ secured through His death and resurrection.³¹ He makes a wonderful case for how spiritual disciplines are an "exercise unto godliness."³² Spiritual disciplines are designed by God to produce intimacy with Him.

The second is Richard Foster's, *Celebration of Discipline*, in which he nearly exhaustively explores all the spiritual disciplines presented in the Bible. He calls spiritual disciplines the "door to liberation."³³ He proposes that spiritual disciplines are the way to

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How to Change Lives* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 33.

³² Ibid., 95.

³³ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, Rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 1.

overcome slavery to ingrained habits of sin.³⁴ It is easy to see a definition of addiction in the phrase “slavery to ingrained habits of sin.” In his chapter on the discipline of simplicity, Foster calls addictions “undisciplined compulsions.”³⁵ These compulsions enslave a person and soon seem to be beyond control.

Elmer Towns adds to this powerful subject with many works. Two will be considered at this time. Both deal with the spiritual discipline of fasting. The first is *Fasting for a Miracle*. Towns writes of great moves of God’s power that were preceded or connected with fasting. In one chapter, the story of Dion Henderson’s healing from gambling addiction is told. This great testimony tells how God completely removed the addiction from Dion while he was in the midst of a twenty-one-day fast.³⁶ It was during this time that he learned that addiction was not an incurable disease, but slavery to sin.³⁷ The book contributes to this thesis demonstrating how people can be set free through the power of prayer and fasting.

Towns’ second book, *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough*, presents nine biblical fasts and how each are applicable to overcoming certain struggles. The disciple’s fast is presented in chapter two as a way to overcome addictions. The biblical foundation for this fast is found in Matthew 17:21 where Jesus teaches the disciples after their failed attempt to cast out a demon, “This kind does not come out except through prayer and fasting.” Fasting is way of breaking the

³⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁵ Ibid., 91.

³⁶ Elmer Towns, *Fasting for a Miracle* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2012), 115-120.

³⁷ Ibid., 119.

“chains of wickedness” (Isaiah 58:6) and being set free from “sin that so easily ensnares us” (Hebrews 12:1). These two phrases are accurate descriptions of addiction. Towns’ presentation is particularly powerful and encouraging to those who are struggling with addictions. He presents six steps to freedom to overcoming addictions through fasting.³⁸

Neil Anderson’s book, *The Bondage Breaker*, looks at the spiritual influences at play with negative thoughts, irrational feelings, and habitual sins. He uses biblical proof to demonstrate that Christians should be living free in Christ.³⁹ The reason many people are enslaved to negative issues is because they are being attacked, deceived, or influenced by Satanic forces.⁴⁰ This book is particularly helpful because many issues stem from deeper emotional or cognitive issues which impact a person’s view of God, self, and others. Anderson helps people combat Satanic untruths with biblical truths through a process of confession, renunciation, and claiming the truth of God’s Word.⁴¹

Anderson, along with Mike and Julia Quarles, wrote *Freedom from Addiction* to focus on spiritual influences as they relate to addictions specifically. The first part of the book is the testimony of Mike and Julia as they worked through Mike’s addiction. The second half of the book is about overcoming addictions. The contribution of this book is that it presents how

³⁸ Ibid., 39.

³⁹ Neil Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2000), 27.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 63.

⁴¹ Ibid., 199-252.

people can be free from addictions rather than just managing them.⁴² They present a well-rounded understanding of addictions as being larger problems with deeper sources than most realize.⁴³

Recovery ministry is a form of counseling. As such, there are some reference works which are especially helpful in understanding and helping people struggling with recovery related issues. *The Christian's Guide to Psychological Terms* is a helpful guide for Christians to understand the terminology used by the medical and psychological communities. The book presents many common diagnoses by giving a psychological description and biblical definition. For example, the world generally understands addiction as an illness that is beyond the addict's control.⁴⁴ However, looking through a biblical lens, addiction is described as a choice that grew into a slavery.⁴⁵ This book is helpful to bridge the gap between secular and biblical descriptions of the same observable problems.

Clinton and Hawkins offer *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling*. Their work gives a wide angle lens view at Christian counseling. They briefly explore almost every issue a counselor may encounter in helping others. The chapter on substance abuse and behavior addictions is particularly helpful. They place addictions into four categories: addictions that

⁴² Neil Anderson, Mike Quarles, and Julia Quarles, *Freedom from Addiction* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 210-211.

⁴⁴ Marshall Asher and Mary Asher, *The Christian's Guide to Psychological Terms*, 2nd ed. (Bemidji, MI: Focus Publishing, 2014), 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

stimulate, tranquilize, serve a psychological need, or satisfy.⁴⁶ They do a great job of comparing and contrasting secular and biblical models of counseling.

Clinton and Scalise provide a great resource with *The Quick-Reference Guide to Addictions and Recovery Counseling*. This guide dives deeper in the specific issues surrounding addictions and recovery. It is divided into four parts: overview, substance abuse addictions, behavioral addictions, and process addictions.⁴⁷ Each chapter offers stories of people dealing with the particular issue, definitions, assessments, wise counsel, action steps, biblical insights, prayer starter, and recommended resources.⁴⁸

In *Caring for People God's Way*, Clinton, Hart, and Ohlschlager cover most of the issues related to recovery: personal and emotional issues, addictions and impulse control, and grief and trauma. They call addictions “a desperate expression of life in a sin-sick world.”⁴⁹ They provide a detailed analysis of each of these issues and helpful information on how to help people struggling with them. The benefit to this work is the depth of examination on each subject that is greatly beneficial for helping people who are struggling with recovery related issues to get to the root cause of their struggle.

⁴⁶ Clinton and Hawkins, *Popular Encyclopedia*, 376-377.

⁴⁷ Tim Clinton and Eric Scalise, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Addictions and Recovery Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

⁴⁹ Tim Clinton, Achibald Hart, and George Ohlschlager, *Caring for People God's Way* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 248.

Dissertations/Theses

One helpful dissertation is *The Victorious Christian Life: The Phenomenon of Christian Spirituality in Overcoming Alcohol Dependence* by Michael Byrne. In his work, he interviewed participants who received treatment for alcoholism using Christian spirituality as a foundational treatment method.⁵⁰ His research concluded that application of spiritual disciplines are helpful in helping patients avoid alcoholism and are beneficial in their recovery process. He concludes with eight themes that could be summarized as follows: all participants in his study lacked Christian spirituality when then entered the treatment program, all participants experienced Christ as their savior and reported the great impact that Christ-like role models in the program had on their decision, all participants recognized the new spiritual battle before them and the need for daily submission to God through the ongoing practice of spiritual disciplines, and, finally, all participants who experienced relapse could directly connect it to a decline in their pursuit of God through spiritual disciplines which was restored through confession and repentance.⁵¹

Another helpful terminal work is Farid Awad's thesis, *Pornography Addiction: A Cognitive Approach in Combating the Lies Christian Males Believe*. He conducted an online survey between December 2009 and February 2010 and had thirty men participate.⁵² He

⁵⁰ Michael Byrne, "The Victorious Christian Life: The Phenomenon of Christian Spirituality in Overcoming Alcohol Dependence" (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2013), 30.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 215-230.

⁵² Farid Awad, "Pornography Addiction: A Cognitive Approach in Combating the Lies Christian Males Believe" (DMin thesis, Liberty University, 2010), 2-4.

discovered that Christian men did not have a significantly different view of pornography than unbelievers.⁵³ He proposes reframing one's worldview through a Scriptural lens as the pathway to recovery.⁵⁴ This requires a cognitive change in the person struggling with the addiction as well as a surrounding support system to help the person walk in freedom.⁵⁵ His work contributes by demonstrating the great need for Christians to have a biblical worldview.

Scriptures

The foundational passage for all church ministry should begin with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20,

Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

These are the marching orders from Jesus: make disciples, baptize, and teach them.

Unfortunately, many churches focus on only part of the Great Commission and make it the main thing to the neglect of the others. For instance, some teach that the Great Commission is solely about evangelism, but neglect teaching people to practice Jesus' commands.⁵⁶ Others focus so much on teaching people to observe Jesus commands that they abandon evangelism. These type of Christians have a tendency to believe their righteousness resides in their obedience rather than

⁵³ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 89.

⁵⁶ David Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2013), 5.

the expression of God's grace and imputation of Christ's righteousness.⁵⁷ They also tend to make discipleship about information transfer in a classroom setting rather than about life transformation and heart change.⁵⁸

The passage is really about "making disciples," as it is the only imperative in Christ's command with the other verbs playing a supportive role. Hull divides disciple-making into three parts: deliverance, development, and deployment.⁵⁹ Every person is naturally in bondage to sin before coming to Christ. Christians have the responsibility of faithfully participating in the emancipation of unbelievers from this slavery by presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ and walking with the person through their spiritual journey with Christ. The proposal of this author is that recovery ministry is an essential part of discipleship because of the prevalence of people who are being held captive by sin and its effects. All people are in recovery from sin in general and most people are recovering from specific struggles.

The Great Commission is always administered through the lens of the Great Commands. Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-40 that the greatest command is to love God with every aspect of one's being and the second greatest command is to love others as one loves himself. This passage is essential to recovery ministry because it defines the heart and attitude Christians are supposed to have towards God and the others. If a person loves God, then they will also naturally love the things He loves. God loves every person. God loves unbelievers. God loves

⁵⁷ John Koessler, *True Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 15.

⁵⁸ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2012), 18.

⁵⁹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 34.

addicts. God loves and mourns for those who have been abused, abandoned, and hurt by others. If God loves these people so should the church.

What is commonly referred to as the New Command is found in John 13:34, in which Jesus tells the disciples they are to love one another based on how he has love them. This sounds extremely similar to the second greatest command, but he adds a different motive and standard for the love. He says that believers are to love one another as Christ has loved them. This means that believers' demonstration of love towards others is not to be solely based upon their own self-view and appreciation, but on the example Christ has set. There are many believers who were once in bondage to addictions or other recovery related issues who have been set free. It is only natural that they should love those who are currently struggling with those issues.

Next is 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, which states, "He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God." This passage demonstrates believers are not saved for their own personal benefit, but rather they are rescued to become part of the rescue party going after those who are still in danger and bondage. The Christians who are best prepared and should have the greatest motive for helping those struggling with recovery related issues are those who have experienced the bondage themselves and have found freedom in Christ. Exact experience with a particular bondage is not necessary to help a person find freedom, however. Even if a person's slavery chains are a different color, size, or material from one's own, Christians have the key that unlocks all forms of bondage: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Another passage which proves Christians are not saved for their own benefit is found in 2 Corinthians 5:17-20,

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; certain that God is appealing through us, we plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

Here it is clear that Christians have been saved to help others know the redeeming and restoring power of Jesus Christ. He can take brokenness and make it in a new creation. This hope is the basis of helping people who are struggling with recovery. It is those who are "in Christ" who have the ministry of reconciliation. This means all believers are to be part of this ministry to help others know Christ and have a new, free life in Him.

In Galatians 6:1-2, Paul writes, "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a brother with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won't be tempted. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." This passage is the source of the title for this work: dirty discipleship. Believers have a responsibility to one another to help each other find restoration and forward progress in their walk with Christ. The law of Christ demands that believers help others as they struggle with sin. Recovery ministry essentially springs from this passage as Christians struggle with sin just like the rest of the world. Believers are commanded to get dirty in the discipleship process. The idea is that someone has fallen in mud hole and can't get out themselves. Christians are called to enter the mess of the mud hole to help their brother or sister get free of it. In the process, they are going to get a little dirty, but the freedom of the other person is worth the messiness that the ministry requires.

The story of the Israelites deliverance from Egypt, found in Exodus, is powerful for helping people find freedom from recovery related issues. It contains the beautiful picture of redemption from slavery, deliverance from the old slave master, guidance through the uncertainties of the wilderness, and the truth of the promised land. All of these issues are directly connected to recovery ministry. The wonderfulness of the story of the Exodus is that God is the One responsible for providing the redemption, deliverance, guidance, and promised land. The people are only responsible for responding in faith and obedience.

The parable of the prodigal son, in Luke 15:11-32, is an encouraging example of how God loves his children. While the younger son sinned directly against his father, committed sins, and made mistakes, the father celebrated and lavished his son with love upon his return. Unfortunately, there are some Christians who are more like the older brother than the father. He was self-righteous and despised his brother. When his father showed love and acceptance, the older brother got angry and resentful. Today there are many Christians who say they trust Jesus for their salvation, but their trust in their own behavior for their sanctification. This leads them to respond callously and unlovingly towards others who have more apparent struggles. Their answer to them is usually something like, "Just stop it." They typically view church as the place a person comes to after they have cleaned up their life instead of seeing church as the place a person comes to be cleaned up by Jesus.

There are many passages which refer to the freedom that Christ brings into a person's life. For instance, in John 8:32, Jesus says, "The truth will set you free." In John 8:36, He says, "If the Son sets you free, you really be free." In Romans 6:6, Paul tells readers that sin's dominion has been abolished and believers are no longer slaves to sin. However, in Romans

7:13-25, Paul also writes about the on-going struggle with his sin nature. He concludes the passage with an exclamation, “Who will rescue me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Galatians 5:1 makes the exclamation, “Christ has liberated us into freedom. Therefore, stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.” All of these passages along with a multitude of others teach that Christians are granted freedom in Christ and freedom should be the normal reality of the Christian experience. Recovery ministry helps people come to know Christ and experience this freedom.

Scripture also teaches that God has given believers helpful assistance and tools to be able to live in freedom. First and foremost, believers have the Holy Spirit living within them as a down payment of the redemption to come according to Ephesians 1:13-14. He produces fruit from the inside out as described in Galatians 5:22-23. As believers submit to God and walk in the Spirit in obedience to Him, believers live in the reality of freedom.

Second, God has provided tools to help believers increasingly know Him better. These are commonly called spiritual disciplines. Most people have experience with some spiritual disciplines like prayer and worship. Likely the most central discipline is that of reading the Bible.⁶⁰ Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:7, “Train yourself in godliness.” Freedom is not just a passive experience, but an active endeavor by believers. Hughes calls it, “directing energy towards godliness.”⁶¹ The disciplines are a means by which those who have been set free by God from sin and death can increasingly know Him more and better combat attacks that come

⁶⁰ David Helm, *One-to-One Bible Reading* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2016), 11.

⁶¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, Rev. ed. (Wheaton: Good News Publishing, 2001), 14.

against them. Attacks come from Satan and a person's selfish desires. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 of the intentional effort he made to overcome fleshly desires.

While many Christians are familiar with the spiritual disciplines mentioned above, most have not participated in others, such as fasting. In Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:29, Jesus tells the disciples that some victories can only be won through prayer and fasting. In Isaiah 58:6, God tells of fasting as a way of breaking chains of wickedness to set the oppressed free. Floyd calls the combination of prayer and fasting the "gateway to spiritual breakthroughs."⁶² Recovery ministries should faithfully teach about the powerful tools God has given to believers to live in freedom.

⁶² Ronnie Floyd, *The Power of Prayer and Fasting* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2010), 11.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND FOUNDATIONS

It is imperative to this project to understand the background of this author and the biblical foundations of helping people struggling with recovery related issues. This chapter will explore this author's personal testimony and background, his ministry setting and experience, biblical definitions of discipleship, spiritual disciplines, and addictions.

Personal Testimony and Background

This author grew up in a small town in East Texas called Pittsburg. He and his family lived in a rural area near a lake. His family was composed of father, mother, and one brother. They were fairly poor and lived in a small trailer house on ten acres of land.

On the outside many things looked great, but the interior details of their family painted a different picture. His father was addicted to alcohol, cigarettes, and a multitude of drugs. He had a hard time keeping a job for more than a year at a time. He was easily agitated and angered, especially when he was intoxicated or high.

The anger was usually unleashed on his mother. Never did his father abuse his brother or him, but it was a common occurrence for his father to beat his mother. There were times when the fights and arguments were so frequent that as soon as a cross word was said, his brother and he would put everything down, go to their shared bedroom, and shut the door. It was a response of habit developed out of experience.

Most of the time the arguments would only be yelling and screaming, but there were many times the brothers would hear a muted slap come through the thin walls of their room. The yelling would stop and then they could hear the muffled sobs of their mother. At other times, it was not one hit but many. These were the nights where their mother would try to put up a fight

against their drunken father and he was beating the resistance out of her. Other times, the brothers would feel the whole house shutter and rock as their mother was pushed or thrown against a wall of the home.

The abuse was not limited to just physical things. There were lots of verbal, emotional, and mental abuse that took place as well. His father did not like anyone second guessing or challenging his decisions. If anyone in the family did express a doubt or challenge to him, he would prove his rule over them by threatening to leave, ridiculing their ideas, or leveling a person attack against them.

Most of the money his father earned was used to support his drinking and drug habits. This made the family's financial situation even worse. They did not have a working hot water heater for about the first ten years of this author's life. Hot water for baths were heated in kettles on a stovetop and then poured in the tub to be mixed with water to get the right temperature. Things like this happened in several areas of life. His father was making a good income, but he was spending most of the money on things that were more important to him than his family at the time.

This author's mother was not only abused, but felt abandoned. This led to her relying on his brother and him to have adult conversations and make adult decisions. As early as six years old, this author would work with his grandfather during the summer mowing yards, cutting, splitting, and hauling firewood and pulpwood. As he got bigger and stronger, he actually started to make full wages for the work. There were times when the money he earned was needed to help pay bills or buy groceries since the family was essentially trying to live off of his mother's income which was significantly lower than his father's. He and his brother had to be the friend

to their mother that their father was supposed to be. As she felt abandoned, she formed an unhealthy relationship with them. They were the ones she would go to with her problems. They were the shoulder for her to cry on. They had to hear her doubts, fears, and anger about life situations. They also had to hear about the relationship problems between her and their father.

