Collaborating Mentors in the Discipleship Process

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Doctor of Ministry

by
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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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The researcher presents an action thesis conducted at Crossroads Family Ministries, studying multiple mentors’ effects in the discipleship process. Single mentor discipleship systems where one mentor disciples one mentee are common in many churches. However, placing one mentee with multiple mentors should produce better-discipled individuals with a greater experience and spiritual gift base from which to grow. This study aims to measure the effect collaborative mentoring has on a mentee during the discipleship process. The researcher has recruited five mentees and fifteen mentors to participate in this study. Four mentees are unfamiliar with the discipleship material and will each be assigned to three mentors creating four discipling groups. There will be one additional group where the mentee has previously experienced discipleship under the single mentor system. Each discipling group will meet for nine weeks, during which each mentor will have three weeks of close interaction with their mentee. The mentors will be trained and continuously encouraged to collaborate on addressing the needs of their mentees. All participants will be required to keep a journal of their observations and progress. The mentees will be given an anonymous survey at the end of this study to help assess the impact of multiple mentors. The results of this thesis project will influence the methodology of discipleship in Crossroads Family Ministries and potentially other local churches. If mentees benefit from a collaborative of mentors working together, then the single mentor model could be abandoned for a multiple mentor approach.

Key words: disciple, discipleship, mentor, mentee, mentoring
Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral research project to my wife Heidi. She has been my encouragement and support throughout this entire process. She has been so patient with me always praying for me and helping to keep me calm. She fully believed that I could finish well even when I doubted myself. She is a wonderful woman of God and she makes me a better man just by being in my life.
## Contents

**Abstract** ................................................................................................................................. iv

**Dedication** .................................................................................................................................. v

**Chapter 1: Introduction** ........................................................................................................... 11

  - Ministry Context ....................................................................................................................... 15
  - Problem Presented .................................................................................................................... 19
  - Purpose Statement ................................................................................................................... 20
  - Basic Assumptions ................................................................................................................... 20
  - Limitations ............................................................................................................................... 21
  - Delimitations ........................................................................................................................... 21
  - Thesis Statement ...................................................................................................................... 22

**Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework** .......................................................................................... 23

  - Literature Review ...................................................................................................................... 23
    - Mentoring Mindset .................................................................................................................. 23
    - Developing Relationships ........................................................................................................ 26
    - Collaboration in Mentoring ..................................................................................................... 27
    - Equipping and Potential .......................................................................................................... 30
    - Character and Transformation ................................................................................................. 31
    - The Gap in Literature .............................................................................................................. 33
    - Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 36

  - Theological Foundations ........................................................................................................... 36
    - The Great Commission ............................................................................................................ 37
Life Transformation .................................................................38
God’s Compassion on the Lost and Simple ..................................39
Gifting .........................................................................................41
The Need for Mentors ..............................................................43
Old Testament Examples ..........................................................45
New Testament Examples ..........................................................47
Multiple Mentors .................................................................50
Conclusion ..............................................................................50
Theoretical Foundations .........................................................51
Secular Research .................................................................52
Religious Research ...............................................................53
Concepts of Mentoring in Use ..................................................54
Conclusion ..............................................................................55
Chapter 3: Methodology ..........................................................56
Intervention Design ..................................................................57
Mentor Training .................................................................58
The Mentee’s Role ...............................................................59
Implementation of Intervention Design ......................................61
Communication .................................................................61
Assistance .............................................................................62
Reflection and Analysis .........................................................63
The Creation of Written Materials ............................................64
Chapter 4: Results

Archival Data

Various Themes Noted

Project Mentees’ Questionnaire Responses

Project Mentees’ Responses to Identified Themes

Project Mentors’ Journals

Common Themes

Unusual Circumstances

Project Mentors’ Journals

Common Themes

Control Group Mentee’s Journal

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Conclusion Questions

How do the results compare to the archival information?

How do the results of this project compare to the literature studied?

What did the researcher learn in implementing the project?

How might the results apply in other ministry settings?

Did anything emerge during the study that merits future research?

Where should the research regarding collaborative mentoring go from here?

Bibliography

Appendix A (IRB Approval)

Appendix B (Definitions)

Appendix C (Mentor Consent)

Appendix D (Mentee Consent)
Appendix E (Questionnaire Questions) ................................................................. 117
Appendix F (Mentor Training Outline) ................................................................. 118

Tables

4.1 Archival Data Graph .................................................................................. 70
4.2 Project Mentees’ Questionnaire Response Graph ....................................... 77
4.3 Comparison of Discipleship Models Graph ................................................. 88
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFM</td>
<td>Crossroads Family Ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIN</td>
<td>Doctor of Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUSOD</td>
<td>Liberty University School of Divinity</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The conceptual nature of mentoring has existed for thousands of years. One individual coaching, teaching, or encouraging another is a natural and fundamental principle found in the human experience. Whether it is a coach, trusted friend, or parent, people have always been speaking into the lives of others. The advent of social media has exposed humanity’s obsession with speaking into the lives of others. Whether for benevolent or malicious reasons, people seem to crave others’ input or give opinions and direction into others’ lives. Mentoring addresses this need within the human condition and involves someone coming alongside another and speaking into their life to enhance their personal or professional growth.

The name ‘mentor’ originates from an account in Homer’s ancient classic, the Odyssey. In this account, king Odysseus has departed for the Trojan war and left his young son, Telemachus, under the tutelage of a trusted friend named ‘Mentor.’ It was Mentor’s responsibility to raise Telemachus to be a capable and mature man. Mentor was to be both a guide and an educator to facilitate Telemachus’ personal growth. Without a father to guide, educate, and encourage, Telemachus had a severe growth disadvantage. In essence, Mentor fills this vacuum and serves as a surrogate parent and guide for his young student. In the story, Mentor was just an elderly friend of Odysseus,’ the real training came through the guidance and encouragement of Athena, the goddess of wisdom who took the form of Mentor to advise Telemachus as the need arose.

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2 Ibid.
Telemachus receives the blessing of Athena’s wisdom because he appears to be ‘napios,’ which is the Greek word for ‘disconnected.’ Telemachus is disconnected from the king, his father Odysseus, and therefore he is disconnected from knowing what his life should be. Bill Hendricks notes that Telemachus does not know himself. He does not know who he is or what he is supposed to do with his life. Without knowing one’s self nor what to do, life may proceed forth aimlessly and without meaning. Therefore, at the council of the gods, Athena decides to give Telemachus ‘menos,’ which is commonly translated as “heroic strength.” However, Athena does not seem to desire to give Telemachus a heroic strength of just any kind. ‘Menos’ seems to refer to a strength of mind. Since Telemachus’ deficit was his disconnectedness (‘napios’), Athena endows him with the heroic ability (‘menos’) to connect. Hendricks argues that this strength of mind is the ability to connect mentally. Therefore, Athena connects mentally with Telemachus (through the visage of the elder, mentor) in an attempt to strengthen the young man, guiding him and connecting him with who he is and what he is supposed to do.

Mentoring today takes on certain aspects of this story. Telemachus was transformed not because of information gleaned through the educational process nor through a rigid training discipline. His transformation, and the transformation desired in all who enter the mentoring

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4 Ibid.


6 Ibid.

7 Hendricks and Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 56.

8 Ibid.
process, took place deep within. Such a transformation manifests from the inside out. Hendricks argues that Telemachus’ transformation was ultimately a matter of him believing in himself.\textsuperscript{9}

Individuals in need of mentoring are often disconnected and unsure of themselves. The mentors, therefore, are the ones who speak into these lives to connect them. The connection may be in the form of joining the mentees with the right knowledge base to advance their lives. The connection could be linking the mentees with the proper life perspective to overcome a difficult challenge. The connection possibilities are endless. However, the prime objective of the mentors is to transform from within the lives of the mentees. Such a transformation can only occur when the mentors influence other’s lives on such a deeply personal level that the mentees change their self-perception.\textsuperscript{10}

As believers in Jesus Christ, mentoring has its roots in biblical truth. The foundations of Christian mentoring are the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, who inspired it. The Spirit is the source of power for positive life transformation and connectivity. The gifts that the Holy Spirit endows on believers empowers them to conduct the work of ministry and mentor others.\textsuperscript{11} Without these gifts, the work of mentoring would be significantly diminished, and the prospect of positive life transformation would be slim. The theological undergirding that supports mentoring will be discussed further under the “Theological Foundations” section. Suffice to say, the power that transforms a mentee and gives him purpose and identity does not come from the Greek pantheon but is revealed in the pages of Scripture.

\textsuperscript{9} Hendricks and Hendricks, \textit{Men of Influence}, 57.  
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 60.  
\textsuperscript{11} Ephesians 4:12-13 (ESV). Unless otherwise noted all biblical passages referenced will be in the English Standard Version Bible (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).
Concerning the nature of mentoring, the traditional model has been to partner one mentor with one mentee for a specified duration of time with hopes that life change on the mentee’s part would take place. The traditional model presumes that the mentor is adequately trained (possibly by the church or institute of higher learning) and gifted by the Holy Spirit to deal with the necessary elements and issues in the mentee’s life. The traditional model fails to examine that no single person can possess all of the Spirit’s giftings. Lacking the proper spiritual gifts may hinder the mentor from properly connecting with the mentee. A mentor can lack the necessary giftings to engage his mentee properly. Moreover, it follows that the mentor may also lack the proper training and life experiences to adequately address the needs the mentee may have.

A multiplicity of mentors could address the problem of underqualified, inexperienced mentors, or the need for other-gifted mentors. Utilizing multiple mentors in the mentoring process could significantly increase the chance of connectivity and life transformation. Each mentor could engage the mentee according to his respective experience levels and spiritual giftedness. These mentors would need to work together closely to achieve agreed upon goals. As the mentors collaborate, their cooperative efforts could engage the mentee on a level no singular mentor ever could. The connected partnership of multiple mentors could be more responsive to the needs of the mentee. In the mentoring process, having more eyes in the process gives a collaborative mentoring effort more observational potential. As mentors collaborate, a

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synergistic relationship could form between the mentors and their mentee that might bring about positive life transformation faster and more effectively. Collaborative mentoring seems to promise a far more significant transformational potential than traditional mentoring models ever could.

It is important for Crossroads Family Ministries (CFM) to grasp the conceptualization of a collaborative mentoring program. CFM has employed (as most churches do) the traditional mentoring model for too long. The traditional model has a high failure rate. Both mentor and mentee are leaving the mentoring program frustrated and believing themselves to be failures, or worse, that the discipleship process is not worth the effort. The traditional model represents an untenable program that should be abandoned for a more effective one.

Ministry Context

The ministry context of CFM is determined by its people and their location in the country. CFM began in 1954 as Keystone Baptist Church and was planted by the founding pastor, Donald Greene. Greene grew the church until his retirement in 1988. In 1989, the church called its second pastor, James Fox. Fox ministered in the church and kept it a traditional church model until 2003, when he hired a youth pastor, Tyson Wahl. By 2005, Fox had begun to lead the church to shed its traditional feel and adopt a more attractional model with his youth pastor’s full support. Bringing a traditional church into an attractional model caused a rift that came to a head in 2008 with changing the church’s name. Keystone Baptist Church changed its name to Crossroads Family Ministries, and the church went through a small split. Fox navigated these

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14 Neil Powell and John James, *Together for the City: How Collaborative Church Planting Leads to Citywide Movements* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 110. Powell and James discuss the beneficial relationship that can exist among church planting collaborators but never venture into the possibilities a collaborative mentorship in a discipleship environment could offer.
waters and kept the church stable and growing slowly. By 2013, the average attendance was 90-110. In 2013, Fox retired, and CFM called its youth pastor to be the lead pastor. Starting in 2013 until the beginning of 2020, the attendance at CFM had risen to an average of 230. The congregation outgrew its original building and in 2015 moved across the valley to an old Methodist church in the center of town. Moving from a suburban location to a more urban (as ‘urban’ as a small valley can be) has brought many changes to CFM. The previous site for the church was not highly visible and a little confusing to find. The church’s current location is downtown in a prominent building on a well-trafficked street. After the move in 2015, CFM continued to experience rapid growth, adding a second service and multiple staff members. The church is currently enjoying a boom in attendance and continues to grow in salvations, baptisms, and discipleship.15

The people of CFM are located in Sayre and Athens’ valley communities in the Northeast corner of Pennsylvania. CFM is located in a mostly rural setting with limited suburban aspects. The valley community had its beginnings with the coming of the railroad towards the end of the nineteenth century. The Lehigh Valley Railroad brought blue-collar industrial workers to the valley to settle and work the railway.16 Over time, the railroad grew less prominent and employed fewer people, while farming remained a consistent way of life for most people. By the mid-twentieth century, a new employer arose in the valley. Although surrounded by farmland, in the heart of the valley rests a large conglomerated medical center (Guthrie Clinic and Robert Packer Hospital), which has grown to employ a substantial portion of the current valley

15 Note: the current advent of the Coronavirus pandemic has altered the church’s growth pattern to a degree that will not be known until well after the completion of this thesis.

population. Shortly after the turn of the twenty-first century, the valley experienced the advent of the natural gas industry. Companies like Chesapeake Energy established their operations base in the valley, offering good-paying jobs, which drove the unemployment rate down from 11% in 2009 to 4.4% by the end of 2014. With the rise of the natural gas industry came a boom in attendance at CFM. Educated and well-paid individuals became regular attenders and congregation members during this time. However, as natural gas prices began to fall rapidly, so did the stability of the industry that had come to the valley. Chesapeake Energy began to decline; therefore, the company reduced its operations in the valley and laid off many of its employees. With the decline in the gas industry came a large exodus from CFM as these former members and attenders began to relocate to find work. The current financial and educational demographic of CFM is wide and varied. 65% of regular attenders and members are not highly educated and would rank financially in the lower-middle-class (with a small percentage under the poverty line). Approximately 30% of the church’s population is college educated and would rank in the middle class. Only 5% would be considered highly educated and in the upper-middle class. According to a 2020 population review, the valley’s ethnic population comprises 95.39% White, 0.73% African American, 1.22% Asian, and 2.66% mixed race, with a median age of 45.

Concerning the religious make-up of the valley, there seems to be a general malaise. People tend to distance themselves from religious institutions. Many in the valley show an overwhelming apathy or disregard for churches and ministerial considerations. The greater valley

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area has been heavily influenced for many years by Roman Catholic doctrine. At one time, the valley boasted five large Catholic churches in an area with a population of just under 20,000. Many members and attenders of CFM are converts from Catholicism. Much of the church and valley population still struggle with the pangs of Catholic dogma. In recent years, the valley has seen the demise of many local churches. The Presbyterian association has shrunk from three churches to one, the Methodist association has shrunk from three churches to two, and the Roman Catholic association has shrunk from five churches down to one. In the past five years, the Nazarene, Pilgrim Holiness, and two independent churches have closed their doors for good.

CFM has been able to make inroads to connect with the people of the valley community. Although ministering at its current location for less than five years, CFM is regarded as a stable and beneficial church organization. The church has developed relationships with various ministry organizations in the valley. Through cooperation with these organizations, CFM can minister more effectively to the poor and underprivileged, those in financial and spiritual crisis, those in motorcycle and gun clubs, and those struggling with the idea of keeping their babies. Since CFM is an independent church, it has also sought fellowship with other theologically conservative churches in the valley. Creating bonds of friendship and helpfulness has helped CFM develop a good testimony within the community and better minister to the valley population.

CFM continues to utilize the hard-fought attractional model adopted by pastor Fox. Drawing people to come to the church through regular invitations, small groups, events, and relational evangelism has helped grow the church’s overall attendance. The most important tool to draw people to the church is a personal invitation through a connected relationship. CFM

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20 Having had only three pastors in its sixty-six-year existence provides valuable stability that other churches and local government members have come to respect.
regularly instructs and encourages its members and regular attenders to speak out about the good things the Lord is doing in their lives and the church. Creating an environment of excitement and anticipation towards attending church is a counterculture in this valley but proves to draw others to CFM effectively. Every member and regular attender reaching into their respective sphere of influence leverages more people to come to CFM. As these relationships grow, so does the connectivity of regular attendees and members with new visitors. These new relationships often lead to salvations, baptisms, and more discipleship.

As CFM has grown over the past few years, so has its discipleship program. Desiring to fulfill the Great Commission,21 CFM has designed a discipleship material guide.22 Participants are paired with a discipler who teaches through one of three levels of discipleship offered by CFM. Once a participant has completed a discipleship level, they are encouraged to take someone else through it. Teaching through the material they have just finished proves to be an excellent medium for maximum understanding and retention. However, CFM has come to a point where the discipleship program has plateaued. The next step in the church’s discipleship progression is to enhance its potential and success in the mentoring ministry.

