The Erosion of Theological Understanding

A Thesis Project Submitted to
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By

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Many Christian churches have been experiencing declines in attendance at Sunday services, Bible studies, and prayer meetings, and have experienced the affects of an apathetic attitude toward Christian community engagement. The lack of teaching scripturally accurate Biblical doctrine and applying scripture to daily life has led to a sharp decrease in discipleship. By examining the attitudes and reasons contributing to this lack of Christian participation and scriptural understanding, pastors and other church leadership can address the specific rationales for not living the scripture in daily life. Through the advent of a discipleship program an increase for the desire of congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy to become more dedicated disciples for Jesus Christ may occur. The research method employed includes the administration of a pre questionnaire, the presentation of a complete discipleship program, followed by a post questionnaire to measure Biblical knowledge specifically focused on The Great Commission and the doctrine of sufficiency. This project will influence stakeholders, including parishioners, ecclesiastical hierarchy, pastors, ministry leaders, parents, youth, and the entirety of the Christian community as it strives seek Christian education and apply a scripturally accurate approach to every aspect of daily life.
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No illustrations.
Abbreviations

DMIN  *Doctor of Ministry*

LUSOD  *Liberty University School of Divinity*

PRRI  *Public Religious Research Institute*
Chapter 1

Introduction

In the latter half of the twentieth century, and into the dawn of the second millennium, churches have undergone tremendous change. While some churches have drawn more visitors into their Sunday services with various engaging entertainment, there has been, in many instances, a lack of teaching scripturally accurate Bible doctrine and discipleship. The concept of church as a consumer product over the role of the Bible in an individual’s life has led to Biblical infidelity. This problem has led to an apathetic attitude towards attending groups outside of Sunday service, which include Bible study and prayer meeting. The lack of participation contributed toward the congregation possessing a pluralistic scriptural understanding that is more culturally relevant than scripturally accurate. The issue of Biblical infidelity infiltrated the body of the Christian church on a wide scale, and although this is a broad issue, this research will specifically focus its attention on the Brick by Brick Bible church ministry in Williamsville, New York.

Ministry Context

Brick by Brick Bible Church is located in Williamsville, a small suburb of Buffalo, New York. Buffalo is a historically Roman Catholic city, with a heavy concentration of those of Polish, Irish, and Italian descent. The congregation is predominantly Caucasian, with incomes ranging from lower to upper middle class. Currently, the student author serves the church in a capacity of Assistant Pastor and leads weekly prayer meetings and sermons. The different and

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varied roles of this ministry context include but are not limited to, weddings, funerals, baptisms, communion, Sunday services/ sermons, and individual and couples counseling.

Buffalo, New York is the second largest city in New York State. As of 2018, the population is 256,304, which is a 2% decline from the population count of the 2010 census. The city of Buffalo is 52.4% female and 47.6% male. The population density is 6,413 per square mile and the median age in Buffalo is 33. In terms of language and place of origin, 83% of Buffalonians speak English and 8% speak Spanish. 74% of Buffalo residents were born in New York, 13% were born out of state, 4% are American nationals born outside of the United States and 9% are foreign born.²

In terms of race and ethnic origin, Buffalo is 47.4% Caucasian, 36.7% African American, 11.6% Hispanic, 5.6 % Asian, with the remainder of the population reporting as Native American, of Middle Eastern descent, or other.³ The median household income in 2018 was just under $37,000, with over 30% of the residents of Buffalo living below the poverty line.⁴ In terms of education, 83.9% of residents have at least a high school diploma, and 26.6% have obtained at least a bachelor’s level education.⁵ The city is 40.38 square miles in size.⁶

In terms of religious affiliation in the greater Buffalo, New York area, 57.2% of the populace self-reports that they consider themselves religious. This is slightly higher than the


⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.
51.6% of the New York state population that profess faith. Of the 57.2%, 38.8% identify as Roman Catholic, 3.3% identify as non-denominational Christian, 2.9% identify as Baptist, 2.7% identify as Lutheran, 2% identify as Methodist, 1.9% identify as Presbyterian, 1.2% identify as Pentecostal, and less than 1% identify as Episcopalian or as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Additionally, 0.9% identify as Jewish, 1.8% identify as Islamic, with the remaining 0.6% identifying as a member of an Eastern faith.⁷

At the dawn of the 19th century, Buffalo was a new city, rising from the shores of Lake Erie. Once a thriving Native American epicenter for the Haudenosaunee people, Native Americans were removed from their Native land to make way for the emerging economic boom that was to come to Buffalo. The city became the westernmost stop on the Erie Canal, and the economy grew into a manufacturing powerhouse. The lumber and shipbuilding industry evolved into ironworks and eventually Bethlehem Steel at the beginning of the 20th century.⁸ Buffalo enjoyed this economic growth throughout the first half of the century, but by 1970 the increase of foreign steel markets devastated local industry, and Bethlehem steel, a major Buffalo employer, filed for bankruptcy. This led to a significant generational shift from the manufacturing giant that the city of Buffalo was several decades ago, to a city growing exponentially in the technical and medical fields. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states, “the largest employer by industry is healthcare and social services (18.6% of jobs); manufacturing accounts for just 7.4% of jobs. In fact, even if you add the jobs from construction (3.6% of jobs)


and transportation/warehousing (4.2% of jobs), the combined jobs from those industries still
don't equal the jobs impact of healthcare,”9 This led to a shift in the way Buffalonians view
higher education given limited blue-collar opportunities, and the increasing need for white-collar
positions.

While Brick by Brick Bible Church is in the suburb of Williamsville, it is only 4.5 miles
from Buffalo Proper. Many of the congregates are not from Williamsville, but the surrounding
areas including the city. There is an overall impression in this area that everyone self-identifies
as a Buffalonian, and seldom mentions the suburb from which they reside. Much of this unity is
connected towards the strong connection that exists between Buffalonians and their professional
sports teams, the Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres. Despite this unified front, which is prevailing
in the community, it is important to consider both the demographics of Buffalo and
Williamsville, New York for ministry context purposes.

The population of Williamsville, NY is 5,205 as of 2018. Caucasians make up 91% of the
population, followed by 3.6% African American and 3% identifying as Asian.10 The median
income increases significantly from that of the city of Buffalo ($37,000) to $62,000.11 In terms of
education, 98% of residents have at least a high school diploma, and almost 60% have obtained a
at least a bachelor’s level education.12 There is only 10.4% of the population of Williamsville

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9“The Myth of Blue Collar Buffalo and the Josh Allen ‘Fit,’” Two Bills Drive, April 20, 2018,

10“U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Williamsville Village, New York,” Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2018,
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/williamsvillevillagenewyork.

11Ibid.

12Ibid.
living below the poverty line as compared to 30% of the city of Buffalo. Williamsville is contained within a 1.28 square mile area.\textsuperscript{13}

Brick by Brick Bible Church, while being reflective of the ethnic demographics of Williamsville, reflects the wider economic scale of the city of Buffalo. The congregation is 99% Caucasian, but there are several families living below the poverty level as well as those who have higher than median incomes. The Congregates consists of a pool of 53 people, who attend services either on a regular, semi-regular, or intermittent basis. For purposes of categorizing congregates by generation, the following designations are employed. Traditionalists (which include the Silent Generation and the Greatest Generation), born before 1945, Baby Boomers, born between 1946-1964, Generation X, born between 1965-1980, Millennials, born between 1980-2000, and children under the age of 18. The generation make-up of Brick by Brick Bible Church is as follows: 3 Traditionalists, 15 Baby Boomers, 17 Generation X, 6 Millennials, and 12 persons under the age of 18.

Brick by Brick Bible Church self identifies as a non-denominational, Bible-believing, congregation that espouses Christian fellowship. The congregation, many of whom were raised in the Roman Catholic church but have since abandoned Roman Catholic ideological and theological doctrine, are very warm and welcoming, and casual conversation with parishioners is open and relaxed. However, there tends to be a barrier when teaching orthodoxy and orthopraxy with this specific congregation. The Christian fellowship ideal is central to the congregation’s culture; however, Sunday service participation does not translate into well-attended weekday Prayer Meetings and Bible Study or a Discipleship programs. Many parishioners are looking for

\textsuperscript{13} “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Williamsville Village, New York,” Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2018, \url{https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/williamsvillevillagenewyork}. 
a relaxed environment that is the antithesis of the strict high church culture they grew up in. Most parishioners are working professionals or those with blue-collar employment. A majority of parishioners also have school-aged children, however, a lack of programming and Christian education for the church’s youth due to a lack of volunteering to lead a Sunday School curriculum continues to exist. Additionally, there has been stagnation in new membership, as there are no new congregants since 2018. Furthermore, three families have left the congregation in the same time period due to work related relocation and one family only attends four months out of the year as they have a winter retirement location out of state. This corresponds directly to parishioner apathy regarding creating new programming or offering small group ministry.

**Problem Presented**

Brick by Brick Bible church has followed the general trajectory of the general body of the contemporary Christian church in which there is an emphasis on entertainment and the acceptance of popular cultural opinion instead of a strong sense of relying on scriptural accuracy and Biblical fidelity. The attitude of syncretism that is displayed at Brick by Brick Bible church is part of a larger problem. However, by focusing on this specific group of congregants, they may see growth both in measurable attendance and programing as well as visible recognition of stronger faith provided their focus is on Biblical fidelity. The problem is acceptance of secular ideas eroding theological understanding and congregational apathy in pursuing Bible Study and discipleship classes which follow orthodox Christian scriptural authority.

The acceptance of secular ideology into the Christian church has been a dilemma for many decades. While a source may be the advent of postmodernism following WWII, it may be reasonable that the source of the problem dates back as early as the post-Revolutionary War era.
when the chief concern was to establish a new country and commerce with the world rather than entertain orthodox Christian ideological and theological beliefs into societal view through Biblical scholastic education. Either way, the problem of erosion of theological belief is more monumental today than it was at any given point in time during United States history.

Syncretism is common and rampant as Biblical theological accuracy is replaced with current popular cultural belief. Steve Lowe states there is a great deal of over-reporting, over-inflating, church attendance and daily Bible reading, as per a Gallup Poll which estimated approximately 40% of people who identify as Christian are attending church services on a weekly basis and daily Bible reading. Further, Lowe suggests that in all accuracy the report is probably much closer to 20% of people who identify as Christian are attending church services on a weekly basis and daily Bible reading. Lowes comments suggest syncretism affectively substituted for Biblical scriptural authority which further developed into believing a false reality of church attendance and Bible reading.

Contributing factors over the decades that relate to Christian apathy are varied and diverse. One significant contributing factor is the advent of the internet where access to instant information is possible. This instant information access encourages many to believe that truth is not only found in Biblical scripture, as it was once thought, but can be found in the new virtual world of information. Access to instant information leads many to retrieve both objective and subjective information from other sources which devalues the Bible and Biblical scripture as being a primary source for truth and information. Brett McCracken assess that “the trajectory of technology” has not only skewed the accuracy of information, but also “exasperates existing

gnostic tendencies,” that encourage “disembodied experience” rather than “the crucial physicality of the church,” and has desensitized parishioners need to be physically present and “connected to God and to one another through the inhabiting, unifying power of the Holy Spirit.”

Of course, the advent of instant information can also be utilized to support Biblical scripture if the reader has a solid foundation in accurate scriptural understanding.

Further contributing factors which lead to Christian apathy include communities and society that value sporting events, music concerts, celebrities, and their often-liberal ideologies, and anti-Biblical messages, as being more trustworthy and respected than Biblical scripture. Further, McCracken states that this type of Biblical devaluation can also be seen in “the ubiquity of consumerism” that “has fully infiltrated the church, to the extent that” congregants “choose churches that fit them and match their checklist of preferences, just as one would choose a car or a new pair of jeans.”

Thus, many sporting events, music concerts, and celebrities are the new idols of the current era. There has also been a breakdown of familial relationships and the term ‘family,’ as defined by Biblical scripture, which has also contributed to Christian apathy. The terminology for ‘family’ has been severely redefined and undermined by United States cultural belief, and the advent of new law, allowing for induction and destruction of defining ‘family’ through Biblical scriptural means. An additional cultural shift that has occurred in the United States is the tendency to over schedule daily life leading to ineffective time management. The fast-paced lifestyle and work and extracurricular commitments have led to a false sense that there is no time for daily scriptural reading or to attend weekly church functions and services.

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16Ibid.
The problem does not have any easy solutions. There are societal, familial, cultural, and technological barriers which congregants perceive as impediments to daily scripture reading and responsible discipleship program participation. J.R. Briggs states, “while Bible ownership and sales remain strong, Bible reading and engagement are down significantly…as pastors, what are we to do with people who possess more Bibles than ever but have little interest in reading them?” When parishioners view reading the Bible or attending classes as a chore rather than an inseparable component of being a Christian, it is an uphill struggle to change their mind set. It is not a task that can be forced upon a person, but rather a practice that they must willingly incorporate into their life and believe in as a cornerstone of their Christian faith. In specific reference to Brick by Brick Bible church, unfortunately, there has been no yearly formal record keeping of weddings, baptisms, funerals, and church membership. This is further evidence of a careless approach in terms of maintaining a scripturally accurate Christian church community. However, visual photographic observations of past church service attendance and interviews with parishioners suggest higher congregational turnout than presently exists.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose is to understand rationales why congregants do not live Biblical standards at Brick by Brick Bible Church, and therefore do not live the scripture in daily life.

The reason(s) the problem exists are multi-faceted and diverse. The problem of religious plurality is largely due to the advent of modernism which crept into American societal view during the 1950’s. Tolerance was the mantra of the era which depicted inclusivity of religious

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toleration and was to be upheld and frequently encouraged. As a by-product came a lax on teaching orthodox Christian theological perspective from a Biblical viewpoint, this further exacerbated an overall appreciation of religious plurality and belief. Scriptural accuracy was forsaken under the auspices of equality and termed as acceptable.

Another reason for religious plurality is due to the advent of cultural diversity which has permeated the American education system. For several decades, there has been an extreme push from educational institutions to institute a more liberal view that all cultures and religions are equally valuable. Although, there is always a need for respect and gentle persuasion when spreading the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ, fulfilling the Great Commission has become more difficult in our current educational system and culture of religious equality and tolerance. Our society, culturally, has come to a point where discussion and teaching about religions other than Christianity is not only accepted but applauded, while any mention of Jesus Christ is too often silenced within the current education system.

The latter half of the twentieth century, as well as the beginning of our current millennia, brought unprecedented change in how Americans interact socially. There is a sharp decline in club memberships, volunteerism, group activities, which has led to a decline in church participation as well. Technology, including the ability to communicate without physical proximity, partake in group discussions without being in the same room, and attending church in a new virtual reality has changed the vision of what Americans understand as social participation. This new face of social interaction is not only accepted but encouraged and applauded. Although technology will always have its advantages, especially for those with physical or mobility issues, it will never replace the physical connective presence needed for true Christian community that Biblical scripture commands.
The problem is researchable and significant for my current work and ministry regarding there being congregants who accept pluralistic relativism within the church body which is rooted between two specific categories, exclusivism, and inclusivism. Some congregants believe toleration (inclusivism) of other religious views are acceptable viewpoints to be addressed from the pulpit whereas other congregants believe in Christian exclusivism. This research will demonstrate the possible connection between lack of Biblical fidelity and the acceptance of accurate scriptural authority and how it relates to apathy in church attendance.

**Basic Assumptions**

It is presupposed that the erosion of theological understanding has developed over decades due to a lack of Bible study and discipleship programs accurately depicting, transmitting, and maintaining scriptural accuracy and integrity from an orthodox Christian Biblical perspective. Further, it is presumed that parishioners understand; 1) the importance of daily Bible reading, 2) will truthfully self-report church attendance and Bible reading, 3) will answer pre and post survey questionnaires truthfully, 4) will invest personally in the project study, and 5) will realize, post-project study, the importance of maintaining daily Bible reading, Bible study, and discipleship programs. Further, it is supposed that if congregants have a stake and personal investment in living by orthodox Christian scriptural text that their natural tendency will be to obey and follow what scripture states.
Definitions

Biblical fidelity – first and foremost, loyalty and adherence to God and God’s word.18

Evangelical Protestant – an offshoot of the classical Protestant church, especially in the latter half of the 20th century, that stress the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, personal conversion experiences, scripture as the sole basis for faith, and active personal commitment to Christ.19

Postmodernism – in Western philosophy, a late 20th – century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism.20

Limitations

Functional restrictions and a priori non-intentional limitations upon this thesis study define project boundaries which describe and specifically illustrate the scope of the project. These parameters are, but not limited to ethnicity (overwhelmingly Caucasian), those who self-identify as non-denominational Christian, and the wide generational range which encompasses the congregation. A further limitation is income discrepancy among the congregants, and a voluntary willingness to honestly answer the pre-prepared survey questionnaires. These are limitations because they do not address a wider scope of American Christian church attendance. Additionally, although the researcher is addressing an issue in the Christian church body in general, there will be specific focus on Brick by Brick Bible church.


Delimitations

The focus and project scope inherently acquire delimitation values which are self-imposed constraints in order to develop strict parameters as guidelines, thereby intentionally yielding specific data results regarding a participants’ personal perceived understanding and truthfulness. These parameters are subject to participant perception given the survey questionnaire is voluntary and anonymous, however; the survey questionnaire also contains a series of validity control questions enabling the practitioner to evaluate, with a relative degree of accuracy, if the individual is lying, defensive, over-reporting, or engaging in true response inconsistency (TRI) and variable response inconsistency (VRI) while voluntarily taking the survey questionnaire. Two survey questionnaires will be administered, one before and one after the project study. Although the survey sample is not limited by gender or vocation, a survey questionnaire will not be distributed to any congregant under the age of thirteen due to the nature of subjective thinking and the abstract mental processes needed to complete a valid survey.

Thesis Statement

If specific rationales for not living the scripture in daily life are addressed in the congregation, then an increased desire to become more dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ may occur.

Christian exclusivity and inclusivity are issues that have a direct effect on meaningful Christian participation. The failure of the church body to educate disciples is impacting how the Gospel Message of Christ is spread in my local community, and in many other communities as well. It is not enough to increase Sunday Service numbers, the problem of lack of scriptural theological accuracy and the acceptance of religious pluralism are having negative effects on
societal mores, morals, ethics, economy, and family. It is imperative that meaningful avenues which aid in fulfilling the Great Commission are implemented within the local church body.
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

The problem addressed, the acceptance of secular ideas that erode theological understanding and lead to congregational apathy, is occurring throughout the general body of Christ. There is vast research that informs the development of this thesis project and focuses on the issue of Biblical fidelity.

Literature Review

The Literature review will survey several sources that address the erosion of theological understanding, and the various contributing factors that have led to congregational apathy and stagnation in pursuing Bible study, and discipleship classes which follow orthodox Christian scriptural authority. The review has identified several themes including current trends in religious identity and affiliation, pluralism, challenges to faith, discipleship, and submission to the authority of the Bible, which directly speaks to the issue of how to create an increased desire within the congregation to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Current Trends in Religious Identity and Affiliation

The religious landscape of the United States has changed drastically in the last few decades. The Public Religion Research Institute’s 2017 survey reported that white Evangelical Protestants who were once predominant in the fabric of America now account for only 17% of the American populace.\(^\text{21}\) In fact, the Encyclopedia of American Religions reported in 2009 that there are more than 2,300 distinct religious groups in the United States compared to 213 in 1926.\(^\text{22}\) Religious affiliation is only one of several current trends in religious identity that has

deeply affected theological understanding, congregational apathy, and stagnation in Christian
growth. The PRRI research also points to great decline in religious affiliation based on
geography, generation, educational level, economic status, and the introduction of religions other
than Christianity into mainstream American culture.23 Robert D. Putnam states that a hollowing
out of American religious and secular life has been observed with Americans less likely to claim
church membership and actual church attendance falling 25 to 50 percent.24

Several authors have weighed in on the reasons and influences behind this drastic decline
in Christian belief and Christian participation. Vern S. Poythress points to a significant cultural
shift and modern patterns of thinking being substituted for a Biblical theological way of living.
Where once was a deep connection to scripture in every aspect of daily life, now a stronger
tendency to treat our surrounding environment, as well as the people that live in it, as secular and
unrelated to God occurs.25 Jared C. Wilson observes a contemporary trend to make church more
practical and appealing by emphasizing God’s abundant love over God’s Holiness and personal
change through obedience to God and repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ.26 Andy Stanley
contends in new liberal churches exists a tendency to choose which parts of the Bible fit into
one’s personal belief system because today’s culture is uneasy with the idea of absolute truth.27

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23Cox, 3-10.


25Vern S. Poythress, Inerrancy and Worldview: Answering Modern Challenges to the Bible (Wheaton, IL:
Crossway, 2012), 120.

26Jared C. Wilson, The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto against the Status Quo (Wheaton, IL:
Crossway, 2015), 10.

27Andy Stanley, Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend (Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan, 2016), 74.
Within the current trends in religious identity and affiliation theme, several authors refer to a cultural shift in Bible reading, meditating, and application of Biblical doctrine to daily life. Kenneth Berding refers to this trend as a famine in which Christians no longer read, meditate and study the Bible and teach it to others. 28 Greg Ogden remarks contemporary church has become a spectator sport, full of passive recipients, in which only 20% of participants use their spiritual gifts for the Christian community at large. 29 The various authors point to several factors to account for the current trends and changes in the religious landscape of America. These authors tend to focus on white Protestant Evangelical Americans, with little account or attention to cultural groups that do not fit into this category. Although there is available research on African American, Asian American, and Hispanic American Christianity, in a general sense, there is a glaring lack of specific research on the level of orthodoxy and orthopraxy in recent Christian immigrants to the United States. Despite this lack of research, there is a consensus that pluralism has been a defining factor in the erosion of theological understanding.

Pluralism

Pluralism was initially seen as a problem to be contended with and now is seen as the solution for the ills of society. According to Philip Graham Ryken, Christians once pushed back against pluralism through mission work and evangelicalism, but now that effort is diminishing as inclusivism grows and self-identified Christians question how can God condemn people who have never heard the Gospel? 30 This positive view of pluralism is heralded by Clark Pinnock

when he writes that a person need not be aware of the work that Christ has done on their behalf in order to reap the benefit of salvation. Pinnock’s theological ideology may be attractive to contemporary Christians as it allows a believer to feel that proselytization and fulfillment of the Great Commission are not a priority.

Despite this entanglement of differing theological belief systems which contradict Biblical scripture, supporters of religious inclusivism (religious plurality) maintain its relevance and necessity in Christian churches today. One such supporter of religious inclusivity was Karl Rahner, 1904-1984, a Jesuit Priest, who is known as one of the most influential theologians of the 20th century. Karl Rahner expressed the idea of the Anonymous Christian as “someone who does not profess the Christian faith, perhaps even denying the existence of God, and yet is nonetheless justified by the grace of Christ.” Rahner argues that “there should be no room for doubt among Catholic theologians or Christians that anonymous Christians are not only a possibility, but that there actually are anonymous Christians living today.”