This lifestyle lasted for the first fourteen years of this author's life. He lived in constant fear of his father's anger and his mother's manipulation. He felt like he was trapped in a nightmare at times. He felt he was the cause of all of their problems. He thought that if he could somehow remove the problems in his family's life then his parent's relationship would be better. He became a go-between, at times, for his parents to keep them from arguing. He thought there were things he could do to solve his family's problems. He was wrong.

He began to resent both of his parents: his dad because of the addictions and his mom for not leaving and removing them from the situation. He resolved in his heart to never be a man like his father. He decided that he would never drink alcohol, do drugs, or hit a woman. His whole goal in life became to not be like his father.

When he was fourteen something amazing happened. After a particularly brutal fight, his mom decided enough was enough. She talked to his brother and him and they decided the course of action was for her to leave his dad. The police came that day to remove his father from the house peacefully. In the following weeks, he did not see his father much. In that time, his dad had been detoxing off of the drugs and began going to church. He received Christ as his Lord and Savior. Through Christ he was set free from all the substances he had been using: cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs.

Eventually, the marriage and family were restored. His dad began to be the spiritual leader of their home. He took them to church. This author accepted Christ when he was eighteen. His goal in life changed. No longer was he trying to resist becoming like his father. Instead, he sought to become like Christ.

It was some years later this author realized that while many of the problems growing up stemmed from his father's addictions, they were also an expression of deeper pains in both his mother and father's lives. His father's addictions and his mother's attachments were symptoms of deeper pains in their lives. His father did not have a good relationship with his family and at the age of nine years old began smoking marijuana which led to harder drugs soon thereafter. He was abused and left home at the age of fifteen. His mother had been abused and raped as a child and teenager. She learned to manipulate people with her emotions. She left home at the age of seventeen to be married to this author's father.

In the years that followed, the Lord revealed to this author that the pains of the early years of his life were going to be used for good to help others who are struggling with similar situations. His life was going to be a fulfillment of 2 Corinthians 1:4, which states, "He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God." God instilled a passion to help people be free from addictions and all the pain and far-reaching destruction that it brings.

Ministry Setting and Experience

The Lord called this author to the ministry when he was nineteen years old, but it was not until he was twenty-two years old that he surrendered fully to the call. He began to formally pursue seminary and higher education, but the Lord always kept on his heart the desire to help

those who are hurting. He tried to help every person come to know the redemption and healing that is found in Christ. He fully forgave his parents for the pain of his childhood.

God gave him an opportunity to serve as a youth pastor. He seemed to attract youth who were in broken families just like the one he grew up in. He helped them work through their own pain, disappointment, and fears using the Bible as the main source of counsel and discipleship with great success.

In July of 2012, he began serving on the board of The Biblical Wellness Center (BWC) in Borger, Texas. The BWC is a discipleship-based resident recovery ministry for men. Many of the men who enter the program have served jail or prison time. During their incarceration, they get clean from addictions. However, when they are released many of them have to enter back into a drug-using environment that their friends and family are still part of. The BWC offers them a safe environment coupled with intense biblical discipleship. Working with this organization helped teach this author how important recovery ministry is to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Currently, this author is the senior pastor of Wildwood Baptist Church in Mesquite, Texas. They are currently in the preparation stages of launching the first recovery ministry in the church's history. The main focus of this recovery ministry will be complete freedom found in Christ. Biblical discipleship and loving relationships are the foundation for helping people discover and deal with the root causes of their addictions, anger, anxiety, abuse, abandonment, and other assorted troubles. This project will be used to strengthen this new recovery ministry.

Discipleship

In order to understand Dirty Discipleship, one has to first understand the church's call to discipleship. Matthew 28:18-20 is the foundational passage about discipleship. In it believers are given one command in three parts. The command is to make disciples. The three parts are: going to all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe everything Christ has commanded. There are two reassurances given. The first is that Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. The second is that he promises to be with his disciples through the end of the age. This means that every believer is part of the overall mission of making disciples and he has the confidence in the authority and assistance of Christ while on the mission.

The term used by Jesus when he said, "Make disciples" is the Greek word, *mathetes*.⁶³ The most basic meaning of this word is "learner."⁶⁴ This was a term used of students of rabbis. The students would follow the rabbi, learning from him, and they were expected to respond as the rabbi would respond.⁶⁵ Chan notes, "It's impossible to be a disciple or follower of someone and not end up like that person."⁶⁶ Barna defines discipleship as the "intentional training of people who voluntarily submit to the lordship of Christ and who want to become imitators of

⁶³ William D. Mounce, ed. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 183.

⁶⁴ Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 2nd ed. (Pawley's Island, SC: 3 Dimension Ministries, 2011), 21.

⁶⁵ Francis Chan, *Multiply* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2012), 16.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Him in every thought, word, and deed.”⁶⁷ Discipleship is observed in the relationship an apprentice has with a master craftsman, he is not there to learn academic knowledge, but practical skills. The disciple of Jesus is learning skills of faith in relation to God, world, and self.⁶⁸

In essence, discipleship is an intentional process of helping people become more like their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The foundation for discipleship is the Word and Spirit of God. The Word, the Bible, provides the recording of God’s revelation of himself to humanity to bring about eternal redemption from sin.⁶⁹ It is to be used as an instructional guide to in helping people grow in Christlikeness.⁷⁰ The Holy Spirit of God is the indwelling presence of God within every believer.⁷¹ God promised in Ezekiel 36:26-27, “I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances.” It is the Spirit that provides internal understanding, guidance, and the ability to obey the commands of Christ.⁷² He

⁶⁷ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples* (Colorado Springs, WaterBrook Press, 2001), 17.

⁶⁸ Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 17.

⁶⁹ Howard Hendricks and William Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, Rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 22.

⁷⁰ Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 311.

⁷¹ Charles C Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 409.

⁷² Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 258.

is also the manifestation of God's power within the disciple that gives the believer the ability to overcome trials, forces, and struggles which are otherwise unconquerable.⁷³

Discipleship should be understood to be a lifelong process where a follower of Christ progressively learns, through the instruction found, externally in the Bible and internally through the Spirit, how to be an accurate representative of Jesus Christ. Where in all of this can recovery be seen? How does it all relate to the subject at hand?

Recovery is seen as an essential part of the Great Commission for discipleship in the examples and commands of Christ. Since discipleship is about Jesus' followers becoming more like him, then believers have the obligation to look at their Lord and imitate him. As he is their Lord, they have the obligation to obey him.

Christ exemplified recovery ministry by his incarnation, death, resurrection, and indwelling of believers. First, in his incarnation, he left the good life in heaven to come down into the messiness of humanity. Philippians 2:5-7a states, "Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men." Just as Christ left the goodness and perfection of heaven to save sinners, so his followers need to lay down their own lives in order to help people who are hurting. Recovery related issues are where people are hurting the most. Christians, if they

⁷³ Walter Elwell, ed, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 569.

follow Jesus, follow him into the messiness and dirtiness of this world with the goal of rescuing the lost so they too can go and join Jesus on his rescue mission.

Not only did Jesus have to meet mankind where they were, he also died in order that all people may have access to salvation. Paul, in Philippians 2:7b-8, continues about Christ's example, "And when He had come as a man in His external form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Jesus gives the example of dying to self in order to rescue others. Believers, in imitating Christ, then have to die to themselves in order to rescue others. Many modern-day Christians have reduced the value of Jesus' atoning death by believing that he died only so they can dress up, go to church, and give an offering on a weekly basis. Christ died for much more than this. He died so that sinners can be redeemed. He commanded his followers to exemplify his death in Matthew 16:24, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." Disciples are not saved for their own benefit; they are saved so they can join Jesus on his mission of saving souls. In order to do this, disciples have to die to self. Believers have to die to themselves in order to help others know the true freedom that only comes through Christ.

In Christ's resurrection, he was raised back to life. It is clearly pictured in baptism: believers have died to sin and have been raised to new life in Christ. This new life comes with new goals. No longer was it a life lived in selfishness, but now this new life is about the Lord's business. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Paul writes,

"Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; certain God is appealing through us, we plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.'"

The new life that comes for believers at the moment of their salvation is a life that is to be lived in pursuit of those who do not know Christ yet, who are trapped in sin, and who are struggling to find God in the midst of their mess. Recovery related issues are the areas where people are trapped and where they are struggling to find God in the midst of their mess. Too often the church has not been a place of healing for people in these battles, but has been an area of new attacks. Christians are called to die to self and use the new life they have in Christ to go into the ugliness of this world to guide out those who are still trapped.

Recovery ministry is also seen in how Christ indwells believers through the Holy Spirit. Indwelling means that Christ makes his home with his followers. He has not sent them on a journey alone, but he is always there with them. In the Great Commission he said he was going to be with them always. He knew they had a battle ahead of them. He was not going to let them face it alone. If Christians imitate Christ, then they will come alongside others who are facing battles and be a friend on the hard journey to freedom before them. Recovery ministry is a way for Christians to reassure those who are seeking freedom that they will always have a friend in their corner, fighting for their greatest good. This ongoing relationship is vital to discipleship at all levels.⁷⁴

World's Definitions of Addictions

The world and the Bible define many things differently. In the arena of recovery, there is no exception. In this section and the one to follow, the world's definitions of addictions will be

⁷⁴ Larry Kreider, *Building Your Life on the Basic Truths of Christianity* (Shippensburg: PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2009), 261.

compared those of the Word of God. The reason for this comparison is to understand and discern the differences between what the world and the Bible teach about the causes of addictions. Correctly diagnosing the cause is essential in successfully helping someone through recovery. Many Christians have adopted a postmodern worldview. This has led to Christians subjectively selecting the parts of the Bible they want to believe and obey. Without an objective understanding of truth, Christians cannot operate in reality.⁷⁵ If worldly explanations of the cause of addictions are accepted then worldly solutions will be pursued. Essentially, the world proposes that humanity's problems are external in nature and the addict holds little to no responsibility. Consequently, it then proposes that the solution is found somewhere inside the person. The four primary definitions of addictions relate to disease, genetics, brain chemistry, and environment.

Disease

The world primarily teaches that addictions are a chronic disease which require a lifetime of management and treatment.⁷⁶ As stated earlier, there is no evidence for this conclusion. There are no blood tests or scans to determine if a person is addicted to something. In addition,

⁷⁵ Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 362.

⁷⁶ "Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: The Science of Addiction," National Institute on Drug Abuse, accessed July 1, 2016, <https://drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/treatment-recovery>

no medical cures have been produced either.⁷⁷ Instead, the primary motive behind labeling addictions as diseases is to remove the guilt associated with the addiction.⁷⁸

There are some unintended consequences to people believing they have a disease. First, they trust doctors as if they are infallible beings like unto God. Second, they now believe they have a cancer-like disease that has happened to them without any assistance of their own. It creates a victim mentality. Third, it alters the person's self-view or self-identity. They believe they are forever an addict. Fourth, viewing addiction as a disease can actually undermine self-confidence and the will to change because the addicted person believes they cannot and eventually should not fight who they really are.⁷⁹ In Alcoholics Anonymous, the first step requires members admit they are powerless over alcohol.⁸⁰ If one is powerless, then what is the motive to fight to be free?

The world also separates alcoholism from addictions to other substances. However, alcoholism is also an addiction. The person addicted to alcohol is addicted to the substance, ethyl alcohol or ethanol, that is found in all alcoholic beverages.⁸¹ The only reason for separating alcoholism from other addictions appears to be that alcoholism is much more common and easily assessable. However, Shaw notes, just because a drug is in liquid form does not mean

⁷⁷ Asher and Asher, *Guide to Psychological Terms*, 10.

⁷⁸ Shaw, *Heart of Addiction*, 14.

⁷⁹ Myers, *Psychology*, 8th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2007), 298.

⁸⁰ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1981), 21.

⁸¹ Ronald J. Comer, *Fundamentals of Abnormal Psychology*, 6th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2011), 287.

that it stops being a drug.⁸² Viewing addictions as diseases and separating alcoholism from other addictions impede the recovery process.

Genetics

The genetics model presents that people are born with certain genes that predetermine them being an addict. The genetics model is similar to the disease model in that it is something that happened outside of the control of the person and, therefore, they are not ultimately responsible for their own addiction. It is true that addictions can be influenced by multiple genetic traits, however, genes do not produce behavior.⁸³ They can predispose people to certain tendencies, but there is no evidence that they determine behavior. As Clinton and Hawkins note, “Susceptibility does not necessarily imply inevitability.”⁸⁴ Clinton and Scalise observe, “If genetics and biology were all encompassing, no one would ever be able to use free choice to move toward recovery.”⁸⁵

Brain Chemistry

The latest development within the medical community is to examine brain chemistry as the primary cause of addictions. If brain chemistry is the cause of behavior, then the person doing the behavior should not be held responsible. In today’s world, almost everything is being blamed on the chemistry of the brain. The problem with much of the research surrounding brain

⁸² Shaw, *Heart of Addiction*, ix.

⁸³ James McDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Stephen Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 129.

⁸⁴ Clinton and Hawkins, *Popular Encyclopedia*, 376.

⁸⁵ Clinton and Scalise, *Addictions and Recovery Counseling*, 10.

chemistry as it relates to addictions is that addicts are only studied after they become addicted. The question then arises as to whether the chemistry in that person's brain was that way from the beginning or was shaped by the addiction?

It is a well-known fact that addictions can change the chemistry of the brain. For instance, people can develop a tolerance and physical dependence upon substances.⁸⁶ Tolerance is when the substance produces chemicals in the brain, primarily dopamine, and over time more of the substance is required to produce the same levels.⁸⁷ Therefore, more of the substance has to be taken to produce the same effects.⁸⁸

Dependence is when a person has habitually introduced new levels of chemicals into the brain either through ingesting substances or participating in a behavior. The body adapts and becomes accustomed to the new levels of chemicals. The body accepts these new levels as normal.⁸⁹ The body is dependent on the chemicals and levels of the chemicals. When the chemical is removed, the body produces negative physical symptoms in a wide range of ways. Some are as simple as nausea, sweating, or disorientation, while others are as severe as hallucinations, seizures, vomiting, psychosis, or even death.⁹⁰ So while brain chemistry plays an

⁸⁶ Comer, *Abnormal Psychology*, 286.

⁸⁷ Tim Clinton and George Ohlschlager, Eds., *Competent Christian Counseling*, vol. 1 (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2002), 142-147.

⁸⁸ John Santrock, *Adolescence*, 12th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2008), 475.

⁸⁹ Asher and Asher, *Guide to Psychological Terms*, 4.

⁹⁰ Chris Prentiss, *The Alcoholism and Addiction Cure: A Holistic Approach to Total Recovery* (Los Angeles: Power Press, 2007), 24.

important part in addictions, it has not been proven whether it is the cause or the results of addictions.

Environment

The world also proposes that addictions are primarily a function of nurture and the environment in which one was raised or resides. For instance, Santrock proposes that some adolescents take drugs to escape the harsh realities of their world.⁹¹ Others may use drugs as a means of rebelling against social norms or laws. Some take drugs to gain the approval of their peers.⁹² Even when parents warn against drug abuse because of their own negative experiences, many teenagers will disregard these warnings through what is called generational forgetting.⁹³

Another expression is through generational reoccurrence. This is when a younger generation adopts the addictive practices of the previous generations. It is a game of imitation. This is the reason why certain addictions seem to run in some families.

While environment can play a large part in the development of an individual including their exposure to behaviors or substances, it is not the primary cause. Clinton and Sibcy, in their study of attachment theory, observe that environment and parental relationships have a tremendous impact upon the individual, but also note that these are not completely determinant or irreversible.⁹⁴ There are many people who have been raised in negative environments who

⁹¹ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 474.

⁹² Kathleen Berger, *The Developing Person*, 7th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2008), 385.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁹⁴ Tim Clinton and Gary Sibcy, *Why You Do the Things You Do* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 13-14.

have not become addicts. Many had poor examples lived out for them by their parents or grandparents, yet chose to live their lives a different way.

Biblical Definitions of Addictions

While the world has put forth many definitions and causes of addictions, it ignores biblical teachings and the importance of the spiritual aspect of every person. The Bible does not present addictions as diseases, genetics, brain chemistry, or the product of environment. Instead, it presents addictions in the terms of slavery to sin, drunkenness, idolatry, and spiritual strongholds.

The Bible offers hope for freedom from these through the revelation of Christ and redemption found in his completed work.⁹⁵ Hope comes from the general understanding of the cause of addictions and the source of healing. The world says the problem is external to the addict, and the solution is found within. This only gives the addict another thing to blame other than his own choices. It perpetuates a victim mentality and a blame orientation.⁹⁶ The Bible presents that the ultimate source of the world's problems is found in the dysfunction of a sinful and fallen humanity. Individuals act out their own rebellion towards God and his designed order. Therefore, the cause of addictions is not outside the individual, but within their own sinful heart. Hope is found in the trust that healing does not come from within, but, externally, through the completed work of Jesus Christ.

⁹⁵ Tim Clinton and John Trent, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Marriage and Family Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 20.

Slavery to Sin

Addictions are simply an outworking of the sin nature that is part of every person.⁹⁷ In John 8:34, Jesus says, “Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.” First John 3:4 states, “Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law.” Romans 3:23 tells how every person is sinner, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The root of sin is found in the human heart.⁹⁸

Sin is a human problem. Welch notes, “the addiction experience is the human experience.”⁹⁹ Wilkerson explains the disastrous effects of sin. It is a personal offense against the Creator. It distorts the distinction between Creator and created. It erodes awareness of living in the presence of God. It corrupts the image of God in mankind and treats it with contempt. It corrupts worship. It spoils peace.¹⁰⁰

Slavery to sin means to be under its control. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 2:19, “People are enslaved to whatever overcomes them.” This is nearly a perfect description of addiction. The substance, habit, or process that once promised to be a savior has now become an unrelenting tyrant, demanding more and more while returning less and less. Wilkerson calls it “voluntary

⁹⁷ Dan Lightsey, *Grace Overcomers Addiction Ministry* (Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing and Enterprises, 2010), 25.