**Problem Presented**

The mentoring ministry in Crossroads Family lacks direction, guidance, and purpose. Most programs seem to pair a singular mentor with a mentee for the duration of a specified mentorship cycle. However, this individualized approach can often leave a mentee with an underqualified mentor resulting in a substandard mentorship. Working together, mentors could

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22 The discipleship material guide (called “Discipleship 1”) was designed and created primarily by Tyson Wahl and may be found at the CFM website: [https://crossroadsfamilyministries.org/discipleship/](https://crossroadsfamilyministries.org/discipleship/)
fill in the ‘gaps’ in their education, experiences, and gftings. The problem is that CFM has been pairing a single mentor with one mentee with no focus on collaborative aspects of the discipleship process.

**Purpose Statement**

Since it is unlikely that a singular mentor could possess all the Holy Spirit’s gifts, it is necessary for a mentor to collaborate with other mentors to present a more skillful, well-rounded, and robust mentoring experience. Mentors need to be trained to share the vision, set goals, and work together in mentoring others. A collaboration of mentors working together in such a fashion could produce well trained and experienced mentees ready to serve in the church’s ministry. The purpose of this DMIN action research thesis is to test the effectiveness of a collaborative mentoring discipleship model against a single mentor model.

**Basic Assumptions**

There is a basic assumption that CFM will support and commit to the research of collaborative mentoring in their discipleship programming. The church’s commitment will involve using the church’s classrooms, discipleship material, and general availability. There is a basic assumption that the participants will commit to the research and engage one another adequately. The commitment made by the participating mentors will involve classroom training, engagement with one another in the mentoring process, honest evaluations for journal entries, and completion of the discipleship material provided. The commitment made by the participating mentees will involve dedication to attend all discipleship meetings, answering the questionnaire truthfully, and making honest evaluations for journal entries. The basic assumption regarding all
the participants is that they will honestly engage in this project with no agenda to influence the study results. There is also a basic assumption that this research’s participants are an equitable sample of the overall church population. Moreover, this study assumes that these participants are a fair example of the valley community’s general population.

A further assumption is that this research will provide information that will help facilitate future church mentoring. The study should give insight into the greater workings and results of a collaborative mentoring approach. In time, the collaborative mentoring process may prove to be the church’s first adaptation in its discipleship and mentoring efforts.

**Limitations**

As part of this action research, the congregation members and regular attendees of CFM will serve as the participants for this study. Research limitations include the participants’ ability to follow instructions thoroughly and to engage one another adequately. There are no methods available to verify the current spirituality of the participatory mentors. Participants will self-identify as mentors, while others will volunteer as those in need of mentoring. Additionally, the willingness of participants to be instructed, observed, and questioned will be a limitation. Another limitation will be the participants’ reluctance to offer candid responses. The researcher’s ability to absorb the information and adequately communicate the findings will also be a limitation.

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23 Participants volunteering as mentors will have varying degrees of education and experience in teaching the discipleship material. Moreover, these mentors may have limited skills working with others.
Delimitations

The delimitations of this research include utilizing only the members and regular attendees of CFM for this study. The timeframe of this research also presents a delimitation. Participation in this research will occur in the winter months and limit the potential pool of participants due to current attendance trends. Moreover, the weather may interfere with the regularity of meetings; thus, affecting connectedness.

Thesis Statement

As an invaluable element in the discipling process, mentoring should be a central focus for any church seeking to excel at accomplishing the Great Commission. The proper training of the church’s mentoring core will aid in expanding and growing its mentoring ministry. Specifically, teaching mentors to collaborate in the discipling of a mentee may offer untold benefits in mentee and mentor’s spiritual education. Therefore, this action thesis seeks to demonstrate that if CFM provides a collaborative discipleship experience for its mentees, then the church may see better-discipled individuals emerge who will have a more refined understanding of their spiritual gifts and how to employ them in the church.
Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

Crossroads Family Ministries has been operating its discipleship program from a single mentor system since its inception. Although this process has born modest fruit through discipling individuals, more fruitful discipleship might be realized using collaborative mentoring. Therefore, a review of the precedent religious and secular literature concerning collaborative mentoring elements will be undertaken to examine what themes are revealed. These themes come to light as the literature repeats itself and notes the same distinctive qualities for the mentoring process. Each theme is the culmination of multiple views from the precedent literature pertaining to a specific topic. There are some themes about which the literature has remained silent. These silences or ‘gaps’ in the literature will be discussed toward the end of this analysis. The following literature topics range from relationships in mentoring to the transformation of a believer in the discipling process. The first of these themes to be examined is the mindset of the mentor.

Mentoring Mindset

Most authors agree that mentoring occurs when one individual (the mentor) seeks to affect change in another (the mentee) through the transference of wisdom, knowledge, and experience.24 Whereas the Christian goal in mentoring differs in many respects from secular purposes, there are significant overlapping similarities that should be noted. Both seek to develop individuals through the use of experienced, older mentors.25 Both expect a mindset of self-

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sacrifice on the part of the mentor for the good of the mentee. Both anticipate a transformation in the mentee’s behavior brought about by the direct influence of the mentor. Finally, both carry a reasonable expectation that the mentee will become a viable future mentor to others with a continued gain in knowledge and experience.

The primary differences in the literature concerning the mindset of a mentor reside in the desired outcome of the mentee. The secular industry does show concern for its people’s development and encouragement; however, its primary purpose has always been the financial bottom line. In stark contrast, the Christian community seems to refine its mentoring mindset to producing men and women who demonstrate characteristics and behaviors resembling those of Jesus. The core motivation seems to be the main difference; one is after a transformative, Christ-like experience, while the other is motivated more by financial results rather than life transformation.

The majority of reviewed Christian literature that speaks to the mentoring mindset seems to agree in most aspects. The intentional development of a relationship where the mentor purposefully sets out to encourage and equip the mentee for Christlikeness is repeated almost


without fail. Where the Christian literature differs is in the notion of collaboration. Authors like Gordon MacDonald argue for a singular approach to mentoring where he, as the mentor, becomes the sole deciding factor in the spiritual upbringing of the mentee. However, like Joseph Hellerman, many authors suggest a collaborative approach to mentoring, where relational environments form the foundation for a communal approach to mentoring. The literature consistently supports a collaborative effort over a singular approach to mentoring.


Developing Relationships

Reviewing the literature has shown that the mindset of a mentor is essential to understanding mentoring. However, the literature also reveals a common theme of developing relationships to facilitate the mentoring process. John Maxwell argues that individuals will not care about what a potential mentor has to say until they are invested in that mentor.\textsuperscript{36} The literature supports the truism that for any mentor to influence a potential mentee’s life, the mentor must first earn the right to speak into that life. The literature also suggests that the best and possibly only way to earn this right is by developing an intentional relationship with the mentee.\textsuperscript{37} The underlying relationship forms the mechanism by which all encouragement, equipping, and guidance is transmitted from mentor to mentee. Neil Cole goes so far as to suggest that without an excellent relationship, mentoring cannot exist.\textsuperscript{38} Even secular sources agree that a positive relationship with a potential mentee is critical to the mentoring process.\textsuperscript{39} It is possible to extrapolate that an intentional relationship between mentors could be developed to facilitate collaboration in the discipling process.

Not only does the literature emphasize the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship, but also the quality of this relationship.\textsuperscript{40} Secular and Christian sources agree that a quality relationship between a mentor and mentee is only achievable when the right conditions are

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intentionally created.\textsuperscript{41} The environment created suggests an atmosphere of trust where the mentee is encouraged to open up and be honest with the mentor. Moreover, within this environment’s confines, the mentor may gauge how teachable the mentee’s mind and attitude are.\textsuperscript{42} Without saying it, the literature seems to indicate that the environment created by the church or secular organization is like a first date. Mentors search for mentees, and both decide if their potential relationship is a good fit.

The literature does have some different perspectives concerning the relational aspects of the mentoring process. Stedman agrees with the need for the development of relationships in mentoring. However, he argues that unity, an essential ingredient to any relationship, is not something the church can manufacture but must maintain.\textsuperscript{43} This implies that certain aspects of the relational environment are beyond the control of the church. Additionally, John Maxwell gives the mentoring relationship a high-water mark to gauge itself. He argues that mentors and mentees should not only be open and loyal to one another but genuinely be thrilled with each other’s respective successes.\textsuperscript{44} Although this benchmark is not counterintuitive to the nature of the relationship proposed by the literature, it does set forth a new and different standard.

**Collaboration in Mentoring**

The precedent literature identifies another common thread throughout the theme of mentoring. Although seldom directly addressed, much of the literature speaks or references the positive concept of collaboration in mentoring. Just as there must be an honest relationship

\textsuperscript{41} Powell and James, “Together for the City,” 139. Here, the Christian authors argue for relational strength to be the target of the mentor. The relationship will be the catalyst to create a conducive movement dynamic.

\textsuperscript{42} Don Hawkins, “Master Discipleship,” 15.

\textsuperscript{43} Stedman, “Body Life,” 41.

\textsuperscript{44} Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 109.
between mentor and mentee, there must be a respectful relationship between mentors. The literature consistently agrees that mentoring is greatly aided within the confines of a mentoring group working together and supporting one another in the mentoring of a mentee.\(^ {45} \) Secular and Christian sources agree that mentors working in a collaborative relationship can better aid each other in the mentoring process.\(^ {46} \) Moreover, the literature suggests that deliberately collaborative teams will grow each member in their mentoring skillsets collectively.\(^ {47} \) This type of collaboration requires thoughtful and intentional planning. Thomas McCann notes that the most substantial potential for mentoring is achieved when collaboration is planned out with strategic targets and goals in mind.\(^ {48} \)

Since a collaborative mentoring environment so greatly aids mentoring, an argument then arises against a single mentor system’s shortcomings. Multiple mentors working together seem


\(^ {48} \) McCann, “Mentoring as Collaborative Effort,” 110-112.
to be a more advantageous system than a solitary mentor working alone. Stedman notes that no singular mentor could possibly embody all the necessary attributes needed to mentor a mentee adequately.\textsuperscript{49} Moreover, Bill Hendricks argues that not every mentoring relationship has the depth or engagement necessary to fully mature the mentee.\textsuperscript{50} Neil Cole notes the benefit of a collaborative mentorship in that with a multiplicity comes accountability unto the mentors not to dominate the discussion with the mentee singularly.\textsuperscript{51} Although these sources might appear to be highlighting problems with the single mentoring process, they are making the argument for a collaboration of mentors within a respectful and honest relationship setting.

The literature does disagree in certain areas. Powell and James argue for a less formal and more fluid structure to the collaborative strategy whereby mentors come and go in the mentoring process.\textsuperscript{52} These authors argue that this process allows for the moving and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the evolution of the mentoring process; however, this methodology seems to destabilize any relationship properties that may initially be established and ultimately might cause confusion or distrust on the part of the mentee.\textsuperscript{53} Sharples and Marcon-Clarke also note that when the mentoring group that is possibly collaborating shares the same experience gap, the mentee suffers a sub-par mentorship.\textsuperscript{54} This observation reflects a previous objection concerning a single mentor’s lack of qualifications (now expanded to a collaborative group). However, the prospect of multiple mentors all being deficient in the same experience, giftings, and education seems not


\textsuperscript{50} Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 161.

\textsuperscript{51} Neil Cole, “Cultivating a Life for God,” 42.

\textsuperscript{52} Powell and James, “Together for the City,” 37.


\textsuperscript{54} Sharples and Marcon-Clarke, “Collaborative Approach,” n.p.
only an unlikely phenomenon, but one easily addressed by a supervising pastor at the outset of the mentoring process.

**Equipping and Potential**

As the literature begins to wind through various nuances of the mentoring process, certain threads begin to appear repeatedly. Seeing the potential in a mentee and equipping that potential is a theme that is commonly written. Possibly, the most powerful statement a mentor could make to a mentee is, “I believe in you.”\(^{55}\) This statement carries with it the relational connection a mentor has with the mentee and the potential the mentor sees in the mentee. According to John Maxwell, this mentality of belief in the mentee energizes his spirit and begins the process of releasing the mentee’s potential.\(^{56}\) It is this hope and optimism that encourages the mentee to reach upward and fulfill the potential seen in him.\(^{57}\) Even if the mentee does not believe in himself, the belief of the mentor may suffice to motivate the mentee to elevate his performance and achieve his goals.\(^{58}\) Christian and secular literature converge on this point and agree that by encouraging and challenging the mentee to rise above his current station, the mentor inspires the mentee to believe in himself.\(^{59}\) Once the mentee believes he is capable, the mentor must then equip the mentee for a task that achieves a specified goal.\(^{60}\) Once the task is successfully accomplished, the mentee earns the confidence to face more challenging tasks.

\(^{55}\) Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 57.

\(^{56}\) Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 82.


\(^{58}\) Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 46.

\(^{59}\) Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 57.

The literature concerning the equipping and potential of a mentee is somewhat congruent; however, certain authors take unconventional approaches. Kowalski argues that obstacles (naturally found or mentor made) help the mentee achieve their goals through hard-fought victories.\textsuperscript{61} The concept is that challenging the mentee’s thinking and behavior makes for a more robust mentorship process. Having the mentee overcome difficult obstacles would create a greater sense of accomplishment. Elevating and encouraging the spirit of the mentee is a significant theme in mentoring.

Character and Transformation

The final theme the literature brings to light surrounds the elements of the character and transformation of the mentee and mentor. The clear and present purpose of mentoring is to change a mentee to be more like the mentor. In this respect, the literature agrees that there must be a transformation in the mentee’s life, or the mentoring process has failed.\textsuperscript{62} Bill Hull argues that the relationship forged between mentee and mentor is the catalyst that ignites this transformation.\textsuperscript{63} Maxwell adds that the transformative process is dependent on the character of the mentor as much as the activity within the relationship.\textsuperscript{64} The literature seems to suggest that the mentoring relationship provides a type of “proving ground” for the mentor to model the character, ethic, and lifestyle he or she wishes the mentee to adopt and emulate. Hendricks suggests that it is this ‘modeling relationship’ that inspires the mentee to excel in character

\textsuperscript{61} Kowalski, “Mentoring,” 540-541.


\textsuperscript{64} Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 11.
transformation.\textsuperscript{65} Again, the literature seems to suggest that a mentor must earn the right to speak into a mentee’s life by authentically living out the values, ethics, and character he or she wishes to impose upon the mentee. It stands to reason that if a mentee interprets the mentor’s actions as disingenuous or worse, hypocritical, then the relationship that fosters the mentoring process will be irrevocably harmed. At this point, any hope of growth or transformation, which is such a crucial element to the mentoring process, will be lost.

Most Christian literature deems the mentor’s character as a prime factor in mentoring a mentee; however, the secular literature diverges at this point. Not as concerned with the moral or ethical transformation of its mentees, the secular literature concerns itself more with the mentoring process’s educational aspects.\textsuperscript{66} Again, secular literature seems more concerned with the business’s ‘bottom line.’ Despite the differing moral agenda, secular literature agrees that the mentee’s relationship with the mentor/s is the ultimate factor in the transformation process.\textsuperscript{67}

The transformation process is surprisingly not limited to the mentee. Both secular and Christian literature reports a rising trend where mentors are experiencing “reverse mentoring” while executing the responsibilities of a mentor. Maxwell notes that he has observed his personal

\textsuperscript{65} Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 34.

\textsuperscript{66} Jennifer Werdenberg, Francois Biziyaremye, Merab Nyishime, Evrard Nahimana, Christine Mutaganzwa, David Tugizimana, Anatole Manzi, Shalini Navale, Lisa R. Hirschhorn, and Hema Magge. "Successful implementation of a combined learning collaborative and mentoring intervention to improve neonatal quality of care in rural Rwanda." \textit{BMC Health Services Research} 18 (2018): 1-11. Accessed July 27, 2020. \url{https://search-proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2158357534/ftextPDF?ID=7D7EA1C3DB2646B7PQ/1?accountid=12085} Of significant note is the number of secular authors who view mentoring for education transference. As previously mentioned, such authors (Not an exhaustive list to this topic) include Semiyu Adejare Aderibigbe (Opportunities of the Collaborative Mentoring Relationships Between Teachers and Student Teachers in the Classroom), Laurette Bristol et al. (Academic Life Support: The Self Study of a Transnational Collaborative Mentoring Group), Wendy Murawski (Collaborative Teaching in Secondary Schools), and Stephen Southern (The Story of Us).

\textsuperscript{67} McCann, “Mentoring as Collaborative Effort,” 110-112.
growth as a direct result of the people he was mentoring.\textsuperscript{68} Sharples and Marcon-Clarke add that older executives reported having learned from their younger mentees.\textsuperscript{69} The literature reports that in each case, the phenomenon of reverse mentoring was neither the goal of the mentoring relationship nor was it planned. The literature (mostly Christian) does agree that for there to be a significant transformation in the character of a mentee or mentor, there must be a strong spiritual passion and desire for change.\textsuperscript{70} The literature seems to agree that without the willingness to change, no transformation could be possible.