Theologically, Rahner’s ideology is extra scriptural, incorporating leniency for universalism. While scripture maintains that “for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,” adding credence to Rahner’s belief, further exegetical examination into the doctrine of sufficiency produces deeper scriptural understanding and more clarity and correct Biblical scriptural understanding. Biblical precedent for correct scriptural

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31 Clark Pinnock, A Wilderness in God’s Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 158.


understanding is specifically illustrated in scripture; “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” *Proverbs* 4:7 (KJV). Rahner’s ideological proposition can be summated when scripture states, “beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” *Colossians* 2:8 (KJV) Further, the scripture is clear, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” *Jude* 1:3 (KJV) Scripture necessitates belief for Christian exclusivity, as opposed to Rahner, who is a proponent of religious inclusivism. Scripture is firm on the grounds that the only way to know God is through the Biblical Jesus Christ. Rahner’s ideology points toward a worldly belief that people can come to know God without knowing the Biblical God of scripture, however, the Bible specifically denotes who God is, His plan, and that salvation is only through the Biblical Jesus Christ and hearing what His Word says. Rahner’s view professedly eliminates the Biblical scriptural Jesus Christ, which is a rejection of God’s divinely inspired Word. If people do not know the Biblical scriptural one true God, and His will for their life, then by direct implication they are worshipping a false God.

The reason Karl Rahner is so important a figure to religious inclusivism is due to the fact that his viewpoint of the Anonymous Christian was distributed worldwide, succinctly having causation and origin to a worldwide belief in secularization and liberalism. Rahner’s beliefs and ideals were legitimized over and above the authority of scripture. When both World Wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the counter-culture revolution of the 1960’s free love hippie movement ‘turn on-tune in-drop out,’ there exists the ingredients and elements for the
delineation of the authority of scripture, belief in scripture, and the applying of scripture for everyday life situations.

Theological ideological beliefs shifted from Biblical scripture’s autonomous authority to those of seeking spiritual guidance from Eastern religious thought and practice such as Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism. Theologians who support religious inclusivism are Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, and Scott Draper, who regard the Bible as a fallible collection of religious writings and advocate religious pluralism. These theologians add credence and validity to Karl Rahner’s ideology and help to further theological destruction of Biblical scripture, thereby denouncing scriptural integrity. Problems these theologians help to create are to condone and embrace alternative life choices. Alternative life choices lead to immoral and unethical life practices such as the rampant use of marijuana and hallucinogenic drugs to expand mental consciousness and awareness contrary to scripture which took place predominantly in the 1960’s. Then a trickle-down effect began where mediums such as music and alternative life options that directly promoted, accepted, and reflected hedonistic lifestyles contrary to scripture were in full swing culturally and accepted nationwide. In its simplest linguistic form, the Biblical concept of hamartia (to miss the mark) has taken place. The acceptance of Karl Rahner’s ideology in Christian belief is parallel to the scriptural reference of ‘missing the mark’ where Biblical authority has been specifically sacrificed and is having residual long-term effects.

Conversely, Derek Davis sees pluralism as damaging in that Christian morals and ethics have dissolved from a Biblical perspective to an overall widespread acceptance of majoritarianism which accentuates coexistence and harmony.\footnote{Derek H. Davis, “Introduction: Religious Pluralism as the Essential Foundation of America’s Quest for Unity and Order,” The Oxford Handbook of Church and State in the United States, November 18, 2010, 2.} Pluralism is endorsed under the
guise of religious freedom. Secular ideology is seen as easing cultural tensions that occur in an ever-changing social American landscape due to the influx of a new immigrant populace which hold entirely different religious beliefs that compete with Christian values and beliefs. Whereas Christianity offers necessary change and conformity to Jesus Christ and His teachings, religious pluralism offers the acceptance of a person without change that conflicts with his or her current beliefs. Scott Draper believes religious pluralism is attractive to the individual as they can church shop and religion shop to find a religion that best fits their individuality.35

Peter L. Berger suggests religious pluralism aids in allowing the individual with freedom of choice for the good of self.36 Berger speaks of religious pluralism as being a construct woven in the very fabric of American society, which is concretized in the First Amendment in the United States Constitution, providing the individual with the freedom and protection to practice their chosen religion. Even though participation is of a voluntary nature in America, a religious market where religions compete is created through the auspices of freedom of religion. Kleber D. Goncalves views the inclusion of religious pluralism as a natural effect of modern societies reposition from a culture based on production to one obsessed with consumption.37 Evidence of a religious free market is touted by Christopher Scheitle whose research reveals that in the colonial era there were only thirty to forty religious groups present.38 Now, two hundred and thirty years later, religious pluralism has blanketed American society and culture.


38Scheitle, 5.
Geoffrey Swenson, a supporter of religious pluralism, contends the idea is good for a multicultural society which aids in establishing justice for all citizens involved. Religious pluralism not only establishes, but maintains societal harmony when society is multi-ethnic and diverse. It is thought that competing ideologies undermine one another and encourage hostile, combative acts on the part of one segment of society toward another. Andy Stanley justifies the inclusion of religious pluralism in the church when he renders the remark urging church leaders to adopt a whatever-means-necessary attitude when it comes to increasing church attendance. Andrew Davis states when it comes to religious exclusivism, moderate religious pluralism must be defended along with the concept that one religion’s truth does not automatically imply the falsity of others. Davis advocates religious pluralism especially when it comes to all levels of Christian education. His platform demonstrates that inclusivity adds to the upbringing and education of children, thus adhering to the good found in every religious viewpoint.

Multiple authors disagree with advocates of religious and legal pluralism because pluralism fails in its understanding of what and where truth comes from. John MacArthur’s case in point is that the world cannot hide from what Scripture says, and is steadfast that scriptural accuracy and integrity defends Christian exclusivity. Poythress concurs truth is from and found only in God’s Word with God, which is where all knowledge and truth originates. Ogden

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40Stanley, 55.


43Poythress, 130.
concurs with Poythress, if truth is relegated to an individual’s personal, private sphere of understanding, then there is no longer absolute, complete truth, there is only social relativism.⁴⁴ Patrick Fagan sums up the pluralism counter-argument by professing, if Christian ideology is not practiced in society, then there is a breakdown in familial values and beliefs, in individual morals, in socioeconomic structures in society, a lack of empathy for others and individual self-control, higher incidence of crime, births out of wedlock, addictive behaviors, and mental pathologies.⁴⁵ Promoters of religious pluralism, as well as agnostics and atheists, effectively ask – what’s the harm if society is multicultural, multireligious? Religious pluralism should be the goal to which society, especially American society, should aspire. Opponents of religious pluralism point to inclusiveness as being a challenge to faith that contributes to the erosion of theological understanding.

Challenges to Faith

Secularism and secular humanism can be defined as, “a way of life and thought that is pursued without reference to God or religion.”⁴⁶ While this concept should be diametrically opposed to the beliefs of Christianity, there are some that argue that secularism is a good thing, even for the church. Isaac Chotiner argues that, “increasing secularization is not in fact a huge threat to religious liberty” and Christianity “has a way of adapting itself to current conditions.”⁴⁷ What Chotiner does not address, is how the believer needs to change and adapt their personal

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⁴⁴Ogden, 3.


worldview to fit a Christian worldview, not Christianity adapting and changing to fit people and their culture.

According to Joel Beeke, one example of how secularism has eroded theological understanding can be seen in how many contemporary churches refuse to rebuke false teachings and completely ignore sin.\(^{48}\) Beeke’s argument that too many Christian institutions are not teaching basic Christian orthodoxy is recapitulated in the pulpits across the United States. Beeke contends that Christians must separate themselves from participation in these churches and seek out Godly fellowship along with orthodoxy and orthopraxy.\(^{49}\) Another challenge to faith is summarized by Patrick Fagan. Fagan points to the decline of religious education in America’s youth. He believes that the lack of correct theological instruction during the transition period from childhood to adolescence is a substantial contributing factor to why young adults lose their faith in God.\(^{50}\) Fagan suggests that attention to this specific aspect of religious ministry will not only alleviate a plethora of social issues but will also strengthen familial ties which will address rationales for not living the scripture in daily life and increase the desire to become a more dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ.

Kenneth Berding cites Gallup polls from the current decade show Biblical literacy has declined to a record low.\(^{51}\) Lack of biblical knowledge is a challenge to faith mentioned by several authors. Scott Draper connects Biblical illiteracy to a current crisis of knowledge about


\(^{49}\) Beeke and Smalley, 243.

\(^{50}\) Fagan, 24.

truth and where truth is allocated. When the Word of God is no longer understood as objective fact, then individuals are less likely to commit themselves to following Biblical principle.\textsuperscript{52} The question emphasized is how to understand absolute truth.

Jared Wilson espouses the current trend of commercializing Jesus is another challenge to faith. The author warns against referring to potential believers as potential customers, but does use the adage if they are customers, they often do not know what they want or what is good for them.\textsuperscript{53} There are many authors and those in the clergy who share a vision for the contemporary church which is diametrically opposed to that which Wilson warns against. Andy Stanley claims the goal is to do what it takes for the “win.”\textsuperscript{54} While it is important that those in the pulpit are educated and trained in Biblical literacy, there still needs to be humility displayed.

Often, when Christian clergy are confronted with such challenges in their congregation they respond in negative or less than Christ-like fashion. Poythress expounds that Christian attitudes to such inquiry should not be antagonistic, dismissive, shallow, or defensive, but rather should follow scriptural premise which reflects doing all things with love.\textsuperscript{55} Challenges to faith in everyday life must be readily met with correct theological understanding of the Word of God, continued reading of the Word of God and real life pattern and practice of God’s Word through life experience in both Christian community and the secular world. Several authors point to

\textsuperscript{52}Draper, 7.
\textsuperscript{53}Wilson, 56.
\textsuperscript{54}Stanley, 226.
\textsuperscript{55}Poythress, Foreword; 1 Corinthians 16:14 (NIV).
Discipleship as a way to approach these challenges to faith and restore theological understanding and reverse congregational apathy and stagnation.

Discipleship

Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously penned “cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance…cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”56 Bonhoeffer is adamant that true grace is costly and requires a Christian to give all to truly follow Jesus Christ. For Bonhoeffer, discipleship is the centerpiece of theological understanding which is scripturally accurate. Although Bonhoeffer was writing while experiencing Christian persecution in Nazi-occupied Germany many contemporary authors share his views. D.A. Carson includes in his collection of essays the work of Kevin J. Vanhoozer who acknowledges that the role of the disciple has changed since the time of Paul. Where the early disciples had to overcome challenges that were often life-threatening, contemporary Christian disciples must navigate pluralism and postmodernity, which are the intellectual and cultural equivalents of physical life and death circumstances.57 None the less the terrain is still dangerous and requires specific Biblical training and Biblical doctrinal knowledge in order to be successful.

The contemporary Christian church is often overly concerned with aesthetics and numbers, without much thought given to necessary foundational theological training. Jared C. Wilson’s position formerly addresses how the discipleship culture of the American church must be


reformed. Less emphasis must be put on the way the church does music, and more emphasis on how the church does worship to the Triune God.⁵⁸ Wilson is not naïve to the fact that people have to be brought through the front door, but his main concern is what happens once they are inside. Trendy music and gimmicks are not going to make disciples for Christ, and when theology is divorced from worship it is hollow and shallow despite its great appearance.⁵⁹ Dallas Willard concludes that the contemporary Christian body is too preoccupied with consuming services and believing that is Christian faith, and consumption in no way replaces true obedience to Jesus Christ.⁶⁰

The reasons for lack of discipleship are varied. Brandon D. Smith claims that today’s Christians do not get excited about discipleship and Bible reading because they do not comprehend how the Bible works, or how useful the Bible is to daily life.⁶¹ Smith sees the problem of failing discipleship as solvable through Christian education. Other authors, such as Putnam, point to the disintegration of social activity as being the root cause for Christian stagnation. Religiosity has always rivaled education as one of the most powerful forms of civic engagement, but when that system breaks down there is a multifaceted causation to why there is erosion, apathy, and stagnation among congregants.⁶² When disciples do not remain true to discipleship, the Word will not remain true to them, an exact opposite concept of Biblical

⁵⁸Wilson, 96.

⁵⁹Ibid., 99.


⁶²Putnam, 66.
teaching. It naturally follows that another theme, submission to the authority of the Bible, has seen a sharp decline in the culture of America.

Submission to the Authority of the Bible

The critical nature of submission to the authority of God’s Word can never be understated, as it is a foundational Biblical tenant. Jared C. Wilson embraces the idea if Christ-followers and believers do not make the Bible their central priority for all they do in life, specifically the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ, then Christians and the Christian Church miss out on following and participating in the Great Commission, mandated by Jesus Christ. True submission to the authority of the Bible is not merely in the reading of scripture but in the memorizing and applying of scripture to everyday life. D.A. Carson is adamant, God’s Word is not merely for [me] and [my] situation, it is for all people for all times.

Mark A. Maddix agrees with Carson and Wilson’s views on the importance of the authority of scripture. In order to combat the acceptance of secular ideas that are eroding theological understanding, one must hear scripture preached, allowing it to function as an omniscient authoritative source from an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God who brings understanding and illumination not only to and for the person reading, but the hearer as well. Other theologians believe a similar premise, however, finds fault lays with a different source. Paul O’Callaghan clearly places a heavy responsibility upon Christian clergy when he states the

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63 Bonhoeffer, 215.

64 Wilson, 86.

65 Carson, 790.

rules in the Bible are evident, clear, limiting, guiding and fully comprehensible, yet Christian leadership fails to inform and affect positive Christian change in behavior in American society.67 Although author Andy Stanley often promotes pluralism and secular ideology when it comes to increasing church attendance numbers, his stance on the importance of scripture and salvation is clear. Stanley is adamant that the Bible is crystal clear when it comes to the need for salvation, a pastor cannot pick and choose which parts of scripture to embrace.68

The themes of current trends in religious identity and affiliation, pluralism, challenges to faith, discipleship, and submission to the authority of the Bible, are integral in addressing the problem of the acceptance of secular ideas in the contemporary church, the erosion of theological understanding, and congregational apathy and stagnation. In order to understand the rationales for why Christians are not living up to Biblical standards and practicing scripture in daily life, it is imperative that all avenues of the problem are researched and explored. Understanding the root causes is a first step in increasing a desire for dedication toward becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Theological Foundations**

The doctrine of sufficiency serves as the foundational Biblical principle for addressing why congregants are not living the scripture in daily life and for convincing parishioners to become more dedicated disciples for Jesus Christ. Before meaningful research can be conducted, a strong understanding of the doctrine of sufficiency through careful exegesis is critical. Ample amounts of scriptural reference elucidate the fact that church must be crucicentric in format and

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68 Stanley, 74.
based upon accurate theological scriptural understanding which stress the doctrine of sufficiency.

Examples of scriptural doctrine of sufficiency are Acts 2:42-47; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalms 19:7-11; John 2:22; and Luke 24:44-45. It is the responsibility of the researcher, preacher, pastor, or minister to utilize a well-developed biblical argument from the totality of scripture, both Old Testament and New Testament, to establish biblical precedence which the preceding scriptures abundantly affirm.

Return to scriptural accuracy and correct scriptural understanding, via the doctrine of sufficiency, is demonstrated in Biblical scripture that states,

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And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:42-47 (KJV)
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While some scholars think of the book of Acts as being anonymously written; traditionally, Luke the Physician was responsible for writing Acts of the Apostles. A strong emphasis in Acts resides in the work of the Holy Spirit through Christian believers, such as the eleven remaining disciples (1:13) with responsibility as leadership having been placed with Peter, and Philip, for spreading the Gospel Message of Jesus throughout Jerusalem. Paul and his companions, who accompanied him on three of his four missionary trips is also outlined in the Acts of the Apostles. The setting and backdrop of the beginning of Acts takes place immediately with Jesus’ ascension into heaven (1:9), witnessed by his disciples (1:13) in the Mt. of Olives (1:12), and Jesus’ instructions for his disciples (1:4-8) which include waiting for baptism (baptisthēsesthe from the root Greek
Koine baptizó) from the Holy Spirit [of God] (Hagio Pneumati)[Theos] a descriptive reference for the upcoming Pentecost (2:1-8). The Acts of the Apostles ties the New Testament together by depicting the character of Jesus’ disciples in proclaiming that the kingdom of God did not end with Jesus’ ascension forty days after his crucifixion, but continues on in believers whom are indwelt, embodied, and empowered with the Holy Spirit of God. Acts gives a view into the very first Christian community and how they functioned within the strict confines of overpowering Roman governmental rule (4:26-27) and Jewish religious authority (2:23,36; 4:1) which attempted a stranglehold on the burgeoning Christian faith. The book of Acts demonstrates how scripture delegates and orders Christian community, illuminating the doctrine of sufficiency via everyday life activities, physical and spiritual needs, and public and private life.

Acts 2:42 specifically denotes four practices that are essential within the Christian community, the apostle’s doctrine (apostolōn didachē), fellowship (koinōnia), breaking of bread (klasei artou) and prayer (proseuchais). These Christian practices are highlighted as residing within the Christian believer, as a member of the Christian community, and denote a responsible commitment of the individual to other Christians as well as the Christian community at large. Another significance placed upon the immediate unquestionable authority that the apostles had among the Christian community, to teach the doctrines of Christ precisely as Christ had taught them Himself. Further, the Greek Koine proskarterountes, an action verb, conveys the deep, close, relationship that Christian believers maintained within their community as Christ followers. Proskarterountes also implies the intimate relationship the community had with Christ and to his teachings (didachē) due to the fact proskarterountes is transliterated as

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70 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 
‘steadfastly continuing.’ Fellowship, (koinōnia), in Acts 2:42, as the inference of a clear message where mutually shared activities and possessions are the benefit of the Christian community, are established through the Holy Spirit of God. The form of intimate fellowship that exists in Christian community is not only in sharing of a meal, but also in the sharing of socio-economic welfare provided for all, which includes the breakdown of ethnic barriers.

Acts 2:43 expressly designates the tying of two significant elements which specified the apostles were operating within the Holy Spirit of God and were to be believed and accepted. The emotion that overcame the disciples as well as those in the crowd was fear, which every soul (phobos pasē psychē), had experienced through wonders and signs (terata kai sēmeia). These two elements relate to Divine intervention and miracles taking place within the abilities of the apostles and are purposely demonstrated in Luke 1:12; 2:9; and 5:26; and 7:16 respectively. In each scriptural reference, the depiction is representative of Divine intervention (1:12; 2:9), and Jesus’ miracles (5:26; 7:16) which the apostles were reflecting through their works and is supernatural. Luke validates the apostle’s ability and its source – the Holy Spirit of God, which further confirms the reason for three thousand coming to repentance and belief in Christ Jesus (2:41).

Acts 2:44 explicitly signifies three unique qualities of Christian community; mutual belief (pisteuontes), togetherness or fellowship (koinōnia), and like-mindedness of thought or having all things in common (eichon hapanta koina). Luke expresses that their mutually shared fellowship and belief went beyond the bounds of shared material possessions. It extended to a voluntary congealment where fellow members pool resources and knowledge about Jesus Christ.

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\(^{71}\text{Ibid.}\)
that develops into spiritual connectedness as well as reciprocated care for one another’s spiritual and physical needs.

Acts 2:45 plainly indicates Luke describing that Christian community members anticipate their fellow members physical needs by combining, sharing, selling, and distributing their own physical goods for the benefit of the collective group. This Christian community belief is designated through the use of ktēmata (physical possessions in terms of land/property) hyparxeis (goods in terms of property/subsistence and possessions) epipraskon (they were selling) diemerizon (were dividing). Luke portrays the Christian community as having an abundant emphasis and a profound sense of absence of discriminatory practice in the distribution of goods and a united common experience shared by all regardless of social status or wealth. Further, Luke describes a common bond in Christ that develops over time as members become more aware of each other’s needs that are completely voluntary in substance and nature.

Acts 2:46 exclusively suggests that Christian members of a Christian community are in one accord (one mind of belief) (homothymadon) regarding natural place, temple (hierō) or home (oikon) in the apportioning of daily meals on a regular basis. Luke implies their private and public communal Christian life experience intertwined, which expanded beyond the formal bounds of temple worship. Moreover, Luke demonstrates how living the Christian community experience developed, connecting their familial bonds with other Christian believers. Luke also accentuates an overwhelming sense of fellowship and joy that was not obligatory, but from a place in each individuals heart that exude with abundant gladness (agalliasei – exuberant

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72 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*
73 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

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exultation) and cemented their common belief in Christ. This sense of Christian community was a visible extension of the Holy Spirit of God at work, showing authenticity and genuineness.

Acts 2:47 indicates three crucial elements that are a result of Christian community: praising God (ainountes Theon), having favor with all the people (echontes charin pros holon ton laon), and the Lord adding to the church daily such as should be saved (Kyrios prosetithei tous sōzomenous kath’ hēmeran epi to auto). Luke directly implies an immediate response is necessary to Christ’ offer of salvation and that it is the Lord Jesus who is doing the complete work via the Holy Spirit of God through the people and community. Luke further states that believers are receiving favor from God which naturally spilled out into the surrounding non-believing community to entice them to become believers. The overall arching reiteration that is present in verse 47 is the presence of urgency that compels people to repent and come to belief in Christ, and that being saved takes place in the present tense. The specific words kath’ hēmeran (καθ’ ἡ μέραν), a preposition and noun respectively, signify the concept of ‘every day,’ meaning the Holy Spirit of God does not rest from doing His work, and multiplies everything He does. This is evidenced in Genesis 1:28, “…be fruitful and multiply…” Albeit in context, God said this to Adam and Eve to bring forth children, it shows a characteristic quality of God’s person and nature, that He is fruitful and multiplies in His work. There is a direct correlation between the Greek Koine prosthíemi and the Hebrew rabah, as both words purposefully depict God’s ability,

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74Ibid.
75Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019).
76James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
desire, and intention to increase, which translates in Acts 2:47 to people being saved daily or the Lord added (Kyrios prosetithei).

Accurate scriptural understanding cannot be overstated, especially through the doctrine of sufficiency, as exhibited in 2 Timothy,

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV)

Commonly, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus are referred to as the Pastoral Epistles, and are specific in construct as they are written on how to deal with church structures and forms of ecclesiastical leadership, and men serving in pastoral roles. A strong emphasis in the Pastoral Epistles teach Christian living/ conduct (1 Tim. 2:8-15; 2 Tim. 1:8-12), combat false teaching (1 Tim. 4:1-5), and its harmful effects in a Christian church. Christians are to adhere to and hold up on correct/ right doctrine (2 Tim. 4:1-4) which must result in proper scriptural living (2 Tim. 3:14-15). In 2 Timothy, Paul prepares Timothy to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ after he is gone. An overarching theme in 2 Timothy is the importance of the individual’s response to God’s act of salvation through Jesus Christ. Another enormously valuable insight that is derived from 2 Timothy is the prominence it places on church leadership. The connection that 2 Timothy has with the doctrine of sufficiency is living out your faith in Jesus Christ and teaching others to do the same. The Pastoral Epistles reveal the unique view of Christian church government for a Christian community. All believers belong to the family of God (1 Tim. 3:5,15) and as such there

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is a tremendous responsibility that the Christian church be built upon a foundation of doctrinal and ethical truth (2 Tim. 1:13-18) that is firmly rooted in teaching Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16 concretely endorses four discerning Christian virtues which are found throughout the entirety of both the Old and New Testament. Immediately the reader understands ‘all scripture is given by inspiration of God,’ which in the Greek Koine is pasa graphē theopneustos (πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος). The significance of pasa graphē theopneustos, God breathed, references more than just the scripture found in 2 Timothy 3:16, it is a precisely detailed indication that both the Old and New Testaments are given to us as a gift from God. The scripture further illuminates this point, “knowing that no prophecy of scripture is for private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20), and further designates “for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). These scriptures attest to the authority, authenticity, and reliability of scripture as divine utterance.