⁹⁸ J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, Eds., *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 946.

⁹⁹ Welch, *Addictions*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Wilkerson, *Redemption*, 31.

slavery.”¹⁰¹ While it should be noted that no person begins using a substance or participating in a bad habit with the goal of becoming addicted, they did have a choice in the matter at least in the beginning. Over time the choice became easier and easier to make until it came almost automatically.

Drunkenness

Many people believe the Bible does not speak to addictions. However, it does speak quiet often to a certain type of addiction that is the prototype of all other addictions: drunkenness. Proverbs 23:29-35 provides an accurate description of the alcoholic:

Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
 Who has conflicts? Who has complaints?
 Who has wounds for no reason?
 Who has red eyes?
 Those who linger over wine, those who go looking for mixed wine.
 Don't gaze at wine when it is red, when it gleams in the cup and goes down smoothly.
 In the end it bites like a snake and stings like a viper.
 Your eyes will see strange things, and you will say absurd things.
 You'll be like someone sleeping out at sea or lying down on the top of a ship's mast.
 "They struck me, but I feel no pain! They beat me, but I did not know it! When will I wake up? I'll look for another drink."

Drunkenness throughout the Bible is described as foolishness. In 1 Corinthians 5:11 and 6:9-10, drunkenness is listed alongside other sins such as sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, and adultery. In Galatians 5:19-21 it is listed as one of the obvious works of the flesh, another phrase for sin. It is contrasted against the fruit of the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul exhorts believers, "And do not get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions,

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 35.

but be filled with the Spirit.” If one understands alcoholism to be a form of addiction and drunkenness to be a biblical description of it, then it is easy to see addictions spoken of throughout the Bible.

Idolatry

Idolatry is another theme that is found throughout Scripture that is an accurate description of addictions. Webster’s defines idolatry as “the worship of a physical object as god” and “excessive devotion.”¹⁰² This definition is limited to only physical objects, but in reality, an idol can be any number of things like expectations, thoughts, memories, or fears. In Ezekiel 14:3, God tells the prophet about the idols of the heart. Addictions can easily be considered idols, but the idolatry is not to the substance or habit, but to something deeper which emanates from the person’s heart.

Essentially, addictions are a demonstration of devotion to a false savior. There was pain or disappointment that caused the person to seek relief. The substance or habit provided a temporary rescue from the pain so they repeatedly returned to their savior. As the process continued, they eventually realized they were no longer in control. Their false savior had now become lord over their life and demanded full submission. Chandler and Snetzer propose that idols are means of attempted redemption. They put them into four broad categories: self, others,

¹⁰² *Webster’s New Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Popular Publishing Company, 2001), 257.

the world, and religion.¹⁰³ As people seek rescue and redemption, they often run to things that can never provide true relief.

Welch notes that no one seeks an idol in order to be enslaved to it, instead, they seek an idol for their own benefit, to use the idol for their own will, not to bow to its will.¹⁰⁴ The problem with idols is they do not cooperate, instead they seek to conquer.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the person who seeks pleasure from an idol and bows their will to it finds out that it is a greater power than they first realized and it wants to be in control.¹⁰⁶

The power behind all idols is Satan himself. Idols are a means through which he can steal, kill, and destroy those who are created in the image of God. In 1 Corinthians 10:20 Paul tells the Corinthian church that those who sacrifice to idols are sacrificing to demons. Demons are under the control of Satan. Satan wants worship.

Spiritual Strongholds

Not only are addictions seen in the definitions of slavery to sin, drunkenness, and idolatry, but there is also a deeper spiritual connection. Addictions are also spiritual strongholds. A stronghold is a fortified place that is used as a refuge or fortress.¹⁰⁷ One would run to a

¹⁰³ Chandler and Snetzer, *Recovering Redemption*, 25-36.

¹⁰⁴ Welch, *Addictions*, 49.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁰⁶ Todd Hunter, *Our Favorite Sins* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 19.

¹⁰⁷ Douglas and Tenney, *Bible Dictionary*, 967.

stronghold for protection, but an enemy's stronghold was particularly difficult to defeat as the defenses were great. Strongholds can be physical places or figurative ones.

In Galatians 5:20-21, idolatry and sorcery are connected in the list of the works of the flesh. The Greek word used for sorcery is *pharmakiea*.¹⁰⁸ It is used in the reference to the use of drugs in the worship of false gods. This leads to the indication that drugs are a gateway for spiritual influence. A way for Satan to gain access to a person's heart and mind.

Second Corinthians 10:3-4 Paul writes, "For though we live in the body, we do not wage war in an unspiritual way, since the weapons of our warfare are not worldly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds." This means that spiritual strongholds can only be conquered through spiritual means. Therefore, if addictions have become spiritual strongholds, then the most effective way to overcome them is on the spiritual level. This could be the reason that the last fruit listed in the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:23 is self-control. Shaw notes, "self is not the source of control, rather it is the object of control."¹⁰⁹ It is self being brought under control of the Holy Spirit. It is only the greater power of the Holy Spirit that can overcome the power and influence of demonic spirits in one's life.

Spiritual Disciplines

In the process of sanctification, God has given his children means of overcoming the flesh by saying, "No" to temptation and "Yes" to God. These are called spiritual disciplines. First Timothy 4:7 tells Christians to "train yourself in godliness." Spiritual disciplines are ways

¹⁰⁸ Clinton and Scalise, *Addictions and Recovery Counseling*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Mark Shaw, *Relapse: Biblical Prevention Strategies* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2011), 32.

of becoming godlier by knowing God better. Hughes refers to it as directing all of one's energy toward godliness.¹¹⁰

Disciplines are needed to overcome any recovery related issue. There are a few disciplines that are focused on more than others in Christian circles. Bible study, worship, and prayer are the ones that get the most attention. These are the ones that are essential to the Christian walk. They are the ways for a person to interact with God. Through this interaction intimacy is developed.¹¹¹ Without intimacy with God, Christianity is simply another religion. Swindoll observes, "It is so easy to get religious instead of godly."¹¹² Intimacy with God requires effort and action on the part of the believer. Without intimacy with God, religion is at best moralism and at worst destructive legalism.¹¹³

While worship, study, and prayer get the most attention, they are not the only disciplines the Bible mentions. There are at least twelve other disciplines, that include, in addition to the ones previously mentioned, meditation, fasting, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, guidance, and celebration. Different scholars have different lists. Willard adds to the above list silence, frugality, chastity, secrecy, fellowship, and sacrifice while subtracting meditation, simplicity, and guidance.¹¹⁴ The goal is not to come up with an exhaustive list of

¹¹⁰ Hughes, *Disciplines*, 14.

¹¹¹ Charles R Swindoll, *The Owner's Manual for Christians* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 77.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 78.

¹¹³ Foster, *Discipline*, 8.

¹¹⁴ Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines*, 158.

disciplines, but rather to see the disciplines as a means to experience freedom in Christ.¹¹⁵ Each of these disciplines can have a powerful impact on the recovery process.

For this project, two disciplines are of particular interest: submission and fasting. Submission may also be called surrender. Dyslin calls surrender an act of total abandonment to the will of God.¹¹⁶ He proposes that spiritual surrender with the incorporation of confession is “the key agent of change in recovery from substance abuse and addiction.”¹¹⁷ Swindoll notes that letting go is a vital prerequisite of faithfully moving forward with God.¹¹⁸ As one surrenders to God, he naturally submits to the will of God and to the value and authority of other people.¹¹⁹ Fletcher notes that the only acceptable type of surrender to God is unconditional surrender where one’s own will is abandoned to the will of the Father.¹²⁰

Fasting is a discipline that is almost completely neglected in American Christianity today. It, like almost every other discipline, has been abused and misrepresented to the point that many people have abandoned it as a purely ascetic practice. Fasting is the biblical practice of

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 157.

¹¹⁶ Christopher Dyslin, “The Power of Powerlessness: The Role of Spiritual Surrender and Interpersonal Confession in the Treatment of Addiction,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 27, no. 1 (2008): 47.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹¹⁸ Swindoll, *Owner’s Manual*, 116.

¹¹⁹ Foster, *Discipline*, 112.

¹²⁰ William Fletcher, *The Triumph of Surrender* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2013), 139-141.

abstaining from food with a spiritual goal in mind.¹²¹ When coupled with prayer, study, and worship, fasting has been a gateway to major movements of God.¹²²

The Bible presents fasting as a means by which some battles are won. In Matthew 17:21, after Jesus casts out a demon which the disciples had been unsuccessful in exercising, he tells them, “This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.” The indication here is that some spiritual battles can only be won when coupled with the desperate seeking of God through fasting.

In Isaiah 58:6, God tells his people that the fast he chooses for them is to “break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke.” This means that fasting is a means through which God brings victory over things that oppress his people. This means fasting may be a key for some people to experience true freedom in recovery.

Confidence in the Gospel for Salvation and Sanctification

The last foundational issue that needs examining is the confidence in the Gospel of Christ for salvation as well as sanctification. Christians tend to believe Ephesians 2:8-9 easily, “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift, not from works, so that no one can boast.” This verse is trusted to mean that salvation comes only through the grace of God, not the good works of the believer.

¹²¹ Floyd, *Prayer and Fasting*, 4.

¹²² Towns, *Fasting for a Miracle*, 27-36.

However, a different story is told when it comes to sanctification. Sanctification is the process of increasingly becoming more holy, set apart for Christ.¹²³ While most do not believe in a work-based salvation, many Christians fall into the trap of believing a works-based righteousness. In their pursuit of transformation, they place all the attention on their own power to change instead of Christ's power to transform them. This sets them up for disappointment.

Recovery ministry is really all about the sufficiency of Christ to not only save, but to also to transform through salvation. It is his work within the heart of the believer to transform from the inside out. The believer is an active participant in the process, but not the determining power. The same Gospel that saved the person's soul is the one that transforms their life to bring freedom and holiness. If there is no confidence in the Gospel for sanctification, then the believer will adopt worldly avenues of self-help and self-actualization "to do one's best at a purely human level."¹²⁴

If a person resorts to self-effort in the process of recovery rather than trust and faith in Christ, they will fail. When they fail over and over again, their confidence in the power of God is weakened and their confidence in sin is strengthened. They begin thinking their sin is bigger than God's redemptive power.¹²⁵

The Bible tells a different story, however. Christians are commanded to be sanctified in 1 Thessalonians 4:3. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:30, "But it is from Him that you are in Christ

¹²³ Douglas and Tenney, *Bible Dictionary*, 894.

¹²⁴ Stanton Jones and Richard Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 57.

¹²⁵ Chandler and Snetzer, *Recovering Redemption*, 64.

Jesus, who became God-given wisdom for us, our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” Second Corinthians 5:21 states, “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” There are many other verses and passages that point to the same conclusion: Christ is sufficient for salvation and sanctification.

It is upon these backgrounds and foundations that this project is built. These understandings have shaped and developed this author to help people who are struggling with recovery related issues. The sufficiency of Christ is the power behind all healing, change, and transformation.

CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH SURVEY

Methodology

The methodology used in this research survey was a quantitative and qualitative analysis of how people view recovery ministry. This anonymous survey was shared via Facebook to this author's friends beginning July 27, 2016. The survey remained open for one month and closed on Aug. 27, 2016. The survey consisted of forty-one questions, the first of which was the consent to participate. The purpose of the survey was to understand how people view recovery ministries, in general, as well as in relation to discipleship and spiritual disciplines. The potential participants received a recruitment letter from the author along with contact information for Liberty University and Dr. Hicks, the mentor for this project. The total amount of participants was seventy-seven, which fell short of the goal of one hundred.

This chapter is an overall presentation of the research survey. It includes the author's hypothesis, a detailed presentation and analysis of the collected data, and a summary of the data. The complete set of survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

Hypothesis

This author's hypothesis is that most churches do not believe recovery ministry is an essential part of the Great Commission. He expected participants to agree with recovery ministry in principle, but fall short of practical participation. He also expected participants to have a limited exposure to spiritual disciplines. It is likely the spiritual disciplines they have been exposed to primarily centered around worship, prayer, and Bible study. The belief in the power of spiritual disciplines to help a person in recovery from addictions was expected to be minimal amongst participants.

Collected Data

The first question was the consent to participate. All respondents consented to participate. Part of the consent form was the understanding that they could discontinue the survey at any point. There were several who did this before the end of the survey. The question with the lowest responses was question 20 which only had 60 people answer it.

The next eleven questions of the survey were primarily related to demographics. Question two asked about the gender of the participant. The distribution was 78% female and 22% male. This distribution may be statistically significant and will be considered when interpreting the data in the next chapter.

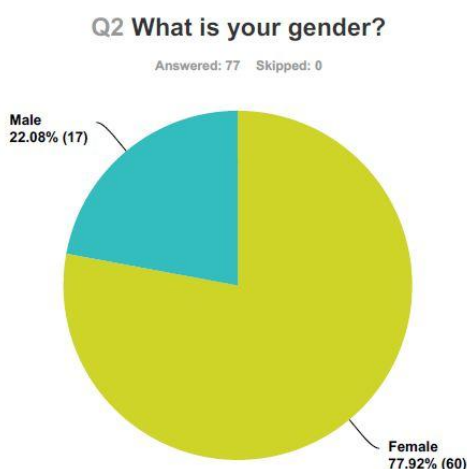


Figure 1 - Q2: Gender

Question three covered the age of each participant. The ages were well dispersed. Participants had to be at least eighteen years old to participate. Ages were condensed into groupings with the following distribution: 18-24 (9%), 25-34 (21%), 35-44 (28%), 45-54 (17%), 55-64 (21%), and 65-74 years old (4%). The largest concentration of combined groups was 25-44 years old at 49%. There were no participants over 75 years old.

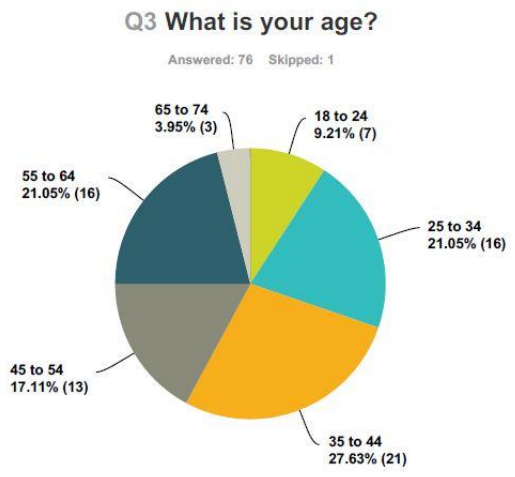


Figure 2 - Q3: Age

Question four asked about ethnicity. The overwhelming amount (88%) of participants were white/Caucasian. The remaining responders were American Indian/Alaska Native (3%), Asian/Pacific Islander (1%), Hispanic (7%), and Other (1%). An unfortunate result is that no Black/African American people participated in the survey. The reason for this absence is unknown as many African American people are friends with this author and were invited to participate.

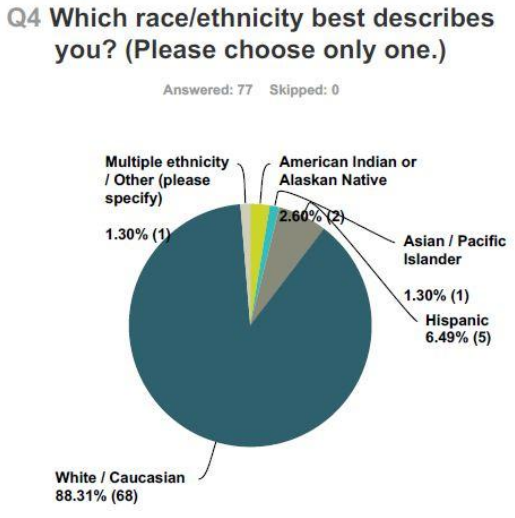


Figure 3 - Q4: Race/Ethnicity

Question five described relationship status. The largest category was married at 71%. Next was single and never married at 16%. Third, divorced at 8%. Widowed represented 3% of responses. Lastly, people who are single, but cohabitating with a significant other and those who are separated both represented 1%.

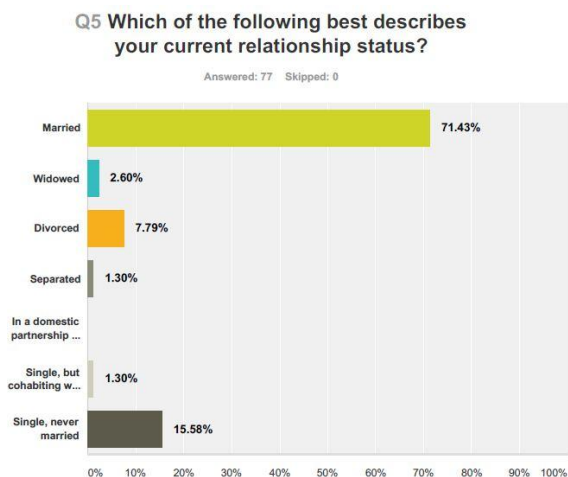


Figure 4 - Q5: Relationship Status

The participants' level of education was explored in question six. There was a good distribution amongst higher education. Those who have at least some college all the way through a graduate degree made up 90% of the participants. The highest concentration was those who hold a bachelor's degree (30%).