The literature deviates only slightly regarding the transformational nature of the mentoring process. Akira Shinohara suggests that the pastor of the church should not necessarily be a catalyst for mentoring transformation.\textsuperscript{71} The underlying argument is that the input of an established pastor may corrupt the Holy Spirit driven nature of the mentee’s character development. Shinohara also advocates mentoring one’s self.\textsuperscript{72} However, this view has no support elsewhere in the precedent literature and seems to be counterintuitive to the mentoring process’s overall nature.

Gap in Literature

No piece of literature can contain all the various concepts and notions pertaining to a specific subject. When much of the precedent literature leaves out discussing a particular topic,

\textsuperscript{68} Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 27.

\textsuperscript{69} Sharples and Marcon-Clarke, “Collaborative Approach,” n.p.

\textsuperscript{70} Hull, “The Complete Book of Discipleship,” 37. As stated previously, other Christian authors supporting this view would include (but is not an exhaustive list for this topic): Neil Cole (Cultivating a Life for God), Bill and Howard Hendricks (Men of Influence), John Maxwell (Mentoring 101), Greg Ogden (Unfinished Business), and Ray Stedman (Body Life).


\textsuperscript{72} Shinohara, “Spiritual Formation and Mentoring,” 105.
this absence forms a ‘gap’ in the literature. From this gap, new ideas concerning the material arise or offer the potential for approaching existing material in different ways.

Concerning the mentoring mindset, there seems to be little mention of the negative aspects of maintaining a singular mentor with a mentee. Perhaps the singular (“lone wolf”) approach to mentoring is just how things have been done in churches for long periods. However, just because that is how something has been done in the past, it does not mean that it is the most effective method, nor should it be the prescribed path moving forward.

Although sometimes addressing the need for a communal approach, most authors take this theme no further. Moreover, the limitations of a sole mentor are seldom discussed in the literature, nor are the possible harmful effects of having an undereducated or heretical mentor. The literature is also silent concerning the potential structure and application of multiple mentors and their possible functionality.

Regarding developing relationships, the literature seems to come up short. A warm and accepting environment that fosters openness and respect is needed to facilitate the relationship process. However, there is little in the literature discussing the development of this warm environment or how the mentor may gauge his qualifications as suitable to the needs of the potential mentee. Conversely, the mentee has no selection process for a mentor. This relational environment seems like an ideal place to pair a mentor’s qualifications to a mentee’s needs. These elements appear to be assumed by the literature, as though this process will naturally happen in each organization.

Regarding collaboration in mentoring, the literature does not answer several questions. Are there specific gift sets that complement each other better? Where can the church locate multiple mentors if it struggles to find just one? How does the pastor train potential mentors to
work together? However, the most significant gap seems to be how the local church creates an environment of collaborative mentoring? Bob Deffinbaugh argues that believers are charged to fulfill the Great Commission, and to do this, they must employ their spiritual gifts in conjunction with other believers within the body of Christ. Deffinbaugh’s challenge is the closest exhortation to a collaborative mentoring framework. What remains is a generalized agreement that multiple mentors would significantly enhance the mentoring ministry, yet little more is explored.

Regarding the equipping and potential of mentees, one element that was not addressed by the literature is the spiritual giftings of the mentee. Greg Ogden notes the importance of identifying the gifts within the mentor and how they are used. However, the spiritual giftings of the mentee seem to be a silent issue. Bill Hendricks mentions that a good mentor will discover the giftedness of the mentee through the mentoring process. Nevertheless, the literature seems to elevate the needed relationship before the initiation of the mentoring process. Perhaps the mentor could determine the spiritual giftedness of the mentee in the initial stages of the mentoring process.

Regarding the character and transformation of a mentor/mentee, any gap in the literature would quickly be seen in the subtheme of reverse mentoring. Most of the literature uniformly covers character transformation benefits, particularly in the Christian themes of morals, ethics, and fidelity. However, the literature remains relatively silent regarding how to plan or make goals for reverse mentoring.

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75 Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 195.
Conclusion

The precedent literature seems to highlight the mentor’s character, ethics, and giftings coming to bear on the mentee. Both secular and religious literature point to the conclusion that without a quality mentor operating in a safe, open, and welcoming relationship with the mentee, there seems to be little hope of a quality discipleship. The literature highlights the ultimate focus of mentoring as being the transformation of the mentee. Transformation in religious circles appears obvious (the growth in knowledge, practice, and likeness of Jesus Christ); whereas, in secular circles this transformation seems limited to the enhancement of the organization’s bottom line. However, both secular and religious literature both agree that better and more effective mentoring involves the intentional efforts of the mentor in connect with his mentee in order that his life and expertise may be passed on to another.

Theological Foundations

God’s desire for His people is to make disciples. When a person comes to faith in the resurrected Savior, he is not immediately transported to heaven to be in His presence. Instead, Jesus desires to keep him in the world, but away from the influences of the evil one (John 17:15). The purpose of remaining in the world is to bear much fruit unto the Father and thereby prove to be Jesus’ disciples (John 15:8). Spreading the good news of the gospel of Jesus and making disciples honors the Lord and bears fruit for His kingdom. However, discipleship is not a program or formula to be replicated throughout time, but an outgrowth of what believers are in Christ.\textsuperscript{76} As saved and redeemed individuals, believers are commissioned with the responsibility

to pour into and develop others to be enthusiastic, devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Pouring into one another may be done singularly, but perhaps it would be beneficial to collaborate with others to accomplish this goal.

The Great Commission

In the Great Commission, Jesus’ words outline this purpose, “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 all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20). The Great Commission has often been misinterpreted as an imperative to go to all nations. However, what appears as a command to go, is actually a participle that would better be translated as ‘going,’ or ‘while you are going.’ The imperative command in the Great Commission is to ‘make disciples.’ Jesus drew His disciples to one purpose, to lead others to a loving and abiding relationship with Him.

What is of interest to this thesis’s purpose is the teaching that Jesus solicits from His disciples. Teaching presumes one entity speaking the truth of God’s Word and commandments into another’s life for instruction. In a discipling paradigm, teaching should result in Christ-like life transformation. It should be noted that it is the power of the Holy Spirit of God in a believer that brings about this positive life transformation and not the workings of any human intervention. In Zechariah 4:6, God declares to Zerubbabel, “not by might, nor by power, but by

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my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” The power of the Holy Spirit is the “great internal change agent” within a believer that draws him to be more like Christ.⁷⁹

However, the life transformation of an individual is not solely composed of the knowledge gained through teaching. There must be a voluntary agreement and adherence to this teaching, evidenced by obedience to the known command.⁸⁰ God calls believers to change, He provides Scripture to inform and instruct, He calls experienced and matured believers to facilitate the instruction and growth, and He gives His Holy Spirit to empower the change itself. One ingredient that is still necessary for life transformation is the willingness of the believer to be discipled. God calls individuals to salvation and discipleship but does not force them to change.⁸¹ If a believer is unwilling to be discipled or submit to the Holy Spirit, he will not experience the Christ-like life transformation that comes through the disciple-making process.⁸²

Life Transformation

In disciple-making, both teaching and baptism characterize a disciple, but they are not necessarily the means of making disciples.⁸³ It is life transformation that holds the focus of discipleship. Sadly, just because an individual is baptized and taught the truths of Scripture does not guarantee a genuine disciple of Jesus. Instead of a formulaic disciple-making process, the

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⁸¹ John 6:44, Hebrews 4:12, Titus 2:2-5, Philippians 2:12-13. These verses speak of the voluntary nature of the disciple. Although this thesis project will assume the willingness of its participants, it must be understood that any positive transformation that may result from collaborative mentoring must contain this essential theological element.

⁸² Lewis Sperry Chafer, Major Bible Themes (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 115.

Great Commission suggests transforming individuals into being devoted, self-replicating disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the disciple-making process appears to speak of a relationship with God more than a methodology of creating acolytes. Jim Putman describes this process well, “Discipleship requires real teaching and real learning. It requires conversation, modeling, encouragement, debriefing, and practice, all of which need to happen in the context of relationship.” The relationship he speaks of refers not only to the involvement of one believer with another but also to the relationship God desires with believers.

God’s Compassion on the Lost and Simple

God’s desire to have relationships with individuals from all nations is an emotional expression of His love for humanity. It is this love for humanity that lays the theological foundation for the ministry of mentoring. God’s love is exhibited throughout all of Scripture and is expressly demonstrated through evangelism and discipleship. God’s love may find its highest point in the well-known verse of John 3:16. God’s love and compassion for humanity culminated in the person and work of Jesus, offering Himself as a substitutionary atonement for sinners. However, God exhibits a pattern throughout Scripture, demonstrating His intentional concern and outreach for the welfare of the lost and the simple. This pattern of intentionality and love may unlock fundamental theological truths for the mentoring process.

In Psalm 116:5-6, God is described as gracious, righteous, merciful, and the one who preserves the simple. God is not focused only on the attitudes and actions of those deemed to be righteous and wise. Psalm 19:7 reveals that “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the

84 Putman, Real Life Discipleship, Kindle, n.p.
85 Bruce Barton et al., John, Life Application Commentary, ed. Grant Osborne (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 62-63.
testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” The information given in the pages of Scripture is not too lofty to be understood by the simple. Both the experienced and the naïve may comprehend and gain perspective. God’s compassion further evidences itself through His warnings to the simple through the pages of Scripture that their poor actions will lead to harm. Proverbs 22:3 states, “The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.” Moreover, God personifies the attribute of wisdom and calls to the lost and simple, “Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice?” “O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense” (Prov 8:1, 5). God calls to all classes of men since there are lost and simple within every cast of humanity. God does not wish to see people fall into disaster and harm themselves. This sentiment is echoed in the New Testament, which declares, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). The Lord is patient with the lost and the simple desiring salvation for them, which leads to a relationship with Himself. If this is the Lord’s attitude and position toward the simple-minded, then the godly mentor should adopt the same intentional approach regarding coaching the simple.

Even the words of Jesus suggest that His priority is to establish a relationship with the lost. Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” The salvation Jesus refers to is a restoration unto the community of God’s people. Elsewhere in the New Testament

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Testament, Jesus describes searching for the lost like a shepherd searching for his sheep (Luke 15:3-7, John 10:1-18). The theme of restoration and searching for the lost is not limited to the New Testament. Ezekiel 34:11-12 speaks of how the Lord will search for His lost sheep. The Lord’s goodness and character are seen in His searching for and restoration of the simple and lost sheep of Israel.\(^91\) The godly mentor should be intentional in building relationships with his mentee. If the mentee breaks this relationship off, the mentor needs to wisely and intentionally seek ways to reestablish the relationship.

Scripture demonstrates time and again the intentional care and concern God has for those who need instruction and life transformation. All humanity needs the Lord, but in God’s efforts to reach the lost, empathy may be observed for those without guide or instructor. It is these lost and simple individuals that need a mentor the most. A mentor will help these individuals by caring for them despite their condition, establishing a godly relationship with them, and helping them understand and navigate spiritual and life issues. However, these mentors must be equipped.

**Gifting**

God proves His desire to draw the lost and simple to Himself throughout Scripture. Still, the underlying theme behind it seems to bring them up to a greater understanding, personal walk, and relationship with Himself. If this is the case, there should be evidence of God specifically empowering His people in this desired relationship. 1 Corinthians 12:7 states, “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” This manifestation of the Spirit within the life of a believer is evidence of God’s desire for His people to be connected to Him and serve the

greater welfare of the body of believers.\textsuperscript{92} God describes the individual members of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27). Moreover, He uses the body analogy to describe individual believers’ various functions within the church (1 Cor 12:14-20). Believers are interdependent on each other to optimize their fellowship with others and their relationship with God.\textsuperscript{93} In this regard, God sets forth His plan for building up the church (the members of the body of Christ) by using the gifts (given by His Spirit) of each member. Ephesians 4:16 seems to confirm this notion, “from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” The body is held together by its members, who supply its requirements (through the giftings of the Spirit) for health and development in Christ.\textsuperscript{94} So, the individual giftings of the Spirit that are distributed to all believers within the body of Christ are to work together to better grow each other in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The growth of the body is not an issue that is independent of the head. The measure to which the body is to build itself up is determined by the head of the body, which is Christ. Ephesians 4:13 elaborates, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” The ultimate goal of maturity for any believer is “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” or in simpler vernacular, ‘to be like Christ.’


\textsuperscript{93} Craig Bloomberg, \textit{1 Corinthians}, The NIV Application Commentary, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 252.

It should be noted that the unity of the faith is essentially the same as the unity of the Spirit, which the church has already been encouraged to preserve.\textsuperscript{95} Unity speaks to the bonds of fellowship and peace that individual believers intentionally keep with one another. Being united to Christ through a saving faith helps believers recognize their own need for unity.\textsuperscript{96} It is this intentional unity that captures the attention of disciple minded believers. Mentoring carries with it a responsibility to maintain a bond of unity through the discipling relationship. Mentors have an opportunity to fulfill this responsibility (and many others) by employing the Holy Spirit’s gifts. As a mentor utilizes the gifts of the Spirit in his life and the life of his mentee, transformation happens. Ephesians 4:14 describes, “so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.” God has already established a precedent elsewhere in Scripture of addressing His believers as children in need of following guidance (1 Cor 3:1-2, Heb 5:13-14, 1 Pet 2:1-2). There is a need for growth in unity that mentors within the body, who are skilled at appropriately directing and instructing others, would significantly enhance.

The Need for Mentors

Since mentors seem to function as useful guides in the process of growth, unity, and the use of spiritual gifts, their experiences could further enhance the mentee’s spiritual transformation. An older and more experienced individual guiding the way for his less experienced counterpart is a tale heard the world over. Examples of mentoring have been seen in every discipline of society. Medieval children learned their parents’ trade or skill and grew to

\textsuperscript{95} Bruce, “Ephesians,” 350.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
take them over. Many entered apprenticeships to escape the life allotted them at birth. These apprenticeships were often secular but provided the necessary skill and experience to develop the mentee into a mature practitioner of the discipline they were studying.

Biblical mentoring seeks to achieve the same goals. God uses mentors throughout the Scriptures to give direction and guidance to His people. However, God’s people are not studying a common trade but disciplining themselves to bear fruit unto God (Gal 5:22-23). To enhance the fruit-bearing process, God has provided each believer with spiritual gifts that he is to work out (1 Cor 12:7, Phil 2:12). It seems reasonable to conclude that experienced believers who have traversed these waters could serve as excellent guides to mentor others through the intricacies and applications of such a maturation process. After all, the goal is to grow in maturity unto Christlikeness (Eph 4:13).

In this respect, it is theologically vital for spiritual mentors to be an example for others to be Christ-like in the example of their lives. The apostle Paul often encouraged others to follow his example (2 Thess 3:7). Paul’s focus may be defined in 1 Timothy 1:5 “The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” John Koessler speaks to the nature of this example, which a mentor needs to show, “One of the most important characteristics of the godly person is the ability to say no to the flesh and yes to God.”

98 Although this thesis seeks to argue for a multiplicity of mentors, it is important to understand the place mentoring (often singular) has held in the human experience and comprehend the need and necessary role each mentor should play in the life of the mentee.
100 Koessler, “True Discipleship,” 108.
Although simplistic, Koessler’s approach sums up the fundamental responsibility that is needed in spiritual mentoring. This type of mentoring is not new to the world. It may be seen in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

Old Testament Examples

The Old Testament offers mentoring examples that help demonstrate the theological and practical significance of good mentoring versus bad. In the Old Testament, an example of mentoring may be seen in 1 Kings 2, where King David gives guidance to his young son, Solomon. In Proverbs 4:3-9, Solomon declares that his father instructed him in wisdom and insight. David spent time grooming Solomon, teaching, and admonishing him in the Word of the Lord. As Solomon had been anointed king and was preparing to ascend to the throne, his father, David, coached him in spiritual issues and state matters. Solomon’s early spiritual vitality is attributed to David’s personal relationship with the Lord that was passed onto his son. Sadly, it was not until many years later, devoid of his father’s mentoring, that Solomon fell to the fleshly temptations of life.