The four instructional constructs God’s Word facilitates in its entirety are: profitable for doctrine (ὦφελιμὸς προς διδασκαλίαν), for reproof (conviction)(προς ἐλεγμόν), for correction (προς ἐπανορθώσιν), for instruction (training) in righteousness (προς παιδείαν τὴν ἔν δικαιοσύνη). Each of these Biblical concepts stand on their own, relaying important theological and ethical Biblical doctrine which underpins the doctrine of sufficiency. The Biblical concept, profitable for doctrine (ὦφελιμὸς προς διδασκαλίαν), is immersed throughout Old and New

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79 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 
Testament scripture. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to didaskalian (training/instruction) is מָלַדֶּה (mə·lə·mā·ḏāh, לֻמָּדָָּֽה׃) from the root Hebrew word lamad, (phonetic spelling: law-mad'), Strong’s Concordance #3925, a Verb, and is defined as: to exercise in, learn, instruct, instructors. In context, lamad is used as a Verb Plural Participle Feminine Singular, and precisely describes how God is angry that people fear other people rather than fearing God who the Hebrew people are disrespecting. The relevant scripture for this discussion reads,

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Isaiah 29:13-14 (KJV)

The significance of this Old Testament scripture directly implies a more laser focused view of the doctrine of sufficiency in the sentence structure, specifically the words ‘by the precept of men,’ which states conclusively that humanity gives lip-service to God instead of genuine, heart-felt, spirit filled, worship in both private and public life. Further, the Isaiah scripture is a warning that God will perish the wisdom of their wise men and hide understanding of their prudent men provided the people do not return to right scriptural understanding and right worship of God. Both warnings are intertwined with the doctrine of sufficiency and inform the reader of God’s Word to apply Biblical teaching to their daily life or their lives and success will perish and be hidden from their view. Confirmation of these facts are deliberately stated in Joshua; “This book

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81 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

The Biblical concept for reproof (conviction)(pros elegmon), is also found throughout Old and New Testament scripture. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to reproof (conviction)(elegmon) is יֹּ֣כִיח from the root Hebrew word yakach (phonetic spelling: yaw-kah''). Strong’s Concordance #3198, defined as: to decide, adjudge, prove, reproof, refute, rebuke.⁸² In context, yakach is a Verb Imperfect Third Person Masculine Singular, or Second Person Masculine Singular, and exactly states how God judges and corrects those who show Him proper fear and respect.⁸³ On the contrary, God will punish those who openly disrespect Him and His Word and reject Christ. The relevant scripture for this discussion reads, “Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment? Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?” Job 22:4-5 (KJV) In context, this Old Testament scripture provides a more precise understanding of the doctrine of sufficiency specifically by the words reprove thee which are understood as being used in a rhetorical question format. Decidedly, God will reprove, prove, refute, correct, rebuke, us when we have sinned because the wickedness of our sin before a righteously just, and perfectly sinless God, is an abomination to Him. Moreover, God’s correction for us and our sin is God showing us that He loves us. Confirmation of this Biblical concept is stated in Proverbs, “For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.” (Proverbs 3:12) The fact

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⁸²James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

⁸³Ibid.
that God corrects those whom He loves is also evidenced in the New Testament, “For whom the
Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (Hebrews 12:6)

The Biblical concept for correction (pros epanorthōsin), is found throughout Old and New
Testament scripture. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is
relative to correction (epanorthōsin), in context with the 2 Tim. 3:16 scripture, is bə-šiq-qāh
ב צִד קָָ֣ה from the root Hebrew word tsidqah, (phonetic spelling: tsid-kaw’), Strong’s
Concordance #6665, and is defined as right-doing. In context, tsidqah is a Preposition Noun
Feminine Singular, and expressly conveys Daniel the Prophet is speaking to king
Nebuchadnezzar imploring him to repent of his sin and accept God. The relevant scripture for
this discussion states,

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off
thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the
poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. Daniel 4:27 (KJV)

In context, this scripture from the Old Testament establishes a more profound
understanding of the doctrine of sufficiency in overall summation as Daniel’s plea for king
Nebuchadnezzar, however, it also was prophetic in the sense that Daniel’s statement came true.
Confirmation of this is evidenced in Daniel 4:33, along with its future prophetic counterpart
found in Daniel 4:25. The overall Biblical concept that is understood, in relation to the doctrine
of sufficiency, is right-doing or living a scripturally accurate life, which king Nebuchadnezzar
did not follow.

84James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
The Biblical concept for instruction (training) in righteousness (pros paideian tēn en dikaiosynē) can be found throughout Old and New Testament scripture.\(^85\) The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to instruction in righteousness (paideian tēn en dikaiosynē), or righteousness training (dikaiosynē paideian), is ḥā·nōḵ גָּנֹ from the root Hebrew word chanak, (phonetic spelling: khaw-nak'), Strong’s Concordance #2596, and is defined as: to train up, dedicate.\(^86\) In context, chanak is a Verb Imperative Masculine Singular, and unambiguously communicates the way we raise up our children is the way they will follow throughout their entire life. The scripture which defines this Biblical principle reads, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6 (KJV) This Old Testament scripture describes and details a specific educational methodology regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, which is to be adhered to, without question, in the raising of children. Further proof of the doctrine of sufficiency can be located in 2 Timothy, “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:17 (KJV)

2 Timothy 3:17 definitively, clearly, and unequivocally, instructs three essential Christian characteristic virtues: perfect, thoroughly furnished, good works, which are bedrock principles for Christian life which are displayed in private and in public. These characteristic qualities are built upon post Christ conversion. Instantly, the reader is acutely compelled with the words ‘that the man of God may be perfect,’ which in the Greek Koine are hina artios ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος.\(^87\) The significance of hina artios ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος.

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\(^85\) Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019).

\(^86\) James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

\(^87\) Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019).
anthrōpos (that the man of God may be perfect), is found in the specific word artios. The word artios has more relevance than just for the 2 Tim. 3:17 scripture, it depicts people found throughout the Old and New Testament, that God chose to perform His many unique and different missionary tasks. The Greek Koine word artios, Strong’s Concordance #739, is an Adjective (phonetic spelling: ar'-tee-os), and is defined as: fitted, complete, perfect, ready. In context, it is a description of the character of the man who possesses the quality of following and obeying God and God’s Word. Further, it describes a character attribute of God who endowed the ability, referring to God’s immutability which attests to God’s unchanging and eternal nature. Scripture which confirms this attribute of God, He is unchanging reads, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17 KJV) Ultimately, God expects that we, as believers in Christ Jesus, will emulate and reflect the same character attribute in our self, a completeness, that surpasses worldly secular instruction.

The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament relative to artios (fitted, complete, perfect, ready), is nā·ḵō·wn ܢܢ from the root Hebrew word kun, Strong’s Concordance #3559, a Verb, is defined as: to be firm, appointed, established, makes ready, prepared. In context, nā·ḵō·wn, a Verb Participle Masculine Singular, references Joseph interpreting Pharaoh’s dream. The scripture relevant for this point states,

And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Genesis 41:32 (KJV)

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88 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

89 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 
The significance of the scripture and the Hebrew nā·ḵō·wn to the doctrine of sufficiency resides in the wording of the sentence structure Joseph states to Pharaoh, ‘it is because the thing is established by God.’ The reader comprehends that only God establishes, makes ready, prepares (completes). In other words, the Biblical principle – God completes – is firmly formed, through the relational value between the Greek Koine artios and the Hebrew nā·ḵō·wn.

The second necessary Christian characteristic imparted to believers in 2 Tim. 3:17, thoroughly furnished, originates with God and is given to human beings from God, solely. There is nothing any human can do to acquire it, create it, or earn it, the characteristic quality must be bestowed from On High to a human. This foundational principle, built on the teachings and words of Jesus Christ, is relayed through Holy writ in the Greek Koine word exērtismenos. The Greek Koine word exērtismenos ἐξηρτισμένος Strong’s Concordance #1822, is a Verb (phonetic spelling: ex-ar-ti’d'-zo), from the root Greek Koine word exartizó ἐξαρτίζω and is defined as: to complete, to equip fully, I fit up, completely furnish, equip, furnish, supply, accomplish, finish. This word is particular in its usage as it is a Verb Perfect Participle Middle, or Passive Normative Masculine Singular, which indicates action required on the part of the recipient. This attests to the fact that the doctrine of sufficiency is given through both God’s Word and God’s actions as a benefit on behalf of God toward the person God gives this characteristic to, and relays the message – God is sufficient in all areas, completely. It also directly implies God gives the person everything that they need to complete the missionary task He calls them to do. Further, after God has conferred this gift to the individual, they must act upon it by obeying what God wants them to do.

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90James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to exērtismenos, to equip fully, is comprehended through a specific passage of Bible scripture, Isaiah 28:23-39,

Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.  

Isaiah 28:23-29 (KJV)

In this Biblical passage, and relevant for this discussion, is the Hebrew word found in verse 26, yō·w·ren·nū נוּ׃ from the root Hebrew word yarah (yara), a Verb, Strong’s Concordance #3384, defined as: to throw, shoot, instruct, teach.91 The Hebrew word yō·w·ren·nū is used as Verb Imperfect Third Person Masculine Singular, and is the Prophet Isaiah endeavoring to tell the people of Judah, through the use of a parable, their future behavior will determine God’s judgment. The significance of yō·w·ren·nū identifies how God responds to His people by teaching them to obey His Word. In relation to the Greek Koine exērtismenos, to equip fully, it is but one of many ways God instructs, teaches, and equips people to be fully prepared for the task assigned to them for His kingdoms purpose. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, both the Greek Koine word exērtismenos and the Hebrew word yō·w·ren·nū work in direct relationship. They impart the need for correct detailed discernment of God’s Word as to how

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91 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.
God expects we are to think, speak, and act during our daily life, as witnesses for Christ. Further, scripture that speaks to this Biblical principle, God instructs and equips, is found in Psalms, “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”  

(Psalms 32:8 KJV)

The third Christian characteristic conferred to believers in 2 Tim. 3:17, good works, rests entirely upon the shoulders of the human God has chosen. The Greek Koine words for good works, are agathon and ergon, respectively. The significance of these Greek Koine words imply a character quality of the individual who possesses them and says just as much about the person that embodies these qualities as it does about God who provides them. In contrast, it also attests to those who intentionally wreak mischief, chaos, destruction, and evil, in the fact that their actions speak louder than words as to who and what they are as individuals. These people who partake in heinous acts, believe, and follow the powers of darkness and destruction rather than God. Scripture which confirms this Biblical principle reads,

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Matthew 7:16-20 (KJV)

This scripture serves two distinct purposes. It speaks directly about the person and about God, in that we know the character quality of people by the fruit they produce just as we know God’s character attributes by the good and gracious gifts He gives.

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92 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
The Greek Koine word agathon ἀγαθὸν is derived from the root Greek Koine word agathos ἀγαθός. It is an Adjective, Strong’s Concordance #18, defined as: intrinsically good, good in nature, good whether it be seen to be so or not.⁹³ Agathon, an Adjective Accusative Neuter Singular, signifies an inward psychological manifestation and condition of belief which is displayed outwardly in the world through the individual’s actions, words, and deeds.⁹⁴ The Biblical principle of intrinsically good, found in 1 Timothy reads, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” (1 Timothy 6:11 KJV) The overall theme that is symbiotic in relationship to the doctrine of sufficiency, which is conveyed through the previous scripture passage, explains that a person is known by their actions as to whether they are good or not and there is only one place that information exists, in God’s Word.

The Biblical concept for intrinsically good is found throughout the Old and New Testament. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to agathon, intrinsically good, is hay·yā·šār הַיָּשָָּׁ֥ר from the root Hebrew word yashar, an Adjective, Strong’s Concordance #3477, defined as: straight, right, upright, which was right, who are upright, who is upright.⁹⁵ Hay·yā·šār is an Article Adjective Masculine Singular, and definitively announces Moses speaking to the Israelite people as they have come to the end of their forty year exodus in Deut. 6:18. Moses warns the Israelite people to honor the Lord in everything they do during their daily life. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, the Greek Koine word agathon, and the Hebrew word hay·yā·šār, speak to the Biblical principle that God’s Word contains definitive

⁹³James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.
⁹⁴Ibid.
⁹⁵Ibid.
moral and ethical requirements for the individual if followed and appropriately applied. God
wants people with character attributes that reflect His goodness, righteousness, and uprightness.

Scripture which exemplifies the Biblical principle of uprightness declares,

And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that
it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good
land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers. Deuteronomy 6:18 KJV

The second character quality that God expects will be developed in a mature believer is
found in the Greek Koine word ergon. The Greek Koine word (ergon or) erga ἔργα, from the root
Greek Koine word ergon ἔργον, a Noun Neuter, Strong’s Concordance #2041, defined as: work,
task, deed, employment, action, that which is wrought or made, behavior, in an owned business,
a product made, or a deed done.96 In context, the Greek Koine word erga is a Noun Accusative
Neuter Plural, and in its usage represents an action that God expects a believer in Christ Jesus to
reflect in their private and public life – good deeds, works, for others.97 This Biblical principle is
illustrated in Matthew, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16 KJV. The connection to the doctrine
of sufficiency is found in the action that a believer in Christ Jesus is to bestow upon other people,
the most important good deed that a person can do for another person – helping them come to
belief in Christ.

The Biblical concept of good deeds toward others, erga, especially helping a non-believer
come to belief in God, can be found throughout the entire Old and New Testament. The

96James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

97Ibid.
correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to erga, good deeds, is ma‘āšeḵā from the root Hebrew word maaseh, a Noun Masculine, Strong’s Concordance #4639, defined as: a deed, work, achievement, conduct, actions, regarding work done in a business, a thing made, or work done for others. 98 Ma‘āšeḵā is a Noun Masculine Singular Construct, or Second Person Masculine Singular, in its usage, and is found to be a command to be generous to the poor in Deut. 15:10. 99 The significant Biblical principle is to work as if one is directly working for the Lord in all they do toward others and for others’ benefit. Colossians illustrates this Biblical principle, “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Colossians 3:23 KJV. The relation between erga and ma‘āšeḵā, regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, is found in the decisive comprehension that God’s Word explicates when we work for others benefit we are really working for God Himself.

Decisive scriptural understanding remains imperative, especially in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency. Psalms depicts this Biblical principle,

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Psalms 19:7-11 (KJV)

The word for Psalms, in the Greek Koine is psalmos (psalmos, ψαλμός), and in the Hebrew is tehillim (tehillah תְּヘִלָּה), which means songs of praise or praise/ song of praise, respectively. The Greek Koine, psalmos, is the source from which the combined title Psalmoi is

98 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

99 Ibid.
taken, which then became the English name Psalms. The Hebrew word tehillim, songs of praise, presents an intriguing mixture of a Feminine Noun and a Masculine Plural ending. The Psalms are a collection of 150 prayers and hymns that were used in ancient Israel’s worship toward God. Authors of the Psalms include King David, King Solomon his son (72; 172), Asaph (50; 70-83), the sons of Korah (42; 44-49), Ethan (89), Heman son of Korah (88), and Moses (90). The date of Psalms extends from the time of Moses, 15th century B.C., to the 6th century B.C. There are a myriad of messages scattered throughout the Psalms, however, the overall theme highlights teaching people how to relate to God in different life situations. The Psalms further elucidate God’s sovereignty and kindness, righteousness, and integrity toward His creation, human beings, to encourage unambiguous belief and faith in those who trust Him. One of the most significant contributions that Psalms establishes is that God is actively at work in people’s day to day lives. The five major divisions of the Psalms are categorized as petition, thanksgiving, praise, instruction/ teaching, and profession of trust. The doctrine of sufficiency is found throughout the Psalms in many scriptural passages, the most prevalent being Psalms 19:7-11 which attests to the orthodox Christian theological belief system that is cornerstone to Christian belief. Psalms 19:7-11 can be divided into two major Biblical concepts: the glorious character of God’s Word (verses 7 thru 9), and the great value of God’s Word (verses 10 thru 11).

Psalm 19:7 signifies two major Biblical concepts which explain the doctrine of sufficiency and directly indicate God’s Word is perfect (טָּֽֽמִימָּה tə·mî·māh הַנִּפְשֵׁשׁ), and sure (נֶ֝֝אֱמָּנָָּ֗ה ne·’ĕ·mā·nāh הַנִּפְשֵׁשׁ). There are two principles illustrated which are converting (מָֽ֣י·שִׁיבַּת mə·šî·ḇaṯ הַנִּפְשֵׁשׁ) the soul (נֶָּפֶשׁ nā·peš הַנִּפְשֵׁשׁ).
and making wise (מַחֲכָּֽ֖מַתְּ) the simple (פָּֽתִי׃).

For purposes of the discussion of the doctrine of sufficiency the focus is upon the Hebrew word מַחֲכָּמַת, making wise. Making wise directly states God’s Word is sufficient for all people in all circumstances and situations of daily life. The Hebrew word מַחֲכָּֽ֖מַת is from the root Hebrew word חָכָּמ, a Verb (phonetic spelling: khaw-kam'), Strong’s Concordance #2449, defined as: to be wise, become wise, make wise, making wise, acting wise.

The Hebrew word מַחֲקָּמַת is a Verb Participle Feminine Singular Construct, and references the ability one receives from reading, studying and memorizing God’s Word and applying it to their daily life.

Further, it implies that daily Biblical study will make one wise in all areas of life: spiritual, family, relationships, and business. In correlation to the Hebrew word מַחֲכָּֽ֖מַת, making wise, is the Greek Koine word σοφός found in the New Testament. The Greek Koine word σοφός is an Adjective, Strong’s Concordance #4680, (phonetic spelling: sof-os'), defined as: wise, learned, cultivated, skilled, clever, governed by piety and integrity, forming the best plans and using the best means.

Confirmation of this Biblical principle reads,

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:15-17 (KJV)

Directly, the Apostle Paul gives and provides theological insight to all those who would listen, follow, and obey Jesus Christ and His Word. The direct implication significant for the

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102James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

103Ibid.

104Ibid.

105Ibid.
doctrine of sufficiency is the fact that all who are believers and followers of Christ must consign themselves to daily reading, memorizing, and the study of God’s Word. It is the only way to achieve true wisdom and the only source where true wisdom is found.

Psalm 19:8 expresses two major Biblical doctrines, the Lord’s statutes (piq·qū·ḏē ṭוֹרָתָם) are right (יְשֶׁרְתָּם), and the commandments (miṣ·waṯ הַקְדֻשָׁתָם) of the Lord enlighten (מְשֵׁרִים) (open) the eyes (of understanding).106 For purposes of discussion of the doctrine of sufficiency the focus lies with the Hebrew word mə́·rī·rāṯ, open the eyes of understanding. The Biblical concept of open the eyes of understanding directly implies it is God who opens understanding. The Hebrew word mə́·rī·rāṯ, from the root Hebrew word אוֹר is a Verb, (phonetic spelling: ore) Strong’s Concordance #215, defined as: to be or become light, enlightened, give light, illumine, in reference to physical light of sun, stars, moon, a person, and lighten of the eyes (understanding).107 In correlation to the Hebrew word mə́·rī·rāṯ, open the eyes of understanding, is the Greek Koine word φῶς a Noun Neuter, (phonetic spelling: foce) Strong’s Concordance #5457, and is defined as: light, a source of light, radiance, in terms of God’s divine illumination imparted through Christ.108 Two scriptures that confirm this Biblical principle read, “And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven” Acts 9:3 KJV, and “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Luke 2:32 KJV. In context, both scriptures reference Jesus, the first when Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, and the second when Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to be circumcised in the Temple when the elderly man Simeon beheld the baby Jesus. Both

106James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
107Ibid.
108Ibid.
scripture references elude to Saul and Simeon’s eyes of understanding having been opened which affirms the doctrine of sufficiency.

Psalm 19:9 explains two vitally important Biblical concepts of God’s Word relating to the doctrine of sufficiency, righteous (šā·ḏə·qū) and enduring (ō·w·me·ḏet).109 Both Hebrew words posit concrete postulates about scripture; completely just and completely standing on its own. The Hebrew word šā·ḏə·qū is from the root Hebrew word tsadeq or tsadoq צָּדַק, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: tsaw-dak’) Strong’s Concordance #6663, defined as: to be just or righteous in reference to character.110 In context, šā·ḏə·qū is a Verb Qual Perfect Third Person Common Plural, which reveals a quality of how God’s Word acts upon the person(s) who continually reads it and applies it to their daily life.111 In correlation to the Hebrew word šā·ḏə·qū is the Greek Koine word dikaios δίκαιος, an Adjective, Strong’s Concordance #1342, (phonetic spelling: dik’-ah-yos), defined as: correct, righteous, by implication innocent, just in the eyes of God.112 Scripture which validates God’s Word is just, confirming the doctrine of sufficiency states, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12 KJV.

The second critical Biblical concept about God’s Word, enduring, is the Hebrew word ō·w·me·ḏet from the root Hebrew word amad תָּקָא, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: aw-mad’) Strong’s Concordance #5975, defined as: to take one’s stand, to make a stand, remain, establish,

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110Ibid.

111Ibid.

112Ibid.
in reference to enduring (lasting). The Hebrew word ō·w·me·ḏet, a Verb Participle Feminine Singular, and describes a shift of one’s nature and soul from taking part in earthly and worldly pursuits to being converted to Christ with an emphasis upon an attitude of obedience and reverence toward God and His Word. In correlation to the Hebrew word ō·w·me·ḏet is the Greek Koine word hupomenó ὑπομένω, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: hoop-om-en'-o) Strong’s Concordance #5278, defined as: to await, to endure, to show endurance, to bear up against, to persevere, with respect to bearing hardship, literally and figuratively, and remain and abide as in God’s Word. Scripture that confirms God’s Word remains forever can be located in 1 Peter, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Peter 1:25 KJV. The doctrine of sufficiency connects specifically through the nature of the quality that God’s Word possesses long term meaning and truth in perpetuity.

Psalm 19:10 emphasizes the Biblical concept that God’s Word is to be more desired (han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏîm הַָנּ חֱמָּדִָ֗ים) than refined gold (ū·mip·paz וּמִפַָ֣ז), and is sweeter (ū·mə·ṯū·qîm וּמ תוּקִָׁ֥ים) than honeycomb (ṣū·pîm צֻפִּים). For this discussion the focus is on the Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏîm, to be more desired. The Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏîm is from the root Hebrew word chamad, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: khaw-mad’) Strong’s Concordance #2530, defined as: to desire, to take pleasure in. The Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏîm, an Article Verb Participle Masculine Plural, emphasizes the spiritual, emotional, logical and physical connection that exists between God’s Word and the human who reads, memorizes, studies, and

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113 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.
applies it to their daily life. In correlation to the Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏîm is the Greek Koine word epithumeó ἐπιθυμέω, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: ep-ee-thoo-meh'-o) Strong’s Concordance #1937, defined as: desire, lust after, I long for, set the heart upon, regarding to show focused passion. Scripture which exemplifies this Biblical principle reads,

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Matthew 13:15-17 (KJV)

Jesus relays the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, which teaches several related truths; people with calloused hearts reject truth of God’s Word, Jesus describing the fulfillment of Isaiah 6:9-10 (Jesus is Israel’s healer and redeemer), Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and one day God would preserve a remnant of the Jewish people who will accept Christ as Lord. The parallel connection between the Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏîm, the Greek Koine word epithumeó, and the doctrine of sufficiency lies in the fact that one’s heart should yearn for God’s Word as evidenced in scripture that states,

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Matthew 13:44 (KJV)

The implication revealed in the scripture, to desire the kingdom of heaven with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, precisely demonstrates how one should read, memorize, and study God’s Word.