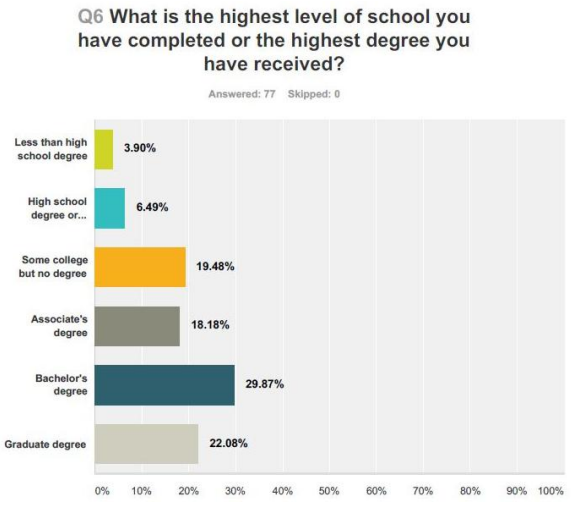


Figure 5 - Q6: Education

When categorizing their spiritual beliefs in question seven, 86% stated they were born-again followers of Jesus Christ. This percentage is a little low because there were 10 respondents who categorized their belief as “Other.” Six of those ten specified their beliefs as some form of Christianity by either listing their denomination or simply stating they are Christian. One person responded that they are agnostic/skeptic in their beliefs. This means for all practical purposes this survey was taken by mostly Christians.

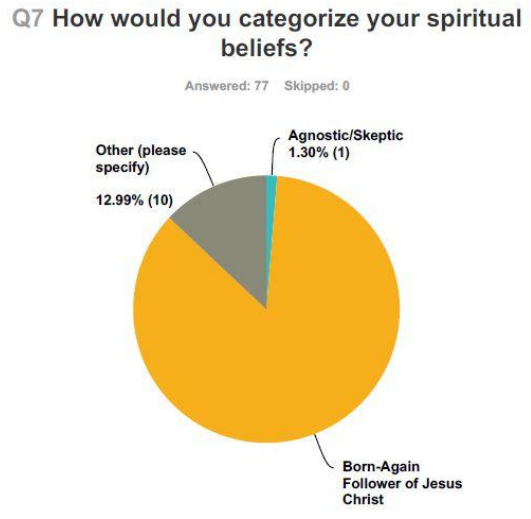


Figure 6 - Q7: Spiritual Beliefs

Question eight asked about the size of the congregation of the participants' churches. The greatest percentage of people come from churches with the size of 100-499 (53%). The second greatest go to churches with under 100 people in average attendance (22%). The smallest concentration was those whose church is 500-999 people in attendance (4%). People who attend churches who congregation size is greater than 1,000 represented 12% of participants. Nine percent answered "Not Applicable."

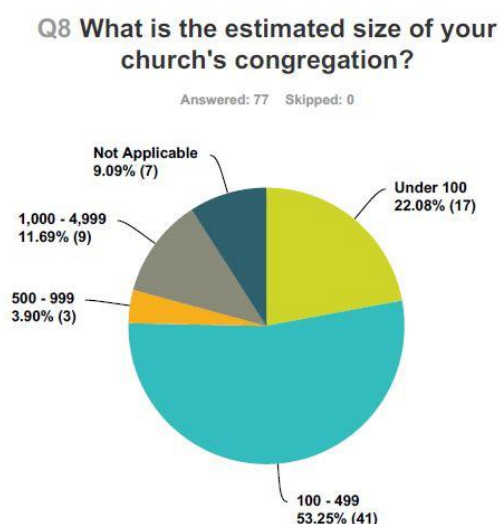


Figure 7 - Q8: Size of Church

Question nine asked about the participants' denomination. Most were Baptist (63%). The second largest category was Non-Denominational (12%). The remaining participants were dispersed between Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Catholic, and Other.

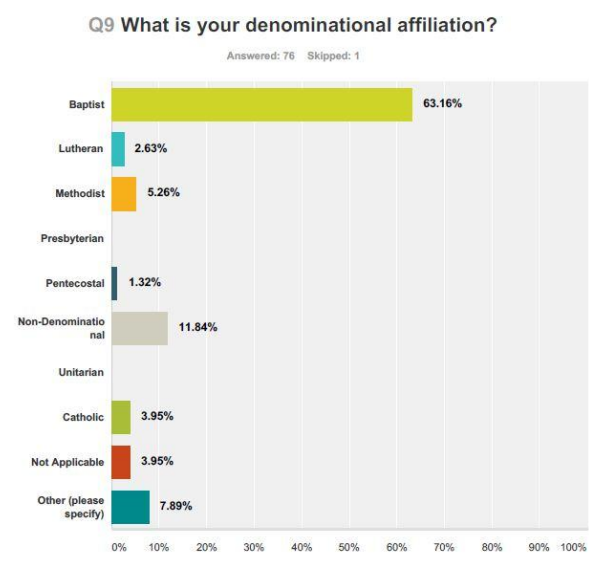


Figure 8 - Q9: Denomination

Most of the participants attend church weekly (73%). The next largest group are those who reported they attend occasionally, but with little to no regularity (14%). Seven percent attend monthly. The last two categories are: do not attend (5%) and major holidays only (1%). This means that while most of the participants are being influenced regularly by church, over 20% do not attend or do not attend with considerable regularity.

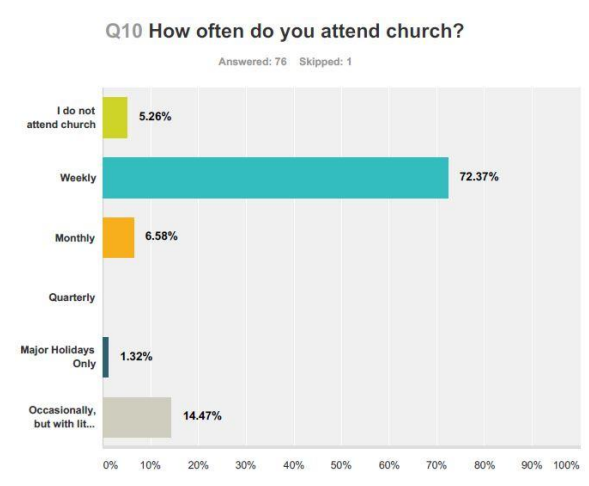


Figure 9 - Q10: Church Attendance

Question eleven asked whether the participants church offered a recovery ministry. As expected, most (50%) answered that their church does not offer any kind of recovery ministry. Twenty-two percent listed “Other” with respondents specifying one of the following: a different program than was offered as one of the answer choices, their church is in the process of beginning a ministry, their church refers people to other churches which have a recovery ministry, or they were not sure.

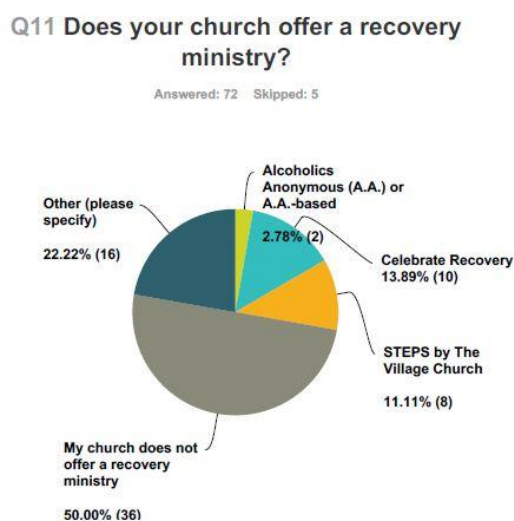


Figure 10 - Q11: Recovery Ministry

The vast majority of the people who responded to question twelve indicated they do not participate in recovery ministry (88%) as indicated by the responses to question twelve. This is not surprising given the response to question eleven. The remaining responses indicated 5% have attended a recovery ministry, 4% have served as a leader, and 3% have served as a mentor.

Q12 Do you participate in recovery ministry?

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2

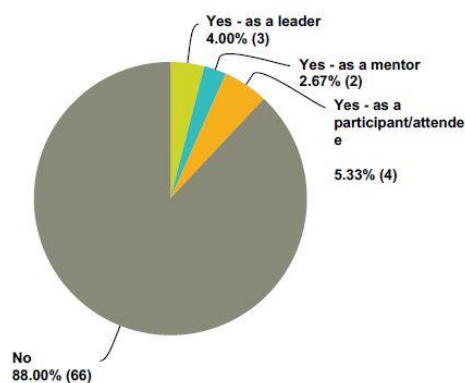


Figure 11 - Q12: Participation in Recovery Ministry

The remaining questions of the survey sought participants' personal experiences or opinions related to recovery ministry, discipleship, and spiritual disciplines. This portion of the survey will likely yield the greatest results to understand people's perceptions related to the thesis project goals. Some sections of questions centered around specific topics. These will be explained as the question are presented. Each question will be presented and discussed based upon its order in the survey.

Question thirteen asked, "What prevents most churches from having recovery ministries?" The purpose behind this question was to discern what prevents churches from even participating with recovery ministry. The top response (37%) was lack of training, that many churches simply do not know how to help. The next highest (15%) was negative perception, that churches do not want to attract people struggling with these issues. Third was finances (14%), that churches cannot afford to have recovery ministries. Fourth most common response was "Other." There were some interesting answers given. Several answered that they were unsure or did not know why churches do not have recovery ministries. Some people stated that churches

do not want to that involved in a messy ministry. One person expressed congregational safety as the motive.

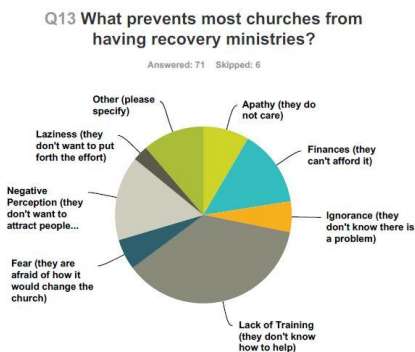


Figure 12 - Q13: What Prevents Recovery Ministry

Questions fourteen and fifteen asked about what kind of discipleship the participant's churches offered and what kind they have personally participated in. Each question had the same potential responses: Sunday morning sermons, regular Bible studies, discipleship classes, personal discipleship, not applicable, and other. Figure 13 shows the responses to what kind of discipleship churches offer. Figure 14 reveals the responses to the types of discipleship the participants have personal experience with. There is a noticeable decline between what churches are offering and participation.

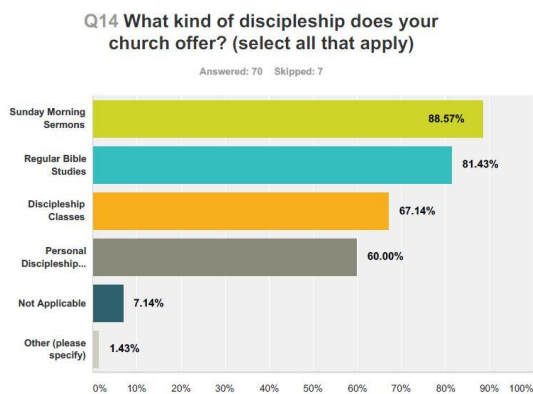


Figure 13 Q14: Discipleship Offered by Churches

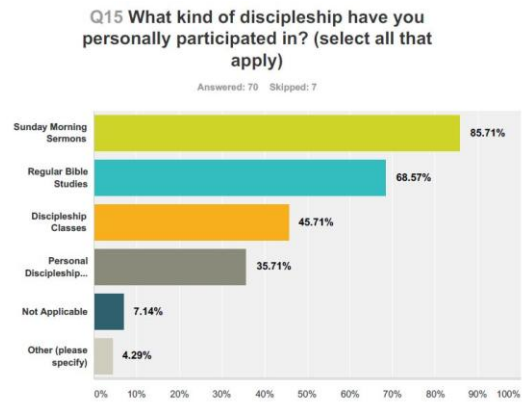


Figure 14 - Q15: Personal Experience with Discipleship

Question sixteen asked participants to rank how discipleship has impacted them personally. The possible responses were divided into two broad categories of positive and negative change. Each of the broad responses were divided into three sub-categories relating the change to only desires, only behavior, or desires and behaviors. Seventy-three percent reported positive change in desires and behaviors. The other positive changes were recorded as behaviors or habits only (13%) and desires only (1%). None of the participants stated that discipleship had impacted them negatively.

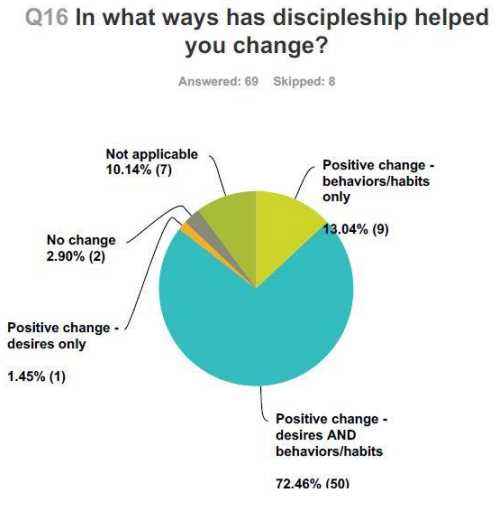


Figure 15 - Q16: Impact of Discipleship

Respondents indicated in questions seventeen and eighteen how discipleship has impacted their love and obedience to God. Fifty-six percent reported that discipleship has greatly increased their love for God. Forty-seven percent indicated that it has greatly increased their obedience to God. There were some who indicated that it only somewhat increased their love (31%) and obedience (37%). While some stated no change in love (6%) and obedience (10%), no one indicated that discipleship had decreased their love or obedience to God on any level.

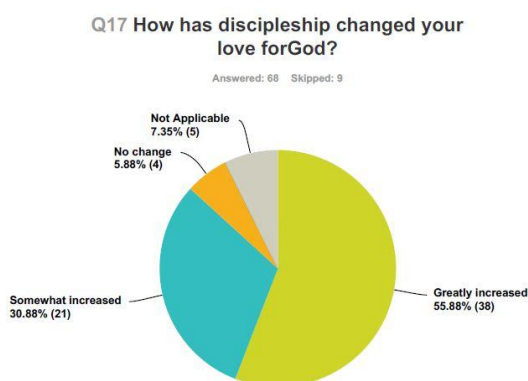


Figure 16 - Q17: Love for God

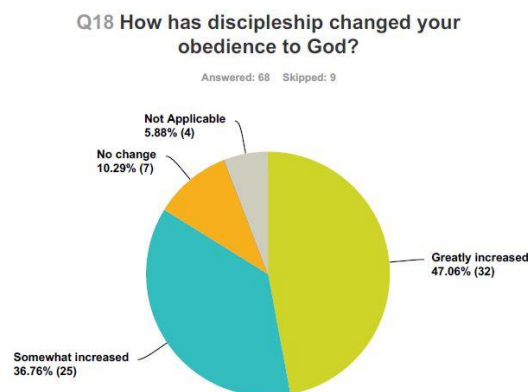


Figure 17 - Q18: Obedience to God

Question nineteen asked the point blank question of whether the participants believe recovery ministry is part of the Great Commission. An overwhelming majority (88%) responded

in the affirmative while 12% disagreed. It should be noted that only sixty-eight of the participants answered this question.

Q19 Do you believe recovery ministry is part of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 9

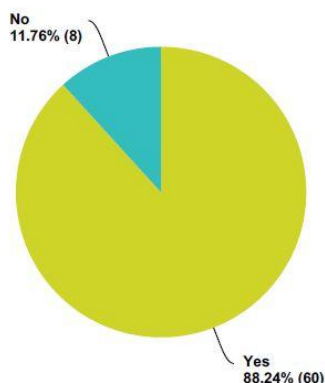


Figure 18 - Q19: Great Commission

Questions 20-23 deal with specific types of recovery related struggles: anxiety, anger, abandonment, abuse, addictions, and other. Question 20 asked how these relate to the participants' personal struggles. The top two responses were anxiety and anger. Figure 19 presents categories where participants have struggled. Two people specified under "Other" they have struggled with depression. One specified they did not struggle with any of these issues. It probably would have been wise to include an option of answering "None." There were 17 people who skipped this question. It is possible they did not feel they struggle with any of these issues or did not want to reveal their struggles.

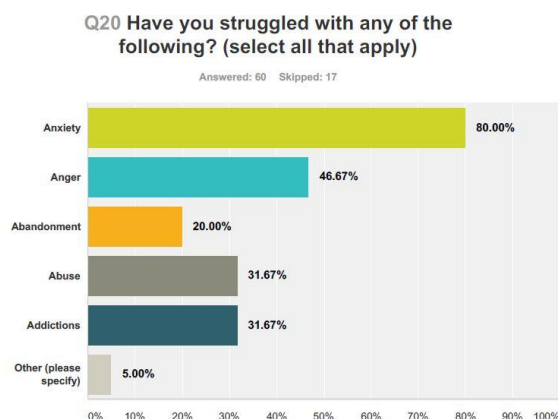


Figure 19 - Q20: Participants' Personal Struggles

Question 21 asked if the participants know anyone struggling with these issues.

Surprisingly, 89% reported they know someone who is struggling with addictions. This percentage is a little low because one person specified drug addiction under the “Other” option. If this one is incorporated into the addiction category, then it brings the percentage up to 91% of the respondents know someone who struggles with an addiction. The next highest category was anxiety at 86%. Anger was third with 82%. Abandonment was the lowest at 49%. Figure 20 demonstrates a considerable amount of the participants know someone who is struggling with recovery related issues.

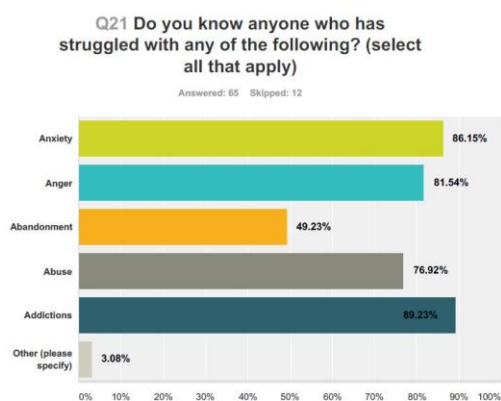


Figure 20 - Q21: Known Struggles of Others

Question 22 asked the participants to select the greatest struggle for people in society today. Addictions ranked the highest with 42%. The “Other” answers represent two categories: sin (8%) and apathy (6%). Figure 21 gives a visual how the other struggles were ranked.