Another example of mentoring in the Old Testament may be seen in the relationship between Moses and Joshua. Although not kin by birth, as Hebrews, these two men shared a heritage as the children of God. Moses led the people of Israel and mentored Joshua. In Deuteronomy 31, some of the words of encouragement Moses spoke to Joshua are recorded, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who


102 R. D. Patterson and Hermann J. Austel, “1 Kings,” 34.
goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be
dismayed” (Deut 31:7b-8). These are some of the last words Moses would speak to his younger
protégé. They are words of encouragement and trust in the Lord. Joshua seemed to internalize
this teaching and reproduced it before the entire congregation of Israel in the writing of Joshua
1:9, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not
be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua learned the lesson of
trusting in the Lord that Moses seemed to be teaching him. It was a lesson to follow God from
the heart and to receive the blessings that follow the people who obey Him.\(^{103}\)

Sadly, there are many examples in the Old Testament of a lack or failure in the mentoring
process. In the opening chapters of 1 Samuel, the reader is introduced to Eli’s two worthless sons
(Hophni and Phinehas). These two boys did not internalize the mentoring of their father. The
love and respect Eli held for the Lord did not materialize in his two sons, and they suffered
greatly for it.\(^ {104}\) Later, the great prophet of God, Samuel, is seen to have sons (Joel and Abijah)
that did not walk in his ways (1 Sam 8:1-9). Samuel appointed his sons to be judges near the
Southern boundary of Israel. Whether it was the distance from their father or their willful desire
for financial gain, Samuel’s righteous lifestyle was not internalized by his boys, and they walked
away from a relationship with the Lord and chased after sorted gain.\(^ {105}\)

There are positive and negative examples of mentoring in the Old Testament. Wherever a
mentee accepted the teaching and life testimony, there was growth and transformation in the

\(^{103}\) Donald Madvig, “Joshua,” In Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, Vol. 3, The
Expositors Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 257.

\(^{104}\) Ronald Youngblood, “1 & 2 Samuel.” In Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, Vol. 3,
The Expositors Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 584.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 612.
mentee’s life. Wherever a mentee rejected the mentor’s teaching and life testimony, there was almost always rejection and destruction that followed the mentee. The theological precedent set in the Old Testament of honing and following the example and teaching of a mentor is significant. The mentor must model godly attributes, but without the mentee’s genuine internalization, there is not only a lack of life transformation but seemingly devastating consequences.

New Testament Examples

The mentoring pattern is not unique to the Old Testament. The New Testament exhibits examples of mentoring throughout. Examples of mentoring in the New Testament also serve to guide the modern mentoring process. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul encourages older men to teach younger men and older women to teach younger women (Titus 2:1-6). The verb used here ‘to teach’ literally means ‘to speak.’

It may be inferred that the apostle Paul was instructing Titus to ‘speak into the lives’ of others. Paul further encourages Titus to “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech” (Titus 2:7a). Paul instructs Titus to model this proper godly behavior to others. Mentoring necessitates teaching but involves so much more than merely shoveling biblical or theological information. Mentoring involves living out one’s convictions in an exemplary way. Mentoring requires modeling one’s beliefs in real-life scenarios where the

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107 Ibid., 189.

mentee may inspect and see the reality of a belief lived out. The concept of mentoring by way of modeling must also incorporate the attribute of intentionality. Mentoring will not happen naturally. The New Testament mentor must be intentional with modeling the desired attributes before their mentee. Intentionality is essential in the execution of an effective mentoring ministry. Perhaps this is why Paul urged Titus to be such an example.

Paul himself sought to model an example for the church. In Philippians 3:17, he writes, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.” Paul not only sought to model spiritual attributes but also encouraged the observance of those who modeled godly principles. The purpose was not to acquire knowledge on the part of the church but to practice Paul’s lifestyle.

In 1 Corinthians 4:16, Paul again urges the church to imitate his example. However, this time Paul contends with the seemingly weak and ineffectual spiritual ‘guides’ with which the people have become accustomed. Therefore, Paul leverages the relationship he has with the believers in Corinth and calls on them to remember the model he exampled for them. Moreover, Paul was sending Timothy, his protégé, to continue modeling godly attributes as a reminder of how they should conduct themselves.

Timothy serves as an example of a good protégé or mentee in the New Testament. Paul spent considerable time and energy educating the young man in the ministry and exercise of his

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109 Peter Mason and Dino Pedrone, Mentoring the Next Generation: Making a Lasting Difference (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2012), 33.


spiritual gifts. Timothy was an intimate companion of Paul, collaborating in six of Paul’s letters
to the churches and was entrusted with ministry assignments in Thessalonica, Corinth, and
Philippi.\textsuperscript{113} Paul seemed to have poured his life into his young mentee until Timothy was mature
enough to minister and model an exemplary Christian life independently.

Strikingly, this pattern is seen in the ministry of Jesus to the disciples. Jesus ministered
in the lives of His disciples for years before going to the cross. During that time, He taught them
and modeled the life He desired for them to live. He released them to limited ministry, all the
while encouraging them. Jesus is the master mentor. However, Jesus never forces people to be
His disciples; there is always a choice to be made on the part of the mentee.

Unfortunately, there are instances in the New Testament of failed mentoring. Not by any
fault of His own, but even Jesus had a failed disciple. Judas had the greatest mentor in history
and still failed to internalize His modeling and truth. By allowing sin to become a regular
practice in his life, Judas created a layer of insulation in the form of rationalization that worked
to inoculate him from the teaching and life of Jesus.\textsuperscript{114}

John Mark started with Paul and Barnabas but turned away from their vision and purpose
in Acts 13:13. An argument can be made that Peter turned away from the mentoring and teaching
of Jesus as he denied Him three times (Matt 26:69-75). Fortunately for Mark and Peter, there was
redemption to be had in their lives. In this regard, mentoring is not an exact science. There are
examples of failures and redemption, of victories and disasters. The human condition creates the
need in mentoring for flexibility, an adjustment to the accepted norms.

\textsuperscript{113} Fee, \textit{1 and 2 Timothy, Titus}, 2.

\textsuperscript{114} Darrell Bock, \textit{Luke}, The NIV Application Commentary, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,
1996), 547.
Multiple Mentors

Deviating from the accepted norm, a collaboration of mentors could enhance the discipling experience and potential effectiveness of the maturing and transformational process. Paul states, “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine” (Rom 1:11-12). Even though Paul shared the same faith as the believers in Rome, their different perspectives and gifts combined to bring mutual edification. The mutual edification of believers is a prime tenet to the maturing of others in the body of Christ (Eph 4:16). Paul sought to use his spiritual gifts to encourage the believers in Rome and be encouraged by their gifts. It seems that, in the Lord, one cannot give without receiving back and that one life flows from one to another.

Conclusion

When considering the theological nature of mentoring, there are a number of elements to consider. God clearly desires His people to make disciples as they go through this life. God’s discipling design can be seen in the Old Testament and is His Great Commission of the New Testament. The New Testament disciples seem to be individuals who have been transformed from a fleshly life lived outside the parameters of God’s will into conformity with what God would have them to be. This transformation seems to occur within the context of an intentional relationship between a mentor and mentee. It is in this relationship that deeper conversations,

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115 It is the collaborative nature of the gifts, experiences, and personalities coming together that was mutually beneficial for Paul and the Roman Christians. This mutual gain creates the driving force for collaborative mentoring.


modeling, encouragement, and practice may be accomplished.\textsuperscript{118} It seems to be here in the discipling relationship that the theology of mentoring finds its application. Mentors exercising their Holy Spirit given gifts to replicate themselves in the lives of their mentees seems to lay at the heart of good mentoring.\textsuperscript{119}

Ephesians 4:11-12 states, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Paul outlines the fact that God gave multiple individuals various gifts to build up the body (individual members) of Christ. It seems that the collaborative nature of these gifts working in concert with each other should serve to increase the knowledge of the Son of God in the heart of a mentee while maturing him unto the fulness of Christ (Eph 4:13).

**Theoretical Foundations**

The field of mentoring has been overwhelmingly singularly based. Most research done with mentoring involves a single mentor with a single mentee for a specified duration of time. The results are determined by several factors ranging from the mentor’s capability to the mentee’s willingness to participate. Some precedent literature is opening up the idea of a multiplicity of mentors along with the benefits it entails. Both secular and religious research approach the concept of collaborating mentors differently since they have different goals in mind.

\textsuperscript{118} Putman, *Real Life Discipleship*, Kindle, n.p.

\textsuperscript{119} 1 Corinthians 12:7
Secular Research

Secular research involving collaborative mentoring practices is more widely accepted than its religious counterparts. It is surprising and important to note that even the secular world has recognized the benefits of multiple mentoring. The upfront goal in secular mentoring is not necessarily a life transformation as much as it is to increase the education and prowess of an individual to benefit a company’s financial bottom line.\(^\text{120}\) Indeed, the secular world is interested in mentoring that causes individuals to have positive life changes. Some literature suggests that creative collaboration in mentoring could be beneficial in repairing and enhancing earlier relationship damage.\(^\text{121}\) The advantages of a happy and emotionally healthy workforce are many, and therefore, they are of moderate importance to the secular community. Time and again, secular research propounds on the benefits of mentors working together collaboratively for better training, educating, and generally meeting the mentee’s needs (mostly business needs).\(^\text{122}\) If a collaborative mentoring process has proven beneficial in the secular world, it stands to reason that there would be even more advantages in a spiritual setting.\(^\text{123}\)

\(^{120}\) Sharples and Marcon-Clarke, “Collaborative Approach,” n.p.


\(^{123}\) The secular world does not seem to be actively pursuing the spiritual, emotional, or personal welfare of its subjects as much as pursuing the financial bottom line. Any mentoring that delves into a beneficial emotional or psychological advantage for the mentee is merely a fortunate side-effect. The company’s bottom line seems to rule the agenda for the use of collaborative mentoring.
Religious Research

Research concerning the collaboration of mentors in a religious environment is available but limited. Religious institutions do not seem to be well known for propounding change or flexibility to previously established concepts. However, collaborative mentoring has been gaining ground in religious research and literature.

Of particular note is how well different individuals will work together collaboratively in a ministry environment. People with differing backgrounds, educational pedigrees, and personality types may not mix well in a collaborative venture. What becomes clear is that the success of a collaborative undertaking does not depend so much on the individual’s giftedness as much as the specific calling of those individuals to the ministry at hand. When considering one’s calling in the Lord, Greg Ogden promotes a collaborative approach noting an individual is incapable of determining his calling in isolation. Ogden’s remarks support the notion that before undertaking a ministry (in this case, mentoring), there should be a spiritual gift assessment completed for both the mentor and the mentee.

One theoretical concept is that it would be beneficial to match the mentor’s gift set with the complimentary gift set of a mentee. Doing so would optimize the equipping and maturing process during mentoring. Therefore, it would stand to reason that employing more mentors with complimentary gift sets would accelerate the mentoring process even further. Dave Early drives home a primary objection to a singular mentor approach by stating, “In Christianity, one gifted individual cannot do it all. It takes all of us doing our part to reach this world for Christ.” The sentiment which is gaining ground in religious research is that what is needed in the mentoring

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and discipleship process is more gifted leaders working collaboratively to mature a mentee to Christlikeness.\textsuperscript{126}

**Concepts of Mentoring in Use**

Currently, there are many mentoring concepts in use. Churches have been using the small group model for many years. These models range in types and styles and seem to have benefits as well as weaknesses. Some weaknesses include underqualified leaders guiding the groups, a lack of faithful attendance from participants, and a general low excitement level for attendance. However, the overall research has shown that these cell-based units are statistically healthier in loving relationships, gift identification and employment, evangelism, and growth.\textsuperscript{127}

Another concept in use in many churches is the discipleship program. Traditionally the discipleship program has been a ‘proto-mentoring’ field from the beginning. Many churches use a traditional classroom style format to accomplish the purpose of discipleship education. The strength of this model is its overall comfort level. Many church members are comfortable with this ‘Sunday School’ format and harken to its ease. However, this format’s comfort can also be its weakness as other church members find the class setting for discipleship and mentoring an unexciting option.

One final mentoring concept that is already in use in CFM and many churches is the special meeting. The special meeting is the intentional forum created by a leader, usually to address a known issue or problem. There is no research supporting the effectiveness of this approach. However, most people do not relish being called to a meeting to discuss problematic


issues in their lives. The weakness of this approach is in the negative connotations it holds.

However, with positive adjustments, this concept could be productive. By intentionally soliciting the potential mentee in positive tones, the special meeting could theoretically lend itself to a beneficial mentoring relationship.

Conclusion

Although more widely acknowledged in secular circles than religious, collaborative mentoring practices seem to be gaining more acceptance. Secular and religious literature both note the benefits of utilizing a collaborative approach in mentoring practices. However, it appears to be the secular world that is ready to shed the traditional single mentor model much faster than the religious. The religious literature underscores the value of utilizing spiritual gifts in the mentoring process, which raises the question of whether a multiplicity of mentors utilizing their spiritual gifts could theoretically offer a mentee a more effective and robust discipling experience.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Chapter three of this thesis will discuss the overall methodology and research design for
this study in mentoring. This study’s research design includes qualitative data from two sets of
participants: the mentors of Crossroads Family Ministries and the mentees. The mentors will be
selected from the regular attenders and members of CFM who have demonstrated loyalty to the
church and prowess with the discipleship material.\footnote{Note: The discipleship material (known as “Discipleship 1”) is a nine-lesson curriculum created and distributed by CFM. The pastors and deacons of CFM recognize “Discipleship 1” as an excellent educational resource for mentees in the basics of the Christian faith.} Loyalty to CFM will have been
demonstrated through faithful attendance to regular services, small groups, and church events,
coinciding with a general attitude of support and willingness to serve. Each mentor will have
undergone training in the discipleship material (as past mentees) and preferably have
subsequently taught it to others.

Mentees are not necessarily members of CFM, but individuals familiar with the church
who are willing to participate in this study. Mentees will demonstrate general respect for the
authority of the church and give testimony of faith in Christ. Respect for the church may be
shown through regular attendance to general services, offering assistance at special events, and
demonstrating an overall helpful and willing spirit. Testimony of faith in Christ may be obtained
through written or verbal means. Mentees and mentors will be adults over the age of eighteen.

The aim of this qualitative action research is to gain greater clarity and understanding of
the elements surrounding collaborative mentoring.\footnote{Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 36.} Of particular interest will be how the
mentees respond to a collaborative approach to the discipleship process. The mentees’
experiences from this project will be compared to the experiences of past mentees from CFM.\textsuperscript{130} The research conducted will seek to partner with the participants from CFM. The participant’s input will be incorporated in the formation of solutions to the mentoring issues at CFM.\textsuperscript{131} The participants must recognize their role as partnering with the researcher to address the mentoring issues. More specifically, the mentoring aspects of this project will seek to determine if mentors working together in a collaborative environment can be a greater benefit to both mentees and other mentors in the discipling process. This qualitative research will seek to examine the various participants’ discipleship experiences to determine better how collaborative mentoring may aid in the discipling process at CFM.\textsuperscript{132} The goal of this study is not necessarily to fix a broken mentoring system but to listen to the experiences of those undergoing the mentoring process. Since there are no rules about how many people should be included in a study, this research will abide by Sensing’s advice of quality being more important than quantity.\textsuperscript{133} For this qualitative action research, the plan is to recruit fifteen mentors to work in three-person units with one mentee (five mentees total).

**Intervention Design**

The intervention design will initially focus on the training of the mentor. Volunteers from CFM will be selected to be the mentors for this study. The research project will take place at CFM and homes in the surrounding valley. Since the researcher is the lead pastor of the church

\textsuperscript{130} CFM has exit interview information from past mentees under a single mentor system. This information will serve as a baseline from which to compare the results of a multiple mentor approach.

\textsuperscript{131} Stringer, “Action Research,” 75.


\textsuperscript{133} Sensing, “Qualitative Research,” 85.
and knows the potential mentors well, the researcher will seek to discuss potential mentors with the pastoral staff at CFM. The opinion of the members of the pastoral staff will help add objectivity to mentor selections. Once the staff has thoughtfully considered and advised the researcher on the acceptable nature, strengths, and weaknesses of the current body of volunteer mentors, the researcher will individually approach each potential mentor and ask if they are willing to participate in this study.

**Mentor Training**

Upon acceptance, each participating mentor will read, understand, and sign a full disclosure agreement. Each agreement will address the purposes, methods, goals of this project, and the participant’s responsibilities. After the participants written consent is obtained, the training process will begin.

1. The mentors from CFM who have been selected to participate in this study will be assessed for their spiritual giftings. The spiritual gift assessment will be conducted by verbal interview and written test. The mentors will assess their mentee’s spiritual gifts in the same fashion before beginning the discipleship process.

2. Once the mentors have been assessed for their spiritual gifts, they will begin training to identify and assess others’ spiritual gifts. Once an acceptable schedule is agreed upon, the mentors will meet in a designated room of the church with the researcher. The researcher will then educate the mentors in a classroom format using written notes, verbal lectures, and acted out scenarios for the mentors to participate in and evaluate (see Appendix F). The mentors will be educated in the proper identification of spiritual gifts, the outworking of such gifts, and applying these gifts in the ministry and discipleship context of CFM.