117 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
Psalm 19:11 underscores a Biblical principle for the preceding four scripture verses, and that is reward to those who keep God’s Word. The Biblical concept, reward (ê·qeḇ בְּֽקֶב), and in keeping them (bə·šā·mə·rām בֶּשָּמ רָ֖ם), are foundational structures God expects humans will act upon as they traverse their earthly journey.\textsuperscript{118} The Hebrew word ê·qeḇ is a Noun Masculine Adverb Accusative Conjunction, (phonetic spelling: ay’-keb) Strong’s Concordance #6118, defined as: a consequence of, in relation to gain or reward (literally, or figuratively).\textsuperscript{119} This is poignant regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, demonstrating both a positive reward when one keeps God’s Word and a negative consequence when one disobeys God’s Word. The positive reward is exhibited in Genesis, “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” \textit{Genesis} 26:5 KJV. The previous scripture relates God expected Abraham to keep His Word. Abraham’s reward for keeping God’s Word can be found in the verse prior that states,

\begin{center}
And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed \textit{Genesis} 26:4 (KJV)
\end{center}

Negative consequences exist for those who disregard and disobey God’s Word, “For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” \textit{Psalms} 1:6 KJV. The negative consequence portrayed in this scripture denotes the ways of the wicked will perish.

In correlation to the Hebrew word ê·qeḇ, reward, is the Greek Koine word hupakouó ύπακούω, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: hoop-ak-oo’-o) Strong’s Concordance #5219, defined as: to

\textsuperscript{118}James Strong, \textit{The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible}.

\textsuperscript{119}Ibid.
listen to, to attend to, to obey. Scripture which reinforces this Biblical concept as mandate states,

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. *Acts 6:7 (KJV)*

God’s Word holds purpose and intent provided a person follows and obeys. This Biblical concept proves the doctrine of sufficiency in God’s Word, that obedient life-long faith will result in accurate witness for Christ and disciple making.

The second Hebrew word, בֹּשָׁמַר, in keeping them, describes a relational value that one must maintain with God’s Word and remain true to throughout one’s entire life. The Hebrew word בֹּשָׁמַר is derived from the root Hebrew word שָׁמַר a Verb, (phonetic spelling: shaw-mar) Strong’s Concordance #8104, defined as: to keep watch, preserve, take heed of. Shamar specifically refers to what one must do with God’s Word, preserve it and take instruction from it. In Psalm 19:11 the Hebrew word is a Preposition Verb Infinitive Construct Third Person Masculine Plural, that describes and highlights the responsibility of the individual reading, memorizing, and studying God’s Word. Scripture which embodies this Biblical principle reads, “And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.” *Genesis 17:9 KJV.* This scripture portrays that God expects people will follow His Word and teach it to their children.

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120James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

121Ibid.

122Ibid.
In correlation to the Hebrew word shamar, to preserve, is the Greek Koine word διατερέω, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: dee-at-ay-reh'-o) Strong’s Concordance #1301, defined as: I keep safe, hold fast. Scriptures that epitomize the Biblical concept of keeping God’s Word, which is truth, as found in Colossians and John state, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord,” Colossians 3:16 KJV, and “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17 KJV. These scriptures reinforce the doctrine of sufficiency in God’s Word; further, they are summated and explained in 2 Thessalonians, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” 2 Thessalonians 2:15 KJV. In this scripture, the Apostle Paul gives direct instruction on how to live the Christian life correctly by keeping God’s Word while we await the return of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Scriptural precision and correct scriptural understanding, via the doctrine of sufficiency, as explained in John states,

When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. John 2:22 (KJV)

This scripture, taken from the book of John, portrays Jesus as God’s Son and how one acts in response to His teachings – we are to believe His Word. The book of John possess a unique quality in the canonical Gospels, which comprise Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the synoptics themselves, which are only the first three books of the New Testament. Information in John equates Jesus with God by translating Aramaic concepts and principles into Greek Koine.

123James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 65
John wrote with an evangelistic purpose, to convert non-believers into Christ believers and followers. Knowing and believing the Biblical Jesus is paramount and are concepts conveyed in response of a new believer and is actualized by that new believer’s action throughout the Gospel of John. The clear, plain teaching in John’s Gospel is the deity and preexistence of Christ before creation. A significant theological concept from the book of John exists in his teaching of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Spirit – and is the foundational information that exists which established Trinitarian and Christological theological framework and understanding for early Christians and early Christian belief.

John 2:22 accentuates one of the most important Biblical principles found in the New Testament – they believed (episteusan) the scriptures (graphē).124 In the Greek Koine episteusan ἐπίστευσαν, is from the root Greek Koine word pisteuó πιστεύω, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: pist-yoo'-o) Strong’s Concordance #4100, defined as: to believe, entrust, I believe, have faith in, trust in, I am entrusted with.125 In context, the Greek Koine word episteusan is an Verb Aorist Indicative Active Third Person Plural, and describes Jesus cleansing the Temple of moneychangers who were profiting off of inflated sales of oxen, sheep, and doves for sin sacrifices required in Temple worship. The significance of episteusan is appreciated from a two-fold angle which illustrates the actions of Jesus and the belief of His disciples. Jesus’ actions demonstrate that He is naturally upset in the fact that people are profiting through a misuse of sacrificial sin offerings. The Temple, the House of God, was being used to fleece the public; these activities were contrary to the original intent and purpose of the Temple and Temple worship. In the belief of the disciples, the point of reference eludes to their understanding and


125James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
comprehension of the scriptures being opened and that they realized the entire Tanakh, an acronym for the division of the Masoretic Text: Torah (Teaching, the five books of Moses), Nevi’im (the books of the Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings), spoke in its entirety of Jesus Christ. Scripture that defines God opening our understanding is demonstrated in Luke, “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” Luke 24:45 KJV. This scripture passage will further be addressed as the final Biblical scripture expounding the doctrine of sufficiency.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word episteusan is the Hebrew word aman אָּמַן, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: aw-man) Strong’s Concordance #539, defined as: to confirm, support, believe, assurance, establish, steadfast, in reference to a kingdom (literally or figuratively). In regard to the doctrine of sufficiency, both the Greek Koine episteusan and the Hebrew aman speak of the reliability of God’s kingdom and rule and His eternal Word. Scriptures from the Old Testament which confirm the validity of the doctrine of sufficiency as found in Exodus and Genesis read,

And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped. Exodus 4:31 (KJV)

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. Genesis 15:6 (KJV)

In the first scriptural reference, Moses and his brother Aaron have gone to the enslaved Hebrew people of Egypt to tell them that God has heard their cries and will set them free. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, the Ex. 4:31 scripture denotes God still hears our cries and pleas today, and still sets us free, provided we repent of our sin and accept Christ. In the second scriptural

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126James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
reference, a deep sleep came over Abraham and as he slept. Moses was told by God that the
nation he would father would be in bondage four hundred years but would eventually be freed.
Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, the Gen. 15:6 scripture denotes God still speaks to us in
dreams today, and explains His plans for us, if we take the time to listen. However, we are
required to trust Him, believe in Him, and believe His Word.

In John 2:22 the second Greek Koine word graphē γραφῇ is from the root Greek Koine
word graphé, a Noun Feminine, Strong’s Concordance #1124, (phonetic spelling: graf-ay),
defined as: a writing, scripture, a passage of scripture, the scriptures.127 The Greek Koine word
graphē, a Noun Dative Feminine Singular, speaks to the moment when the disciples came to
grips with the recognition that Jesus is spoken of throughout the entire Hebrew Bible, and has
fulfilled prophecy as the Messiah. The significance in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency lies
within the sentence structure “and they believed the scripture.” The words ascribe the disciple’s
action of belief to the totality of the Hebrew scriptures are precisely the mind-set God expects us
to have regarding His Word. The Biblical concept, believing the scriptures, alludes to one of the
nine ‘I am scriptures’ only found in the book of John, “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread
of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”
John 6:35 KJV. Jesus and His Word are crucial in providing sustenance from hunger and thirst,
on a spiritual basis as well as a physical basis. If believers are to survive through the peril, trials,
and turmoil that they will experience during our earthly journey, then belief in Jesus and His
Word is imperative.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word graphē is the Hebrew word miqra מִקְרָא a Noun
Masculine, (phonetic spelling: mik-raw) Strong’s Concordance #4744, defined as: a convocation,
convoking, reading, in regards to a sacred assembly for religious gathering.\textsuperscript{128} The Biblical concept, gathering in groups to hear God’s Word, through the Hebrew word miqra, found in scripture that states, “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” \textit{Nehemiah 8:8 KJV}. The distinction is plainly clear, believers are to congregate in groups with other believers in order to listen to the Word of God, at which time, God will give understanding about His Word as He sees fit to do. Further, it is unambiguous, regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, that when we gather as believers, God will see to it that we plainly comprehend and apply His Message. This work takes place through the advent of the Holy Spirit of God. Scripture which confirms the Biblical concept, the Holy Spirit gives understanding about God’s Word, can be found in John,

\begin{quote}
But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. \textit{John 14:26 (KJV)}
\end{quote}

This scriptural reference reinforces the doctrine of sufficiency by stating the Holy Spirit of God is sent in Jesus’ Name and explicates His Word.

\begin{quote}
Scriptural correctness and accurate scriptural understanding, via the doctrine of sufficiency, as explained in Biblical scripture states,
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures \textit{Luke 24:44-45 (KJV)}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{128}James Strong, \textit{The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible}. 
In this scriptural passage lies the singularly most crucial Biblical concept that relates to the doctrine of sufficiency, logoi, the word, found in the Gospel of Luke. In brief, logoi is a reference to both Jesus Christ and His Word throughout the New Testament as attested to in John 1:1-14. The book of Luke is the longest of the four Gospels and is book one of a two-part history combined with the book of Acts. A healthy emphasis on preaching the Word to Gentiles exists in the book of Luke, with the intended audience probably directed toward Greeks. The third Gospel is addressed to ‘most excellent Theophilus,’ which in the Greek Koine means friend of God. The purpose of the book of Luke is to strengthen the faith of believers and challenge erroneous belief of non-believers. The book of Luke highlights the divinity and perfect humanity of Jesus Christ our Savior. Distinctive themes of the book of Luke include Jesus’ compassion toward outcasts of the world He created, Jesus as Savior, and a typified Christology as found specifically in Luke 24:44-45. Jesus (the word) mentioned in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, utilizes examples that spoke of Jesus being revealed in the Old Testament. The significance in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency is that the ‘word,’ Jesus, fulfilled Prophecy and is the focus of all Old Testament scripture.

Luke 24:44 explicates the singular Biblical concept of how relevant, distinct, and predominant, the word logoi, truly is, and that all else rests firmly upon Jesus – the word. The Greek Koine word logoi λόγοι, is from the root Greek Koine word logos λόγος, a Noun Masculine, (phonetic spelling: log'-os) Strong’s Concordance #3056, defined as: a word, a statement, a speech, divine utterance, in relation to embodying an idea or expressing the thoughts of God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit of God.\(^\text{129}\) In context, the Greek Koine word logoi, a Noun Nominative Masculine Plural, denotes explicitly that Jesus

\(^{129}\)James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 70
fulfills Prophecy from the Old Testament with three examples: the Law of Moses, the books of the Prophets, and the Psalms. There is also direct implication that Jesus is the one who imparted the words of the Old Testament to Moses, the Prophets, and the authors of the Psalms. Scriptural reference that directly states Jesus is the word and gave the word(s) is found in John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” *John* 1:1 KJV. This scriptural passage gives proof to the doctrine of sufficiency, that the word (God’s Word), is embodied within the Triune God who is preexistent to universal creation, and therefore is sufficient for all areas of life.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word *logoi* is the Hebrew word דִּבְרֵי which is from the Hebrew root word dabar דָּבָּר a Noun Masculine, (phonetic spelling: daw-baw) Strong’s Concordance #1697, defined as: the word, speech, message, promise, in reference to the Word of God and God confirms His Word and promises. The Hebrew word דִּבְרֵי, a Noun Masculine Plural Construct, denotes in scripture when Moses was with God a second time to re-write the Decalogue because Moses had broken it the first time. Exodus states,

> And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. *Exodus* 34:28 (KJV)

This scriptural passage affirms the doctrine of sufficiency, God’s Word supersedes physical required needs. In ancient Jewish religious belief, it was thought that God, who wrote the Decalogue, was to be feared and revered even though His creation did not understand Him and

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130 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

131 Ibid.
His ways. Ancient Hebrews so feared God they would not say His Name aloud. As illustrated in
the fact that the Hebrew word for Lord, YHVH, a tetragrammaton and the 4-letter word for the
God of Israel, which reads from right to left as yodh, he, waw, and he, depicts their reverence for
God and represents an alternative word for God. Other Proper Names for the God of Israel are
Yahweh or Jehovah, all references to Jesus Christ.

Another Biblical passage from the Old Testament that accounts for the doctrine of
sufficiency and the Hebrew word diḇ·rē, Word of God, is the Hebrew word dib-ber דיבר from the
root Hebrew word dabar דבע a Verb, (phonetic spelling: daw-bar) Strong’s Concordance #1696,
defined as: to speak, pronounce, in relation to both speaking literally and the writing of
literature.\textsuperscript{132} The Hebrew word dib-ber, a Verb Perfect Third Person Masculine Singular, refers
to the person doing the speaking or writing.\textsuperscript{133} This Hebrew word, dib-ber, to speak, pronounce,
write, is found in Deuteronomy,

\begin{quote}
And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten
commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the
midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto
me. \textit{Deuteronomy} 10:4 (KJV)
\end{quote}

The significance of the Hebrew word dib-ber is that that God speaks and writes (communicates),
His Word to those He has chosen to be His representative(s). This is demonstrated when Jesus
gave the ‘word’ to His people in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is more

\textsuperscript{132}James Strong, \textit{The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible}.

\textsuperscript{133}Ibid.
proof confirming the doctrine of sufficiency, that God’s Words (Jesus’ Words) are one in the same as they are the same person.

The second scriptural passage from Luke 24:45 which relates to the doctrine of sufficiency and sheds further light on how understanding is acquired, and from where it originates, is in Luke, “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” Luke 24:45 KJV. This scriptural passage notes where the understanding originates – from Jesus Himself. The two crucially vital Greek Koine words that illustrate this fact are diēnoixen and synienai. The first Greek Koine word diēnoixen is from the root Greek Koine word dianoigó διανοιγó, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: dee-an-oy'-go) Strong’s Concordance #1272, defined as: I open fully, to open up completely, in relation (both literally and figuratively) to opening the eyes and ears and mind, or the womb as in a first born.¹³⁴ In context, diēnoixen is an Verb Aorist Indicative Active Third Person Singular, and specifically mentions the person performing the action of opening.¹³⁵ Biblical scripture that confirms an opening of the mind resides in Romans, And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God Romans 12:2 (KJV)

There exists a direct implication when a person comes to repent of sin and accept Christ they must be willing to open their mind to changing from their old ways of life to a new way of life which God enables them to accomplish.

¹³⁴James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
¹³⁵Ibid.
In correlation to the Greek Koine word διενόιξην is the Hebrew word way·yê·ḏə́·’ū ַוֶּׂיֶדֶע which is from the root Hebrew word yada ַוֶּדֶע, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: yaw-dah) Strong’s Concordance #3045, defined as: to know, acknowledge, understand, take notice, recognize, learn to know, perceive, know by experience, in relation to God knowing persons.\(^{136}\) The Hebrew word way·yê·ḏə́·’ū, a Conjunctive Verb Consecutive Imperfect Third Person Masculine Plural, refers to an individual having an awakening or God specifically performing the action of awakening.\(^{137}\) Two Biblical references that demonstrate this point, opening of the eyes and ears and mind, are found in Genesis and 2 Kings,

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.  
*Genesis 3:7* (KJV)

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.  
*2 Kings 6:17* (KJV)

In the first scripture, Adam and Eve had a revelation, an understanding, they were naked, and in the second Biblical passage, Elisha prays to the Lord from where understanding originates. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, both scriptures illuminate the readers understanding of how mental comprehension occurs, and who performs that action. This validates God’s Word is sufficient for all mental processes.

The second Greek Koine word, from the Luke 24:45 Biblical passage, is synienai συνιέναι from the root Greek Koine word suniémi συνίημι, a Verb, (phonetic spelling: soon-ee'-ay-mee)

\(^{136}\) James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

\(^{137}\) Ibid.
Strong’s Concordance #4920, defined as: I consider, understand, perceive, to set together, to understand, in relation to a human arriving at and understanding through mental capacity. In context, the Greek Koine word synienai, a Verb Present Infinitive Active, relates to the person understanding and then acting with understanding. Scriptural reference that confirms this Biblical principle as exemplified in Matthew reads,

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Matthew 13:23 (KJV)

Jesus confirms the doctrine of sufficiency when He states that His Word is enough and provides adequate instruction for a believer to hear the Word, believe and understand the Word, and make disciples who do the same.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word synienai, upright, is the Hebrew word yashar יָּשָּר, an Adjective, (phonetic spelling: yaw-shawr) Strong’s Concordance #3477, defined as: straight, right, conscientious, upright, in relation to a man that God made upright. The Hebrew word yā·šār, an Adjective Masculine Singular, specifies in scripture the behavior of children. Scripture which validates being upright, and conscientious occurs in Proverbs, “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” Proverbs 20:11 KJV.

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138 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*
139 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
It is clear, this scripture passage states that a child is known by his actions and behavior, and by implication, so are adults. The overall theological premise that these Greek Koine and Hebrew words point to is Jesus gives understanding of His Word. Additionally, the character of a person as he acts upon God’s Word or rejects it is well known to other people and readily visible. The Luke 24:44-45 Biblical passage summates the other scriptures, Acts 2:42-47; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalms 19:7-11; and John 2:22 in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency. It illustrates that active participation in God’s Word is mandatory in order to experience a ‘change of person,’ a ‘renewed mind.’ Otherwise, we are or become as James states,

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. James 1:23-24 (KJV)

As Christ followers and believers, Christians must become doers of the Word of God to navigate the treacherous waters of a turbulent earthly life.

**Theoretical Foundations**

Theoretically, Brick by Brick Bible church has operated for multiple decades under the auspices of belonging before believing. The consequences of which are now exhibited through lack of participation in Bible Study, discipleship programs, or promotion of daily Bible reading of any kind for both its ecclesiological hierarchy and the congregants. The theological foundations of the project study are based upon the doctrine of sufficiency, that the Bible is sufficient for all areas of operating God’s Christian Church on earth. Inclusivism, secularism,
and a ‘watered down gospel message,’ has dampened correct orthodox Biblical scriptural belief and praxis at Brick by Brick Bible church over the course of many decades.

The project study is tied theoretically to the foundation of the project thesis proposal which will demonstrate to the clerical hierarchy and the parishioners that the Bible is sufficient for Brick by Brick Bible church’s operating governmental procedures and is designed to establish correct scriptural exegesis and correct scriptural praxis for one’s daily life. A thorough theological exegesis of the doctrine of sufficiency reveals five essential Biblical principles that are critical in understanding that God’s Word is sufficient: reading the Bible daily, applying God’s Word to daily life, comprehension that God’s Word provides sufficient instruction and direction for all areas of navigating through earthly life, participating in Christian community, and making disciples as commanded by the Great Commission. It is the contention of this research project that the data will reveal that these five Biblical principles are missing at Brick by Brick Bible Church. Through the advent of providing a deeper understanding of the doctrine of sufficiency, and the application of these principles, the congregants at Brick by Brick Bible Church will not only achieve a more meaningful relationship with Christ, but the effects will be measurable in terms of church membership growth and church activity participation. At this juncture, a more complete theoretical examination of church models and other underlying issues affecting church participation is warranted.

The lack of congregational participation and apathy toward carrying out the Great Commission are not problems that are confined to Brick by Brick Bible church. Although this research focuses upon one congregation, there is an abundant amount of research on the general topic of church engagement and involvement. Current research into theoretical foundations
related to the thesis has been conducted under the auspices of appropriate church models. Two such church models are described as attractional church/seeker church that is based upon consumerism, and missional church that is ground in scriptural accuracy. Jared C. Wilson and Andy Stanley are two pastors and authors who share a passion and heart for delivering the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ to the lost. While both authors go to great lengths to convince the reader of their methodology for a church model, Wilson’s church model more accurately follows Scriptural continuity whereas Stanley’s model derives from a standpoint of viewing the audience in terms of commercialistic enterprise. Wilson is adamant in his text, *The Prodigal Church*, and in his belief, that “this is not an argument for a more traditional church so much as it is an argument for a more biblical one.”141 Stanley is self-convincing from his text, *Deep & Wide*; “a church model is essentially the framework a church or denomination chooses or creates to advance its specific vision.”142 Whereas Wilson tends to focus on a church model that seeks Biblical accuracy, Stanley’s emphasis is on a self-created vision for a church model which promotes consumerism.

Andy Stanley’s book *Deep & Wide* is based upon an attractional church model. Stanley’s methodology emphasizes consumerism. Stanley is more focused on settings that are appealing and presentations that are engaging rather than correct orthodox theological Biblical principle and Biblical concept or Christian praxis. Stanley argues: “we are in the presentation business. We are the only entity charged with the responsibility of presenting the gospel…this responsibility is ours alone…people aren’t breaking our door down to hear it, we’ve got to

141 Wilson, 18.
142 Stanley, 287.
harness every bit of our creative energies to make our presentations engaging.”

Stanley’s commentary is impactful and poignant, yet not in the manner in which he would hope. There is concern that the Word of God is reduced and trivialized. God’s inerrant, infallible, divinely inspired word stands alone and is not to be abridged to presentation determines interest, not content.

Wilson states “…the very paradigm of the attractional church creates this instability.” And to further supplement that the attractional church model falls short of its intended goal, reaching the un-churched and the lost, Wilson explains “the family has not been won to a church. They’ve been won to a menu of attractive goods and services.” Wilson also states, about Andy Stanley’s attractional church model that it caters to a non-believer audience: “…designing your service [or church model for non-believers]…specifically…is neither biblical nor wise.” An inherent flaw of the attractional church model focuses upon the fact that it does not prioritize Biblical fidelity, therefore relegating the doctrine of sufficiency to at best an afterthought, and at worse, never teaching scriptural accuracy at all. Wilson contends, “the church will be built…by the work of the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Jesus Christ…the Bible’s ‘functional ideology’ – contrary to consumerism and pragmatism – of that ‘what works’ is the Holy Spirit through the message of the gospel of Jesus…neither the Spirit nor the gospel needs help from our production values.”

The contradictory views between Wilson and Stanley reveal the deep chasm between the two church models and adherence to Biblical fidelity in congregations.