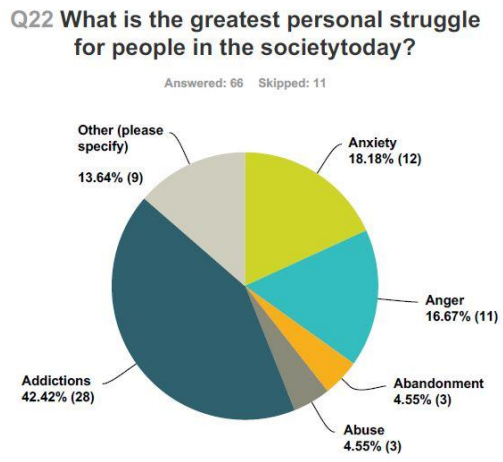


Figure 21 - Q22: Struggles in Society

Question 23 posed the same question as 22, but in application to the church. The highest ranking struggle in the church was anxiety (47%). The second highest was “Other” with the participants listing a wide range of answers such as apathy, sin, adultery, laziness, afraid of offending people, and judgment. Addictions came in third with 17%. Figure 22 shows how the rest of the answers were distributed.

Q23 What is the greatest personal struggle for people in the church today?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 11

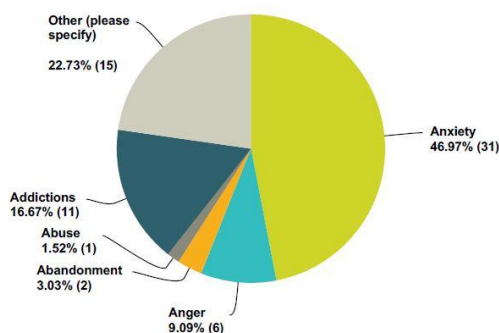


Figure 22 -Q23: Struggles in the Church

Questions 24-35 deal specifically with addictions. The greatest number of people who come to recovery ministries are dealing with addictions. While recovery ministry is not just about addictions, a large amount of the people who are helped by recovery ministries are those struggling in this area.

Question 24 asked the participants what they believed was the root cause of addictions. Thirty-four percent believe the root cause of addictions is spiritual in nature. There were several who specified sin when they checked “Other.” When these are added into the spiritual category, the percentage rises to 39% who believe the root cause is spiritual. Learned behavior was next with 24%. Two of the answers in the “Other” category fit the description of learned behavior. When they are accounted for it brings the percentage up to 27%. Next was peer pressure (15%) with disease coming in last (13%). Figure 23 shows this distribution.

Q24 What is the root cause of addictions?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 10

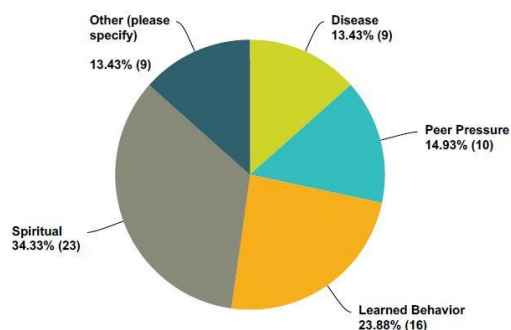


Figure 23 - Q24: Root Cause of Addictions

Question 25 asked the participants what they believed should be the primary source of help for someone struggling with an addiction. The potential answers were: willpower, profession counseling/therapy, medication, biblical counseling, and other. Biblical counseling scored the highest at 48%. When the explanations from the “Other” category are considered, the percentage goes up to 55.2%. Figure 24 shows the remaining distributions.

Q25 What should be the primary source of help for people to find healing and freedom from addictions?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 10

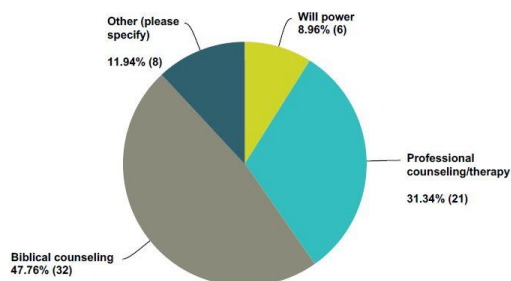


Figure 24 - Q25: Primary Source of Healing

Question 26 asked, “What is the most important area to treat to help someone find freedom from addictions?” Spiritual needs received the greatest number of responses at 49%.

Emotions and behavior scored the next highest at 13% with environment coming closely behind them at 12%. Figure 25 details the rest.

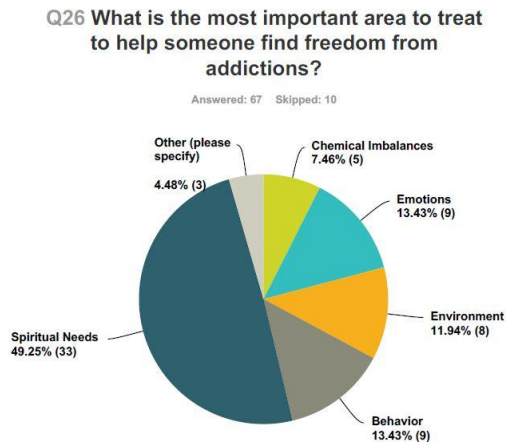


Figure 25 - Q26: Most Important Area of Treatment

Question 27 asked whether an addiction is the main problem or the symptom of a deeper, true problem. Overwhelmingly, the participants believe addictions are a symptom with 93% voting for that answer. Only 7% said they believed addictions were the true problem.

Q27 Are addictions the main problem or the symptom of the true problem?

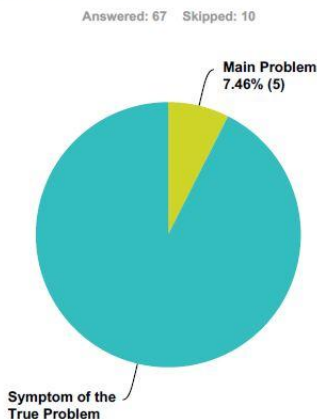


Figure 26 - Q27: Addictions

The purpose behind question 28 was to discover what level of freedom should be expected when suffering from an addiction. There were three options: incurable, controllable, or

conquerable. Conquerable received the greatest votes at 61%. However, when the “Other” answers were examined, they best fit into this answer and bring it up to 64%. Controllable was next with 36%. Encouragingly, no one believed addictions are incurable.

Q28 What level of healing and freedom from addictions can a person reasonably expect?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 10

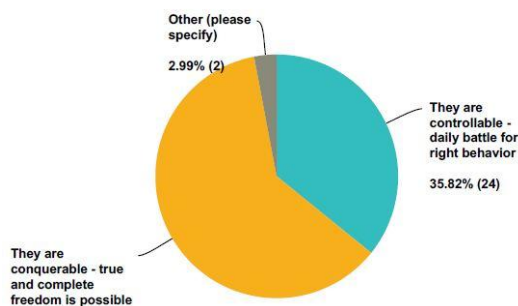


Figure 27 - Q28: Reasonable Expectation of Healing and Freedom

Question 29 looked into the influence that a person’s self-identity or self-view have on their recovery process. The participants expressed that self-view has an extreme influence on the recovery process. Only 12% believed it had a moderate effect. All the participants believe self-view has some level of influence on the recovery process as figure 28 demonstrates.

Q29 How much influence does someone's self-view have on their recovery process?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 10

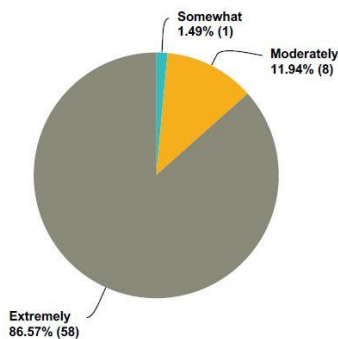


Figure 28 - Q29: Influence of Self-view

Question 30 builds upon the previous question by exploring the negative influences of certain self-views. The question was posed from the perspective of which self-view would most likely contribute to relapse. Three phrases about self-view were presented. The first is “I am an addict and I will always be an addict.” The second, “I am fragile and the addictions is only one bad choice away.” The third is “I am free and the addiction no longer controls me.” Figure 29 shows how the participants scored these. The majority (56%) believe the self-view of believing oneself to always be an addict was the most likely to contribute to relapse. Only 15% expressed that believing oneself to be free from addiction would lead to relapse.

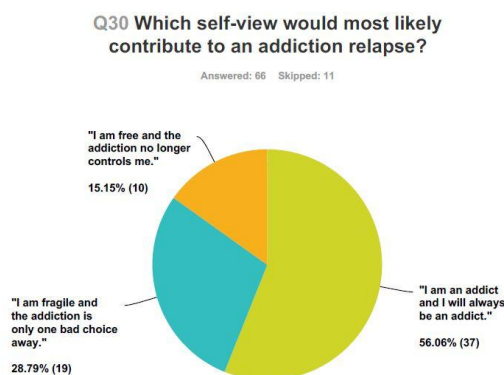


Figure 29 - Q30: Self-view and Relapse

Question 31 asked, “How equipped are most churches to help people find healing and recovery from addictions?” The top responses reveal that 83% of the participants believe churches are not at all (38%) or only somewhat (45%) equipped to help people with addictions. These responses reveal that few people have confidence that if they or someone they know needs help that the church is prepared to help them. Only 3% believe churches are extremely prepared. Fourteen percent believe churches are moderately equipped to help people with recovery. Figure 30 represents these numbers visually.

Q31 How equipped are most churches to help people find healing and recovery from addictions?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 11

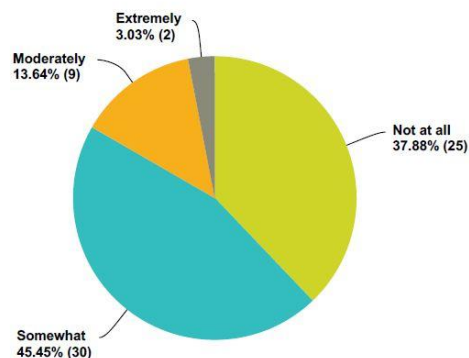


Figure 30 - Q31: Church Preparedness for Recovery

Question 32 posed the same question as thirty-one except it asked it for the participants own church. The extremely category increased to 12%. Figure 31 shows how the chart looks different when one's own church was considered.

Q32 How equipped is your church to help people find healing and recovery from addictions?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 11

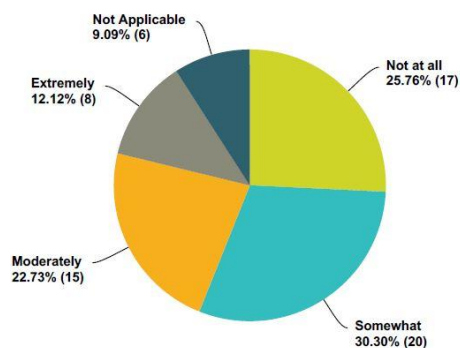


Figure 31 - Q32: Your Church Preparedness

Question 33 sought to know what the participants believed was the greatest help the church could offer someone who struggles with an addiction. Gospel-based recovery community

received 65% of the responses. Love and acceptance alone was next with 12%. Individual counseling received 11%. Reference to a professional licensed counselor got 9%.

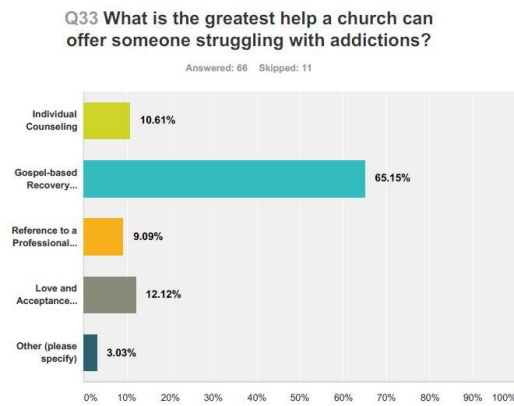


Figure 32 - Q31: Church Greatest Help

Questions 34 and 35 are practical applications of confidence in recovery ministry: how likely would participants be to attend recovery ministry if they were struggling with an addiction and how likely would they be to recommend a friend to a recovery ministry. When considering their own struggles, the greatest percentage (36%) said they would only be somewhat likely to attend. However, when it was a friend, the highest percentage (56%) said they were extremely likely to recommend a friend attend. Figures 33 and 34 show the differences.

Q34 If you were struggling with an addiction, how likely would you be to attend a recovery ministry offered by a church?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 11

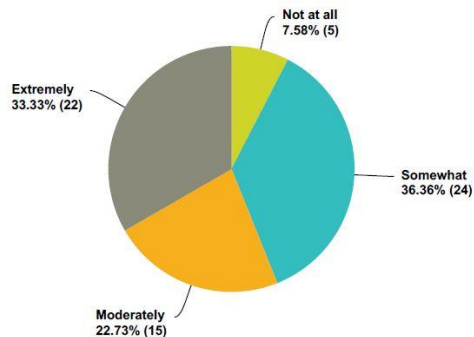


Figure 33 - Q34: Likeliness to Attend a Recovery Ministry

Q35 If you had a friend who was struggling with an addiction, how likely would you be to recommend they attend a recovery ministry offered by a church?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 11

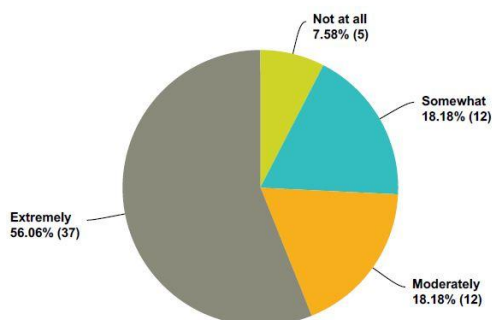


Figure 34 - Q35: Likeliness to Recommend Recovery Ministry

Questions 36–40 relate to spiritual disciplines: their power and impact. Nine spiritual disciplines are considered for these questions: meditation, prayer, fasting, personal bible study, solitude, serving others, confession to God, confession to others, and worship. The purpose behind these questions was to build a foundation of comparing what the participants believe compared to what the Bible expresses about the power of spiritual disciplines. The questions are

designed to discover not only which disciplines the participants have practiced, but also which ones they have the greatest confidence in for helping with recovery related issues.

Question 36 asked which disciplines the participants have personally practiced. The order of the greatest participation is: prayer (97%), worship (94%), confession to God (91%), serving others (89%), personal Bible study (79%), confession to others (48%), fasting (44%), meditation (36%), and solitude (29%). The top two results are not surprising. The surprise for this author is that only 79% have participated in personal Bible study.

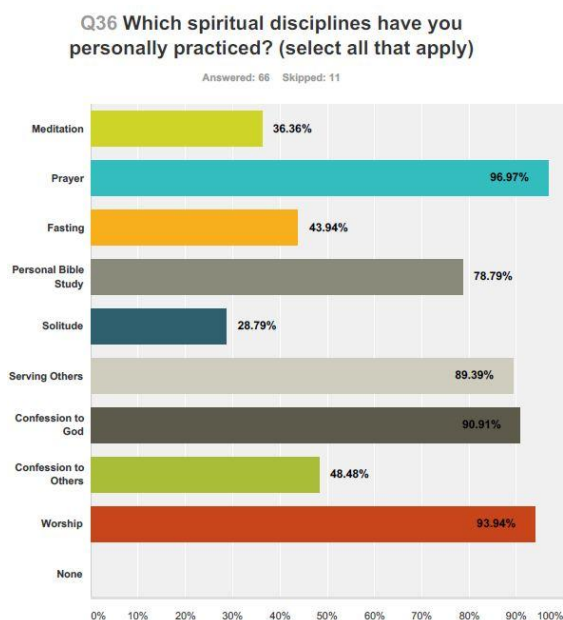


Figure 35 - Q36: Personal Practice of Spiritual Disciplines

In question 37, the participants expressed that 54% of them believe spiritual disciplines are extremely effective in helping someone overcome negative behaviors. Twenty-seven percent said they were moderately effective. About 15% believe they are somewhat effective and 3% expressed they are not effective at all.

Q37 How effective are spiritual disciplines in helping someone overcome negative behaviors?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 11

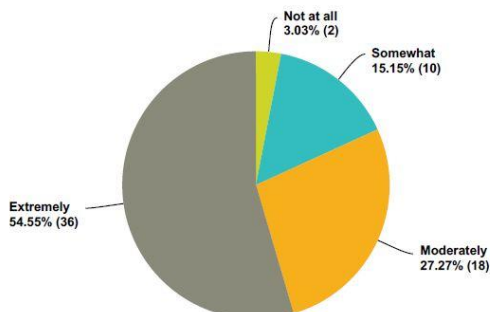


Figure 36 - Q37: Spiritual Disciplines and Negative Behaviors

Question 38 asked which spiritual disciplines are the most effective in helping someone overcome negative behaviors. Prayer received the most responses at 42%. The percentages drop considerably from there as the second choice of confession to God at 17%. Maybe the most surprising is that none of the participants believe meditation, fasting, or solitude are helpful. Figure 37 shows the rest of the results.

Q38 Which spiritual discipline is the most effective in helping someone overcome negative behaviors?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 11

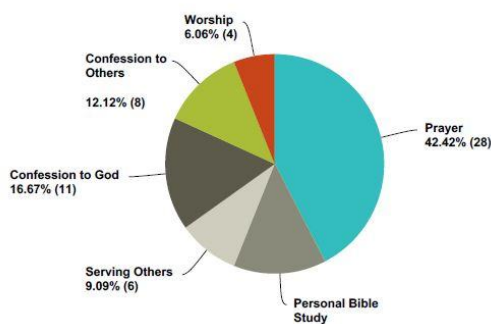


Figure 37 - Q38: Spiritual Disciplines and Negative Behaviors

Question 39 is similar to the previous one, but puts the focus on resisting temptation and controlling negative impulses. Prayer still topped the list at 48%, but there was greater distribution amongst the other options. More confidence was given to personal Bible study at 15%. Confession to others came in at 12%. No one believed solitude was helpful. Figure 38 shows the rest of the results.