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134 Spiritual Gifts Test, accessed June 10, 2020, [https://spiritualgiftstest.com/](https://spiritualgiftstest.com/)
3. The mentors will be further educated in the vision and purpose of CFM, founded in the Great Commission,\textsuperscript{135} and the disciples’ maturing to the fullness of Christ.\textsuperscript{136} Once these purposes have been taught, a quiz will be administered to the mentors to determine their cognitive retention of the material covered.\textsuperscript{137}

4. Upon satisfactorily passing the quiz, the mentors will be trained to set goals for their future mentees. The mentors will be taught to set these goals within the parameters of the church’s vision and purpose, as found in Scripture. These written goals will help guide the mentors to evaluate their mentee’s progress during this mentoring project.

5. The researcher must be satisfied with the mentors’ progress, understanding of the material, and general cooperative nature before assigning mentees to these groups.\textsuperscript{138} Once the researcher is confident in the mentors’ development, they will be regrouped and assigned an actual mentee.

**The Mentee’s Role**

1. Individuals from CFM who desire to be discipled and enter this study will be vetted by the researcher (as stated earlier) and sign the full disclosure agreement before entering the nine-week program.

2. Mentees will be assessed for their spiritual gifts via a written exam.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{135} Matthew 28:19-20.

\textsuperscript{136} Ephesians 4:13-16.

\textsuperscript{137} The creation of the lecture, survey, and quiz material will be completed over the Fall of 2020.

\textsuperscript{138} The mentors must be capable of working in concert with each other. Although no long-term assessment is practical, for the purpose of this action thesis, the researcher and mentors should be able to gauge whether a cooperative spirit exists during the training portion.

\textsuperscript{139} It should be noted that no spiritual gift exam or inventory test is infallible; however, these tools help to give direction for the mentee and the mentors to explore during the discipleship and mentoring process.
3. The mentees will then be assigned to a mentoring pod. The mentors’ first assignment will be to initiate and develop a relationship with the mentee. The relationship development will occur on the church campus, out in the community, and at home. The mentors will initiate multiple encounters as scheduling permits for maximum relational exposure. The mentors will be provided and ask open-ended questions to ‘break the ice’ with their mentee.

4. One mentee will have previous experience with “Discipleship 1” under a single mentor system. This mentee and the related mentors will serve as a control group. This mentee’s journal experiences will be examined with key elements from the archival information to evaluate the differences in the two systems.

5. The mentors and mentee will be provided the discipleship curriculum,\textsuperscript{140} which will constitute the ‘educational’ focus of the mentoring program.\textsuperscript{141} Mentors will take scheduled turns with the mentee going through the material, answering questions, and sharing life experiences. The discipling process will begin with each mentor teaching a different three-week section of the discipling material (nine weeks total).\textsuperscript{142}

6. The mentors will schedule private meeting times with their mentee to socialize and communicate. These meetings may occur at regular church services. The mentors will schedule these meeting times during weeks that they are not already scheduled to teach their mentee.


\textsuperscript{141}CFM mentors are currently familiar with the discipleship material and do not need to be educated on this form and function.

\textsuperscript{142}Each lesson of “Discipleship 1” is traditionally covered one week at a time; thus, the mentors will ultimately teach three lessons.
7. The mentors will schedule private meeting times away from their mentee to connect with the other mentors of their three-person pod. As mentors connect, they will communicate any pertinent observations concerning the mentee and collaborate to address these issues better and meet pre-established goals.

The researcher will communicate with each mentoring pod weekly to encourage them in the overall experience. The mentor and mentee journal entries will be compiled for data collection and reference. An online exit survey will be conducted for the mentees pertaining to their overall experience in this study. These surveys will be anonymous, secured for the use of the researcher only. The findings of this study will be recorded, interpreted, and reported in the researcher’s thesis.

**Implementation of the Intervention Design**

The implementation of the research design for this study is dependent upon human facilitators. The researcher will require the participants to keep a journal for this project and make weekly contact with the mentors to encourage them in this discipline. Stringer argues for a multi-step support structure comprising communication, personal nurturing, reflection and analysis, assistance, and conflict resolution. Borrowing from Stringer, the researcher will seek to communicate to the participants a three-step process to aid in the intervention design’s support and implementation.

**Communication**

Proper communication is an essential element in the implementation of the intervention design. Therefore, the following actions will be implemented for this action thesis.

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143 Stringer, “Action Research,” 75-78.
1. The researcher will communicate weekly with all participants through prearranged visits, telephone calls, texts, or informal social contacts.\textsuperscript{144}

2. The researcher will communicate the importance of the mentors to maintain regular communication with their mentee and require the mentors to record these interactions in their project journals.

3. Participants will be encouraged to communicate their problems, issues, and victories to each other and write them down in their project journal.\textsuperscript{145} Doing so will strengthen the mentor-mentee bond, maintain focus, and keep them connected with the research project.\textsuperscript{146}

**Assistance**

Giving aid and assistance where necessary is another essential element in the implementation of the intervention design. Therefore, the following actions will be implemented for this action thesis.

1. The researcher will assist and encourage the mentors to meet weekly to collaborate. These meetings will serve to encourage the mentors, identify underlying issues with the mentee or study, and adjust any prearranged goals that the mentors may have agreed.

2. The researcher will aid in conflict resolution between participants and seek to encourage them to explain these issues in their project journal clearly.

3. The participants will be encouraged to record their experiences with mentoring in the discipling process regularly. Sensing notes that individuals tell stories in patterned ways.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 176.

\textsuperscript{145} All participants must communicate their experiences in their project journals since these journals will be used to analyze the impact this action thesis has on the mentoring and discipleship process.

\textsuperscript{146} Stringer, “Action Research,” 176.
By comparing the mentee’s stories’ details, the researcher will be greatly aided during the data analysis process.\textsuperscript{147}

Reflection and Analysis

Throughout this project, the participants will have been encouraged and required to communicate their experiences in their project journals. These journals (along with the mentee’s exit surveys) will serve as the basis of an analysis the researcher will use to explore this project’s results. Therefore, the following actions will be implemented for this project.

1. The mentors will enter their journal observations into the data collection. Of particular interest to this action thesis will be their estimation of the mentor-mentee relationship. The relationship between the mentors and the mentee is what will connect the mentee to the realities of the discipleship journey.\textsuperscript{148}

2. The mentees will enter their journal observations and submit their exit survey responses to the data collection.\textsuperscript{149}

3. The mentee who formerly underwent discipleship under a single mentor model will have his exit survey responses added to the data collection.

4. The mentee’s and mentor’s journals will be cross-checked with the mentee’s survey results.

5. The results of the mentee’s experiences during discipleship will be examined. The following questions (not an exhaustive list) will be explored.

\textsuperscript{147} Sensing, “Qualitative Research,” 92.


\textsuperscript{149} The exit survey responses will be anonymous and submitted online through the online application Survey Monkey. This application also offers a potential diagnostic tool that may help the researcher disseminate the survey’s information.
a. How did the use of multiple mentors aid or hinder the retention of the discipleship material?

b. How did the use of multiple mentors aid or hinder the exploration of spiritual gifts?

c. How did the use of multiple mentors aid or hinder the exercise of service to the church?

d. How did the use of multiple mentors aid or hinder the relational bonds of unity and growth in the life of the mentee?

The Creation of Written Materials

The researcher will develop instructional material based on the study done from the literature review and the researcher’s own experience with discipling and mentoring others (see Appendix A for IRB approval). The survey will be the same survey previously used by CFM for mentees finishing the “Discipleship 1” material. Using the same survey used with previous mentees should help maintain uniformity and accurately track differences in data generated by this project. The researcher will choose to use the online survey application ‘Survey Monkey.’150 The application was selected for several factors. Survey Monkey is convenient and comfortable for the participants to use. Due to the position of authority and respect within the church the researcher holds, the use of face-to-face verbal interviews could contaminate legitimate answers from participants. The application allows for anonymity as a link may be sent through social media to all participants. The survey results will only be accessible to the researcher.

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Chapter 4

Results

This action thesis aimed to create an environment at Crossroads Family Ministries that would help propel the church forward in its mentoring mission and facilitate a deeper and more robust discipling experience. Since the mentors for this project were all long-standing active members of the church, their enthusiasm to participate was high. Moreover, the mentors genuinely seemed to desire to see CFM advance in its mentoring endeavors. The mentors were cooperative and respectful during the training, followed the researcher’s directives throughout the project, and expressed an eagerness to apply the principles of what they had experienced with more potential mentees from the church.

The participating mentees were all members or attenders of CFM. They generally reflected an enthusiasm to be part of a unique study within the church. The researcher found the mentees to be cooperative and respectful of any directives. Moreover, many of the participating mentees expressed a desire to mentor others through this discipling process.

The researcher understands that this project’s participants were aware that their observations, reflections, and responses would be analyzed and incorporated into the research data. As such, this project’s participants might be more thoughtful in their observation and questionnaire answers than previous mentees. However, an analysis of the archival data from former mentees will help establish a baseline from which to see if this project has made any difference in CFM’s mentoring. The archival data consists of questionnaire answers from former mentees pertaining to their discipleship experiences. The same questionnaire has been used with this project’s mentees to maintain an equal comparison (see Appendix E).
Archival Data

The archival data regarding the past mentees’ experience with the discipleship material and mentors has formed a baseline for comparative data analysis. These past mentees’ observations and results have been contrasted with the project mentees’ experiences to see the differences between a single mentor style (the past mentees) and a collaborative mentoring approach (the project mentees). Evaluating the archival data has shown various themes to be analyzed and compared with the experiences the project mentees observed.

Various Themes

The first theme to come to light from the archival data is the sharing of life experiences. The mentees were asked to explain how their mentor’s life experiences helped them better understand the discipleship material. Under this single mentor system, the mentees mildly related how the mentor’s modeling of the principles outlined in the discipleship material was encouraging. The mentor interjecting his own experiences was important to the mentee’s assimilation of the material; however, most mentees did not report having much exposure to their mentor’s life experiences. Due to the mentees’ mediocre responses to their mentor’s sharing of life experiences, the researcher ranked the mentees’ overall answer to this question as a four on a scale of one through ten.

The archival data’s next theme is how the mentor helped the mentee cope with struggles in the Christian walk. Like the first theme, mentees were mildly excited about their mentor’s attempts to help them deal with their struggles. Although some mentees related how their mentor attempted to “look into their lives” to offer advice or assistance, the mentees’ overall response was mediocre at best. The researcher noticed many blank answers by the mentees to this question, indicating a lack on the mentor’s part to engage the mentee in this theme. Therefore,
the researcher ranked the mentees’ overall response to their singular mentor’s attempt to help them cope with struggles in the Christian walk as a four.

The theme of identifying spiritual gifts and ways to use them is essential to growing in Christ and a large part of the discipleship curriculum. Mentees were asked to explain how the mentor helped them identify the mentee’s spiritual gift and offer advice on its use and employment. Despite this being such a central theme to discipleship and mentoring, mentees reported the lowest enthusiasm for this archival data theme. Some mentors discussed the concepts of spiritual gifts but spent little time identifying them in their mentees, nor did the mentors advocate deploying these gifts in the church. The researcher noticed that more mentees left this question blank than any other, indicating a major failure of the mentors to address this issue. Therefore, the researcher ranks identifying the spiritual gifts of the mentee as a two.

The next theme from the archival data revolves around encouraging the mentee to serve in their church. Mentees were asked to discuss how the mentor challenged the mentee to serve in the local church’s various ministries. Serving in the church was not impressed upon the mentees, as it seemed to be merely discussed. The mentees noted that their mentors gave an example or two of serving but only ever discussed the nature of serving instead of challenging the mentee to serve. The researcher noticed a large majority of the mentees left this question unanswered. This observation led the researcher to rank the theme of challenging the mentee to serve as a three.

Mentees were asked to discuss how the mentor encouraged them to share their faith with others in the mentee’s sphere of influence. The theme of sharing one’s faith is widely discussed in the discipleship curriculum; thus, offering the mentor an excellent opportunity to encourage their mentee in evangelism. The mentees noted that their mentors merely discussed the option of sharing faith in Christ, and at best, mildly encouraged the mentee to pursue this effort. The
concept of sharing one’s faith was not well delivered to the mentees. Although most mentees responded to the question, the overall enthusiasm with how they had been encouraged led the researcher to rank the theme of being encouraged to share one’s faith as a four out of ten.

The concept of the mentor aiding in the processing and overall engagement in the discipleship material is the next theme the archival material presents. Mentees were asked to discuss how well their mentor helped them in processing and engaging the material. Overall, the mentees were mildly enthusiastic as to the help their mentor offered. Most mentees reported the mentor competently covered the material but failed to discuss the information’s processing. Independent thought, discussion, or application were absent from the mentees’ observations. The mentors may have taken on less of a mentoring responsibility in this regard and took on more of a lecturer’s mantle. Although there were several blank responses to this question, mentees did seem moderately positive about their mentor’s attempts. Therefore, the researcher ranks the mentors’ challenging the mentee to process and engage the discipleship material as a four.

The next archival theme revolves around spiritual disciplines. The mentees were asked to define how their mentor challenged them to grow in the spiritual disciplines of the Christian faith. Overwhelmingly, the mentees reported their mentors encouraged them to read their bibles and pray more regularly. However, this seems to be more of a remedial task for mentees in a discipleship course. The mentees did not mention being challenged with more complex disciplines.\textsuperscript{151} The mentors appear to have fallen short in challenging their mentees to stretch in other more advanced spiritual growth areas. Weighing the mentees’ enthusiasm for their mentor’s encouragement towards prayer and Bible reading and the remedial nature of these

\textsuperscript{151} An example of more complex spiritual gifts that the mentors of CFM would be aware of may be found in Ephesians 4 (e.g., do not let the sun go down on your anger, no longer steal, do honest work that you may have something to give, no corrupt talk, do not grieve the Holy Spirit, be kind to one another, etc.).
disciplinary has led the researcher to rank the mentors’ challenging the mentees to progress in the spiritual disciplines of the faith as a five.

The last theme to be analyzed from the archival data is how the mentors challenged the mentees in their overall personal spiritual growth. This question expresses the mentee’s overall impression of the mentor and the transformative impact the discipleship experience had on the mentee. Mentees were asked to describe what effect the mentor has had on the mentee’s personal growth and daily walk with God. Mentees reported that their mentors did well in challenging them to engage the Lord and the discipleship material. Some mentees mentioned their mentor’s encouragement never to give up when times get challenging. However, specific details of how the mentor aided in growth were absent. Considering this was the most enthusiastic written question by the mentees, the researcher weighed the mentees’ enthusiasm with the depth of subject matter concerning their discourse. The researcher ranks the mentors challenging the mentees in their personal growth as a six out of ten.

The overall analysis of the archival information of the mentees’ experience with their mentors seemed mediocre. The lowest-performing theme was the mentor’s challenge of identifying the mentee’s spiritual gifts and encouraging ways to deploy them within the church. The highest-ranking theme was the mentor’s challenge to personal growth in the Lord. The researcher weighed and ranked the answers given in the archival material by examining the mentee’s enthusiasm in writing, the amount of information given, and whether the mentee left the question blank. The following chart illustrates the researcher’s ranking of these themes found in the archival information regarding these past mentees’ observations and experiences.
Table 4.1. Archival Data Graph

![Archival Information Chart]

**Project Mentees’ Questionnaire Responses**

Upon the conclusion of this collaborative discipleship project, the mentees were asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating their experiences. The questionnaire was deliberately kept the same as the archival questionnaire (see Appendix E), with the difference being that the project mentees experienced multiple mentors instead of a single mentor system. The mentees were encouraged to give thoughtful and honest answers to each question with the full knowledge that their responses would be kept anonymous to the researcher. The following is an examination of the results of a multiple mentoring approach to discipling. The mentee’s responses from the questionnaire were evaluated according to the previously established themes discovered in the archival information. By comparing the project mentee’s experiences to the archival information,
the differences between a single mentor approach and a multiple mentor approach to discipleship were highlighted and graphed.\textsuperscript{152}

Project Mentee’s Responses to Identified Themes

The first thematic element to be examined is that of shared life experiences. The project mentees were asked to discuss how their mentors’ life experiences helped them to better understand the discipleship material. The mentees responded positively to this theme. Some mentees related how the mentors in their group got to know them and connect with them personally. This connection aided in the mentee’s ability to understand their mentors better, which aided in the mentee being able to understand each mentor’s manner of presentation better. Most mentees shared how the mentors in their group shared purposes and goals for them and how their mentors used their experiences to focus the mentee’s attention on the discipleship material. Not all the mentees shared a positive experience with this thematic element. One mentee abstained from answering this question. Another mentee described a lack of Christian life experience on the part of one of his mentors. This mentee related how one of his mentors had less experience in the Christian walk than the mentee currently possessed. Although this may seem like a disparaging notation from the mentee, the fact that this mentee had two other mentors to “pick up the slack” for the other mentor, supports the overall thesis that a multiplicity of mentors was a benefit to the mentee under this thematic element. Considering the majority of mentees gave very positive feedback concerning their mentors’ life experience, with the semi-negative response of one mentee and the refrain of another, the researcher ranks the mentor’s sharing of life experiences as a six out of ten.