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143Stanley, 174.
144Wilson, 36.
145Ibid.
146Ibid., 65.
147Ibid, 70.
Although the attractional/seeker church model and the missional church model offer a substantial amount of research concerning how to get people through the door and into the church, there remains a lack of research and information on how to maintain and pursue making Biblically centered parishioners who are disciples of Jesus Christ carrying out the Great Commission. This research will further advance ways to develop and address the rationales found within the congregation for not living the scripture in daily life by not only emphasizing the doctrine of sufficiency, but by offering practical applications through scripture as a daily working model.

Just as the foundation for the thesis project proposal, the doctrine of sufficiency, is crucial, it is equally critical for the theoretical foundation to be rooted in theology. This concept parallels Brick by Brick Bible church’s need for their theology to be established in correct scripture and accurate scriptural exegesis. An obvious tie between theological foundation and theoretical foundation is the link in scripture and Jesus’ Gospel Message of salvation, through the implementation of disciple making. Scriptural confirmation which affirms disciple making is found in Romans and Acts,

> How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? *Rom. 10:14* (KJV)

> But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. *Acts 1:8* (KJV)

The scriptures validate the Biblical concept of making disciples and further resolve that disciple making is a definitive command, not a suggestion. Christian churches are deficient in this aspect and Brick by Brick Bible church is not unusual in this respect. What is the reason for a marked decline regarding disciple making? The scripture gives the solution, “Verily, verily, I say unto
you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” *John 13:20 KJV.*

In context, Jesus’ Words reflect the moment at the Last Supper prior to His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, however, the larger implication resonates the Biblical concept – those that Jesus sends will frequently experience persecution and rejection. If Christian churches would derive their operating procedures from accurate Biblical scripture and correct scriptural understanding/application, then Christian churches would be aware ahead of time to the dangers of secular beliefs prior to their induction and acceptance into a Christian community and Christian church. The Biblical principle, be wary of false prophets, is clearly explained, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” *Col. 2:8 (KJV)*

The doctrine of sufficiency is biblical precedence implying that God’s word is enough for all areas of life. Elwell’s Evangelical Dictionary of Theology states that sufficiency has to do with grace, and is explained as,

sufficient grace is grace that is adequate for the saving of the believer here and now and hereafter to all eternity…the cross is the only place of forgiveness and reconciliation and it is fully so; for the blood of Jesus shed there for us cleanses from all sin and from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7,9). 148

A disconnect between understanding the doctrine of sufficiency, and other biblical doctrines, currently exists in the church today. Brett McCracken states, “Biblical literacy is a huge problem in the American church,” and the lack of scriptural understanding only adds to the list of

148Elwell, 521.
challenges facing the church today.\textsuperscript{149} This notable theological disconnect is imputed by many modern scholars as causation for the erosion of theological understanding which exists among church congregants in many Christian churches. One such scholar, John MacArthur, states on the doctrine of sufficiency of scripture,

\begin{quote}
God’s Word is sufficient to meet every need of the human soul as David verifies frequently in his psalms. Psalm 19:7-14 is the most comprehensive statement regarding the sufficiency of Scripture. It is an inspired statement about Scripture as a qualified guide for every situation.\textsuperscript{150}
\end{quote}

As is suggested by MacArthur’s statement, scripture is a qualified guide for every situation; however, this is not the endpoint. Theological understanding needs to rest within the rationale of renewed minds resulting in changed lives. Ministry change at Brick by Brick Bible church is justified through theological reflection and the research project’s purpose and problem given that acceptance of secular ideology has eroded theological understanding and increased congregational apathy. Additionally, Bible study and discipleship classes which follow orthodox Christian scriptural authority will increase parishioners’ Biblical fidelity and help them realize not only their daily need for scriptural reference but promote spiritual growth and personal investment.

Although alternative models of ministry practice have been offered as solutions to rectify congregational lethargy, many fail to take into account the basic Biblical truth that God’s Word is enough. Phil Newton addresses the doctrine of sufficiency, when he states, “when we live in the sufficiency of scripture, we fill our worship with the truth of scripture, believing that…when

\begin{flushright}

\end{flushright}
scripture speaks, God speaks. Merely appealing to emotions or entertainment or crowd pleasing will not do when one is convinced of scripture’s sufficiency.”¹⁵¹ Further, in the church models that have been researched and written about there remains an important tenant missing. Many times, Christians are not making the connection between Christ’ sacrifice on the Cross and His Word. Author Kevin DeYoung alludes to this disconnect when he states that many Christians feel that the Bible is not “enough for living a faithful life in today’s world” and they struggle with the sufficiency of scripture.¹⁵² The doctrine of sufficiency seems like an abstract concept rather than a tangible and accessible resource that connects both Christ’ Cross and His Word that we can utilize today. DeYoung adds, if Christians “learn to read the Bible down (into our hearts), across (the plot line of scripture), out (to the end of the story), and up (to the glory of God in the face of Christ),” Christians will discover “that every bit of the Bible is profitable…it says only what is true.”¹⁵³

All the bright lights, music and fanfare currently being offered by many contemporary churches are just an empty substitution and ultimately a dangerous distraction that will never replace the need for scriptural teaching and understanding. When parishioners are able to connect daily Bible reading, scriptural praxis, participation in Christian community, the importance of the Great Commission, and understand that the Word of God offers all instructions for all life situations, the natural result will be increased church contribution and attendance.


¹⁵³Ibid.
Chapter 3
Methodology
Intervention Design

The problem being addressed at Brick by Brick church in Williamsville, NY is the congregational acceptance of secular ideas eroding theological understanding and subsequent congregational apathy in pursuing Bible study and a discipleship program which follow orthodox Christian authority. The intervention plan the student author plans to use are as follows: 1) a pre questionnaire, 2) a six-week discipleship program focusing on the importance of A) daily Bible reading, B) applying Bible scripture to daily life, and C) the importance of being a disciple of Jesus Christ in daily life, 3) a post questionnaire.

It is the position of the student author that the congregation cannot be forced into undertaking a discipleship program, rather the parishioners need to come to their own understanding that reading scripture daily and reflecting scripture in their daily lives is paramount and the primary way that God speaks to His believers on a daily basis. By gently encouraging congregants to participate in this six-week program through the use of building Christian community and becoming more personally invested in Brick by Brick church, the intervention will not only address rationales as to why congregants do not live out Biblical standards but also by direct implication, the Great Commission is fulfilled.

Intervention Design: Ministry Context, Purpose & Objectives

The ministry context problem and research question posed in Chapter 1 addresses syncretism replacing Biblical, theological orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the Brick by Brick Bible Church. Parishioners must be inclined to view daily Bible reading, daily Biblical orthopraxy, and attending weekly Bible prayer meetings and Sunday services, as the focal point which enhances and contributes stability into all areas of their lives. The six-week discipleship program is
designed to inform and educate congregants and church hierarchy of the importance that God’s Word plays in their daily life. Additionally, the discipleship program is designed to enable participants to become a better witness for Jesus Christ while strengthening their own individual relationship with Jesus Christ.

There are many multi-faceted factors contributing toward the decline of Biblical fidelity at Brick by Brick Bible church. A residual long-lasting effect of not following Biblical scripture has led congregants to embrace modern cultural secular ideology as a substitute, thus Christian belief has been combined with non-scriptural ideas and the result is a Christian by name, but not by practice or belief. The discipleship program emphasizes to congregants and church hierarchy the benefits of daily scripture reading and at the same time highlights scriptural references which mandate the Biblical tenant via the doctrine of sufficiency. A working definition of the doctrine of sufficiency is the scriptures are completely adequate, reliable, and trustworthy, to equip us for a life of faith and service to God through Jesus Christ; and the scriptures provide a clear demonstration of God’s intention to restore the once broken relationship between His creation humanity and Himself.\footnote{What Is the Doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture?,” GotQuestions.org, November 1, 2010, https://www.gotquestions.org/sufficiency-of-Scripture.html.} In the scripture, a definition of the doctrine of sufficiency is validated by Psalms chapter 19 verses 7 through 14. The problem is that congregants/ parishioners, and clergy elders, believe there is more than one area where truth, knowledge, and wisdom are found.

As addressed in week one of the discipleship program, it is imperative that believers understand the importance of gathering as a Christian community through church attendance, weekly Bible prayer meetings, weekly Bible studies, and other Christian events, in order to have a Christian community that has a meaningful dialogue on the meaning of scripture that reflects
the truth of the Biblical tenant of the doctrine of sufficiency. The discipleship program intervenes in syncretic beliefs of Christians and alleviates apathy toward daily Bible reading and application by introducing the many varied scriptures that describe the doctrine of sufficiency as the only source where truth, knowledge, and wisdom are found. If members of Brick by Brick Bible Church look at daily Bible reading and application as an integral part of their everyday life, then there should be a noticeable increase in attendance in weekly Bible Prayer Meeting, Sunday services, and other Christian events.

The purpose and objectives of the project’s intervention align with the project thesis, problem statement, and research question by integrating the use of scripture in practical purposes and daily life events, because it addresses the integration of scripture and the daily life of the believer. An example of this is found in the very first sermon which demonstrates, repeatedly, how the early Christian church continually put scriptural practice into daily life. Consequently, the modern Christian is to do the same. Sermon 1 of the discipleship program places strong emphasis upon modern scriptural practices that Christians are expected to implement into their own lives. Scriptural accuracy and scriptural understanding are complimentary and support one another. Further, we are not allowed to add to or subtract from the scripture in any way, as it is God’s Word. These Biblical tenants are illustrated in Acts 2:42-47 to reinforce the insight of the doctrine of sufficiency; God’s Word is all sufficient for every area of our life. Sermon 1 reinforces the thesis statement, congregants and church hierarchy at Brick by Brick Bible Church, are not living life the way Biblical scripture defines by establishing a comparison contrast as to the way the early Christians lived verses the way modern Christians live. Using demonstrated scriptural references as to how the early Christians lived, congregants and church hierarchy are given numerous examples of life characteristics, and characteristic qualities in
daily practice, belief, and understanding. The discipleship program is designed to have members of Brick by Brick Bible Church realize they must make a choice between serving and obeying Jesus Christ of Bible scripture, or a false idol of their own making.

Currently, the majority of congregants of Brick by Brick Bible church do not participate in Bible study, prayer meetings, or other extra-curricular church activities that fall outside of Sunday morning service. Although weekly prayer meetings are held, and a variety of Bible studies and book studies have been offered, attendance of parishioners falls under 10%, and has been as low as 5% of the congregation.

**Intervention Design: Step by Step Tasks**

A comprehensive step by step process of the discipleship program research project lists all steps to be strictly followed. First, approval of the research project is submitted to the mentor for review. After mentor review and approval, the research project is submitted to IRB for approval. (see Appendix D) Once necessary approvals are in order, then the participant invite is read word for word at the next available Sunday service. (Appendix A) After reading participant invite, the research assistant will hand out the participant invite which contains the voluntary participation form. The researcher is to stress to the congregation and online viewers that participation is completely voluntary, and all participants will be assigned a random number in lieu of their name. This process is intended to keep all participant information and pre/post questionnaires for the project study confidential. All information will be kept on a password locked laptop which only the research assistant has access to. At this time, participants also have the option to take the form home with them, think about whether they wish to participate, and return the form in a two week time frame to the research assistant at an address provided on a self-addressed-stamped envelope. Participants who wish to join the discipleship program research project study
who are online will be given the option to join after they have given the research assistant their home address. Once online participants receive the form, they have a two week time frame to return the form in a self-addressed-stamped envelope. Once all forms have been received and are signed by voluntary participants, then the discipleship program research study can commence at the next available Sunday service. Once the research assistant has received the voluntary permission slips and the pre questionnaires in the mail or in-person, the research assistant will run the necessary formulas to allocate the medians, modes, and all preliminary statistical information which will eventually be assimilated by the researcher in chapter four at the end of the discipleship program project study thesis. The research assistant holds all information in a password protected laptop until the end of the research study project has been completed.

The intervention plan consists of several steps. The research facilitator will design the participant consent form, design the pre and post questionnaire, and design the six-week discipleship program. Due to Brick by Brick Bible Church’s proclivity for entrepreneurial leadership, it is relevant to triangulate data collection with hand-written face-to-face interviews, pre and post questionnaire participation, and personal journals for each video-taped sermon. The use of a triangulated method will produce a strong data base from which to garner information on volunteers’ beliefs, opinions, and ideas regarding answering how the church should be run and managed and why it should be run in that manner. The method will also answer the question of how individual beliefs coincide or do not coincide with a Biblical standard.

The researcher facilitator will keep an active reflective journal during the entire project. The purpose of the journal is three-fold: it allows for accurate data collection, it allows for efficient data analysis, and the process of keeping a journal will aid in revealing any biases or
prejudices that need to be addressed during the course of the research project. The researcher facilitator will also gather and record all approvals needed for the research project.

The approvals that are needed are from the Senior Pastor, and all the parishioner participants who volunteer. The congregants will provide informed consent through a form that will be completed along with a pre and post-intervention questionnaire. The congregants will be involved because the six-week program will be part of the Sunday service, therefore eliminating the need for special time gathering since that is one of the issues that this project is addressing.

The research facilitator will present the consent form and a summary of the six-week discipleship program to the congregation as well as distribute the pre-questionnaire during Sunday service. The facilitator will collect consent forms from all voluntary participants. Once this step is completed participants will complete the anonymous numbered pre-questionnaire, which they will have a week to complete. The facilitator will collect all the pre-questionnaires and record the results.

The project begins with the congregants being read the agreement to participate (see Appendix A) and no research will commence without the expressed written approval of each participant. Voluntary participants will read, sign, and date the agreement to participate before any research proceeds. Any questions voluntary participants have about the agreement or the research project in general will be immediately addressed. Upon receipt of a signed agreement, participants will receive a pre-discipleship program questionnaire of 28 questions, including a section where they indicate age group, which are reflective of the five themes that are contained within the discipleship program sermons. The questionnaire is found in Appendix B.
Once all the data from the pre-questionnaire has been reviewed and recorded, the facilitator will begin the six-week discipleship program, which will be part of Sunday service for six consecutive weeks. At the end of each weekly installment of the discipleship program, participants will have an opportunity to engage in a question and answer session with the facilitator in order to provide transparency and promote the goals of individual investment and stakeholding in the program. The research facilitator will record objective notes concerning 1) problems the participants are having, 2) questions about the previous lesson, 3) relative information as it pertains to the research topic. A detailed step by step outline of the discipleship program can be found in Appendix C.

The intervention design of the discipleship program is completely written out and found in Appendix C. All, a preacher, pastor, or minister, has to do is to read aloud the entire script as provided, each week for six weeks. Prior to commencement of the first discipleship lesson, each participant will complete a consent form and a pre-questionnaire. Once all questionnaires and consent forms have been returned, the discipleship series will begin. The series will run six consecutive weeks and be simultaneously broadcast on Facebook live and posted to YouTube to allow participants to view any lesson they were unable to physically attend. Allowing the discipleship lessons to be broadcast in other formats became a necessity considering the COVID-19 health crisis. Although this project included virtual and online viewing due to state guidelines, this program, even outside of a health crisis, can be utilized in an online platform that would be applicable to those whose church attendance are limited due to health or family issues. Additionally, this discipleship program can be utilized by chaplains or ministers who need to reach participants serving overseas or in hard to reach locations due to geographical limitations. At the conclusion of each week’s discipleship lesson, some random participants may be asked to
complete a series of interview or focus groups questions. This process will repeat for six weeks until the conclusion of the intervention.

The discipleship program consisted of six sermons that each addressed a specific Biblical tenant(s) or elemental Biblical principle(s) of the project study. There is a lengthy introduction read prior to the beginning of the discipleship program series on week one which is listed in Appendix C comparing the discipleship program to Jacob’s Ladder found in Genesis chapter 28. Week one, commencing August 23, 2020, addressed that belief, scriptural accuracy, and scriptural understanding, are complimentary and elucidated in scripture, along with the doctrine of sufficiency. Further, sermon one for the first week of the discipleship program, explicates how the early Christian community relied upon scripture as the basis for daily living practice. The scriptures utilized primarily for sermon one, week one were the target scripture, Acts 2:42-47, and Psalms 19:7-14. The researcher extrapolated that John MacArthur specifically isolates a definition for the doctrine of sufficiency in Psalms 19:7-14. This scripture is a qualified guide for all situations and speaks specifically to the converting of one’s soul, to the restoration of one’s mind, to the heart that seeks justice in God’s decrees which are founded in truth and are completely reliable. John MacArthur’s article, “The Sufficiency of Scripture,” states that it is our responsibility and duty to follow God’s Word in our life.\textsuperscript{155} The Acts 2:42-47 scripture was emphasized to enable the project participant to understand that the early Christians were no different in belief and practice in their Christianity than Christians are expected to be today in our modern world. At the end of sermon one for week one were questions to help people remember the highlights from the first week. At the conclusion of week one sermon one, the research assistant posed questions to a focus group comprised of two parishioners and completed

one personal interview. The recording process consisted of the research assistant interviewing parishioners in a private setting where they felt more comfortable and open to discuss personal beliefs. At the conclusion of week one the research assistant supplied the researcher with the written and recorded documentation of the focus group and personal interview questions. It is imperative that the researcher review this information in preparation for the next week’s sermon installment.

Week two, which commenced on August 30, 2020, quickly summarized week one and then proceeded with week two which exegeted 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The two major Biblical tenants emphasized for week two were how to manage and operate God’s Christian Church on earth and living out our faith in Jesus Christ. Immediately, significant weight was given to the Biblical tenant that the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocrypha, are a gift from God and are Divinely inspired and written. The Biblical principle of the doctrine of sufficiency emphasizes all of God’s Word is the instruction that defines every aspect of a believer’s existence. The example given to underscore the doctrine of sufficiency was how we raise our children, found in Proverbs 3:12; Proverbs 22:6; and Hebrews 12:6. God corrects us in the same manner as a loving parent corrects a child. Further, it was established that there exist relevant synonymous subjects from both the Old Testament and the New Testament and vice versa to prove a theological connection occurs throughout all of scripture. The Biblical tenant of living according to scripture is an example from Daniel chapter 4. The project study program participant was shown how scripture is relevant for Christian orthopraxy in today’s world and is an educational methodology confirming what Christians adhere to throughout earthly life. Additionally, four instructional constructs were explained to the discipleship program participant. Doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, are foundational theological Biblical
tenants found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. God’s Word tells the believer, that doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction, are insightful Christian characteristics proven by scripture and only for believers. In summation, the non-believer is blind to the fact of truth and knowledge found in God’s Word. Sermon two, week two, concluded with questions to help participants and congregants remember the highlights from the second lesson. At the conclusion of week two sermon two, the research assistant posed questions to a focus group comprised of two different parishioners and completed one personal interview. The recording process consisted of the research assistant interviewing parishioners in a private setting where they felt more comfortable and open to discuss personal beliefs. At the conclusion of week two the research assistant supplied the researcher with the written and recorded documentation of the focus group and personal interview questions. It is imperative that the researcher review this information in preparation for the next week’s sermon installment.

Week three, which began September 6, 2020, started by summarizing week two and its highlights and then further exegeted Psalms 19:7-11, a scriptural summation of the doctrine of sufficiency. Week three also made mention that our action is required. The discipleship program participant learned about the book of Psalms, a collection of 150 prayers and hymns that were used in ancient Israel’s worship toward God. The Biblical concept of singing songs of praise to God is also illustrated in the New Testament when Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn of praise after the Last Supper, in Matthew 26:30. The book of Psalms is a myriad of messages whose overall theme teaches people how to relate to God in different life situations. One of the most significant Biblical principles that Psalms depicts is God’s involvement in our day to day lives. The overall emphasis placed upon the individual’s response to listen, follow, and obey Jesus Christ and His Word are highlighted. Attention was directed toward the idea that we
primarily value in our life is that which we will reflect toward other people. If we value reading, memorizing, and studying God’s Word our entire life will reflect that through our words, thoughts, actions, and heart’s desire. At the end of sermon three there were questions to assist remembering the highlights from the third installment. At the conclusion of week three sermon three, the research assistant posed questions to a focus group comprised of two parishioners and completed one personal interview of parishioners that had not already been interviewed. Again, the recording process was conducted in a private setting where parishioners felt more comfortable and open to discuss personal beliefs. At the conclusion of week three the research assistant supplied the researcher with the written and recorded documentation of the focus group and personal interview questions. It is imperative that the researcher review this information in preparation for the next week’s sermon installment.

Week four, which started September 13, 2020, began by summarizing week three and its Biblical concepts, principles, and features and discussed and exegeted John 2:22. The Biblical principles believe, trust, and have faith in Jesus and His Word were reinforced. The discipleship program participants were introduced to the Biblical principle that belief in Jesus and His Word is an either you do, or you do not, concept, there is no middle ground. The discipleship program participants were told about the significance of the sentence ‘and they believed the scripture,’ relating to the doctrine of sufficiency. The words describe the actions of the disciples and the action that is expected of modern-day Christians. Discipleship program participants are introduced to one of the nine ‘I Am’ scriptures and it is explained that belief in Jesus and His Word is imperative and primary in order to navigate a perilous, turbulent earthly life. Scripture that confirms belief is imperative to navigate a crisis filled earthly life is found in John 6:35. At the end of sermon four, questions were reviewed to help participants remember the highlights.
from the fourth week. At the conclusion of week four, the research assistant conducted one personal interview and one focus group that consisted of three individuals. Privacy for the interviews was maintained, and the interviews revealed a fear of approaching and talking to others which will deeply affect a person’s ability to witness for Jesus Christ. It was recorded by the researcher that a need for training and opportunities to practice witnessing may be warranted.

Week five, which commenced September 20, 2020, started by summarizing week four and its Biblical concepts, principles, and features and discussed and exegeted Luke 24:44-45. In the introduction for week five it was adamantly explained that we are not allowed, by scripture, to support people who are living a life that is contrary to what scripture supports as is directly implied and stated in Romans 1:22-32. The concept of living a life that is pleasing to God is found only in scripture, and nothing else. The Biblical concept of scripture speaking plainly was also expressed to discipleship program participants and they were told James and the Apostle Paul specifically state that a Christ believer and follower must have a living active faith and a living active belief. This point was emphasized based upon data collected the week prior where participants expressed apprehension and fear when it came to actively sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The discipleship program participant also learned about the other eight ‘I Am’ scriptures in brief which are, John 8:12; 8:58; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; and 15:1. It was explained to discipleship program participants that the Biblical concept of scriptural correctness and accurate scriptural understanding is coupled to the Luke 24:44-45 scripture. The book of Luke highlights the divinity and perfect humanity of Jesus Christ, which is directly connected to Christology, the theological study of the nature and work of Jesus Christ, and how Jesus – 1) fulfills Old Testament prophecy, 2) gave the Word to Moses, the Prophets, and 3) the entirety of the Bible rests firmly upon Jesus and His Word. These Biblical concepts validate the doctrine of
sufficiency, preexistence of the Triune God before creation, and that Jesus, Himself, is the Word. Continuous correlation is established between the New Testament and the Old Testament by showing relevance between Biblical concepts and Biblical principles. The Biblical tenant God is to be feared, revered, and supersedes all earthly physical needs, is illustrated in the tetragrammaton, YHWH, the four-letter Hebrew word for God. The Biblical principle established how God’s Word directly connects and speaks in writing, to the Bible we read today. The discipleship program participants learn that while God makes someone upright the opposite is also true, a person is known by his actions, behaviors, and speech, which is attested to in scripture Proverbs 20:11. The discipleship program participants also were instructed that the Luke 24:44-45 scripture summates scriptures Acts 2:42-47; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalms 19:7-14; and John 2:22 in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency. Emphasis is placed upon personal initiative to go to Jesus, read His Word, obey His Word, apply it to life, and teach it to children. At the end of sermon five, questions were presented to help people remember the vital features from the fifth week. The research assistant completed one personal interview and a focus group comprised of two parishioners. The interviews were conducted in private to maintain the comfort of the participants, which was particularly important in week five as the answers proved to be of a more personal nature. The focus group in week five gave exceptionally detailed answers referencing who and what Christians should and should not support.