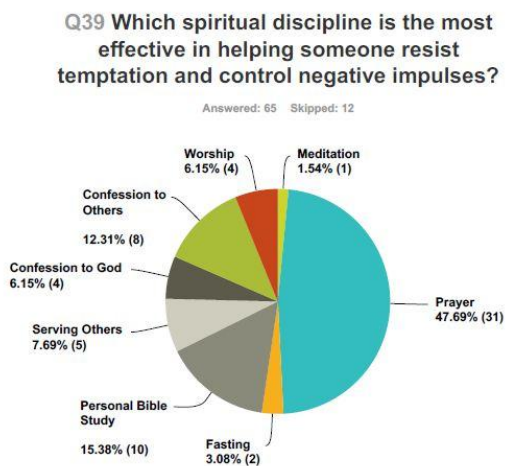


Figure 38 - Q39: Spiritual Disciplines, Temptations, and Negative Impulses

In question 40, the vast majority (95%) express they believe spiritual disciplines can help someone overcome addictions. The majority (85%) also showed their belief that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is sufficient to help someone overcome addictions based on their answer to question 41.

Summary

The survey was shared via Facebook to this author's friends. There were no limitations placed on the respondents except that they had to be at least 18 years old. The survey was designed to discover three things from the participants: their level of confidence in recovery ministry, how they connect recovery ministry to discipleship, and they perceive spiritual

disciplines in relation to recovery ministry. The 77 participants provided ample data to explore these important areas.

CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the survey data by comparing the responses from multiple questions at once. If trends can be identified, then weak areas pertaining to recovery ministry may be found and addressed in the ministry plan that will be presented in the next chapter. As a reminder, this author expected to find that most participants agreed with recovery ministry as an essential part of the Great Commission in principle, but do not participate practically. He also expected that most participants would have limited exposure to spiritual disciplines beyond prayer, worship, and Bible study.

Demographics

Most of the respondents were married (71%), Caucasian (88%) females (78%) with the highest concentration of ages between 25 and 44 years old (49%). Most were college educated with a Bachelor's degree or higher (52%). When it came to their spiritual orientation, most were Christians (93%) who attend Baptist churches (63%) that are between 100 and 499 people in average attendance (53%). These demographics, while providing important data and responses, reflect only a portion of the total of society.

Discipleship

When exploring discipleship, questions were included about the discipleship ministries offered by the participants' churches and the level of participation the respondents have in those ministries. There are two questions that can be answered from this data. First, are churches making discipleship available to their people? Second, which discipleship ministries are people most likely to participate in?

Most of the people attend church weekly (72%). Their churches offer everything from Sunday morning sermons (89%) to personal discipleship (60%). These percentages are both encouraging and discouraging at the same time. The data reveals that most churches are focused on Sunday morning sermons (89%) and Bible studies (81%), but there is a distinct drop when examining intentional discipleship, either in class format (67%) or personal meetings (60%). This may be an indication that only approximately two-thirds of churches are intentional about discipleship. The churches that only offer sermons or Bible studies may believe discipleship is happening in those formats and, therefore, do not offer more intentional discipleship opportunities. It is likely if the leadership of the church is not intentional about discipleship, then the people are not going to be passionate about it either.

The data revealed alarming declines when participants were questioned about their personal participation in discipleship. While 89% of the churches offered Sunday morning sermons, only 86% participated. Eighty-one percent of the churches have regular Bible studies, but only 69% of the people participate in them. Most churches offer discipleship classes (67%), but only 46% of the people participate in them. Sixty percent of churches offer some form of personal discipleship, however, only 36% of the people participate. This seems to indicate that churches are offering discipleship in several forms and formats, but people are not participating in them. This may mean that churches need to find better ways to encourage intentional discipleship and growth. It seems that preaching on intentional discipleship more often would be a viable and productive way of promoting it since most people (86%) are most likely to attend sermons. However, if a church is offering discipleship classes and personal discipleship, it is likely they have promoted it in some form during their large group gatherings like Sunday

morning worship. Therefore, the data may not reflect the church's efforts at all, but may simply be an indication of the people's hunger for intimacy with God or their understanding of the extent of discipleship. Unfortunately, this author's observation has been that many churches provide a limited view of faithfulness by predominantly focusing on attendance and giving. If someone is doing both of these things, they may believe they are living out true discipleship because they have not been made aware of deeper discipleship and what it means to give one's whole life over to Christ.

The results of discipleship on the participants' lives were extremely encouraging and compelling. When asked about how discipleship has helped them to change and its impact on their love and obedience to God, not one single participant reported that discipleship had a negative impact on their lives or decreased their love and obedience for God. The majority (72%) responded that discipleship had a positive impact on their desires and behaviors. The vast majority (87%) reported that discipleship had either somewhat or greatly increased their love for God. The same was true for how discipleship had increased participants' obedience to God with 84% indicating this impact. This seems to indicate that those who have actually participated in discipleship, in any form, believe that it has had a positive influence on their lives and relationship with God.

Recovery Ministry

Several questions on the survey were meant to discover if and how churches were participating in recovery ministry. They also help to understand the respondents' level of participation and confidence in recovery ministry. This author expected to discover that most churches do not offer any form of recovery ministry. He also expected that while the

participants would agree in theory and principle that churches should have recovery ministries, their personal level of participation, either as leader or attendee, would reveal a lack of practical confidence in the essential nature of recovery ministry to the Great Commission. These hypotheses were proven to be fairly accurate.

When the participants were asked about whether their church offered recovery ministry, 50% revealed their church does not offer recovery ministry in any form. This may indicate that many churches do not see recovery ministry as an essential part of the Great Commission since most of the churches offer various forms of discipleship yet half do not have a recovery ministry. There seems to be a disconnection between the Great Commission and recovery ministry as a form of discipleship.

When participants were asked about why many churches do not have recovery ministries, the greatest percentage (37%) replied that lack of training was the main culprit. Considering that discipleship is a way to train oneself to be godly, according to 1 Timothy 4:7, these responses may reveal that church leaders need to be disciplined and taught the importance of recovery ministry to their fulfilling the Great Commission.¹²⁶ This author was expecting that church's primary obstacles to having recovery ministries would be fear or negative perception, but these combined were only 23% of the participants. This may indicate that churches are not afraid of the recovery ministry as much as they are simply not informed about its importance.

The large majority (88%) of the participants agreed that recovery ministry is part of the Great Commission, however, when asked about their own participation, 88% revealed they do

¹²⁶ Hughes, *Disciplines*, 14.

not participate in recovery ministry at all. It is amazing that the percentages were exactly the same. There are many potential explanations for this correlation. It is likely that it is not the exact same 88% of the people who had these responses on each question. Also, the level of participation in recovery ministry is going to be almost directly tied to what each respondent's church offers. Since 50% of the churches do not offer a recovery ministry, one would expect that at least 50% of the participants would not participate in recovery ministry. If they do, it would be through another church.

Other responses seem to indicate this disconnect as well. When asked how likely they would be to attend a recovery ministry if they were struggling with an addiction, the greatest number of participants said they would be somewhat likely to attend (36%). However, when asked if a friend was struggling with an addiction, 56% said they would be extremely likely to recommend their friend attend a recovery ministry. Therefore, when it came to their own struggles, participants are only somewhat likely to attend a recovery ministry, while they are extremely likely to recommend recovery ministry for a friend. The data seems to indicate that people tend to agree with the importance of recovery ministry in connection with Great Commission, but fall short in practical participation in it.

There was an interesting pattern revealed when people were asked about their own struggles compared to what they observe in other people's lives. When asked about personal struggles, participants revealed 80% have struggled with anxiety, 47% with anger, 32% with abuse, 32% with addictions, and 20% with abandonment. However, when asked about struggles they have observed in other people's lives these numbers changed drastically: 91% with addictions, 86% with anxiety, 82% anger, 77% abuse, and 49% observed abandonment.

One would expect the answers between the two questions to be similar, but every category increased in some way when the participants were answering concerning others' struggles. There are several potential explanations for the increases. First, it could be that these numbers are 100% correct and each person is giving an accurate assessment of themselves and others. Second, the participants may personally struggle with more than they recognize. In which case, they are still answering honestly, based on their perception of self. Third, the participants may struggle with the same things they observe in other people's lives, but they are afraid to admit it, even on an anonymous survey. Fourth, the participants may have been generous in their assessment of themselves in reference to the word "struggle." A possible explanation could be that the participants do not currently struggle with some of the issues like addiction because they have found victory over them. However, this explanation is unlikely since the questions were worded in the past tense, asking, "Have you struggled with any of the following?" and "Do you know anyone who has struggled with any of the following?"

Given these potential explanations, the two categories that spark the greatest interest are those with the least and greatest changes between the two questions. The struggle with the least increase was anxiety with only a 6% increase. The question arises of why did this category not see great increases like the others. One possible explanation is anxiety is a more acceptable struggle to deal with than the other struggles since many people do not anxiety is a sin.¹²⁷ There are fewer negative perceptions connected with anxiety than the other struggles listed. With

¹²⁷ Hunter, *Favorite Sins*, 56.

abandonment and abuse, it is likely guilt and shame may have prevented the participants from being more forthcoming.

The struggle with the greatest increase was addictions with an amazing 59% increase. If the responses about others' struggles is more accurate, then it could be an indicator that many people are secretly struggling with addictions, but are afraid to admit it. If this is the case, it means there are many people within every church who could greatly benefit from recovery ministry.

Similar differences in results were found when asking about struggles in the church and society. The participants believe anxiety (47%) is the greatest struggle in the church. However, in society, they believe addictions (42%) are the greatest struggle. There is some concern as 18% of the respondents believe anxiety is the greatest struggle in society, but 47% believe it is the greatest struggle in the church. Does this mean that people in church have greater anxiety than those in society or does it reveal that the respondents were showing preference for their church and choosing the most acceptable struggle when reporting for the church? The answers to these questions would require collecting more data from respondents.

Addictions

Some questions were asked in relation to addictions. Particularly questions were asked about root causes, best practices in helping, and the importance of self-view in recovery. The questions will now be compared to find trends.

The majority (34%) of the participants believe that the root cause of addictions is spiritual in nature. The second highest response was learned behavior (24%). Discipleship and spiritual disciplines address both of these areas. The participants agree and most believe the primary

source of healing and freedom from addictions comes by addressing spiritual needs (49%) through biblical counseling (55%). A vast majority (93%) agreed that addictions are a symptom of a deeper issue. These results indicate that the participants recognize the behavior associated with addictions is an outworking of deeper spiritual issues. Most of the people (85%) believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be sufficient in overcoming these issues.

Most people (64%) believe that a person suffering with an addiction can reasonably expect complete freedom from an addiction. Most (87%) also agreed that self-identity has an extreme influence on the recovery process. When looking at which self-view that would contribute the most to relapse, the majority of people (56%) reported the identity of “addict” as most detrimental. The phrase “once an addict, always an addict” is the world’s recovery motto, however, the participants demonstrated that they believed this would have the greatest chance of contributing to a relapse. The self-view that had the least chance (15%) of contributing to relapse was “I am free and the addiction no longer controls me.” The majority (65%) agreed that the greatest help the church could offer is Gospel-based recovery community. It is in this community that identity can be reshaped as church uses the Bible to teach what God says about each person and the freedom they have through Christ.

Based on these results, the participants recognize freedom from addictions is possible. They also believe that what someone believes about himself and the language used to describe oneself plays an important part in the recovery process. These results seem to indicate that people believe biblical truths about complete redemption and freedom. It also seems to show the power of self-identity in the healing process.

Spiritual Disciplines

The last section of questions dealt with respondents' perspective and participation with spiritual disciplines. This author expected participants to have some experience with prayer, Bible study, and worship, but have limited exposure to many of the other disciplines presented. As such, he also expected the participants' confidence in spiritual disciplines to overcome recovery related struggles to be limited. Mostly, these hypotheses were proven true with some exceptions.

A vast majority (95%) of participants believe spiritual disciplines can help someone overcome addictions. Most (55%) also believe that spiritual disciplines are extremely effective in helping someone overcome negative behaviors. The top spiritual discipline the respondents reported participating in was prayer (97%). As such, they believed it was the primary discipline that would help a person overcome negative behaviors (42%) and resist temptation (48%).

The second most practiced discipline is worship (94%). However, when examining its effectiveness to overcome negative behaviors or resisting temptation, only 6% believed worship to be the most beneficial. This could indicate that people do not believe worship to be a powerful resource for producing practical change.

The surprise result, at least for this author, was that personal Bible study ranked 5th among the spiritual disciplines practiced by the respondents. It ranked 3rd for helping overcome negative behaviors and 2nd in resisting temptation. This seems to indicate that participants recognize the power of Bible study in affecting victory over sin, but they do not give it high priority in their day-to-day lives.

The least practiced (29%) spiritual discipline was solitude. It was also the discipline people had the least confidence in for overcoming negative behaviors or resisting temptation with 0% of the respondents saying it would help in either area. This seems to indicate that the respondents believe victory over negative behaviors and temptations is best accomplished in community rather than alone. This is seen more clearly compared with the response of how the church can best help people struggling with addictions. The participants believed a Gospel-based recovery community was the most beneficial (65%).

There were some responses that demonstrate either a lack of knowledge or confidence in biblical teachings concerning spiritual disciplines. The first is confession to God. While 91% reported they have participated in it, only 12% believed it was effective in overcoming negative behaviors and only 6% in resisting temptation or negative impulses. First John 1:9 teaches that confession is a pathway to freedom, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The second is fasting. Forty-four percent said they have practiced fasting, but no one believed it was the effective in overcoming negative behaviors and only 3% believed it was effective in resisting temptation and controlling negative impulses. However, Isaiah 58:6 clearly teaches that fasting is a means “to break the chains of wickedness, untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke.”

The responses to the questions concerning spiritual disciplines seem to indicate people have confidence in some spiritual disciplines for freedom from addictions. However, it seems there is either limited knowledge or a lacking confidence in others, such as meditation, solitude, and fasting. It seems that any efforts of helping people find biblical freedom from recovery

related issues needs to incorporate teaching spiritual disciplines and provide an environment of practical application of the disciplines.

This author found that most of his hypotheses were true while discovering some were not. Overall, the participants expressed confidence in the Gospel, discipleship, recovery ministry, and some spiritual disciplines. However, this confidence does not always correlate in personal participation. The results from the survey will be incorporated into the development of the recovery ministry supplement that is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: PROPOSED SUPPLEMENT FOR RECOVERY MINISTRY

Many churches already have great recovery ministries. This portion of the project is not to try to reinvent the wheel, but rather to improve on what already exists. The suggestions found in this chapter are gleaned from the academic research as well as the practical feedback discovered in the survey. Based on the research, recovery ministries would be best served to incorporate the following: the power of the pulpit, make the most of mentoring, focus on freedom, answer the “why?”, and train for godliness.

Power of the Pulpit

As the results of the survey indicated, most Christians attend a weekly sermon. In order for recovery ministry to be successful in transforming lives, it has to be a priority in the preaching and leading of the church. Stetzer and Dodson reveal that leadership is the greatest single factor in the success and support of ministries.¹²⁸

Pastor and church leaders must preach and teach on the need for recovery ministry. If this does not happen, then recovery is not seen as important from a church-wide perspective. If the leadership does not see recovery ministry as an important aspect of fulfilling the Great Commission, then neither will the people of the church. This was revealed in the survey results as many people agreed philosophically that recovery ministry is an essential part of the Great Commission, but 88% were not involved in recovery ministry in any form. This demonstrates a disconnect that can most easily be traced back to the leadership of the church.

¹²⁸ Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 37-38.

Not only do the leaders of the church need to speak on recovery related issues and preach about its essential nature, but they also need to be willing to share about their own struggles. Many people see preachers as having perfect lives that are untouched by the struggles that plague regular people. Leaders who really want to make an impact in seeing freedom in the lives of the people of their church need to be able to speak out of their weaknesses as well as their strengths.

Allender, in his book, *Leading with a Limp*, writes, “To the degree you face and name and deal with your failures as a leader, to that same extent you will create an environment conducive to growing and retaining productive and committed colleagues.”¹²⁹ While many people who would agree with his statement, every leader knows the fear of revealing personal sin or struggle. However, the leader who chooses to be authentic about his own frailty wins the heart of his people and encourages their heart with hope.

The real issue is not so much about inordinately focusing on negatives in one’s life, but instead about being authentic and real so that other people can relate. The greatest challenges to being authentic in preaching are fear, narcissism, and addiction.¹³⁰ When a leader exposes one of his own struggles, there is the fear that people will think less of him and his leadership will be negatively impacted. While the potential for this response is real, most of the time his leadership is strengthened because he is able to relate to those who have struggled with similar issues.

¹²⁹ Dan Allender, *Leading with a Limp* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2006), 2.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-6.

Sometimes leaders will not reveal their weaknesses because of narcissism and pride. This challenge is when the identity of the leader is so closely tied to his image that he cannot imagine anything tarnishing it. It takes great humility to reveal struggles.

The last challenge of addiction is one of the scariest. One of the reasons that pastors may not want to preach on recovery ministry and recovery related issues is because they are struggling with them personally. Scazzero notes, “the overall health of any church or ministry depends primarily on the emotional and spiritual health of its leadership.”¹³¹ Many church leaders are not in a healthy place because they are overloaded and are facing burnout.¹³² They are looking for relief just like everyone else, and, just like everyone else, they sometimes choose poor means of finding that relief.