\textsuperscript{152} The mentees’ questionnaire responses were also reviewed in light of the mentor and mentee journals.
The next thematic element the project mentees were asked to comment on was how their mentors identified and helped the mentee cope with struggles in the Christian walk. The project mentees responded relatively positively to this theme as well. Most mentees noted that their mentors encouraged them to keep pushing forward in their relationships with Christ and even related to the mentees’ past failures in this endeavor. The mentees recorded how their mentors focused heavily on the mentee’s prayer life. One mentor went so far as to purchase a book on prayer and gave it to their mentee as a gift to encourage them and give them extra guidance. Overall, the mentees noted how their mentors eased their fears about failing in the Christian walk and were encouraged by the mentors’ drive to press on. One mentee did note that it was a little discouraging to have the mentors come through so fast. Just as the mentee was getting to know one mentor, it was time to change to another. The mentee noted that this reset a trust factor that would once again need to be built up with a new mentor. The short time each mentor had with their mentee became a significant note repeated in most of the mentee and mentor journals. Due to the mentees’ overall positive responses and the outgoing nature of many of the mentors, the researcher ranks the thematic element of mentors helping their mentee to cope with struggles in the Christian walk as a seven out of ten.

The project mentees were next asked to evaluate how their mentors helped identify the mentees’ spiritual gifts and advise on how to employ them in the church. The thematic element of the mentees’ spiritual gifts is of significant value to this project. The archival material revealed an embarrassing lack of attention to this thematic element. The project mentees reported a significant appreciation from their mentors concerning this theme. Mentees noted how their mentors competently reviewed the spiritual gift test with them and used it as a tool to identify the

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153 The researcher will address actions that will be taken concerning the rotation of mentors in the discipleship process of CFM in the next chapter.
mentee’s gift sets. It should be noted that the mentors were taught that the spiritual gift test is a mere tool to give guidance and promote discussion. In no way is the test to be viewed as divine or authoritative in the Christian practice. Mentees continued to note that their mentors gave many suggestions on employing the mentees’ spiritual gifts within the church. The researcher detected some sarcasm from one of the mentee’s responses concerning how their mentors identified spiritual gifts. This mentee noted how all the mentors saw the spiritual gift of service in the mentee; however, the mentee did not agree that it was his spiritual gift. This mentee seemed to feel that his gifts were superior to mere serving and gave a slight condemnation to his mentors.

Due to the very positive responses of the mentees to this thematic element, with consideration of the one mentee’s seemingly negative response, the researcher ranks the mentors identifying the spiritual giftings of their mentors as an eight out of ten.

The next theme the mentees commented on would become the lowest-ranked thematic element in the questionnaire. The mentees were asked to evaluate how they were challenged to serve in their local church. The mentees reported that most of their mentors had made general suggestions without being overly specific. One mentee noted how one of her mentors encouraged her to approach church leadership to gain better insight into the church’s needs. Another mentee recorded how one of their mentors suggested that the mentee make personal observations about the needs of the church around them. Overall, the mentees were relatively positive concerning their mentors’ attempts at suggestions and encouragements; however, there seemed to be a significant lack of specific direction on the mentors’ part. One mentee noted that none of his mentors broached the subject. Another mentee became sarcastic concerning his service to the church giving the impression that his gifts lay elsewhere. Since the vast majority of project

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mentors were successful in discussing serving opportunities in the church with their mentees, coupled with the negative reviews from a couple of the mentees, the researcher ranks the mentors’ challenge to the mentees to serve in the church as a five out of ten.

The project mentees commented next on the theme of evangelism. The mentees were asked to evaluate how their mentors encouraged them to share their faith with others. It should be noted that the theme of evangelism was widely discussed throughout the mentor training (see Appendix F). The project mentees gave an overwhelming review of this theme. Some mentees stated that their mentors prayed regularly and specifically for salvation in the lives of their mentee’s family members. Other mentors were reported to have called and texted their mentee regularly. Every mentee reported that their mentors offered multiple areas in which evangelism could be conducted. Each mentor seems to have significantly encouraged their mentee to share their faith with others. Since every mentee responded very positively with specific examples of their mentors’ enthusiasm for this theme, and since there were no negative comments from any mentee concerning this thematic element, the researcher ranks the mentors’ encouragement of their mentees to evangelize as a ten out of ten.

The next thematic element the project mentees were asked to evaluate was how their mentors challenged them to process and engage the discipleship material. Most mentees noted that not only did their mentors challenge their thinking concerning the discipleship material, but their mentors gave new insight and guidance to previously held notions of the Christian faith. One mentee recorded that her mentor even admonished the mentee in her negative thinking concerning the material. The mentee noted this as a positive experience and appreciated her mentor caring enough to speak into her life this way. Another mentee noted that even though the

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155 It should be noted that as the mentees grew more comfortable with their mentors, the mentees opened up to share personal details of the salvation status of different family members.
mentee was familiar with the material the discipleship was covering, one mentor challenged
them to continue to research certain topics of particular interest to increase the mentee’s
understanding beyond the confines of the discipleship curriculum. Overall, the mentees reported
their mentors discussing the discipleship material with them positively. One mentee abstained
from answering this question. Due to the largely positive nature of the responses with specific
eamples of how the mentors discussed the material and challenged their mentees, taking into
account the one absentia, the researcher ranks the mentors challenging their mentees to process
and engage the discipleship material as a seven out of ten.

The project mentees were next asked to evaluate how their mentors challenged them to
grow in the spiritual disciplines. The mentees responded very positively to their mentor’s
attempts to guide them and give them suggestions. Most mentees noted how their mentors
highlighted the basics of spiritual disciplines: prayer and Bible reading. Although a seemingly
simplistic spiritual discipline, mentees reported their mentors were challenging them to
memorize certain biblical passages and to read extra resources pertaining to prayer. The mentees
seemed to appreciate the extra challenges the mentors were giving in what was otherwise
deemed a remedial spiritual discipline. Several mentees reported that their mentors collectively
encouraged them to utilize their strengths when it came to spiritual disciplines. Some mentees
seemed to be encouraged to continue to advance in the spiritual disciplines in which they were
inherently strong. Other mentees noted that their mentors encouraged them in seeking ways to
serve in the church. Only one mentee abstained from answering this question. Due to the
mentees’ enthusiastic response and the single absentia, the researcher ranks the mentors
challenging the mentees to progress in the spiritual disciplines as a seven out of ten.
The final thematic element the project mentees were asked to comment on was their overall spiritual growth. The mentees were asked how their mentors challenged them in their personal growth and walk in the Lord. Every mentee responded very positively to this theme. One mentee noted how one of her mentors regularly checked on her even after their time together had expired. This act of the mentor encouraged the mentee to view the material and her response to it as more than a mere curriculum but as the next step in the process of maturing, which begins within the mentee. Another mentee wrote that she greatly appreciated one of her mentor’s constant calls to prayer and scripture reading. The mentee noted that Bible reading and prayer were not just simple tasks to perform for the mentor but a life-long growth process. Some mentees spoke about their mentor’s challenge to be transformed by the Holy Spirit, while another mentee noted his mentor’s encouragement to set a Christ-like example for others in the mentee’s life. Most mentees expressed general enthusiasm for having gone through this mentoring and discipling process. Due to the overwhelming enthusiasm shown by the mentees’ responses to this thematic element, the researcher ranks the mentor’s challenge to the mentee to grow in their personal walk with the Lord as a ten out of ten.

The overall analysis of the mentees’ experience in collaborative mentoring discipleship seems to have produced a more robust discipleship experience. The lowest-performing theme was the mentors’ challenge to serve in the local church. The highest-ranking themes were the mentors’ challenge to evangelize and in personal spiritual growth. The researcher weighed and ranked the project mentees’ answers by examining the enthusiasm in writing, the amount of information given, and whether the mentee left any questions blank. The following chart illustrates the researcher’s ranking of these themes found in the project mentees’ questionnaires regarding their observations and experiences.
During the course of this project, the mentors were asked to keep a journal detailing their collaborative efforts, observations, and experiences with their mentees. Although this action thesis focuses on the results of the participating mentees, reviewing the mentors’ journals should help to illuminate the results of the mentees’ experiences. As part of an attempt to triangulate information concerning the results of this project, these mentor journals will be examined to see if the mentors’ overall observations coincide with the results of the project questionnaire.  

Common Themes

Throughout the mentor journal entries, certain themes were observed to be repeated. These repetitive notations formulate common themes or practices experienced by a majority of the mentors. The first and most prolific theme reported by the mentors was their desire to spend

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156 Sensing, “Qualitative Research,” 182.
personal time getting to know their mentee. Some mentors reported spending time with their mentee outside of the regularly scheduled discipleship times. Most mentors reported that the extra time they spent with their mentee was not spent on teaching but on sharing personal stories surrounding the lives of the mentor and mentee. Mentors who took the time to get to know their mentee often reported increased attention to the material and willingness to achieve their mentee goals. A few mentors did not report taking any time to get to know their mentees. These mentors also reported less interaction and growth feedback from their mentee. It would seem that having the mentor open up and relate to the situation and circumstances of their mentee increased the credibility and trustworthiness of the mentor; thus creating a discipleship environment more conducive to growth. This result would uphold the previously theorized notion from John Maxwell that individuals will not care about what a potential mentor has to say until they are invested in that mentor.157

The next common theme to emerge from the project mentors is their lament at only having three weeks to work with their mentee. Although the mentors were challenged during their training to continue to meet and fellowship with their mentee outside of their scheduled discipleship times, many mentors reported that three weeks was just enough time to gain their mentee’s trust and begin working with them. Mentors reported that it takes time to build a trusting relationship with another individual. Once this relationship had just begun to grow, their time for discipleship was up, and another mentor would step in. One of this collaborative mentoring project’s purposes was to investigate methods that would lead to a more robust and effective discipleship experience. It would appear that shortening the relationship span between a mentor and the mentee reduced their overall relationship quality. The hindering of the mentor

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and mentee relationship seems to have had an adverse effect as already postulated by Neil Cole
where he suggests without an excellent relationship; mentoring cannot exist.\textsuperscript{158} Although
mentoring and discipleship commenced during this project, the researcher cannot help but
include in the results that shifting from mentor to mentor throughout the nine weeks seemed to
be a less effective method.

Another common theme to emerge from the project mentor’s journals is their adherence
to collaborate with each other. The mentors were trained and encouraged weekly by the
researcher to collaborate with the other mentors in their group. The mentor’s collaboration in
discipling their mentee is what forms the backbone of this action thesis. Bill Hull has previously
noted that mentoring is greatly aided within the confines of a mentoring group working together
and supporting one another in mentoring a mentee.\textsuperscript{159} The researcher noted almost every mentor
reported communicating and collaborating with the other mentors in their group. The overall
result was that mentors reported knowing what goals to set and monitor for their mentee as well
as being made aware of special circumstances with which their mentee was struggling. One
mentor wrote that his mentee had made such significant progress with his previous Scripture
memorization goals that the mentor (after collaborating with the other mentors) decided to set
new ministry service goals for his mentee to achieve.

Correlating with the previous theme, every mentoring group reported having set goals for
their mentee during the discipleship program. Most mentors reported collaborating with the other
mentors to set a spiritual discipline goal for their mentee to accomplish during the nine-week
program. These spiritual disciplines ranged from scripture memorization, prayer, service projects

\textsuperscript{158} Cole, “Cultivating a Life for God,” 42.

\textsuperscript{159} Hull, “The Complete Book of Discipleship,” 40.
in the church, and personal evangelism. The mentors followed the directives of the researcher who implemented the teaching of Thomas McCann, who previously noted that the most substantial potential for mentoring is achieved when collaboration is planned out with strategic targets and goals in mind.160 The project mentors reported that the mentees who excelled in achieving their goals also engaged the material personally; thus, giving some credence to McCann’s position. It would seem that those mentees who had goals established for them and proceeded to execute these goals, encountered a more engaging discipleship experience than those who merely completed the written portions of the “Discipleship 1” curriculum.

The next common thread noted by the project mentors was found in the reporting on spiritual gifts. The project mentors were heavily trained to identify and explore their mentee’s spiritual gifts. Every mentoring group reported utilizing the spiritual gift test, which was provided to the project’s participants.161 By going through this test with their mentee, most mentors reported being able to discuss the direction the Lord may be leading their mentee. The mentors also reported encouraging their mentee to utilize his spiritual gifts in the regular ministries of CFM. One mentor wrote about encouraging her mentee to approach the church leadership to see where she may serve and use her gifts more intelligently. The researcher notes how the encouragement of the mentors toward their mentees seems to have inspired them to employ their spiritual gifts. It would appear that the belief the mentor had in the mentee empowered the mentee to step out and serve, just as Hendricks previously noted that the most powerful statement a mentor could make to a mentee is, “I believe in you.”162 By “believing in

160 McCann, “Mentoring as Collaborative Effort,” 110-112.


162 Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 57.
their mentees,” the mentors seem to have inspired them to exercise what would have typically remained dormant in other discipleship studies.

The final common theme the project mentors reported was the sharing of life experiences. Like the first theme noted, sharing life stories helped the mentor build the necessary relationship with the mentee to produce a life-change. Discipleship does not seem to be the mere acquisition of information, but a change in an individual’s character and understanding. Pouring one’s life into another through stories and personal accounts seems to help create a relationship conducive to this goal. By sharing life experiences, the mentors reported significant gains in acceptance, fellowship, and credibility by their mentees. Bill Hull previously argued that the relationship forged between mentee and mentor is the catalyst that ignites this transformation. It appears that the sharing of life experiences helped to create an environment that expedited the acceptance of the teaching of the mentor as well as the general discipleship material. The researcher notes that the discipleship material seemed to work in conjunction with the mentor’s stories. The material prompted the mentors to relate stories of success or failure with the described topic resulting in life experiences which the mentee could mentally visualize and to which they could relate. These life experiences may serve as a “model” for the mentee to reference synchrony with the discipleship material. Hendricks previously argued that this ‘modeling relationship’ inspires the mentee to excel in character transformation. It seems that the more open and connected the mentor was to his mentee, the more open and receptive the mentee was with his mentor’s teaching, guidance, and challenges.

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164 Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 34.
Unusual Circumstances

During the course of this action thesis, the participants experienced certain unforeseen events that should be noted for the purposes of this research. Due to the era of Covid-19, one mentor decided to meet with his mentee virtually rather than in person. The mentor and mentee noted this in their respective journals and concluded that their time was still profitable. The researcher has to wonder what was lost in their virtual meeting. The mentor’s record revealed a capable summary of all expectations; however, the researcher wonders if the theme of life experience could properly be explored over a virtual conference.

One mentor contracted Covid-19 during this project. The mentor changed his discipleship schedule with another mentor from his group in order to quarantine and recover. This mentor had light contact with his mentee before symptoms arose, which caused the mentee to quarantine for a time to ensure no further potential transmissions of the virus. The mentee did not contract the virus, and both mentor and mentee were able to resume the discipleship. The researcher cannot help but wonder if the specter of the Covid-19 virus might have had some unforeseen impact on the mentee’s discipleship experience.

One mentee in this project developed a corneal erosion affecting her vision. The mentee reported that this ailment came upon her just before her last discipleship meeting. The mentee did not desire to quit the program but adapted by having her mentor read much of the remaining material. The mentor and mentee then reported they had lively discussions concerning the material covered.

Every project is bound to have unusual circumstances that interfere with what may be considered the “ordinary process” of a project. In many cases, these circumstances may cause some of the participants to abandon their program; however, in every case of these unusual
circumstances, no mentor or mentee desired to pull out of this project. The researcher never had to convince or coerce any participant to stay or complete the project. Many of the participants noted how grateful they were to be included in this project.

**Project Mentees’ Journals**

During the course of this project, the mentees were also asked to keep a journal detailing their thoughts, observations, and experiences. Examining the project mentees’ journals should give the research the third lens of triangulation to view this action thesis’s overall results. The differences between the archival information (single mentor model) and the project information (collaborative mentor model) will be shown at the end.

**Common Themes**

Throughout the mentee journal entries, certain themes were observed to be repeated. These repetitive notations formulate common themes or practices experienced by a majority of the mentees. These themes should give the research greater insight into the mentees’ questionnaire results as well as the overall results of this project. The first theme to arise was the mentors’ efforts to connect with the mentee. Each mentee reported how the majority, if not the totality of their mentors, made an effort to connect and get to know the mentee. As was noted in the mentors’ journals, the act of the mentors connecting with their mentee is possibly the most significant reason for such dramatically improved results in this project. The mentees noted that they were not made to feel like students in a class but partners with a purpose towards spiritual growth and maturity.