Week six, which took place September 27, 2020, concluded the discipleship program sermon series. The lesson started with a brief introduction and quote by C.H. Spurgeon and then led into summarizing weeks one through five and their Biblical concepts, principles, and features. The highlights of each of the five weeks placed emphasis upon the Great Commission and making disciples for Christ and the doctrine of sufficiency. There are no final questions for
remembering the week six sermon six as it is culminative and comprehensive. The research facilitator has the open-ended option of including or not including final questions for week six. At the conclusion of the week six sermon, all participants and attending parishioners that were non-participants, were invited to a Fellowship Meal, held at the church, and supplied by the researcher. This relaxing atmosphere allowed the researcher to interact with participants and non-participants, and the research assistant completed one personal interview and a focus group consisting of three parishioners. These interviews were done in a private setting to ensure confidentiality.

**Intervention Design: Demographics and Tools**

Brick by Brick Bible Church is a non-denominational Christian Church located at 212 Harding Road, Williamsville, New York, which is a suburb of the city of Buffalo, New York. The congregation and church clerical hierarchy of Brick by Brick Bible Church are categorized in the following designating classifications, Traditionalists, born before 1945 (which include the Silent Generation and the Greatest Generation), Baby Boomers, born between 1946-1964, Generation X, born between 1965-1980, Millennials, born between 1980-2000, and children under the age of 18. The congregants are predominantly former Roman Catholics who have abandoned the strict Roman Catholic high church culture and theological doctrine they were born and raised with. While Brick by Brick Bible Church is warm, welcoming, and able to maintain light conversation with each other and newcomers. There is a distinct impediment when teaching, instructing, and dialoguing in orthodoxy and orthopraxy from a Biblical perspective or engaging in a Biblical conversation. This assertion is observable based upon the low percentages of scripturally accurate Biblical knowledge in the pre-questionnaire.
There were 31 participants in the discipleship program six-week course who filled out consent forms, pre-questionnaires, and post-questionnaires. From those 31 participants, random people were chosen for focus group or personal interview sessions following the completion of each discipleship lesson sermon. Each discipleship lesson was approximately 45 minutes in length for six weeks, running consecutively, the first beginning on Sunday August 23, 2020, and the sixth and final sermon lesson of the discipleship program series completing on Sunday September 27, 2020. At the end of each discipleship program a 15-minute-long focus group, containing 2 to 3 randomly selected participants, was conducted as well as a 15-minute-long personal interview session in a one-on-one private setting. Originally, the focus groups were intended to have 3 to 5 randomly selected participants. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the focus groups had to be smaller in size. During the discipleship program intervention, there were some participants in mandatory quarantine who contributed via Facebook live or YouTube. Tools and equipment necessary for successful completion of the discipleship program are audio/visual camera to tape for YouTube and video phone to broadcast live on Facebook. These two resources permitted people to actively engage in a live Sunday service during prayer requests which otherwise would have been relegated to non-participation due to the Covid-19 health crisis.

The specific tools that will be utilized to gather data and measure the effects of the intervention are: the participant agreement form, pre and post questionnaire, question and answer sessions with participants in a group setting, one on one interviews with participants, Facebook live and YouTube videos for any online participants or any in person participants that miss a session. The rationale for including online tools is to increase the sample size of possible participants. By including online viewers, it significantly increases the potential participant pool.
Additionally, COVID-19 restrictions severely limited in-person church attendance during the time of this study. By utilizing on-line mediums, there was a larger participant pool to draw from, and therefore allowed the discipleship program study to continue. When the researcher is ready to commence the discipleship program research project study, items that are required are a video camera/ or video phone recorder, documenting every week for six weeks via audio and sound recording.

**Intervention Design: Ethical Issues**

The research facilitator will discover that there are no ethical issues to discuss relating to the six-week discipleship program sermon series. The discipleship program is designed to be engaging and interactive, intentionally, in the same manner that God’s Word is designed to do. Each individual participant is encouraged to get involved by reading their Bible daily, memorizing scripture, and telling others whom they meet in the course of their day about their Savior Jesus Christ, in the same manner that God’s Word does.

The researcher took great care to diminish the possible occurrence of any ethical issues by ensuring that the research methods were beneficial and non-malfeasant in nature. The researcher also maintained ethical principals in the care of the participants by minimizing the risk of harm, obtaining informed consent, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, avoiding deceptive practices and providing the right to withdraw.\(^\text{156}\) In order to ensure a sense a non-bias in the research, the researcher obtained the services of a research assistant. The assistant assigned numbers to questionnaires and conducted the personal interviews. This allowed the researcher to read while participants maintained complete anonymity. There was a chance participants could

feel pressure to answer questions in a certain way if their identity was not protected. Additionally, then researcher may have unwittingly led participants to answer interview questions in a skewed manner in order to reach specific research goals. These issues were avoided through the use of the research assistant.

**Intervention Design: Data Collected**

The data collected from audio/visual camera, phone camera, research facilitator’s journal notes, pre and post questionnaires, and personal focus group/interview group(s), was compiled by percentages of participants that provided specific answers on the pre questionnaire. After completing the post questionnaire those participants responses are analyzed and again compiled by percentage for comparison and confirming evidence of increased Biblical knowledge. The pre and post questionnaire measures the results of twenty-eight questions that directly relate to Biblical concepts that are a specific part of the discipleship program. Participants are grouped by age category on the pre and post questionnaire. The majority of the questions focus upon measuring knowledge concerning the doctrine of sufficiency and the Great Commission, and general attitudes toward church attendance and the importance of applying scripture to daily life. Additionally, personal interviews and focus groups allow participants to provide more open-ended answers to specific questions pertaining to each discipleship program’s sermon message.

Participants were invited to take part in this project research via the researcher reading a written document invitation that explained the specifics of the research. Willing participants volunteered and completed a consent form prior to research project commencement. Pre-questionnaires were completed and collected before any discipleship program sermons began. Once the discipleship program started no more participants were allowed to join the project study. At the completion of each week’s discipleship program message, personal private
interviews and focus groups were conducted. The researcher (or researcher’s assistant facilitator) asked a series of questions and recorded the answers. Participation in personal interviews and focus groups were completely voluntary and completely random. In light of the Covid-19 health crisis, some focus groups were limited to two participants due to lower numbers of regular church attendance. State mandates only allowed a certain percentage of total possible church attendees, therefore many participants viewed church services in an online format. These formats included Facebook live and YouTube. Due to the random and voluntary nature of focus groups, there were not always more than two participants available who had not already engaged in a survey group.

**Intervention Design: Recording and Protection**

The data collected from audio/visual camera, phone camera, research facilitator’s journal notes, pre and post questionnaires, and personal focus group/interview group(s) is only located on a password protected laptop computer. Paper copies of pre and post questionnaires which contain participants answers were in a pad-locked office storage cabinet. Only the researcher’s assistant facilitator has access to single key and knowledge of randomly assigned number sequence to project study participants names, addresses, phone numbers, and other personal information. As participants completed and returned pre-questionnaires each individual’s name was redacted from the document. Each participant was assigned a numerical value, and that participant was identified only with their number going forward in the research project. The research project study data information is kept for a period of five years’ time per federal regulations which require all research records be stored post publication of the research study project. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has established a series of protective regulatory mandates when project studies involve human participants. The Code of
Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 45 Department of Health and Human Services Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects Subpart A, §§46.101 section b number (1) numbers (1) and (2) were followed during the implementation of the discipleship program study.\textsuperscript{157} Research conducted of the discipleship program involved educating the congregation and ecclesiastical hierarchy in embracing the Great Commission and comprehending the doctrine of sufficiency. All participants were subject to reasonable requests which amounted to asking their individual/group thoughts and filling out a pre and post questionnaire. Liability and damage to participants reputation, health, careers, or familial setting is at an extreme bare minimum, hence no need for informing participant subjects to any risks as no risks were ascertainable or present.

**Intervention Design: IRB Approval**

In brief, human subjects that participate in the discipleship program research project have their anonymity protected and are free from all harm and liability whether that be physical, mental, financial, or social. International Review Board Approval (IRB) for human subjects was obtained through Liberty University before the commencement of any type of research. See Appendix D for IRB approval.

**Intervention Design: Relationship to Participants and Bias**

The researcher should have minimal relationship toward the discipleship program participants. Relationship is limited to Pastor, Biblical Counselor, and other duties and responsibilities as is required of a Minister toward the congregants and church ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Christian Church setting. The overarching understanding is that the researcher must avoid bias in participant selection, focus group/interview group discussion, data collection,

data analysis, and discipleship program delivery. In brief, the researcher is interested in only what the discipleship program participants believe and think concerning their Christian belief, Christian faith, and Christian practices. A definition of bias is,

Bias is any trend or deviation from the truth in data collection, data analysis, interpretation and publication which can cause false conclusions. Bias can occur either intentionally or unintentionally. Intention to introduce bias into someone’s research is immoral. Nevertheless, considering the possible consequences of a biased research, it is almost equally irresponsible to conduct and publish a biased research unintentionally.158

Considering research bias can be intentional and unintentional the most sure method to prevent research bias is for the researcher to rely upon a research assistant who randomly selects participants, collects data accurately and precisely, and records and analyzes data accurately and precisely, in order to prevent research bias being a factor during the discipleship program sermon series. This discipleship program study did utilize a research assistant to allow the researcher to focus and concentrate more specifically on the theological construct, Biblical doctrines, Biblical principles, and scriptural accuracy of the discipleship program six week sermon series and be self-removed from contaminating data collection, data analysis, and implementation of focus group/ interview group questions.

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Implementation of the Intervention Design

Implementation of the Intervention Design: Data triangulation

The forms of data that are used in this project research study are both qualitative and quantitative in order to cross reference participants answers which are gathered from the pre and post questionnaire, and focus group/ interview group sessions. A definition of qualitative research is,

Research that involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is used to understand how people experience the world.\(^{159}\)

Information during the Discipleship program that is qualitative are answers to pre and post questionnaires, and answers to focus group/ interview group sessions. Further, answers were analyzed for mean, median, and mode, and percentage, extrapolating a quantitative numerical assignment. A definition for quantitative research is,

The process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations. Quantitative research methods can be used for descriptive, correlational, and experimental research.\(^{160}\)

The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods ensures sound answers from random participants on pre and post questionnaires and focus group/ interview group sessions;


\(^{160}\)Ibid.
and also shows either an increase or decrease, respectively, in Biblical knowledge post discipleship program series completion.

**Implementation of the Intervention Design: Sequence for data collection**

The specific sequence for data collection for the discipleship program series project combines qualitative and quantitative research. A definition for sequential data gathering is,

> Sequencing is one way of combining qualitative and quantitative data by alternating between them. It relies on the validity of both qualitative and quantitative data collection options and times the use of each type of tool so that information gathered informs the development of the next set of tools and the overall progress of the research.\(^{161}\)

Reasons as to why both qualitative and quantitative research is employed in the discipleship program series project are: to ensure against participant falsifying answers, to measure data analysis understanding if an increase in Biblical knowledge took place, to have program participants realize necessity for daily Bible reading and application of Biblical principles/doctrines to daily life. By utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research, it is possible for the researcher to quickly scan percentages and visually comprehend questions that were not understood by participants in the beginning of discipleship program. If there was an increase in Biblical understanding at the conclusion of the discipleship program, those percentage increases are also easily discernible. Further, the use of both research tools enables cross checking of information for validation of qualified accurate measurable results of Biblical concepts which are numerically understood.

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The specific sequence for data collection and analysis consists of: 1) handing out pre discipleship program questionnaire, 2) at end of each of the six sermon series – focus group/ interview group sessions take place, 3) lasting for approximately fifteen minutes in duration, 4) at end of discipleship program series handing out post Discipleship questionnaire, 5) retrieving all questionnaires, 6) assigning numeric value and ranking of questions by percentages, 7) analyzing data to determine if awareness and increase in Biblical knowledge took place. This step by step procedure enables the researcher/research assistant to gather data prior to analysis process. This procedure also allows random program participants to have time to think about questions before answering the post questionnaire.

**Implementation of the Intervention Design: Data Analyzation**

Data analysis is derived by taking percentage of total participants per each pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire. In other words, on each question of the pre and post questionnaire it is determined from a total of thirty-one participants what percentage answered each individual question in a specific way. Data is also derived from determining if there is an increase in online viewer participation pre versus post discipleship program. This allows the researcher to visually see: 1) questions that participants did not know or had problem answering, 2) if an increase or decrease took place of Biblical knowledge pre versus post questionnaire. This methodology for data analysis allows the researcher to ascertain if a numerical increase in Biblical knowledge per results of the questionnaires translated into increased participation in Sunday services and weekly Bible prayer meetings. This increase will be measured in both in-person participation and through on-line viewing. An added feature that comes from the online viewing participation is if the researcher sees an active increase in viewer participation pre versus post discipleship program, and four weeks post completion. Percentage increase is
determined, pre versus post discipleship program, by taking a running count of number of views online pre-program and seeing if there was an increase in number online views post program.

A fair trial period to evaluate the intervention will begin with the receipt of the first prequestionnaires. Once enough prequestionnaires are received, the six-week discipleship program will commence. The prequestionnaire data can be evaluated during the program, and therefore there will not need to be a long delay between prequestionnaire data collection and the beginning of the discipleship program intervention. Once the six-week discipleship program has concluded, voluntary participants will complete a post questionnaire that is identical to the prequestionnaire. Participants will be given one week to complete and return the post questionnaire. A fair trial period to evaluate post-intervention data is one to two weeks.

A successful outcome in this intervention is three-fold: 1) change in attitudes and perceptions as reflected in the post questionnaire that are indicative of a greater understanding and need for accurate Biblical scriptural application to daily life, 2) a better understanding of the Great Commission and the doctrine of sufficiency, 3) higher attendance and participation in Sunday service, prayer meeting, Bible study, and other extracurricular church activities.

The old approach was too accepting of low attendance and participation in Sunday service, prayer meeting, Bible study, and other extra-curricular church events. The new approach has congregants invest in all church activities for daily life through the utilization of self-awareness, self-motivation, and an intrinsic instinct that one must read and apply scripture to every aspect of one’s daily life. The new approach will specifically address the importance of the Great Commission, not only for church leadership, but for every parishioner in attendance either physically or online. This intervention will further the growth of Christian community as will be reflected in a higher volume of participation.
Chapter 4

Results

Prior to the beginning of the Discipleship program six-week series, attendance in Sunday services, weekly Bible Prayer meetings, and other extra-curricular church events was extremely low at Brick by Brick Bible Church. The purpose of this study was to examine rationales why congregants do not live Biblical standards, and therefore do not live the scriptures in daily life. The proposed reasons for low attendance stemmed from the toleration of secular ideology and non-Biblical information into a Christian Church setting and Ministry context throughout multiple decades. Non-Biblical beliefs and practices were instituted and supported by the church ecclesiastical hierarchy and the utilization of many guest speakers, who condoned incorrect scriptural understanding, into the pulpit at Brick by Brick Bible Church. It was the purpose of the introduction of a discipleship program project study and the reintroducing of correct scriptural understanding of Biblical principles and doctrines, to intend to show a definitive improvement upon parishioners and ecclesiastical hierarchy’s Biblical knowledge base at Brick by Brick Bible church. In this particular chapter, the data will show that decades of toleration of secular ideology has affected Brick by Brick Bible church parishioners understanding of the sufficiency of scripture.\footnote{\textsuperscript{162}}

\footnotesize{In the pre questionnaires, two major areas of deficit in Biblical knowledge are identified as the Great Commission and the doctrine of sufficiency. As anticipated, based upon the researcher’s perceived observation of a lack of Biblical knowledge at Brick by Brick Bible church, participant percentages that left the Great Commission question (question \#23) on the pre questionnaires. \textsuperscript{162}See Appendix E, pre and post questionnaires.}
questionnaire blank or wrote in the answer ‘I don’t know’ were 52% (16 people). These high pre
questionnaire percentages are indicative of Brick by Brick Bible church’s inclusion of secular
ideology in their Christian church. After the conclusion of the discipleship program project
study, which heavily emphasized the Great Commission, it was anticipated that respondents
would greatly improve their Biblical knowledge in this area. In the post questionnaire results,
participant percentages were at 36% (11 people) for giving a Biblically accurate definition of the
Great Commission, as illustrated in the following bar graphs:

![Bar graph showing Great Commission pre questionnaire results](image)

Fig. 1.1
From pre questionnaire to post questionnaire there is a noticeable improvement in understanding what the Great Commission is, an increase from 16% (5 people) to 36% (11 people). Inaccurate scriptural answers decreased from 52% (16 people) pre to 19% (6 people) post questionnaire. A silent response comes from the partially accurate scale which increased from pre 32% (10 people) to post questionnaire 45% (14 people). Out of a total of 31 participants in the project study, what can be drawn from an increase of 13% (4 people) of discipleship program participants who answered the Great Commission question partially accurate? The increase in partial answers indicates that program participants have questions about understanding the Great Commission and did not ask. There is also a variable of unknown quantity which factors into the increase of partial answers. The project study was started during the Covid-19 outbreak and ran successfully using both in person participants and others via live Facebook broadcast. This unknown quantity will be selectively designated and termed as Factor X. A question comes to mind, how many participants in the discipleship program were so stressed out about Factor X.
(Covid-19) that it distracted their mind on concentrating and understanding the Biblical principles and Biblical doctrines presented in each of the six-week sermons? This is suggested as a viable reason for why at the start of the project study, in person participation at church decreased, then increased over the course of the entire program.

Another major area of deficit in Biblical knowledge was observed in participant pre questionnaire results when asked to define the doctrine of sufficiency. Participant percentages in the pre questionnaire that answered with ‘I don’t know’ or left it blank were 71% (22 people) as compared to post questionnaire which were 19% (6 people). The high percentage of participants were lacking Biblical knowledge in the area of doctrine of sufficiency, was anticipated as stated in the original researcher’s purpose statement. A significant increase in participant understanding that the Bible is all sufficient for all areas of life is reflected in the following bar graphs:

![Doctrine of Sufficiency pre questionnaire (question #26)](image)

Fig. 2.1
As is directly observable, and was anticipated, an increase in understanding the doctrine of sufficiency went from 6% (2 people) on the pre questionnaire to 62% (19 people) on the post questionnaire. Also, directly observable is the decrease of scripturally inaccurate answers from 71% (22 people) pre questionnaire to 19% (6 people) post questionnaire. There is not a great difference, however, in the partially accurate answers from pre to post questionnaire which leads the researcher to a question; even though there is a dramatic difference in people understanding the Bible is all sufficient for all areas of their life, the partially accurate answers maintain a similar constant, why? Is the reason Factor X (Covid-19), attributing to participant worry and anxiety? Or are there other variables not yet identified?

To accurately interpret the data, it is important to understand that an inverse proportion should exist between pre to post Biblical knowledge. Given this assumption, there should naturally be an increase in Biblical knowledge along with a decrease in partially accurate answers as well. The percentages for partially accurate answers are correlational and directly
connected to answering scripturally correct or scripturally incorrect. Thus, it was assumed that
the number of people who would have a partially accurate answer would also have changed pre
to post questionnaire. The data revealed that almost an equal amount of participants had a
partially accurate answer on both pre and post questionnaires. It leads the researcher to the
question; why did the same amount of people only partially understand the information? Are
there other variables associated with non-understanding? If so, what are they? How can they be
determined? How can they be avoided or compensated for? One possible explanation for the
same amount of people not understanding both pre and post questionnaire questions on the
doctrine of sufficiency can stem from a response from participant #5 in the Personal Interview
Questions for week 1 found in Appendix F. When participant #5 was asked the question: what
are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life? Participant #5
responded by saying “be more willing to listen and accept ‘feedback’ from the Lord - turn to
Scripture more for answers instead of the world - ask our pastor for guidance in understanding
scripture, do not take it at face value.” The respondent’s answers are indicative of a silent
response in which it is commonly accepted by parishioners to look for answers about daily life
questions from the world rather than God’s Word and being hesitant and reluctant to ask the
Pastor what scripture means in relation to common everyday problems of today. Is this a
commonplace incident that is selective for only Brick by Brick Bible Church congregants and
ecclesiastical hierarchy? Presumably, the answer is no, and understood in participant #5 response
to another question for week 1 Personal Interview Questions found in Appendix F. When
participant #5 was asked: are there any challenges that you many have in applying this week’s
scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they? Participant #5 answered: “realizing and
accepting that what God speaks to me I may not want to hear, regular daily maintenance (making
the time), turning to someone who can help me understand the scripture, pushing myself from close enough to good enough.” Participant #5’s response indicates that it is a human tendency among mankind to accept and cope with when “God speaks to me I may not want to hear.”

While the problem of human beings not listening to or following God’s Word is not unique to Brick by Brick Bible Church, the dynamic taking place at Brick by Brick Bible church is in part a small microcosm of the malady that may be occurring in other churches. The inclusion of secular ideology which is non-Biblical into a Christian church setting and Christian church praxis explains the reason for not following God’s Word as indicated by participant #5’s response. However, this only answers the ‘why’ question and not the ‘how’ question as to why and how this took place originally. In brief, participants know what they are supposed to do, so why are they not doing it? Determining these specific rationales for not living the scripture in daily life is key to increasing congregational desire to becoming more dedicated disciples in Jesus Christ.

Another question from the pre and post questionnaire that addresses the previous issue of human creation not always wanting to hear what God has to say is found in question number 28 from Appendix B. The question states – which statement best describes your belief on the relevance of scripture in today’s world? As anticipated, participants percentages from pre to post questionnaire, pre 75% (23 people) and post 81% (25 people), indicate a slight increase that participants feel the scriptures are just as relevant today as when they were first written. This is observable in the following bar graphs:
Fig. 3.1

Is Bible Relevant for Today
pre questionnaire
(question #28)

- Scripturally accurate (75%)
- Scripturally inaccurate (6%)
- Completely inaccurate (19%)

Series 1  Series 2  Series 3

Fig. 3.2

Is Bible Relevant for Today
post questionnaire
(question #28)

- Scripturally accurate (81%)
- Scripturally inaccurate (6%)
- Completely inaccurate (13%)

Series 1  Series 2  Series 3
While it is clear that participants in the discipleship program feel firmly that the Bible is just as relevant today as when it was written, pre participant 75% (23 people) and post participant 81% (25 people), there should be a significant difference in an inverse proportion of respondents who understand, from pre to post, that the Bible is all sufficient (doctrine of sufficiency) for their every daily needs and concerns. However, the data indicates that participants still have substantial questions concerning the Bible is all sufficient. This ratio is understood from pre 19% (6 people) to post 13% (4 people) which equates of a decrease from 6 people to 4 people, not a large enough decrease to substantiate that discipleship program participants truly grasp the meaning of the doctrine of sufficiency. Further, it indicates that although discipleship program participants heard the information, there are those who are either ambivalent as to applying it, do not believe parts of it, or believe only certain segmented sections of the six-week sermon series. In brief, there are enough people contained within the Brick by Brick Bible Church congregant body who require more information and more convincing.