Another compelling reason to utilize the power of the pulpit is that most unchurched people prefer to attend church on Sunday morning if they attend.¹³³ The most opportune time to inspire people to greater faithfulness in church is during the Sunday morning sermon. When an unchurched person visits a church and they hear about how the church is genuinely trying to help people who are struggling with recovery related issues, testimonies from people in recovery, and the pastor is open and honest about his own struggles, their perception of the church changes.

The single greatest impact on a church’s support of and involvement in recovery ministry is always what is preached from the pulpit. When the leadership gets behind a ministry and

¹³¹ Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 20

¹³² Richard Swenson, *Margin* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004)

¹³³ Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 23.

presents a powerful vision for how it fulfills the mission of the church, then the people will follow. Without pastoral and leadership support, recovery ministry will not be seen as an essential part of the Great Commission.

Make the Most of Mentoring

Recovery hinges on relationships. Many churches offer discipleship in different forms such as sermons, classes, small groups, and one-on-one personal discipleship. The key to successful discipleship is compassion, respect, and sincerity.¹³⁴ Personal discipleship provides the context for all of these to take place. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Since recovery ministry is a form of discipleship, the best setting for lasting and long-term healing is in a mentoring relationship.

Some recovery ministries only focus on classes or group meetings. There are many people who have been helped through these, but there is greater power in a life-on-life relationship. Recovery ministries multiply their effectiveness by making the most of mentoring.

Intentional

Mentoring requires three things to be most effective. First, it must be intentional in its imitation of Jesus. Jesus made it a point to fellowship with people who were aware of their brokenness. So much so the self-righteous religious people of the day called him was friend of

¹³⁴ John MacArthur, *Counseling* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 102.

sinner.¹³⁵ Jesus was intentional in seeking out those who needed him the most. The same should be true of Christians today.

As the discipleship process replicates itself, normal Christians should be discipling the next wave of believers. The key here is normal Christians. People seem to have a stigma about men who are in official religious positions, such as pastors or deacons. Rainer notes that unchurched people would much rather talk with a layperson than a minister about religious matters.¹³⁶ This sentiment is repeated in that unchurched people would also like to have a genuine, sincere relationship with a Christian.¹³⁷ It seems that the people who have the greatest potential in a mentoring relationship is regular, normal, everyday Christians more so than seminary trained ministers with official positions in the church. Ogden addresses this in his book, *Unfinished Business*, in which he writes, “We need to move from a pastor-centered to a people-centered ministry.”¹³⁸ This fits biblically with Ephesians 4:11-12 which gives the job description of pastors and teachers as “training of the saints for the work of the ministry, to build up the body of Christ.”

Within this intentional relationship the mentor does not play the role of wise sage, but rather fellow journeyman. His primary goal is to be both coach and cheerleader for the one he is mentoring. There is a partnership between the two people, helping each other move toward the

¹³⁵ Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 149.

¹³⁶ Rainer, *Unchurched*, 51.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³⁸ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 111.

goal of Christlikeness. Collins calls it “co-active coaching,” where there is an alliance between two equals moving towards the same goal.¹³⁹ As he coaches, he also encourages and cheers his friend onward. He is both coach, offering advice and sharing his experiences, and cheerleader, giving positive reinforcement when challenges arise. Stoltzfus observes, “Change is more of a function of motivation than information.”¹⁴⁰ People who are in recovery need someone to cheer them through the next seemingly impossible obstacle in their journey.

Mentoring must be intentional in its use of time as well. Meetings should be a mix of formal and informal purposes. When the purpose is formal, there should be an intentional use of the time. The mentor must guard against mentor meetings degrading to just casual, surface conversation. The goal is to promote spiritual growth, identify challenges to recovery, and help construct a plan to overcome the challenges. These things will not be accomplished if a formal mentor meeting is spent talking about sports or some other surface level topic.

However, there should also be informal meetings that are for the purpose of fellowship and relation building. During these informal mentor meetings, the primary goal is to develop deeper relationships, trust, and compassion. These meetings do not have a format or set agenda. They are more about experiencing life together.

Biblically Based and Spirit-sensitive

Sometimes mentoring devolves into a conversation about personal experience more than biblical truth. While there are certainly times for sharing personal experience, especially when

¹³⁹ Gary Collins, *Christian Coaching*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 84.

¹⁴⁰ Tony Stoltzfus, *Leadership Coaching* (Virginia Beach, VA: Tony Stoltzfus, 2005), 16.

trying to encourage someone through a hard time, it should not be the basis of the mentoring relationship. The goal of mentoring is to help the person find freedom as they seek to be more like Christ. The only way a person can do these things is through exposure and obedience to God's Word. Second Timothy, chapter three, verses 16-17, state, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Not only should the formal mentor meetings be biblically based, they should also be Spirit-sensitive. In John 14-15, Jesus promises his disciples that he was going away, but that he was going to send the Holy Spirit, whom he calls a helper and a counselor to live in them to guide and remind them of Jesus commands. This same Holy Spirit brings conviction about sin, righteousness, and judgment. He guides them to truth.

The mentor needs to be aware and sensitive to the inner spiritual workings of the person he is mentoring. He needs to take time to listen and pray with his fellow journeyman. Most recovery related issues have a spiritual root, therefore, there is a tremendous spiritual battle for freedom. Praying for the presence and participation of the Holy Spirit is key to each meeting. Also, prayerfully submitting oneself to the Spirit's control should be taught and repeated throughout the mentoring relationship.

Personal mentoring adds a dimension to recovery ministry that simply cannot be replicated in small or large group settings. It is life-on-life where the mentor is able to instruct and encourage weekly or daily the one he is discipling. He is able to help him learn how to

confess and repent of sin and not be overtaken with shame in his failures.¹⁴¹ He is constantly redirecting him back to the freedom that is found at the cross of Christ.

Focus on Freedom

The next key area that can improve any recovery ministry is to focus on freedom more so than behavior management or modification. There are several ways this idea can be conveyed. The first is that Jesus promised redemption, complete freedom from sin and its wages.¹⁴² Another is that recovery ministry should be more about heart transformation over behavior modification. Jesus promised that when he sets a person free, they will truly be free. Recovery ministries need to focus on teaching that freedom from bondage is not only possible, but is attainable through the completed work of Jesus Christ. Swanson and McBean define recovery as “nothing more, but certainly nothing less, than the process of redeeming lives, learning to live in light of what Jesus has done for us.”¹⁴³

As has been presented earlier in this work, many Christians have adopted the world’s terminology and thinking about recovery. The most prevalent view being the disease model, which teaches that addictions are incurable diseases.¹⁴⁴ If a church recovery ministry adopts this terminology and mentality about recovery they can only, at best, offer a temporary reprieve

¹⁴¹ Neil T. Anderson, *Discipleship Counseling* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 306.

¹⁴² Bob Kelleman and Kevin Carson, eds. *Biblical Counseling and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 105.

¹⁴³ Liz Swanson and Teresa McBean, *Bridges to Grace: Innovative Approaches to Recovery Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 2.

¹⁴⁴ Ray A. *Practice These Principles: Steps 1, 2, 3* (Denver: Outskirts Press, Inc., 2012), 69.

through personal self-effort on the part of the person struggling with recovery. This fundamentally does not align with the promises of Christ nor the teachings elsewhere in Scripture.

Identity

Adopting the disease model of addictions is less than effective because it creates an identity of bondage for the person in recovery. Everything they believe about themselves comes from their self-view. Identity is powerful in determining whether a person will remain in slavery to something or being set free from it. Driscoll argues, “Whatever we base our identity and value on becomes ‘deified.’”¹⁴⁵ This means that identity becomes a force and factor all on its own. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If a person believes they are infected with a disease, then they have no hope of any lasting change. However, if they believe they are redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ and empowered with the Holy Spirit to live dead to sin and alive to God, then they have hope.¹⁴⁶ Recovery ministries should focus on teaching that every believer is free. The believer is redeemed.

Grace

In focusing on freedom, recovery ministries should imitate Christ as he is described in John 1:14 and 17 by being full of grace and truth. Freedom can only be had because of God’s grace. Ephesians, chapter two, verses eight and nine, state, “For you are saved by grace through

¹⁴⁵ Mark Driscoll, *Who Do You Think You Are?* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 6.

¹⁴⁶ Mark McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* (Carol Streams, IL: Tyndale House, 2011), 291.

faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift, not from works, so that no one can boast." Those who are suffering with recovery related issues know they are dealing with something they cannot overcome on their own. They have tried. If they have approached someone else for help, then they are saying they have exhausted their own resources for recovery. Recovery ministries need to focus on freedom by extended tremendous amounts of grace in the midst of struggle and even failure.

Since salvation is by grace, this means that the pressure of trying to save oneself from the addiction or recovery related issues is removed. They do not have to try so hard to be acceptable before God based on their own effort. Now, because of grace, they are made righteous based on the works of Christ. Grace gives the freedom to let go and turn all things over to God.

Truth

Freedom not only comes through grace, but freedom also comes through truth. In John 8:32, Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Grace gives us the freedom to be human. Truth equips us to live for Jesus. Recovery ministries focus on freedom through truth by teaching on the redemption that is currently possessed by every follower of Christ and child of God.

One of the truths that is vital for recovery is that a person cannot fall or fail out of God's grace and lose their salvation. Just as salvation was not accomplished because of their performance, neither do they secure their salvation by their performance. Galatians 3:26 makes it clear, "For you all are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:15-17 states,

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, and if children also heirs, heirs of God

and co-heirs with Christ, seeing that we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

God disciplines his children, but he never disowns them. This truth promotes freedom. Every person in recovery needs to know that there is nothing they can ever do to make God stop loving them and, if they are truly saved, then there is nothing they can do to revoke their salvation.

They are in a state of being already declared righteous, but not yet made righteous.

Recovery ministries can help best by focusing on the freedom that is made available through Jesus Christ. This freedom changes every believer's identity from wretched to redeemed. In this freedom is the grace that all of the work has been done by Christ. Freedom is also found by trusting the truth of Scripture, not only for receiving salvation, but for instruction on how to live out that salvation. The truths found in the Word of God are not to be a boring set of rules that burden, but rather the loving instructions from a wonderful father.¹⁴⁷ Freedom is experienced when people realize that grace and truth are not exclusive from one another, but, rather, are two sides of the same coin of God's amazing love.

Answer the "Why?"

Sometimes recovery ministries desire behavior modification over all else. To be the most effective at helping people in recovery, churches should not only focus on what the person is doing, but why they are doing it. This requires patience, persistence, and tremendous amount of prayer. Many people who are dealing with recovery related issues do not know why they are doing what they are doing. They just know they are hurting and trying to find relief.

¹⁴⁷ Luis Palau and Jay Fordice, *Changed by Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 90.

Behavior is the external fruit that can be traced back to an internal root. If the fruit is bad, there is a problem at the root level. If the root level is dealt with, the fruit level changes on its own. Recovery ministries should help people dig deep to find the source of their pain.

Getting down to the root level of why a person is behaving the way they are requires addressing unhealthy thought patterns and destructive emotions. God has equipped every person with good desires. Ortberg notes four kinds of desires: material, achievement, relational, and physical.¹⁴⁸ Wilson expands these out to: purpose, worth, significance, acceptance, security, love, and beauty.¹⁴⁹ When unhealthy thought patterns and destructive emotions take over in the attempt to heal pain then good desires morph into dangerous sins and idols.

Wilson defines idolatry as when someone looks to something that does not have God's power to give them what only God has the power and authority to give.¹⁵⁰ In helping people answer the question of why they are doing what they are doing, one has to get down to the pain they suffered and the idol they ran to for comfort or protection. Arterburn writes that in order to heal, people have to be willing to investigate their life to find the truth behind their actions and emotions.¹⁵¹ Once the true root of the issue is discovered, then a godly response can be employed. Until the root level of a problem is dealt with, it will be destructive and

¹⁴⁸ John Ortberg, *The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 83-88.

¹⁴⁹ Pete Wilson, *Empty Promises* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 3.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵¹ Stephen Arterburn, *Healing is a Choice* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 49.

uncontrolled.¹⁵² However, when the root issue is dealt with, the person will realize their true strength only comes from God.¹⁵³ They will also see that when they thought they had been abandoned by God that he was actively involved in taking what was meant for evil by Satan and turning it into something that can be used for good.¹⁵⁴

Train for Godliness

The last supplement that can greatly impact the effectiveness of any recovery ministry is the implementation of spiritual disciplines. Most, if not all, recovery ministries will already be using spiritual disciplines such as Bible study, prayer, and worship as part of their program. This proposal is to add to those the discipline of fasting. Just as Paul wrote to Timothy, “Train yourself in godliness,” so every person in recovery should be instructed on how to train using the spiritual discipline of fasting. God promised in Isaiah 58:6 that fasting is a way to find freedom from bondage. It is a practical way to learn how to deny the flesh control over one’s life. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:27 that he disciplined his body and brought it under strict control. Fasting is likely one of the ways that he disciplined his body.

The Christian was granted power over sin in his body when he came to faith in Christ according to Romans 6:6-12. However, just because a person has been granted the power to say no to sin, it does not mean he knows how to say no in a practical way. Fasting provides a controlled setting in which, the believer can practice saying yes to God and no to his flesh.

¹⁵² Chip Ingram and Becca Johnson, *Overcoming Emotions that Destroy* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 157-158.

¹⁵³ Clayton King, *Stronger* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 29.

¹⁵⁴ Max Lucado, *You’ll Get Through This* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 155.

When looking at the list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, many, if not all, are issues one could experience in recovery ministry: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, facts, envy, drunkenness, carousing and anything similar. Fasting allows for a person to learn to say no to the flesh and, therefore, strengthen his ability to say yes to the Spirit.

Fasting is like practicing for a football game. The team practices all week so that on game day they can perform out of instinct and natural response. Fasting is like this except for the game day is not a battle of the gridiron, but a spiritual battle. If one has practiced overcoming the desires of the flesh, then when temptation comes, one is already experienced in denying the flesh.

It should be noted that fasting should not be introduced to a person at the beginning of the recovery journey since it could unnecessarily produce other problems. The best way to introduce fasting would be after the person who is in recovery has experienced stability and progress with their issue. As they are being disciplined, fasting should be suggested to them as a means of helping them be stronger in their freedom. Never should it ever be forced upon a person. Fasting, like all spiritual disciplines, has the purpose of freedom.¹⁵⁵ To force it upon someone would remove its practical purpose.

If the person in recovery agrees that they would like to participate in fasting, then the mentor should instruct them on the biblical teachings about fasting. Then they should start with a short fast and build up to longer fasts. The suggested beginning length would be one meal.

¹⁵⁵ Elmer Towns, *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996), 17.

Another option would be to do a partial fast from a certain type of food. After the mentor and disciple visit about the experience and the struggles that arose in the midst of it, longer fasts can be introduced. It is recommended that the mentor participate in the fast with them. As the person gains more confidence in denying the flesh, they will have the ability to overcome greater temptations and will win more spiritual battles.

These suggested supplements will hopefully help recovery ministries be more effective in helping people find freedom. They are not meant to be utilized on their own apart from a base recovery ministry program. The greatest challenges to the implementation of these suggestions occurs in relation to mentoring and fasting. It is difficult to find people who are committed to the discipleship process. Many people are resistant to committing to anything long term. When it comes to fasting, the largest obstacle comes from a lack of biblical understanding, past abuses, and physical challenges that it poses. However, Scripture teaches of its great power to set people free from many types of bondage. It is the hope of this author that churches will apply these suggestions and see increased victories in their recovery ministries.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Recovery ministry is a mission field all on its own. The main proposition of this thesis project has been that it is an essential part of the Great Commission. As such, every church should be participating in recovery ministry in some way. Based on the survey results, 50% of churches do not have any form of recovery ministry. This means that while large portions of American society are struggling desperately with recovery related issue, the church is largely unprepared to help them in an intentional way. When people who are struggling with recovery related issues come to church for help and find none, their confidence in Christians, church, and God may be shaken.

The world's definition of addictions is they are incurable diseases that require a life-time of monitoring and management to find relief. This project has shown this definition to be inaccurate and insufficient. The world's definition was developed to remove the guilt and shame associated with the choices associated with addictions. The biblical definitions associated with addictions demonstrated that addictions are connected with deeper spiritual issues. The biblical terms used to describe addictions are: slavery to sin, drunkenness, idolatry, and spiritual strongholds. Spiritual problems require spiritual solutions. The research of this project found that most participants agreed.

Hypotheses Results

This author had several hypotheses when beginning the project. First, he thought he would find that most Christians would agree theoretically with recovery ministry being an essential part of the Great Commission, but would lack practical participation. The author was correct on this subject. However, through the research, this author found there are many factors

that relate to a person's practical participation in recovery ministry. The largest factor being whether a person's home church offers recovery ministry.

This project proposes and promotes that recovery ministry is essential to the American church fulfilling the Great Commission. The church is called to take the Gospel into every area of the world, into every nation, people group, culture, and language. In America, right now, there is a large people group who are not hearing the Gospel or experiencing its freedom. They are not a people group defined by culture, race, ethnicity, or language. They are set apart by great struggles with alcoholism, addictions, uncontrolled anger, consuming anxiety, crippling abuse, careless abandonment, and other wounds that have come to define their very identity and control their lives. The church does not need to ignore this group. It needs to view it as a mission field that is as important as any foreign mission field.

Second, he believed the reason most churches were not participating in recovery ministry was because they were afraid or repulsed by the people who would participate in recovery ministry. While there was an element of that view found in the research, it was not the main reason discovered. The primary reason that churches do not participate in recovery ministry, based on the research, is because most churches have not been disciplined or trained in the importance of recovery ministry to the Great Commission. This makes a project like this one even more important. Essentially, church leaders need to be taught the value and importance of recovery ministry so they, in turn, can lead their churches forward in this area of discipleship.