The connectedness of the mentors to their mentee is what gives rise to the next common theme, life experiences. Each mentee reported their mentors sharing their life experiences in
varying degrees. Mentees noted that their mentors’ life experiences encouraged them to make strides in spiritual discipline and evangelism. One mentee reported that she was encouraged to share her faith with her coworker. The mentee reported one of her mentors contacting her regularly to offer support and encouragement throughout this process, which the mentee stated she would not have done without the mentor’s push. The majority of mentees also reported that their mentors’ life experiences helped them to cope with issues in which the mentee was struggling in their own lives. Some mentees also reported that certain mentors were more distant than others. However, the mentors they connected with provided valuable life experience and advice to overcome such issues as self-doubt, laziness, intimidation, and negative self-image. It would appear that the mentors taking the time to share their lives with their mentees opened them up to receiving advice and challenges that would aid them in greater personal growth and maturity. These observations seem to support the results identified in the mentees’ questionnaire.

The next theme noted by the mentees was their mentors making a significant effort to identify the mentee’s spiritual gifts. Almost every mentee mentions their mentors’ addressing the mentee’s spiritual gifts and challenging them to employ them in some capacity in the church. Some mentees rose to the challenge of their mentors, while other mentees simply noted their mentors’ attempts at reviewing their spiritual gifts. Some mentees seemed reluctant to explore the uncomfortable change this might bring into their lives; however, the mentees seemed appreciative of their mentors’ efforts. Whether enthusiastic or compulsory, the mentees report that their spiritual gifts were highlighted and discussed by the majority of their mentors, which also supports the results shown in the questionnaire results.

Identifying the spiritual gifts of the mentees lead to the next theme, challenging the mentees to serve. Each mentee reported how at least one of their mentors, if not the majority,
challenged them to serve in the church and community. Some mentees reported rising to the challenge, while others seemed to note this as an academic exercise. The overall response of the mentees seemed ambivalent at best. The mentees’ lack of enthusiasm over this theme is supported in the questionnaire results as it is the lowest-ranked of the survey.

Another theme noted by the researcher concerning the mentees was their adaptation to each of their mentors. Overall, the mentees were able to complete the discipleship material adequately with each of their mentors. However, the mentees did not have the same reaction to each of their mentors. Some mentees recorded that one mentor was distant, while another mentor was engaging. One mentee noted how one mentor was so encouraging, while another mentor needed encouragement. These differences in each mentor’s personality make-up lend credence to the overall thesis that a multiplicity of mentors is advantageous to the mentee in the discipling process. With a multiplicity of mentors, one may fail at connecting with his mentee, and another may “pick up the slack” by excelling at this connection. One mentee even noted that among his three mentors, one was skilled with anecdotal stories, another with a depth of knowledge about the subject matter, and another with theory and philosophy concerning the mentee’s life issues. This mentee (knowing the purpose of this project fully) concluded the collaborative approach to his mentoring to be a success. In this instance, the three mentors clearly showed their diversified strengths, which offered the mentee a more well-rounded discipleship environment. Not every mentee reported a positive experience with a multiplicity of mentors. One mentee reported being a little overwhelmed with all the attention received by three mentors. This mentee noted a desire not to be incorporated with multiple mentees so as not to garner all the scrutiny of so many mentors.
The final theme noted by the mentees was the challenge and success in their overall personal growth. Each mentee concluded that they had grown in some capacity through this discipleship experience. One mentee reported dramatic improvements in prayer life, evangelism, understanding spiritual gifts, and a desire to be a future mentor in CFM’s discipleship programs. A few mentees reported desiring to be future mentors, while others noted significant improvements in their personal Scripture reading, prayer life, and evangelism. Most mentees reported being encouraged or challenged to personal evangelism and to grow in their walk with the Lord. These encouragements seem to reflect the general sentiment recorded in the questionnaire results. Overall, this action thesis seemed to have a very positive result in the lives of the mentees it sought to research.

Control Group Mentee’s Journal

As part of this action thesis’s intervention design, one mentee was included in this project having previous experience with this discipleship under a single mentor model. This mentee’s journal describes his experiences and observations under a collaborative discipleship program. The control group mentee’s notations are similar to the rest of the mentees in his observations of his mentors’ desire to connect, share their life experiences, challenge him to service in the church and discuss his spiritual gifts. The most significant difference the control group mentee notes between the single mentor model and the multiple mentor model is the variety of personalities with which to engage in the multiple mentor approach. The mentee notes that one mentor, although personable in his own right, was more focused on the course material. Another mentor was more focused on the relational aspects of discipleship, while another mentor was more attuned to discipleship’s practical nature. The mentee noted that all of his mentors challenged him to evaluate his life in light of the scriptures. The most far-reaching result seems to be this
mentee’s observation that different mentors come with different gifts, abilities, and connectedness, that reach different mentees in different ways. These sentiments are supportive of the theory that multiple mentors offer a larger opportunity in discipleship. Each individual mentor has a different personality, spiritual gift set, and connection bias that may afford the mentee a greater opportunity to engage the material and mentor. These greater opportunities lend themselves to offering the potential for a more comprehensive and robust discipling experience.

The results of this action thesis using a multiple mentor approach to discipleship were compared against the archival information from CFM’s past experiences using a single mentor model. The multiple (or collaborative) mentor model shows a significant increase in the eight thematic elements previously reviewed over the single mentor model. The reasons for this increase will be explored in the next chapter. It seems that the multiple mentor model’s most significant contribution was in the areas of the mentors’ encouragement and challenge to their mentees to share their faith and to take steps in their personal growth in the Lord. The mentees’ and mentors’ journals both cite the importance of the mentors’ connectedness in the lives of the mentee. This connectedness seems to help open up the mentees to the mentor’s life experiences, which in turn aided the mentees in every theme identified in this project. The mentors appear to have earned the right to challenge and encourage their mentees in all aspects pertaining to discipleship and personal growth. The following graph compares the two approaches. It should be noted that the single mentor approach applied in the past at CFM did not benefit from the academic or philosophical posturing of the researcher (who currently serves as the lead pastor), nor did those mentors receive the training that the project mentors received. The final comparison is as follows.
Table 4.3. Comparison of Discipleship Models Graph

Comparison of Discipleship Models

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Elements</th>
<th>Single Mentor Model</th>
<th>Collaborative Mentor Model</th>
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<tr>
<td>Life Experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coping with Struggles</td>
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<td>Identifying Spiritual Gifts</td>
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<td>Challenged to Serve</td>
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<td>Encouraged to Share Faith</td>
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<td>Processing Discipleship Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Disciplines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenged in Personal Growth</td>
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Average Score

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Chapter 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this DMIN action thesis was to test the effectiveness of a collaborative mentoring discipleship model against a single mentor model. This action thesis project sought to demonstrate that if Crossroads Family Ministries provided a collaborative discipleship experience for its mentees, the church might see better-discipled individuals emerge who would have a more refined understanding of their spiritual gifts and how to employ them in the church. The results of this thesis project did not show the collaboration of mentors with their singular mentee as being the catalyst in providing a better discipling experience. While collaboration was not the ultimate stimulus to prompt more robust and effective discipleship, it still bore fruit by exposing the mentee to multiple mentoring styles and experiences. This thesis project showed that the greater factor in creating a more effective discipleship experience was mentor training. The mentors of this project were taught to connect with their mentee, and those mentors who applied their training were able to share life experiences and garner trust and openness from their mentee. These mentees reported a more robust and effective discipleship experience than those in previous discipleship programs at CFM. Therefore, well-trained mentors who actively engaged their mentee demonstrate a far more effective mentoring approach than collaborating mentors.

Conclusion Questions

Chapter four of this thesis included the field research results pertaining to a collaborative approach to discipleship at CFM. After analyzing the results of chapter four, the thesis’s natural
progression must answer the overarching question of “where do we go from here?” The following questions should help to shed light on this issue.

How do the results compare to the archival information?

This action thesis results show a markedly higher success rate in eight thematic elements of the discipleship process at CFM over previous discipleship endeavors. The previous discipleship paradigm at CFM centered around a single mentor approach to discipleship. In contrast, this action thesis employed a discipleship model in which multiple mentors collaborated to mentor a single mentee. The reasons for the markedly higher success of the collaborative mentor approach do not seem to rest in the use of multiple mentors as much as it does the use of better trained and enthusiastic mentors.

The mentors who were previously used in the archival information at CFM did not receive the same training as the mentors in this thesis project. This project’s mentors were instructed by the researcher in a one-day seminar where specific discipleship elements were explained and modeled through illustrations and open discussion (see Appendix F). The mentors were quizzed on the material to help the researcher ensure the mentors had understood the material. Moreover, the thesis’s mentors were aware that they were in a project that would come under close examination. The mentors were asked to keep journals documenting their collaborative efforts, goals set for their mentee, and observations concerning their experiences in this project. The mentors were aware that their journals would be analyzed and become part of the results of this project. The mentors demonstrated enthusiasm in participating in this project, understanding that the results might be used to advance CFM’s discipleship program. The mentors were trained to engage their mentee, knowing that their experiences would be examined in an academic setting. Finally, the mentors were kept accountable by the researcher, who
contacted them weekly (via text messages and emails) to encourage and remind them of their responsibilities to the project. Thus, the project mentors were more focused and better trained to engage their mentee and set clear goals for their discipleship.

Another factor adding to the increased success of this project’s discipleship was the accountability the researcher provided for all participants. The researcher contacted both mentees and mentors each week to encourage them. This encouragement most often took the form of text messages and emails reminding all participants to continue writing in their journals and that they were being prayed over. The researcher’s accountability served as a constant reminder for the participants of their responsibilities to the discipleship process and subsequently the action thesis. Although no quantifiable measurement was available to gauge the effectiveness of accountability in this action thesis, the researcher notes the special value that accountability played in the mentors’ constancy. The researcher also notes that none of the mentors in the archival information received any accountability during their discipleship periods. It may be surmised that the mentors in the archival information may have benefited from direct accountability during their discipling.

As much as the primary factor to a more robust and effective discipleship experience was a well-trained and enthusiastic mentor, this thesis’s collaborative element was not void in this project. Multiple project mentees wrote about the benefit of having multiple mentors in their discipleship process. One mentee noted the benefit of having three different mentors with three different abilities and gift sets. Another mentee noted the teaching style of some of his mentors made up for the lack of connectedness the mentee suffered from another mentor. The mentors’ collaborative nature worked in these instances to aid in the discipleship process; however, it was
not as prolific as was initially anticipated. The greater factor seems to rest in the training and accountability of the mentor in the discipleship process.

How do the results of this project compare to the literature studied?

This project examined literature pertaining to the mentoring and discipleship process. The researcher identified several common themes within the literature that guided the formation of this thesis. The first theme found in the literature was how the mentor’s mindset appears to be an essential element in the discipleship process. As previously noted, Bill Hull mentions that mentoring occurs when one individual (the mentor) seeks to affect change in another (the mentee) through the transference of wisdom, knowledge, and experience.\textsuperscript{165} Without this desire to affect change, the discipleship process diminishes between the mentee and mentor, leaving only the potential for a lackluster discipling experience. The archival information seems to concur with this conclusion. The previous mentees of CFM’s discipleship program did not report being engaged with mentors eager to communicate their wisdom, knowledge, or experience. Instead, the archival information seems to be a record of a discipleship class taught by a teacher rather than an engaged mentor. The thesis project mentees reported that they were met with mentors whose mindsets were geared to engage them and transfer wisdom, knowledge, and experience.

Another theme the literature revealed was the intentionality behind the mentor developing a relationship with the mentee. John Maxwell previously argued that individuals would not care about what a potential mentor has to say until they are invested in that mentor.\textsuperscript{166} The precedent literature supports this truism, as does the results of this project. The mentees

\textsuperscript{165} Hull, \textit{The Complete Book of Discipleship}, 80.

\textsuperscript{166} Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 9.
reported opening up and engaging the mentors who first took the time to develop relationships with them. It was not adequate for the mentors to observe some trivial required time of pleasantries; they needed to engage their mentees with excellence.¹⁶⁷ Gregory Hickman has argued not only for the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship but also the quality of this relationship.¹⁶⁸ The mentees of this project noted that the mentors developed varying levels of relationships with the mentee. The mentor journals reflect this same fact. However, the deeper and more outstanding the quality of the established relationship led to a much more significant discipling experience.

The collaboration involved in mentoring was the next theme revealed in the literature and researched in this thesis. Secular and Christian sources agree that mentors working in a collaborative relationship can better aid each other in the mentoring process.¹⁶⁹ This project has demonstrated that the effectiveness of this collaborative relationship was not found in the cooperative discipling of a single mentee. Mentors collaborating in the direct discipling efforts with their mentee contributed little to a more effective discipleship experience. However, the collaboration of mentors seemed to be an encouraging and motivating factor between them, thus resulting in higher quality interaction with the mentees. Multiple mentors connecting with the same mentee did not afford the higher results anticipated in the discipling process. However, multiple mentors connecting and collaborating away from the mentee is a path that could be explored in the future. The mentors of this project noted how beneficial it was to collaborate in

¹⁶⁷ Most mentors will engage their mentee with some level of politeness; however, this does not mean they have begun the hard work of developing a quality relationship.


encouraging one another and setting goals for their mentee. Collaboration may be more effectively placed in the training and follow-up areas of discipleship rather than in direct connection with the mentee.

Another theme the literature revealed and was examined in this thesis was equipping and seeing potential in the mentee by the mentor. As previously mentioned, the mentor needs to express belief in his mentee.\textsuperscript{170} John Maxwell has argued that this mentality of belief in the mentee energizes their spirit and begins releasing the mentee’s potential.\textsuperscript{171} This project coincided with the literature researched. The mentees of this project reported being challenged by their mentors to achieve difficult goals. The foremost goal these mentees were challenged in was to share their faith with others. Thus, the mentors expressed belief in the mentees’ abilities to communicate their faith resulted in markedly higher success rates in evangelism than in the past.

The last literature theme examined in this thesis was that of transformation. Character transformation is one of the theological foundations behind discipleship. It is the Lord who changes and transforms us into His likeness. This transformation occurs not by human effort but by His divine power and direction. Zechariah 4:6 states, “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” By the Holy Spirit’s power, the “great internal change agent” within a believer draws him to be more like Christ.\textsuperscript{172} The mentees in this project reported being challenged to transform and grow in their personal relationship with the Lord. Many mentees noted a tremendous transformation occurring as a result of their discipleship experience. As

\textsuperscript{170} Hendricks, “Men of Influence,” 57.

\textsuperscript{171} Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 82.

\textsuperscript{172} Putman, \textit{Real-Life Discipleship}, Kindle, n.p.
much as transformation is by the prerogative and power of the Lord, it seems that the Lord never forces transformation upon those who believe in Him. Jesus describes Himself as being gentle and lowly in heart. It would be disingenuous for Jesus to describe Himself as humble and gentle only to force those who have taken rest in Him to be transformed to His will. Indeed there must be a willingness on behalf of the believer inherent in the transformation God provides. This thesis exhibited the willingness of many of its mentees to be transformed. However, one mentee seemed reluctant to change. Although proficient in reporting the mentoring process’s experiences, this mentee appeared almost unwilling to change. The literature references this result too. Without the willingness to change, there can be no transformation. Theologically, a necessary ingredient for life transformation is the willingness of the believer to be discipled. God calls individuals to salvation and discipleship but does not force them to change.

What did the researcher learn in implementing the project?

The researcher learned that the primary and most potent element in this mentoring project was the mentors’ relationships with their mentee. Mentors who got to know their mentee and develop a relationship of trust were able to share life experiences, garner confidence, and establish the ability to challenge their mentees far more than those mentors who failed to develop adequate connections with their mentee. It would be advisable for future mentors to dedicate extra time, perhaps an entire meeting time, to connect with their mentees. This relationship


174 Hull, “The Complete Book of Discipleship,” 37. As stated previously, other Christian authors supporting this view would include (but is not an exhaustive list for this topic): Neil Cole (Cultivating a Life for God), Bill and Howard Hendricks (Men of Influence), John Maxwell (Mentoring 101), Greg Ogden Unfinished Business), and Ray Stedman (Body Life).

building should not be viewed as time “wasted” but as quality time well spent, establishing trust and openness.