A possible reason for Brick by Brick Bible Church parishioners holding on to secular ideological belief is contained in the Focus Group questions found in Appendix F. In Focus Group questions for week 1, participants #9 and #23 answers may shed light toward further understanding attitudes and beliefs strongly held by parishioners and ecclesiastical hierarchy at Brick by Brick Bible Church. When asked the Focus Group question: “Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?” Respondents #9 and #23 answered: “time, finding time, struggle to change thinking in order to make it a priority, many places shut down right now limiting groups and services, find more ways to connect in the current situation.” The participants are reflective of the Factor X (fear during Covid-19) which permeates congregant thinking and clouds proper concentration
upon Biblical theological scriptural accurate principles and doctrines. Further, the data shows that congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy at Brick by Brick Bible Church are holding tightly to personal beliefs and long held ideologies rather than searching the scriptures for answers. The following pie graph demonstrates this phenomenon found in question #7:

![Pie chart](image)

- scripturally accurate (70%)
- scripturally inaccurate (6%)
- there are no differences in religions (0%)
- scriptures in other religions are equally from God (3%)
- all religious organizations contain truth (22%)

Fig. 4.1
As is indicated by the participant answers there are a similar amount who continue to hold to the belief that all religious organizations contain truth, pre 22% (7 people) and post 26% (8 people). This is followed by the fact that the respondents who answered based on scripture, only increased from 70% (21 people) pre to 71% (22 people) post questionnaire. This indicates there are still 29% of participants that even after the conclusion of the discipleship program project study, firmly ascribe to the belief that 1) all religious organizations contain truth, 2) religious scriptures in other religions are equally from God, and 3) there are no differences in religions. In brief, the data suggests that there are 9 people who hold to a belief that is non-Biblical even at the conclusion of the sermon series despite having been presented with scriptural Biblical principles which clearly emphasize and state the Bible is the only place where truth is found. The researcher anticipated a noticeable inverse proportion to take place from pre to post questionnaire in discipleship program participants understanding that all religious organizations
do not contain truth, religious scriptures from other religions are not from God, and there are vast and multiple differences between Christian belief and other religious organizations. This change did not occur which leads to the conclusion that even when presented with scriptural evidence, some participants still have profound doubts believing in what the scripture actually says, and the reasons why congregants do not adhere to Biblical standards may run deeper than a simple lack of information.

What is the reason for participant misunderstanding from pre to post questionnaire regarding personal belief that Christianity is comparable to other religions at Brick by Brick Bible church? The answer and reason, in part, is found in the Personal Interview Questions for week 2 found in Appendix F. Participant #6 was asked: what are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life? Participant #6 responded: “in my daily life I try to be a good role model for others. A Christian is known by their actions which equals ‘good fruit’.” The discipleship program participant alludes to not fully comprehending the Biblical concept of ‘good fruit’ which refers to one telling others about Jesus Christ, witnessing for Christ, in order to bring a non-believer to belief in Christ. The rationale for this is because the Biblical concept of ‘good fruit’ coincides with making disciples for Christ and is a foundational Biblical principle. Further, the Personal Interview Questions were asked after the completion of week 2 sermon 2, where the participants and congregation were informed that the subject for week 2 sermon 2 was living out our faith in Jesus Christ. An emphasis of the week 2 sermon stated, “the connection that 2 Timothy has with the doctrine of sufficiency is living out your faith in Jesus Christ and teaching others to do the same.” The data suggests that even though the discipleship program participants and congregants were given great detail that ‘good fruit’ is a specific reference to making disciples for Christ, they continue to ascribe to the secular worldly
belief that possibly all religious organizations contain truth, and all religious scriptures in other religious organizations are from God, and there are no differences in religions. The amount of people who continue to hold to this non-Biblical viewpoint is demonstrated from the pie graph as pre 22% (7 people) and post 26% (8 people). The number of people who answered all religious organizations contain truth should have decreased significantly from pre to post questionnaire results. The data suggests that one of the different combinations of theoretical possibilities that could be the result of the increase are due to: 1) participant misunderstanding/non comprehension, 2) defiance of belief in the scripture, 3) participant still has questions about scriptural, Biblical concepts, but is not asking the Pastor/researcher, 4) participants seek non-Biblical sources for help in understanding scripture, 5) participants seek non-theologically trained Biblical Pastoral professionals for information about scripture, and finally, 6) participants still seek other sources than Bible for help in daily life events. These conclusions directly connect to the researcher’s original assumption that secular ideas and inclusivity have a direct affect on meaningful Christian participation and Christian praxis.

This leads the researcher to a question: do the discipleship program participants comprehend the scripture that was explained to them from pre to post questionnaire? The data suggests that they do, as is illustrated in the following pie chart found in question #8:
Fig. 5.1

Fig. 5.2
The previous pie chart illustrates pre and post results for the question ‘I believe,’ where the participant was asked to select one of the five pre written answers of either A) if you are a good person leading a good life that’s all that matters, B) life is a game you can’t win, C) how I lead my life matters to God, D) how I lead my life doesn’t matter to God, and E) how I lead my life matters to me. The Biblically accurate answer to this question is C. The pre questionnaire results were: A) 19% (6 people), B) 0%, C) 67% (20 people), D) 0%, E) 16% (5 people), with one person writing on the questionnaire Other and writing in the words none of the above. The post questionnaire results were: A) 16% (5 people), B) 0%, C) 84% (26 people), D) 0%, and E) 0%. The data shows that from pre questionnaire (results at 67%, 20 people) to post questionnaire (results at 84%, 26 people), that the program participants do understand that what they do in their life matters to God. In brief, this suggests they heard the information correctly. If participants had questions about the information and scriptures that they heard during the course of the discipleship program, then there would not have been an increase in participants answering with the anticipated answer of C.

Another question from pre to post questionnaire holds the direct indication of the personal beliefs of the discipleship program participants from pre to post questionnaire, and specifically suggests that despite being told what the scriptures state, program participants are clinging to non-Biblical beliefs and practices. Question #9 is illustrated in the following bar graph which represents the inner belief of the program participants pre and post questionnaire and at the completion of the six-week discipleship program series:
Fig. 6.1

All religions are the same at their core
pre questionnaire
(question #9)

Fig. 6.2

All religions are the same at their core
post questionnaire
(question #9)
From pre to post questionnaire the Biblically accurate answer is question D, completely disagree, and from pre to post questionnaire the results of those who believe this Biblical foundational fact went from pre 55% (17 people) to post 49% (15 people). The data suggests that the personal belief of participants is to hold on to secular non-Biblical beliefs despite having been told the scripture specifically states that all religions are not the same at their core and that only Christianity is different in that it contains our Savior Jesus Christ. Further, the research assistant wrote a note in the column of the post questionnaire in response to an outpour of people responding to question number 9 which states, “most talk about living a good life – but belief in Jesus is unique to the US.” The data and the discussion with the research assistant, when combined, imply that discipleship program project study participants choose to hold to secular belief despite the scripture stating otherwise. If discipleship program participants choose to believe in scriptural Biblical foundational concept, Christianity is the only religion that is uniquely different, it was anticipated that there would have been a sharp increase from pre to post questionnaire in answering with completely disagree D. It was anticipated by the researcher that program participants would have answered closer to three-quarters or more of the total 31 total program participants, but this did not occur.

How and why is this phenomenon explained, people holding to personal belief rather than Biblical scriptural belief, and participants understanding the scripture yet not applying it directly to their daily life. The solution is explained in questions #5 and #6. Question #5 asked participants: I would characterize myself applying Biblical standards to my life as, A) strong, B) weak, C) moderate, D) devoted, and E) optional. Question #6 asked participants: I would characterize my understanding of scripture as, A) strong, B) weak, C) moderate, D) devoted, and E) optional. From pre to post questionnaire it was anticipated that there would be a noticeable
difference as discipleship program participants realize that their initial knowledge of applying and understanding scripture was extremely weak in comparison to their knowledge of applying and understanding scripture post questionnaire. The results should indicate that the participant realizes he/she needs more work scripturally. However, from pre to post results the discipleship program participants initial view of knowledge of applying and understanding scripture increased in post questionnaire results. This is the direct opposite of what is initially expected. The following bar graphs indicate that the Discipleship program participants believe their knowledge increased on how to apply and understand scripture when in reality program participants should have realized they need a tremendous amount of work to be done yet.

Fig. 7.1
Fig. 7.2

The results from pre to post questionnaire, for question #5, confirm the researchers suspicion that discipleship program participants comprehension of applying ‘Biblical standards to my life’ is severely skewed in comparison to what the scripture actually states. The post results should have been a significantly lower number than the pre results, but that, in fact, did not happen. The pre results for question #5 are: A) 35% (11 people), B) 3% (1 person), C) 45% (14 people), D) 13% (4 people), and E) 3% (1 person). The post results for question #5 are: A) 46% (14 people), B) 3% (1 person), C) 35% (11 people), D) 13% (4 people), and E) 3% (1 person). The specific area of interest to the researcher is the decrease in those participants who answered C which are pre 14 people to post 11 people. This number reflects that out of a total of 31 discipleship program participants only 10%, 3 people, (the difference of 11 post subtracted from 14 pre) comprehend from the beginning to the completion of the discipleship program that they have work to do on their own personal self-beliefs to change it more toward a Biblically accurate scripturally correct
Biblical viewpoint. The results from pre to post questionnaire were expected to yield a significant decrease in those participants that answered A (strong). Further, the results from pre to post questionnaire were expected to yield a significant decrease in those participants that answered D (devoted).

Confirmation of the program participants maintaining non-Biblical viewpoints post discipleship program project study completion is affirmed in the pre to post results of question #6, as is illustrated in the following bar graphs.

Fig. 8.1
As is demonstrated by the results pre to post, program participants pre questionnaire answer for A (strong) is 39% (12 people) and the post questionnaire answer for A (strong) is 46% (14 people). These results are similar to question #5, an increase in understanding scripture exists within the belief of the program participants. One significantly marked difference from question #5 to question number #6 is how participant percentages answered with D (devoted) and E (optional). In the first instance of participants answering with D (devoted) the pre results are 3% (1 person) and the post results for answering with D (devoted) are 0%. This suggests that one person comprehended that they need to understand scripture better. In the participants who answered E (optional) the pre results are 0% and the post results are 3% (1 person). The significance in the increase from pre to post results for answering E (optional) suggests one person remains convinced at the completion of the discipleship program project study that
understanding scripture is an optional belief, further implying that one person believes scriptural comprehension is a personal choice.

Although the results from pre to post questionnaire are other than an expected, it sheds light on an unanticipated conclusionary percentage statistical observation. The results should have decreased as participants realize they have to work at understanding scripture, instead, the results indicated that participants think they are applying Biblical standards to their life and further, participants think they understand scripture. This suggests, overall, discipleship program participants are holding to a confidence other than what scripture states.

How is this affirmed by the data? Question #10 of pre/ post questionnaire is: I can easily follow what the Bible says because A) I understand it completely, B) ask for help when I don’t understand a scripture passage or verse, C) much of the Bible I do not understand at all, D) I don’t bother because most of the Bible is outdated, and E) I never ask for help understanding Bible scripture. The data indicates program participants believe they are asking for help when they do not understand a scripture passage or verse, yet in reality, they are either asking a source that is giving incorrect Biblical knowledge or are not asking at all. The following bar graph indicates this problem:
Fig. 9.1

I can easily follow what the Bible says pre questionnaire (question #10)

- I understand it completely (3%)
- I ask for help when I don't understand scripture (75%)
- Much of Bible I do not understand at all (3%)
- Most of the Bible is outdated (3%)
- I never ask for help understanding Bible scripture (16%

Series 1 ■ Series 2 □ Series 3 □

Fig. 9.2

I can easily follow what the Bible says post questionnaire (question #10)

- I understand it completely (6%)
- I ask for help when I don't understand scripture (84%)
- Much of the Bible I do not understand at all (6%)
- Most of the Bible is outdated (0%)
- I never ask for help understanding Bible scripture (3%)

Series 1 ■ Series 2 □ Series 3 □
As the data indicates from pre to post, program participants are answering that they ask for help when they do not understand a scripture passage or verse, yet in reality, they are not asking for help. As has been stated, either the congregants and hierarchy at Brick by Brick Bible church are asking scriptural questions from a source that is not giving them scripturally correct information or they are not asking at all. The expected results should have indicated a decrease in answering question #10 with the B answer (I ask for help when I don’t understand a scripture or verse) from pre to post results in order for the information to coincide with the answers from previous questions asked in the pre/post questionnaire. If it is presumed that prior to having taken the discipleship program that participants did not have this Biblical knowledge, which is demonstrated by the results, then, how can the participants not realize that they have a tremendous amount of work to do in order to lead and live a Biblically accurate life? The data and percentage results should indicate this participant awareness. On a positive note, those participants that answered question # 10 with D (the Bible is outdated) and E (I never ask for help) both decreased significantly, pre answering D is 3% (1 person), and post answering D is 0%. Likewise results for pre answering E on question # 10 is 16% (5 people) to post answering E is 3% (1 person). This indicates a tendency for a small percentage of program participants (4 people or 13%) awareness has opened to reality – they need more Biblical knowledge and help applying scripture to their daily lives.

Is this supported by the data? Yes, as is indicated in the following pie graph percentages as program participants answered question #12 (a person should be allowed to believe whatever they want):
A person should be allowed to believe whatever they want
pre questionnaire
(question #12)

- completely agree (52%)
- somewhat agree (19%)
- somewhat disagree (10%)
- completely disagree (19%)
- unsure (0%)

Fig. 10.1

A person should be allowed to believe whatever they want
post questionnaire
(question #12)

- completely agree (52%)
- somewhat agree (23%)
- somewhat disagree (6%)
- completely disagree (19%)
- unsure (0%)

Fig. 10.2
As is demonstrated from pre to post with the previous pie charts, even after completing the discipleship program, now having obtained correct scriptural Biblical information, program participants still hold that secular ideology is acceptable as a belief structure and is comparable with a Biblical worldview. Results from pre are: pre – A) completely agree 52% (16 people), B) somewhat agree 19% (6 people), C) somewhat disagree 10% (3 people), D) completely disagree 19% (6 people), E) unsure 0%. Results from post are: post – A) completely agree 52% (16 people), B) somewhat agree 23% (7 people), C) somewhat disagree 6% (2 people), D) completely disagree 19% (6 people), and E) unsure 0%. The data implies that program participants are not convinced that the acceptance of other beliefs are inferior to Biblical scriptural beliefs and a Biblical worldview. In brief, program participants, post discipleship program are not convinced of Christian exclusivity in comparison to other world religious ideology, religious scriptures, and modern secular viewpoints. In fact, the data does show an increase in answering with C (somewhat disagree) and D (completely disagree), from pre to post respectively. If the program participants were convinced of Christian exclusivity, then there would have been a significant decrease in answering question A (completely agree) at 52% to an extremely lower number in post results. If program participants were convinced of Christian exclusivity, then there also would have been a significant increase in participants who answered with D (completely disagree). The question number 12 is based from the command that Christ gave found in scripture to make disciples found in Matthew chapter 28 verse 19, and Mark chapter 16 verse 15, the Great Commission.

Although there were a few unanticipated results within the project study, overall, many of the anticipated findings did come to fruition. There was an overall increase in Biblical knowledge and understanding within the participant group, but the understanding of rationales as
to why congregants do not live Biblical standards at Brick by Brick Bible church still remain
general in nature and at times elusive. There was some general understanding gained by the
researcher as to reasons and rationales for low attendance and participation, but the data did not
reveal deeper and more meaningful revelations as to why congregants are not living the scripture
in daily life. Further research may be warranted that more closely examine Brick by Brick Bible
church congregant lack of desire to become more dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

Purpose and brief overview

The problem presented was to ascertain reasons and rationales for Christian congregants and clerical hierarchy, of Brick by Brick Bible church, having substituted and replaced accurate Biblical theological understanding and praxis with secular ideological belief. The basic assumption in Brick by Brick Bible church is that erosion of correct theological belief/understanding has developed over decades and directly contributed to a lax in discipline in Bible study, discipleship programing, and accurately depicting, transmitting, and maintaining scriptural accuracy and integrity from an orthodox Christian Biblical perspective and worldview. The purpose of the discipleship program project study was to instill, within congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy at Brick by Brick Bible church, the basic Christian theological element that scripture is all sufficient for every area of their daily life. Further Christian Biblical principles which were addressed in the discipleship program project study were: 1) the necessity for daily Bible reading, 2) Christian exclusivity, 3) the promotion of The Great Commission, 4) the promotion of discipleship program, 5) the promotion of witnessing for Jesus Christ, 6) understanding the necessity for correct scriptural accuracy and comprehension, and 7) the expulsion of religious pluralistic ideology and secular ideology. The premise is, if congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy invest themselves and engage with daily Bible reading and applying scripture to their daily life that an increase in weekly attendance in Sunday service, Bible Prayer Meeting, and other Christian activities and Christian events will ensue.

Several reasons exist for the erosion of correct theological scriptural understanding and belief. A prominent issue that has occurred within Brick by Brick Bible church setting is the
introduction of viewing church as an entertainment industry, residing specifically and solely to accommodate weekly participants. This church methodology provides fun and amusing activities which are developed to acquire large amounts of people in weekly attendance. The pitfall that exists in a seeker friendly model of church is the sacrifice of scriptural accuracy and scriptural integrity. Opposite of a seeker friendly church model is a Biblically accurate church model. This approach accentuates and highlights scriptural accuracy and the requirement for correct scriptural belief and praxis. The difficulty that exists in a Biblically accurate church model is that attendance can be extremely low, as it has been at Brick by Brick Bible church. There is also a lack of programming at Brick by Brick Bible church that is aimed at reaching younger generations. Currently, the millennial generation are in excess of seventy million people. Twenty-two percent of the American population, born between the early 1980’s and the mid 1990’s, who range in age from approximately 26 years old to approximately 41 years old, hold little to no belief in God or the Bible. The obvious dilemma is how to reach a vast segment of population which readily ignores and denies God’s existence and the truth found in God’s Word. Pew Research report collected information on the religious composition of young adults ranging in age from 18 to 29 as, 57% identifying as Christian. However, of that 57%, a little over half of the total, identifying as Christian, 19% are Evangelical, 11% are mainline Protestant, 6% are black Protestant, 16% are Roman Catholic, 2% are Mormon, 1% are orthodox Christian, 1% are Jehovah’s Witness, and <1% are other than Christian. The evident problem is in the fact that Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witness, and other than Christian, are not following scripturally accurate Christian belief and ideology, which is 20%. Of the 57% who identify as

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Christian and are following more closely to scriptural accuracy are the 37% who identify as Evangelical, mainline Protestant, black Protestant, and orthodox Christian. If the Pew research statistics are accurate, there are 55 million people in the 18 to 29 age range. This means that a little over 31 million (57% of 55 million) identify as Christian; however, only 37% of those are more scripturally accurate, which is approximately a little over 20 million. Statistically speaking, there, are 328 million people in the United States, and when calculating 20 million of 328 million, 6% or 6 million is the over-all total. If there are 118 million people ranging in age from 18 to 41, then those who identify as Christian and are more scripturally accurate are approximately 9.45% or approximately a little over 29 million people. Considering just the 72 million millennial population, and calculating 9.45% of 72, then the percentage of those who identifying as Christian is approximately 6.8 million. The figures are scandalously shocking and exceedingly disconsolate. The figures calculated speak to an alarming trend of anti-Christian belief and praxis taking place, which is reflected in the generational make-up of Brick by Brick Bible church parishioners.

Some questions arise at this point: how do scripturally accurate orthodox Christian pastors, specifically at Brick by Brick Bible church, reach the 20% of younger generation people with no belief in Jesus and little to no Biblically accurate information? How do scripturally accurate orthodox Christian pastors reach the 37% which ascribe to Christian fidelity with scripturally accurate information? What occurred which has led to this phenomenon? Again, the answers are many, multi-faceted, and diverse as to the reasons that 57% of the younger population, who self-identify as Christian, reportedly misunderstand what the term ‘Christian’ means and how it is defined by scripture.

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Comparing literature review with results gleaned

As expected, the results from the project discipleship study confirm attitudes accepting of secular humanism, religious pluralism, and non-understanding of accurate Biblical theological orthodox scripture. Brick by Brick Bible church congregant and ecclesiastical hierarchy understanding, and praxis of scripture is skewed. Results confirm the literature review section author Greg Ogden, who remarked that contemporary church has become a spectator sport, full of passive recipients, in which only 20% of participants use their spiritual gifts for the Christian community at large.\(^{165}\) An overall attitude of non-committal and non-conformity is relevant, flourishing, and exists in Brick by Brick Bible church as is evidenced through the Personal Interview Questions for week 1 when participant #5 was asked: are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what they? Participant #5 answered: “realizing and accepting that what God speaks to me I may not want to hear.” Further actuation of an attitude of non-committal and non-conformity to scriptural accuracy exists and is evidenced in the raw data in bar graph form. Question #9 on the questionnaire depicts participants still holding to non-Biblical beliefs and practices even though the participants of the discipleship project study understand and realize that they should be reading their Bible daily and applying it to their life. Question #9 reads – all religions are the same at their core. Two significant responses are evident in question #9, respondents to this question, from pre to post questionnaire, should have marked increase without exception in answering – completely disagree, and marked decrease in answering completely agree. The data shows this did not happen. What did take place is the same number of people (pre questionnaire) who answered completely agree (6% or 2 people) also answered (post questionnaire) completely

\(^{165}\)Greg Ogden, “The Discipleship Deficit: Where Have All the Disciples Gone?,” Knowing & Doing, 2011.
agree (6% or 2 people). The number of respondents who answered completely disagree (pre questionnaire) were 55% or 17 people, and the number dropped slightly (post questionnaire) to 49% or 15 people. There should have been a larger percentage between pre and post questionnaire of respondents answering completely disagree, yet there were not. Even though there is not a substantial high number volume, due to a maximum of 31 participants taking part in the discipleship program project study, the slight drop is further understood when coupled with a note the research assistant wrote in the margins as there were a large number of people asking about question number 9. The comment states, “most talk about living a good life – but belief in Jesus is unique to the US.” Both the data and discussion that the research assistant had with program participants directly implies congregant and ecclesiastical participants choose to hold to secular belief despite the scripture stating contrary. Acceptable tolerances that would indicate participant conformity to scriptural belief and accuracy would have been registered as more than half of the 31 total participants or closer to three quarters.