Third, he believed most people would have some level of exposure to some spiritual disciplines such as: prayer, worship, and Bible study. However, he expected their confidence that spiritual disciplines are an effective means of helping one with a recovery related issues

would be minimal. This was largely proven true. Most people had some level of exposure to the spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, and Bible study, but they had limited exposure to other spiritual disciplines such as: meditation, solitude, or fasting.

Biblical fasting is a means through which a person, in their desperation for help from God, can overcome bondage and be set free from the unrelenting tyranny of the flesh. If people have limited exposure to this discipline, it is not surprising that they are unfamiliar with its power and effectiveness in helping set people free in a practical way from some of the struggles related to recovery ministry. This author presented fasting as a tool to help people know victory over their impulses and negative thoughts.

Opportunities for Further Development

After completing the project, this author recognizes some areas that could be improved or expanded. These recommendations could be used to better understand the perceptions and efficacy of recovery ministry. The survey could be improved by including a larger sample size, broader demographics, and more detailed questions.

Larger Sample Size for Study

The sample size for the survey was 77 people. The goal was to have at least 100 participants. Better data could be discovered if the sample size could be 1,000 people or larger. A larger sample size would reduce any anomalies that may be present in this survey. It would also likely expand the demographics of the survey.

Broader Demographics

The primary demographics of the surveyed participants fell into some fairly narrow categories. The average respondent was white, female, Christian, Baptist, weekly church

attender, and a college graduate. While the results for this project are valid for this demographic, the project would have benefitted greatly from having a more balanced demographic to include better representation between races, genders, denominations, and belief systems.

More Detailed Questions

At the beginning of the project the survey questions seemed to be completely adequate. However, based on the survey responses, there were some questions that could have benefitted from a more detailed wording or a larger selection of answers. Question seven is an example of such a question. It asked the participants to categorize their spiritual beliefs. There were four options: atheist, agnostic/skeptic, born-again follower of Christ, or other. Ten people answered other, but specified various forms of stating they were Christian. Some of the other responses were believing God as light and energy or simply saying they are spiritual. The question may have benefitted from including answer options that included various denominations and an option for spiritual/mystic beliefs.

Another question that could have been more detailed is question ten which asked about what kind of recovery ministry the participants' churches offered. There were five answer options. There were sixteen who answered other and specified the program their church offered or that they did not know which one their church offered. This question could likely have had more than 20 answer options if it were to include any potential program a church might use.

Overall, this project can be valuable for churches wishing to start or improve recovery ministries. It is the wish of this author that this project would be used to help more people find freedom from recovery related issues. The greatest result of this project would be the testimony of those who were positively impacted to follow Christ and, in turn, were helping others be set

free. Hopefully, churches will see recovery ministry as an essential part of the Great Commission and recognize that it needs as much attention as any other type of mission work they are doing. Recovery ministry is hard, messy, and dirty. Maybe more churches will answer the challenge to not only have discipleship, but to have dirty discipleship that goes into the messiest areas of life to bring the truth and hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is where the Gospel is needed most.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

7/27/2016

Richard Nichols

IRB Exemption 2584.072716: Dirty Discipleship: The Essential Nature of Recovery Ministry in Fulfilling the Great Commission

Dear Richard Nichols,

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

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the above Statement of Consent?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

3. What is your age?
 - a. 18-29
 - b. 30-39
 - c. 40-49
 - d. 50-59
 - e. 60-69
 - f. 70 or older

4. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)
 - a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - b. Asian / Pacific Islander
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. White / Caucasian
 - f. Multiple Ethnicity / Other (please specify)

5. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?
 - a. Married
 - b. Widowed
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Separated
 - e. In a domestic partnership or civil union
 - f. Single, but cohabitating with a significant other
 - g. Single, never married

6. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
 - a. Less than high school degree
 - b. High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
 - c. Some college, but no degree
 - d. Associate's degree
 - e. Bachelor's degree
 - f. Graduate degree

7. How would you categorize your spiritual beliefs?
 - a. Atheist
 - b. Agnostic/Skeptic
 - c. Born-Again Follower of Jesus Christ
 - d. Other (Please specify)

8. What is the estimated size of your church's congregation?
 - a. Under 100
 - b. 100-499
 - c. 500-999
 - d. 1000-4999
 - e. Not applicable

9. What is your denominational affiliation?
 - a. Baptist
 - b. Lutheran
 - c. Methodist
 - d. Presbyterian
 - e. Pentecostal
 - f. Non-Denominational
 - g. Unitarian
 - h. Catholic
 - i. Not applicable
 - j. Other (Please specify)

10. How often do you attend church?
- I do not attend church
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Major Holidays Only
 - Occasionally, but with little or no regularity
11. Does your church offer a recovery ministry? (select all that apply)
- Alcoholics Anonymous or A.A. based 12 step model
 - Celebrate Recovery
 - STEPS by The Village Church
 - Individual Counseling
 - Other (please specify)
12. Do you participate in recovery ministry?
- Yes – as a leader
 - Yes – as a mentor
 - Yes – as a participant/attendee
 - No
13. What prevents most churches from having recovery ministries?
- Apathy (they do not care that people are struggling)
 - Finances (they can't afford to help)
 - Ignorance (they don't know there is a problem)
 - Lack of Training (they don't know how to help)
 - Fear (they are afraid of how it would change the church)
 - Negative Perception (they don't want to attract people who are different from them)
 - Laziness (they don't want to put forth the effort)
 - Other (please specify)

14. What kind of discipleship does your church offer? (check all that apply)
- Sunday Morning Sermons
 - Regular Bible Studies
 - Discipleship Classes
 - Personal Discipleship (1 on 1 or small group mentoring)
 - Not Applicable
 - Other (please specify)
15. What kind of discipleship have you personally participated in? (check all that apply)
- Sunday Morning Sermons
 - Regular Bible Studies
 - Discipleship Classes
 - Personal Discipleship (1 on 1 or small group mentoring)
 - Not Applicable
 - Other (please specify)
16. In what ways has discipleship helped you change?
- Positive change - behaviors/habits only
 - Positive change - desires and behaviors/habits
 - Positive change - desires only
 - No change
 - Negative change – behaviors/habits only
 - Negative change – desires and behaviors/habits
 - Negative change – desires only
 - Not applicable
17. How has discipleship changed your love for God?
- Greatly increased
 - Somewhat increased
 - No change
 - Somewhat decreased
 - Greatly decreased
 - Not applicable

18. How has discipleship changed your obedience to God?
- Greatly increased
 - Somewhat increased
 - No change
 - Somewhat decreased
 - Greatly decreased
 - Not applicable
19. Do you believe recovery ministry is part of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)?
- Yes
 - No
20. Have you struggled with any of the following? (check all that apply)
- Anxiety
 - Anger
 - Abandonment
 - Abuse
 - Addictions
 - Other (please specify)
21. Do you know anyone who has struggled with any of the following? (check all that apply)
- Anxiety
 - Anger
 - Abandonment
 - Abuse
 - Addictions
 - Other (please specify)
22. What is the greatest personal struggle for people in society today?
- Anxiety
 - Anger
 - Abandonment
 - Abuse
 - Addictions
 - Other (please specify)

23. What is the greatest personal struggle for people in the church today?
- Anxiety
 - Anger
 - Abandonment
 - Abuse
 - Addictions
 - Other (please specify)
24. What is the root cause of addictions?
- Disease
 - Peer Pressure
 - Learned Behavior
 - Spiritual
 - Other (please specify)
25. What should be the primary source of healing and freedom from addictions?
- Will Power
 - Professional Counseling/Therapy
 - Medication
 - Biblical Counseling
 - Other (please specify)
26. What is the most important area to treat to help someone find freedom from addictions?
- Chemical Imbalances
 - Emotions
 - Environment
 - Behavior
 - Spiritual Needs
 - Other (please specify)
27. Are addictions the main problem or the symptom of the true problem?
- Main problem
 - Symptom of the main problem

28. What level of healing and freedom from addictions can a person reasonably expect?
- They are incurable – once an addict, always an addict
 - They are controllable – daily battle for right behavior
 - They are conquerable – true and complete freedom is possible
 - Other (please specify)
29. How much does influence does someone's self-view have on their recovery process?
- Not at all
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Extremely
30. Which self-view would most likely contribute to an addiction relapse?
- "I am an addict and I will always be an addict."
 - "I am fragile and the addiction is only one bad choice away."
 - "I am free and the addiction no longer controls me."
31. How equipped are most churches to help people find healing and recovery from addictions?
- Not at all
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Extremely
32. How equipped is your church to help people find healing and recovery from addictions?
- Not at all
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Extremely

33. What is the greatest help a church could offer someone struggling with addictions?
- Individual Counseling
 - Gospel-based Recovery Community
(worship/discipleship/mentoring/accountability)
 - Reference to a Professional Licensed Counselor
 - Love and acceptance alone
 - Other (please specify)
34. If you were struggling with an addiction, how likely would you be to attend a recovery ministry offered by a church?
- Not at all
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Extremely
35. If you had a friend who was struggling with an addiction, how likely would you be to recommend they attend a recovery ministry offered by a church?
- Not at all
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Extremely
36. What spiritual disciplines have you personally practiced? (select all that apply)
- Meditation
 - Prayer
 - Fasting
 - Personal Bible Study
 - Solitude
 - Serving Others
 - Confession to God
 - Confession to Others
 - Worship
 - None

37. How effective are spiritual disciplines in helping someone overcome negative behaviors?
- Not at all
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Extremely
38. Which spiritual discipline is the most effective in helping someone overcome negative behaviors?
- Meditation
 - Prayer
 - Fasting
 - Personal Bible Study
 - Solitude
 - Serving Others
 - Confession to God
 - Confession to Others
 - Worship
 - None
39. Which spiritual discipline is the most effective in helping someone resist temptation and control impulses?
- Meditation
 - Prayer
 - Fasting
 - Personal Bible Study
 - Solitude
 - Serving Others
 - Confession to God
 - Confession to Others
 - Worship
 - None
40. Can the practice of spiritual disciplines help someone overcome addictions?
- Yes
 - No

41. Is the Gospel of Jesus Christ sufficient to help someone overcome addictions?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

APPENDIX C: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Liberty University School of Divinity

**Dirty Discipleship:
The Essential Nature of Recovery Ministry in Fulfilling the Great Commission**

A Presentation of the Thesis Project Submitted to
The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By
Richard Nichols

Lynchburg, Virginia
May 2017

A Nation in Need of Recovery

- ❑ Approx. 15-20% of American are chemically dependent
- ❑ Estimated total cost to society of \$160 billion
- ❑ Approx. 30% suffer with some form of anxiety disorder
- ❑ Eating, sleep, and panic disorders are increasing
- ❑ Depression is rising

The Church Commissioned

- ▣ Matt. 28:18-20 – Make disciples of all nations
- ▣ Discipleship involves:
 - Going and sharing the Gospel
 - Baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - Teaching them to obey Christ's commands
- ▣ Bringing hope and healing through the Gospel in areas of brokenness and hopelessness.
- ▣ It is recovering through Christ what was lost in garden of Eden

Problem - A Church Omission

- ▣ Many churches do not engage in recovery ministry
- ▣ They do not see recovery ministry as essential to the Great Commission
- ▣ There is a large portion of society they church is not even trying to impact with the Gospel
- ▣ If Christians are to take the Gospel to "all nations" or "all people," then it naturally includes those who are struggling with issues like: anger, addiction, abuse, anxiety, or abandonment

The Church Compromised

- ❑ Many people in church have accepted the world's definitions of addiction, process of recovery, and abandoned the truth of Scripture as a reliable source of healing
- ❑ 2 Tim. 3:16-17 - "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

World's View of Addiction

- ❑ Disease - incurable disease that requires a lifetime of management and treatment
- ❑ Genetics - certain people are predetermined to be addicts based on their genetic makeup
- ❑ Brain Chemistry - chemical interactions in the brain cause addictions and are beyond the control of the addicted person
- ❑ Environment - based upon the circumstances of one's life, they are predisposed to being an addict

World –Identity in the Struggle

- ▣ The problem is OUTSIDE the addicted person
- ▣ The solution is INSIDE them
- ▣ The problem becomes an identity that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
 - *“Hi, my name is Rick. I am an alcoholic.”*
 - *“Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic.”*
- ▣ In an effort to remove guilt and accountability, hope was also lost.

Biblical Definitions of Addiction

- ▣ Slavery to Sin
 - John 8:34 – *“Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.”*
 - 1 John 3:4 – *“Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of the law.”*
 - Rom. 3:23 – *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
 - 2 Pet. 2:19 – *“People are enslaved to whatever overcomes them.”*
 - The ultimate problem is connected to sinful nature of the human heart.

Biblical Definitions of Addiction

- ▣ Drunkenness
 - Drunkenness is talked about many times in the Bible
 - Ongoing and repeated drunkenness is addiction to alcohol
 - It is listed beside other sins such as sexual immorality, greed, and adultery.
 - In Eph. 5:18 it is the antithesis to being filled with the Holy Spirit

Biblical Definitions of Addiction

- ▣ Idolatry
 - Def. – worship of something as god...excessive devotion
 - Ezek. 14:3 – God warns about people who set up idols in their hearts
 - Substances or activities become “functional saviors,” promising to provide relief, but demanding more and more devotion
 - The power behind any idol is Satan, stealing worship away from God.

Biblical Definitions of Addiction

- ▣ Spiritual Strongholds
 - Stronghold is a fortified place that is well protected and hard to defeat
 - Gal. 5:20-21 - "Sorcery" is *pharmakiea* - giving indication that drug use is a gateway to spiritual influence.
 - 1 Cor. 10:3-4 - Spiritual strongholds can only be conquered through spiritual means

Bible - Identity in the Savior

- ▣ The problem is INSIDE the addicted person - sinful heart
- ▣ The solution is OUTSIDE them - completed work of Christ
- ▣ Christ promises complete redemption and freedom
- ▣ The believer's identity is no longer "sinner," but "saint," "child of God," and "in Christ."

The Survey

- ▣ 40 question survey through Survey Monkey
- ▣ 12 question about demographics
- ▣ 11 questions about perceptions or personal experiences with recovery ministry and discipleship
- ▣ 12 questions related to addictions
- ▣ 5 question related to spiritual disciplines

The Average Respondent

- ▣ Married (71%), Caucasian (88%), female (78%), between the ages of 25 and 44 (49%) with a Bachelor's degree or higher (52%).
- ▣ Christian (93%)
- ▣ Baptist (63%)
- ▣ Member of a church between 100 and 499 people (53%)

Interesting Findings

- ❑ 50% of churches do not offer any form of recovery ministry
- ❑ 88% agreed that recovery ministry is an essential part of the Great Commission
- ❑ 88% said they did not participate in recovery ministry

Interesting Findings

- ❑ People are more likely to recommend a friend to a recovery ministry (56%) than attend themselves, if they were struggling with something (36%)
- ❑ People are reluctant to reveal their own struggles, even on an anonymous survey
- ❑ People listed anxiety as the greatest struggle in churches, but addictions as the greatest struggles outside of church

Interesting Findings

- ▣ 93% agreed that addictions are a symptom of a deeper issue
- ▣ 64% believe complete freedom from addictions is possible
- ▣ 87% believe self-identity has an extreme influence on recovery
- ▣ 56% believe the self-identity of “once an addict, always an addict” would contribute the greatest to relapse

Interesting Findings

- ▣ 95% have participated in spiritual disciplines
- ▣ The most practiced (97%) was prayer
- ▣ The least practiced (2%) was solitude

Interesting Findings

- ▣ 44% said they practiced fasting
- ▣ 0% believe it is helpful in overcoming negative behaviors
- ▣ Isa. 58:6 says that fasting is to “break the chains of wickedness, untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke.”

Interesting Findings - Summary

- ▣ Churches are offering forms of discipleship, but people do not take advantage of them at a high rate.
- ▣ In theory, people agree with the idea that recovery ministry is essential to the Great Commission, but, practically, they do not participate.
- ▣ People are drawn more on “passive” spiritual disciplines (prayer, confession) over “active” spiritual disciplines (service, meditation, fasting)

Recovery Ministry Supplement

- ▣ Power of the Pulpit
 - Most Christians attend a weekly sermon
 - Recovery ministry must be a priority in the preaching and leading of the church to have the greatest impact
 - The best chance for an unchurched person to visit a church is during the Sunday morning worship. They need to hear how the church can help practically in real life struggles
 - Pastors must be authentic and transparent in their own struggles

Recovery Ministry Supplement

- ▣ Make the Most of Mentoring
 - The greatest impact of recovery ministry is when deep relationships are formed in life-on-life mentoring
 - Mentoring requires intentionality
 - Mentoring must be Biblically-based and Spirit-sensitive

Recovery Ministry Supplement

- ▣ Focus on Freedom
 - More redemption than recovery
 - Recovery ministry is more about freedom than behavior management or modification
 - Freedom in Identity – you become what you believe you are
 - Freedom in Grace – its okay to be human
 - Freedom in Truth – what’s really real

Recovery Ministry Supplement

- ▣ Answer the “Why?”
 - What the person is doing is an external fruit
 - Why they are doing it is the root of their behavior
 - Recovery ministry should help people discover the true source of their pain and how they have tried to escape it

Recovery Ministry Supplement

- ▣ Train for Godliness
 - Bible study, prayer, and worship are usually already part of recovery ministries
 - At the appropriate time, other spiritual disciplines, such as fasting can be initiated to help the believer walk in freedom
 - Fasting should be started with short, partial fasts to build confidence that the flesh does not have to be in control

Opportunities for Further Development

- ▣ Larger Sample Size
- ▣ Broader Demographics
- ▣ More Detailed Questions



Thank you for the opportunity to do this project
and for all of your help in the process of
completing it.