The researcher further learned that rotating mentors through this discipleship project did not contribute to the mentee’s overall growth. By rotating mentors, the researcher inadvertently reset the trust factor of the mentee with each new mentor. Every mentor had to begin a fresh journey of connecting to the mentee and gaining the mentee’s trust. It would be far more advisable to retain the same mentor with one mentee throughout the discipleship project. The potential of a “bad” mentor still exists; however, with proper training, this probability is significantly decreased. Moreover, with continued accountability throughout the progression of the discipleship, the mentor should be challenged to adhere to the training, continue to set goals, establish a deeper relationship with the mentee, and remain focused on their mentee’s life transformation.

The researcher also learned the importance of better trained mentors. The mentors who had gone through the mentor training, produced markedly better results than previous generations. Moreover, the researcher realized that it is advisable to deploy a collaboration of mentors during the training period and in the mentor’s ongoing accountability throughout the discipleship process. As the researcher kept in touch with the mentors through texts and emails, the mentors stayed attentive and focused on the goals at hand. With more mentor trainers involved in the training process, there would be more accountability partners for the mentors later. As the mentors begin discipling their mentees, the mentor trainers could be used as accountability partners for the mentors throughout their discipling. The archival information demonstrates what occurs when mentors are left alone during the mentoring process. When mentors are left to disciple their mentees over nine weeks (or more), a meandering may occur
where the mentor may lose enthusiasm or go off track. A collaboration of mentor trainers keeping the mentors accountable could offset the drift previously seen.

How might the results apply in other ministry settings?

The results of this action thesis might be applied in ministry settings other than discipleship. Pastors and counselors in a church could benefit from the results of this project by working collaboratively. Pastors and counselors in the church need to encourage each other in their various ministries. The average congregation member might not understand the heavy weight the pastor shoulders daily, nor will they comprehend the complexities a spiritual counselor must deal with regularly. However, as pastors and counselors collaborate, share experiences, and encourage one another, a more efficient and effective ministry may result.

Moreover, the results of this thesis have demonstrated the benefit of having accountability. This accountability may benefit pastors and counselors as they teach, preach, and share experiences and advice. Pastors and counselors could substantially utilize the concept of taking the time to develop quality relationships with those they seek to counsel. More than pleasantries, the pastor or counselor should dedicate significant time getting to know those they seek to minister. This time is not a waste but essential in garnering trust and aiding the individual in opening up and sharing.

Another ministry setting that might apply the results of this project is the youth ministry. By encouraging and training youth leaders to engage and connect with their students, the youth ministry could see significant improvement in reaching young people for the Lord. Utilizing this project’s results by establishing a training system that incorporates an accountability base could help a youth ministry more skillfully connect with young people. These connections might help

176 Pastors of churches where there is not a multiplicity of pastoral staff may still benefit from this thesis’s results by developing deacons or elders within their church who may then serve in various ministry capacities.
develop trusting relationships and potentially grow more trust, and gain better inroads in the lives of the students they seek to lead. Better training and collaborative accountability of the youth leaders might ultimately help them lead their young people to spiritual growth and life transformation.

Another setting that might benefit from the results of this study is the small group ministry. The leadership in any small group ministry might function much like a mentor to a collective group of mentees. In such cases, the leadership might benefit from developing formal training and accountability. On their own, small group leaders are just as susceptible to drifting away from an enthusiastic, life-changing experience as were the mentors from CFM’s archival information. It could significantly benefit small group leaders to collaborate and encourage each other as they minister to their respective groups and be held accountable to maintain focus and set goals.

One final setting that could benefit from this thesis’s results is the stakeholders of this thesis project. Those who served as participants in this project may desire to pursue further ministry opportunities at CFM. The researcher would encourage them to continue to utilize the training they received and seek to connect with others in their respective ministry assignments enthusiastically. Moreover, the participants would be greatly encouraged to collaborate and share experiences, accountability, and encouragement as they minister to others in CFM.

Did anything emerge during the study that merits future research?

During the course of this study, the researcher observed an unexpected relational element arise with some of the mentors and mentees. Some mentors reported in their journals a type of reverse mentoring occurring. Mentors who were supposed to lead and teach their mentees noted

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177 Some churches do not utilize a small group format or agree with its ideology; however, the same application may be made to small group leadership as to a more traditional Sunday school teacher.
how much they were learning from their mentees. One mentor reported how his mentee gave valuable insight that helped the mentor work through a personal issue.

Reverse mentoring is a theme revealed in the literature that was previously mentioned in this thesis.\(^\text{178}\) As stated previously, Maxwell noted that he had observed his personal growth as a direct result of the people he was mentoring.\(^\text{179}\) In the secular literature, Sharples and Marcon-Clarke added that older executives reported having learned from their younger mentees.\(^\text{180}\) These instances of reverse mentoring seem never to be planned but appear to be the happy byproduct of a deeply established relationship between mentor and mentee.

Reverse mentoring merits future research due to its potential to possibly aid an older generation with a younger generation’s insights. Hypothetically, during mentoring, an older mentor may learn how to better relate to a younger generation. Perhaps the scriptural principle of “iron sharpening iron” may apply in the conceptualization and application of reverse mentoring.\(^\text{181}\)

Where should the research regarding collaborative mentoring go from here?

This action research project regarding mentoring has revealed many valuable things. It has revealed that mentors taking the time to develop deep relationships with their mentees is of paramount importance to the discipling and personal transformation process. This project has demonstrated the value of purposeful training and accountability. Each mentor needs to effectively set goals and keep focus during the discipling process. Moreover, this thesis has

\(^{178}\) Pg. 33  
\(^{179}\) Maxwell, “Mentoring 101,” 27.  
\(^{181}\) Proverbs 27:17.
shown the importance of the right mindset a mentor needs to adopt to successfully engage his mentee and guide them to a transformative encounter with the Lord.

By no means has the research come to a full conclusion. There are many other avenues of mentoring and collaboration to be explored. Although collaborating mentors assigned to a single mentee did not bear fruit as theorized, collaborating did hold value for the discipling process. The collaboration of mentors seemed to be an encouraging and motivating factor between them, thus resulting in higher quality interaction with the mentees. One area the research could continue to explore is the idea of collaborative mentor training. Multiple trainers collaborating to help mentor trainees grow in their understanding of the discipleship material, their spiritual gifts, and effectively connecting with mentees through ever-deepening relations, could greatly benefit any church ministry.

Another avenue of exploration is the nature of collaborative accountability and its role in the mentoring process. The natural extension of collaborative mentor training would be to have the trainers regularly check in on the mentors to see how their discipleship and mentoring are progressing. These trainers could collaborate with the mentors they are working with to share ideas, experiences, and encouragement to keep the mentors focused and enthusiastic in the discipling process.

One last avenue to explore would be better ways to develop deeper relationships between mentor and mentee. This thesis has demonstrated the value of the mentor developing a relationship with the mentee. Therefore, exploring different techniques and methods to enhance this relationship could heighten and expand the overall mentoring and discipling experience for both mentor and mentee.
In the end, these attempts to enhance the mentoring and discipleship process serve to open doors for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of the mentors and mentees. God will bless mentors who seek to be used by God to develop disciples for Jesus.\textsuperscript{182} Mentees who seek to grow in their understanding and open themselves to the Holy Spirit’s transformative power will also be blessed.\textsuperscript{183} Finally, those of us who seek to glorify God by thoughtfully and prayerfully developing more robust and effective disciple-making methods will be blessed.\textsuperscript{184} These blessings come not because of the wonderful nature of those who plan or seek them but because of the nature of the one whom they serve. For God has said, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”\textsuperscript{185} Nevertheless, man is still encouraged to work out his salvation; however, he is not alone in this endeavor, “for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”\textsuperscript{186} To God be the glory.

\textsuperscript{182} Matthew 28:19-20, John 15:10.
\textsuperscript{183} John 15:5.
\textsuperscript{184} Titus 2:1-6.
\textsuperscript{185} Zechariah 4:6.
\textsuperscript{186} Philippians 2:13.
Bibliography


https://www.growthmentor.com/blog/origin-of-word-mentor/


November 20, 2020

Tyson Wahl
Thomas Keiser

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-187 Collaborating Mentors in the Discipleship Process

Dear Tyson Wahl, Thomas Keiser:

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

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

101(b):

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
Appendix B: Definitions

*Collaboration:* The action of working in connected partnerships with others to be more responsive to the particularities and needs of the personal, professional, and spiritual lives of the individual being helped.¹⁸⁷

*Connectedness:* A feeling of belonging to or having an affinity with a particular person or group.

*Discipleship:* An individual’s growth, nurturing, and overall understanding of the commands of the Lord Jesus as laid out in Scripture.

*Equip:* The act of providing a learning and formative context to develop another individual to accomplish a particular purpose.¹⁸⁸

*Giftedness:* Spiritual gifts explicitly given by the Holy Spirit unto every believer.

*Mentor:* A spiritual-minded individual seeking to speak into the life of another to connect, guide, and facilitate positive transformation in that person.

*Mentor Mindset:* The outlook of a mentor who seeks to support the personal, spiritual, and professional growth of their mentee by empowering them to achieve their full potential.¹⁸⁹

*Mentee:* An individual willing to come under the teaching, fellowship, and admonition of another for personal growth and understanding.


**Modeling:** The outward demonstration of godly principles and truths lived out for the mentee through concrete examples of integrating various media into the education process to maximize learning.\(^{190}\)

**Personal Testimony:** The overall character and example of one’s life lived for the Lord Jesus.

**Reverse Mentoring:** The effect that occurs when a mentor learns and experiences meaningful growth from the experiences shared with other mentors and their mentee.\(^{191}\)

**Speak into:** The act of connecting with another person through sharing life experiences, wisdom, education, or other means necessary to draw that person to a positive decision.

**Synergy:** Cooperatively working together to increase productivity where two or more individuals produce a combined effect more significant than the sum of their separate effects.\(^{192}\)

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Appendix C: Mentor Consent Form

Mentor Consent

Title of the Project: Collaborating Mentors in the Discipleship Process
Principal Investigator: Rev. Tyson Wahl, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years or older, a member or regular attender of Crossroads Family Ministries (CFM), and be familiar with and have successfully completed CFM’s discipleship level one course. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

What is the study about and why is it being done?
The purpose of the study is to train mentors to work together, as opposed to singularly, in taking a mentee through discipleship level one. Working together as a group of mentors, you will create an environment that helps the individual mentee understand the discipleship material, the spiritual gifts God has given them, and how to use these gifts to serve others better. The goal is to see the benefits, if any, of having multiple mentors as opposed to a singular mentor.

What will happen if you take part in this study?
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Complete an in-person mentor training. This training will include lecture notes, group discussions, and a quiz. The training will last approximately 2-3 hours.
2. Attend three weekly meetings with your mentee. Each meeting will last approximately 1 hour. The meetings may either be held at the church or in yours or the mentee’s home. You and the mentee will need to determine the best schedule for these meetings.
3. Complete a personal journal for each weekly meeting. The journal will be provided to you prior to your first meeting and will include prompts of topics to address in your entries. You will need to have completed three journal entries by the end of the study. Each journal entry will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked to turn in your journal entries by hand to the researcher once you attend the last mentoring meeting and write your final journal entry.

How could you or others benefit from this study?
The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are an increase in biblical knowledge, spiritual growth, and mentoring skills.

Benefits to society include creating citizens with a more Christ-like mindset and outlook as well as mentors who desire to share truth, experience, and godly principles with others.
### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. NOTE: Crossroads Family Ministries is a ‘mandatory reporter.’ If the researcher becomes privy to information concerning child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others is suspected, this must be immediately reported to the police.

### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.
- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked file cabinet. The data may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all physical records will be burned.

### Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as lead pastor at Crossroads Family Ministries. To limit potential or perceived conflicts participation in the study is voluntary. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Crossroads Family Ministries. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Pastor Tyson Wahl. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at tewahl@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Thomas Keiser, at takeiser@liberty.edu.

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

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.
Your Consent

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

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

Printed Subject Name __________________________ Signature & Date __________________________
Appendix D: Mentee Consent Form

Mentee Consent

Title of the Project: Collaborating Mentors in the Discipleship Process
Principal Investigator: Rev. Tyson Wahl, Liberty University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invitation to be Part of a Research Study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and Christian. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the study about and why is it being done?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of the study is to train mentors to work together to support and encourage each other in the process of taking a mentee through discipleship level one. As a mentee, you will be entering an environment that will help you understand the discipleship material and the spiritual gifts God has given you as well as how to use these gifts to serve others better.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will happen if you take part in this study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Attend nine weekly mentoring meetings. The meetings will be between you and one of your three assigned mentors. Each meeting will last approximately 1 hour. The meetings may either be held at the church or in yours or the mentor’s home. You and the mentor will need to determine the best schedule for these meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete a personal journal for each weekly meeting. The journal will be provided to you prior to your first meeting and will include prompts of topics to address in your entries. You will need to have completed nine journal entries by the end of the study. Each journal entry will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked to turn in your journal entries by hand to the researcher once you attend the last mentoring meeting and write your final journal entry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Complete an anonymous online questionnaire on SurveyMonkey. The link to the questionnaire will be sent to you by email after you have turned in your journal entries. It should take approximately 25 minutes to complete.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>How could you or others benefit from this study?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are an increase in biblical knowledge and spiritual growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefits to society include creating citizens with a more Christ-like mindset and outlook as well as mentors who desire to share truth, experience, and godly principles with others.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What risks might you experience from being in this study?</th>
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</table>
| The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. NOTE: Crossroads Family Ministries (CFM) is a ‘mandatory reporter.’ If the researcher becomes privy to information concerning child abuse, child neglect,
elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others is suspected, this must be immediately reported to the police.

**How will personal information be protected?**
The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.
- Journal responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. The questionnaire responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked file cabinet. The data may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all physical records will be burned.

**Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?**
The researcher serves as lead pastor at Crossroads Family Ministries. To limit potential or perceived conflicts participation in the study is voluntary and the questionnaire answers will be anonymous. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

**Is study participation voluntary?**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Crossroads Family Ministries. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. Questionnaire responses cannot be withdrawn once submitted due to their anonymous nature.

**What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**
If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Questionnaire responses cannot be withdrawn once submitted due to their anonymous nature.

**Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**
The researcher conducting this study is Pastor Tyson Wahl. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at twehl@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Thomas Keiser, at takeiser@liberty.edu.

**Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.
Your Consent

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

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

Printed Subject Name ___________________________ Signature & Date ___________________________
Appendix E: Mentee Questionnaire Questions

1. How did your mentors’ life experiences help you to understand the discipleship material better?

2. In what way did your mentors identify and help you cope with struggles in your Christian walk?

3. How have your mentors helped you to identify your spiritual gift and how to use it?

4. How have your mentors challenged you to serve in your local church?

5. How have your mentors encouraged you to share your faith with others?

6. How have your mentors challenged you to process and engage the discipleship material?

7. In what spiritual disciplines did your mentors challenge you to make progress?

8. How have your mentors challenged you in your personal growth and walk in the Lord?

9. In what way has completing discipleship one challenged you to share your faith with others?

10. What effect has completing discipleship one had on your daily walk with God? (faith, evangelism, service to the church?)
Appendix F: Mentor Training Outline

I. Purpose of Crossroads Family Ministries
   a. The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-38)
   b. The New Commandment (John 13:34)
   c. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)

II. What does it mean to be F.A.T.?
   a. Faithful
   b. Available
   c. Teachable

III. Connecting: how to open up and relate to others (This is about developing relationally)
   a. Don’t be afraid to discuss your life events (use humor)
   b. Ask probing question (not too personal)
      i. “Questions to Ask Others”
      ii. Open discussion time

IV. Communication: how to get others to open up and share ideas
   a. Never assume people know (repetition is the key to learning)
   b. Open ended questions (thought provokers, would you rather, etc.)
   c. Keep control of the conversations

V. Collaborate: cooperating with others to achieve more
   a. Together you will see more
   b. Together your experiences will teach
c. Together you achieve more than you could alone
   
   i. Make notes in your journals and share with collaborating mentors
   
   ii. Open discussion time

VI. Preparedness: “If you fail to plan…”
   
   a. Be familiar with and understand your material (D 1 curriculum)
   
   b. Be available for discussion – you don’t know everything (it’s okay to admit it)
      
      i. Humble enough to learn (teachable)
   
   c. Be ready – arrive 15 minutes early and be ready to stay 15 minutes after to answer questions and build relationship

VII. Spiritual gifts: what they are, how to find yours, and define them in others
   
   a. Spiritual gift test (read 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4)
   
   b. Mature believers should see these traits in you as well
      
      i. Ministry areas you feel a special draw towards
   
   c. Keep your eyes open for the spiritual gifts of others
      
      i. Future leaders/teachers
      
      ii. Opportunities to use gifts
      
      iii. Open discussion time

VIII. Source of Power: (Zechariah 4:6) the Holy Spirit
   
   a. Read His word regularly, bring it into your lesson as He brings it to mind
   
   b. Pray before, during, and after each class (involve others)

IX. Quiz