Why is this phenomenon occurring in Brick by Brick Bible church, where people who identify as Christian, choose to willingly embrace non-scriptural, secular beliefs, verses scriptural beliefs? The explanation is resolved in question #5 and how participants responded pre to post questionnaire. Question #5 asked – I would characterize myself applying Biblical standards to my life as – A) strong, B) weak, C) moderate, D) devoted, and E) optional. Pre to post results yield respondents answering (pre) (number of people from total of 31) A – 11, B – 1, C – 14, D – 4, and E – 1, with (post) answering A – 14, B – 1, C – 11, D – 4, and E – 1. The problem is that post discipleship program project study respondents are now aware they need more accurate Biblical and accurate scriptural understanding and praxis of scripture to their daily life, yet post results show the participants feel and believe they have increased in applying
Biblical standards to their life when they should have realized they need much more work in daily Bible reading and application to daily life. This phenomenon is not unique to Brick by Brick Bible Church. Vern S. Poythress sees the lack of Biblical understanding as a significant cultural shift and modern patterns of thinking being substituted for a Biblical theological way of living.

There is a consensus that pluralism is a defining factor in the erosion of accurate theological Biblical understanding. Many authors and theologian/preachers feel that pluralism is a cure for the ills of society. Inclusivism is not only tolerated, but accepted, in modern Christian churches and the data from the discipleship project study reflects such a trend. Question 12 of the discipleship project study states, a person should be allowed to believe whatever they want. Respondents during the pre-questionnaire answered (number of people), A) completely agree 16 B) somewhat agree 6 C) somewhat disagree 3 D) completely disagree 6. After the discipleship program project study had concluded, participants were given the questionnaire to answer again. Results should have reflected a decrease in answer A and an increase in answer D, in view of having received accurate theological Biblical information about both the Great Commission and the doctrine of sufficiency. However, the results indicated differently. On the post questionnaire respondents answered (number of people), A) 16 B) 7 C) 2 and D) 6. The results directly indicate discipleship program participants are not convinced that the acceptance of other beliefs are inferior to accurate Biblical scriptural beliefs and a Biblical worldview. Simply stated, congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy at Brick by Brick Bible church remain entrenched in personal beliefs verses Christian exclusivity.

As religious pluralism and inclusivism grow, self-identified Christians question absolute truth found in scripture. Peter L. Berger, and Austrian born American sociologist and Protestant
theologian, states religious pluralism aids in allowing the individual with freedom of choice for the good of one self.\textsuperscript{166} Berger’s opinion is that religious pluralism is a construct woven in the very fabric of American society, which is solidified in the First Amendment in the United States Constitution, which enables an individual with freedom and protection to practice their chosen religion. Truth, once believed to be found in God’s Word, has shifted from Biblical scripture having sole proprietorship to the American public seeking spiritual guidance, thought, and practice from competing religious and worldviews such as Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, or Platonic belief and thought. The problem that alternative religious viewpoints offer is the acceptance and embrace of alternative lifestyles and the integration and inclusivity of an error driven worldview founded upon erroneous religious understanding that is devoid of accurate scriptural integrity. In simpler terms, orthodox Christian scriptural belief has undergone syncretism with competing pagan religious ideology and formed non-Biblical beliefs and ways of leading life. This is reflected in the data gleaned from the discipleship program project study at Brick by Brick Bible church.

Derek H. Davis proclaims religious pluralism damages once long held traditional orthodox Christian viewpoints, morals, and beliefs. The widespread acceptance of religious pluralism has dissolved Biblical perspective and de-evolved theological views from that of commonly held to that of popular cultural opinion and belief, summated in majoritarianism. Majoritarianism accentuates coexistence and harmony, whereas scripture teaches Christian exclusivity through Christ. The issue then becomes – is the Bible and scripture just as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago, given today’s modern world? This was asked in question 28 of the questionnaire. Even though there was an increase with respondents answering, C) the scriptures are as relevant

today as when they were originally written, discipleship program participants are having
difficulty in making the connection and leap from believing to practicing. In brief explanation,
the actions and behaviors of congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy are directly opposite of
what they verbally espouse to believe. When it is an issue of Christians graduating from
believing to practicing Biblical principles, congregants and discipleship program participants
understand what they hear, they are holding to personal beliefs above and beyond scriptural
authority. The discipleship program participants display a mix of scripture and worldly beliefs,
termed syncretism. There are those preachers and theologians who would advocate syncretism
along with religious pluralism. Geoffery Swenson is one such preacher and theologian. Geoffery
Swenson accepts and supports religious pluralism and contends the idea is good for a
multicultural society which aids in establishing justice for all citizens involved.167 John
MacArthur would disagree with religious pluralism and has stated that the idea fails to
understand what and where truth comes from. The underlying issue to be resolved is a choice
between accepting accurate scriptural Biblical truth or social relativism. Patrick Fagan asserts
that a breakdown in society has occurred due to a lack of believing in scriptural accuracy and
also a lack in practicing Biblical principles. Patrick Fagan has noted that a breakdown in familial
values and beliefs, in individual morals, in socioeconomic structures in society, a lack of
empathy for others and individual self-control, higher incidence of crime, births out of wedlock,
addictive behaviors, and mental pathologies, are all attributed to the widespread acceptance,
tolerance, and condoning of religious pluralism, syncretism, and a failure of accurate Biblical
theological scriptural belief and praxis among Christians. According to researchers, Brick by
Brick Bible church is not unique in having combined societal cultural belief into Christian

worship, and Christian ecclesiastical customs, traditions, beliefs, and services. Brick by Brick Bible church is a small window into the ever widespread worldly viewpoint which has crept into Christianity in the United States.

**What the researcher learned before implementing the project**

The researcher learned many extremely valuable insights when implementing the discipleship program research project. Only the most relevant will be discussed. Even though the results may not be anticipated or expected, whether they be positive or negative, it is a chance for the researcher to learn and grow in his professional ministerial experience. This experience gives the researcher further valuable acumen into the social dynamics and day to day inner workings of a Christian church setting. The first valuable insight the researcher learned is whether the church is operating under the auspices of Christian doctrine which is scripturally mandated via 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. During times of stress, conflict, crisis, event planning/management, and research project implementation, the researcher garnered a glimpse into how the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the church operates and functions, and whether they are doing so according to accurate scriptural understanding. In the case of Brick by Brick Bible church, it was readily evident and apparent that church hierarchy were not operating as per God’s Word. The fact the Covid-19 flu virus broke out at the same time as preliminary focus and attention was initially being drawn toward the future commencement of the researcher’s discipleship program project, enabled the researcher to analyze church hierarchy and church members behavior under strained conditions and times of extreme stress. That which occurred was widespread panic rather than Christian members coming together to pray, to discuss how to proceed forward, to
ask God for His help and advice, to search God’s Word for answers how to operate and function under such conditions.

The immense mismanagement and mishandling of church affairs during the Covid-19 flu virus outbreak, which took place at Brick by Brick Bible church, was to immediately follow the instructions and orders of secular non-Christian leaders of the city of Buffalo and New York State rather than seeking after God’s wisdom. Scripture which supports following Godly leaders is specifically found in Rom. 12:9-13; Exodus 18:21; and 2 Timothy 2:2. Despite the church hierarchy attempting to shut down and close the church completely, the researcher, along with two other dedicated Christian professionals, kept Brick by Brick Bible church open to the public, offering solace and sermons in live time, and further offered Sunday services and Wednesday night Bible Prayer Meetings through Facebook and YouTube. The Covid-19 flu actually increased Brick by Brick Bible church’s attendance and outreach capability (long term), spreading the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ further and faster than had been anticipated or was previously possible. During the initial onset of the Covid-19 flu, attendance was extremely low, but slowly gained parishioners as it became obvious to the public and the ecclesiastical elder team, that Brick by Brick Bible church remained open and kept running as normal. The valued experience that the researcher acquired during the Covid-19 flu outbreak, prior to commencement of the discipleship program project study, was to expect total attendance numbers to fall drastically among congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy of Brick by Brick Bible church when the project study finally launched, which is precisely what took place. Over a relatively short period of time however, as the project study began, numbers of attendance to weekly Bible Prayer Meeting and Sunday service rose and increased steadily as people realized
there was a choice to safely view and attend church services and activities without jeopardizing their own personal health or the health of their children, given this was their main concern.

Another useful awareness the researcher learned from implementing the discipleship program project study was how readily the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ spread through a live Facebook, YouTube, audience. A further benefit from the outbreak of the Covid-19 flu was that it took place late February, early March of 2020, approximately 6 months prior to the commencement of the discipleship program project study. The time sequence mandated that Sunday services and weekly Bible Prayer Meetings be relegated immediately through the advent of online services, such as Facebook and YouTube. This online availability increased project study participation and early announcement, farther than was previously expected or could have been anticipated and imagined. Thus, the researcher gained extremely valuable information of how to circumvent a nationwide crisis. The overall impact of a program project study can be multiplied many times over when offered through online services and the potential audience widens and enlarges through the availability of online services. Therefore, a pastor or preacher can utilize online services to reach people around the globe who can be connected digitally and spiritually, live time, if geographical distance precludes in-person community gathering. This is an extremely valuable resource for Chaplains who minister to soldiers in the Armed Forces who are stationed in military bases in foreign countries.

**What the researcher learned implementing the project**

During the implementation phase of the discipleship program project study the researcher learned a vast amount reviewing the notes from his research assistant and reviewing the visual and audio recordings which occur during each week of the project study. The researcher obtained
valuable information from his research assistant as the research assistant administers the pre
questionnaire, the personal interview and focus group questions, and the post questionnaire, and
personal notes the research assistant wrote down. Appendix E documents the pre and post
questionnaire with research assistant notes written in the margins. Appendix F documents
personal interview questions the research assistant administered. Appendix G documents the
culmination of the research assistant’s work in the personal journal entries of the researcher.
Overall attitudes of the project study participants illustrated through these forms of media
concluded, 1) congregant and church clergy utilize excuses as forms of defense mechanisms to
validate their lack of daily Bible reading and trust in Biblical scripture, 2) congregant and church
clergy use current employment status as an excuse for not following or participating in the Great
Commission, 3) congregant and church clergy cling to secular beliefs and traditions gained from
parents and friends over and above accurate Biblical scriptural authority, 4) congregant and
church clergy were inadequately trained in childhood and early adult stages of life as to the Great
Commission and the doctrine of sufficiency, 5) congregant and clergy feel that modern
technology (Facebook and YouTube) are an acceptable substitute for Christian church
community, 6) congregant and clergy wish to see better recruitment and more out-reach at Brick
by Brick Bible church, yet refuse to get involved if asked or approached with recruitment and
out-reach program suggestions from researcher or research assistant, 7) when congregant and
clergy are asked for suggestions on how to better facilitate more recruitment and out-reach
programs at Brick by Brick Bible church the response is overwhelming silence or complete non-
participation and avoidance self-defense mechanisms employed, 8) congregant and clergy at
Brick by Brick Bible church believe that the Covid-19 flu is the fault and blame for dwindling
in-person Sunday service attendance, 9) the overall majority of parishioner/ congregant and
clergy at Brick by Brick Bible church will not take personal responsibility for investing personal
time into promoting, advancing, or commencing a discipleship program, Men’s Bible study,
Women’s Bible study, youth Bible study, continuation of a Christian Fall Festival…etc. When
approached from researcher or research assistant about Christian events or activities the answer
is always a demonstrative ‘No,’ or ‘we don’t do that here,’

Further problems the researcher observed at Brick by Brick Bible church is that the current
methodology they employ in church day to day business operation are 1) no transparency of
monthly revenue to parishioners, 2) the pastor researcher is willfully excluded and barred from
all elder meetings and business meetings. 3) the refusal of church leadership to accept Biblical
teachings over long term secular held beliefs in operating and managing Brick by Brick Bible
church. These commonly held attitudes developed and took hold in the church decades prior to
the researcher ever having been at Brick by Brick Bible church. In brief, the parishioners and
clergy at Brick by Brick Bible church want to see growth in their church without having to
incorporate Biblical scriptural teachings into their church leadership methodology. The elder
team refuses to do the work themselves and rejects and refuses the work or proposal and
suggestions when they are offered. There is an extreme presiding insurmountable resistance to
commitment, conviction, acceptance, and utilization of Biblical scriptural teaching on behalf of
the elder team at Brick by Brick Bible church in the daily operation and management of the
church. And this brings the researcher to an extremely valid question; how does a minister pastor
in a hostile church work environment? This is a question which bears further analysis and
address and merits future research.

All pastors, preachers, and minsters, must realize, and need to be aware, that tending to a
flock in a church is a position called by God, which includes tending to the lost. Developing a
heart for the lost is the obvious prime condition that, a pastor will find, entails and encompasses his job duties and responsibilities. Making a human connection with the lost, and bringing them to Christ, fulfills the Great Commission which Jesus calls and commands Christian believers and followers to do in Matthew 28:16-20. The researcher has grown tremendously throughout the discipleship project study, and from the last five years of time spent at Brick by Brick Bible Church. Personal spiritual ministerial growth only occurs within the cauldron of adversity; enabling Christian growth to occur. A strong pastor will welcome adversity when it occurs, which is reflected in 2 Corinthians 12:9; and 1 Peter 5:10. It is crucial to remember that the eternal reward that awaits, is far greater than any earthly compensation imaginable. Christian spiritual growth is evidenced in 2 Peter 3:18; Galatians 5:22-23; and Colossians 1:9-10; these are all building blocks, which when firmly anchored to Christ and His Word, yield a fruitful harvest in due time, God’s time. A key for any minister is to remember that they, themselves, need fixing, just as badly as the lost they find themselves ministering to. Share with the lost, your story, of how you came to Christ. Share with the lost, your faith, of what Christ has done for you. Share with the lost, how your life changed because of your belief in Christ. Another crucial key for a pastor is to have a Christian accountability partner; a person who the pastor can share with, cry with, rejoice with, and talk about life with. As Christian believers and followers, we are accountable to Christ and other Christians. A final word for the pastor having trouble within their congregation – listen to the lost, and what they have to say. Ask them about themselves, their family, their trials, their hardships, their personal difficulties. Listen to them, cry with them, rejoice with them, laugh with them, suffer with them, fail with them, grow with them, help them see Christ through your heart. Throughout this process the researcher has grown in ministerial understanding, and has a better comprehension on how to build relationships with the
congregation, other Christians, and the lost – helping them to experience Christ through the researchers own actions, words, and life.

**Positive results from the research**

The positive result from the research, which can apply in other pastoral settings and ministerial settings, is the utilization of live Facebook and YouTube audio/visual media for reaching a larger audience with Sunday services, weekly Bible Study programs, or any Christian event. Mentioned earlier, the researcher noted that live Facebook and YouTube can be used for Chaplains ministering to soldiers who are stationed overseas. There are also over a 100 live audio/visual podcasts offered currently which feature notable theologian preachers as R.C. Sproul, Wes McAdams, Travis Pauley, Stephen Strang, to mention a few. Large churches also utilize audio/visual media to broadcast their Sunday church services and weekly Christian activities and events, such as Rick Warren at Saddleback Church, an affiliated Baptist evangelical church. There are also other Christian churches which have grown to astronomical size through the advent of broadcasting online. Andrew Conrad published an article in 2019 featuring a few well respected and notable ones, two of them are Craig Groeschel, senior pastor and founder of Life Church in Edmond Oklahoma, and Doug Sauder, senior pastor of Calvary Chapel in Fort Lauderdale Florida. Groeschel originally started preaching out of his garage in 1996, today it has become one of the largest churches in America. The Calvary Chapel first opened its doors in 1985, currently today it has expanded to nine locations throughout the state of Florida, a private school, and an online web service offered weekly. These and many other churches have proven that the advent of audio/visual media can further the Gospel Message of

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169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
Jesus Christ not only in the United States but around the world. Even though this is a growing trend, the question arises: do online church services destroy Christian community as illustrated in the first century Christian church and outlined by scripture in Hebrews 10:24-25? This is also a question that bears further analysis and address and merits future research.

**Challenges to faith**

Does the current trend of online church availability hinder or help advance the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ? Can secularism and secular humanism be combined with Christian ideology to create a new more modern Christian path for younger generations to follow? Isaac Chotiner argues that syncretism in Christian ideology is not a threat as some may perceive. It is Chotiner’s position that Christianity has a way of adapting itself to the current social conditions and climate of a particular society.\(^{171}\) Jared Wilson, however, espouses a contrary position which warns of commercializing Jesus will inevitably lead to sacrificing true orthodox Christian belief. Andy Stanley claims the goal of the church is to do whatever it takes for the win.\(^{172}\) It is noteworthy to state that a very good example which more solidly solidifies scripture should be lived out in real life, is found in the illustration of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer repeatedly states that grace is costly and requires a Christian to follow Jesus Christ heart, mind, body, soul, and strength. Another who shares Bonhoeffer’s viewpoint is D.A. Carson. In Carson’s volume of Christian essays, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, who readily admits that Christianity has changed since the first century Christian church but equally states life-threatening circumstances and perils still exist for Christians today. These new perils are just more aptly found in the form of pluralism,


\(^{172}\) Stanley, 226.
postmodern thought, and jagged intellectual and cultural landscapes which contain physical
death if not navigated appropriately.¹⁷³

The previously mentioned thoughts and beliefs are also shared by the participants in the
discipleship program project study. Question 7 illustrates this fact. Question 7 asked, I believe,
A) all religious organizations contain truth, B) religious scriptures in other religions are equally
from God, C) there are no differences in religions, D) all of the above, E) none of the above. In
the pre questionnaire respondents answered (percentage of people out of 31), A) 22% (6), B) 3%
(1), C) 0%, D) 6% (2), E) 70% (22). In the post questionnaire respondents answered (percentage
of people out of 31), A) 26% (8), B) 0%, C) 0%, D) 3% (1), E) 71% (22). The problem that is
displayed in the results is the increase in respondents answering with A) from pre to post
questionnaire. After having heard the entire discipleship program project study for six weeks
there are now eight people who are entrenched with the secular idea that all religious
organizations contain truth. Acceptable values for the post questionnaire should have displayed a
complete decrease for answers A, B, C, and D, and a complete increase in answer E. But the data
revealed opposing expected results. What is happening within the Christian church body which
reveals such results after the participants have been thoroughly instructed on the doctrine of
sufficiency? The answer is two-fold, first, Brick by Brick Bible church has been operating for
decades under the methodology of belonging before believing, and second, the use of non-
Biblical and non-scriptural models of methodology for operating church have taken their toll on
church attendance. Jared Wilson states it best when he says, “this is not an argument for a more
traditional church so much as it is an argument for a more biblical one.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³Carson, The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures, 752.
¹⁷⁴Wilson, 18.
Another question from the questionnaire which answers the evident problem is question 14. Question 14 asked, I believe all Christian denominations are basically similar. The answers to question 14 are, A) completely agree, B) somewhat agree, C) somewhat disagree, D) completely disagree, and E) unsure. Respondents in the pre questionnaire answered, A) 10% (3), B) 48% (15), C) 16% (5), D) 20% (6), E) 6% (1) and one person not answering at all. Respondents in the post questionnaire answered, A), 8%, (3), B) 45% (14), C) 22% (7), D) 19% (6), and E) 6% (1). The evident problem the data yields is found in answer B, somewhat agree, as it only decreased from 15 (pre questionnaire) to 14 (post questionnaire). In brief, when Jared Wilson states that the attractional church model creates its own problem, the concept is the same in Brick by Brick Bible church. Brick by Brick Bible church has created its own problem over decades of lax non-scriptural beliefs which were permitted to overtake a sounder theological scripturally accurate church model based upon Biblical accuracy. The proof of this is found in question 14. Respondents remained from pre questionnaire answering A, 3 people, to post questionnaire answering 3 people even after having been taught the importance of the doctrine of sufficiency as illustrated in Psalms 19:7-14. In brief, the same people still believe all Christian denominations are the same even after having been taught this concept is a fallacy and not compatible with accurate scriptural understanding. In other words, respondents fail to recognize the importance of Christian exclusivity. Brett McCracken explains why there is a predisposition for Christian churches to accept secularism into their Christian belief system when he states, Biblical literacy is a huge problem in churches in America. A notable theological disconnect is noted by many Christian scholars as being the primary cause of the erosion of theological understanding that exists in Christian churches today. John MacArthur is one such scholar and

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175 McCracken, “21 Challenges Facing the 21st century Church.”
theologian. But this brings us to a question, where does theological understanding reside within the Christian? The answer is two-fold, first, in the renewed mind of a believer, and second, in the changed life of a believer. Phil Newton expresses the concept competently when he says, “we live in the sufficiency of scripture, we fill our worship with the truth of scripture, believing that…when scripture speaks, God speaks.” In other words, Christian believers must become aware and refamiliarize themselves with the concept that their primary source for hearing God speak to them is through His Word as they read it daily and apply it daily to their lives. The challenge to faith that Brick by Brick Bible church is experiencing is not unique or uncommon. The solution, which is practical, and Biblically sound, takes place over a slow period of time, is also not uncommonly known or unique.

**Recommendations for stakeholders (parishioners & ecclesiastical hierarchy), pastors, ministry leaders, parents, youth**

As with all problems, the reasons for lack of interest and dedication to Biblical scripture on a daily basis at Brick by Brick Bible church are complex and diverse. However, Brandon D. Smith offers a simple solution which, over the course of many years, will enable Brick by Brick Bible church, and all churches who suffer from inclusion of secular belief into their Christian church praxis, an avenue to reconnect with scriptural accuracy. Brandon D. Smith states the problem is solvable through Christian education. There is a disconnect apparent with Christians today in that they either are no longer aware of, or were not taught, or ignore the fact that, “living God speaks to you through his living Word, right here and right now.” Religiosity has taken precedence over and above reading our Bible every day. Cultural societal popular belief and

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176 Newton, “7 Signs That You Truly Believe God’s Word is Enough.”
177 Brandon D. Smith, “The Real Reason We Don’t Read Our Bibles.”
opinion has taken precedence over and above reading our Bible every day. Recreation has taken precedence over and above reading our Bible every day. Excuses have taken precedence over and above reading our Bible every day. Work has taken precedence over and above reading our Bible every day. If parishioners, ecclesiastical hierarchy, pastors, ministry leaders, parents, youth, are going to recapture and reconnect their relationship with the God of the universe who created all things and all people, from age unto age, then we must read our Bible daily. All other activities must be set aside as secondary after reading the scripture daily. There must also be competent, theologically trained professional pastors, ministers, who relay the scripture accurately and precisely without embellishments or additions of any kind. Scripture that supports these Biblical tenants are Matt. 4:4; and John 15:7, which are Jesus’ own words, and 2 Tim. 2:15, written by the Apostle Paul.

The introduction and implementation of weekly Bible reading groups for men, women, youth, and children must be instituted within the Brick by Brick Bible church by competent, professionally trained Biblically accurate pastors and teachers. The two initial procedures that will be employed as a first primary directive, to teach people how to read the Bible and how they can read the Bible themselves daily. The advent of Bible reading groups fulfills scripture as described by Psalms 119:105 and achieves Christian connection (discussed in Hebrews 10:25) on more than a weekly basis during Sunday services. Christian education begins when Christians spend time involving themselves with God’s Word and other Christians. A nine step procedure is suggested for applying weekly Bible groups to any church setting for any ministerial church group, as follows:

• Seek God’s wisdom
• Clearly draw out a Biblical plan based on scripture
• Identify your target group by age
• Develop a strategy
• Choose a scripturally accurate approach
• Choose and Train small group leaders
• Replicate
• Learn, Apply, Adapt

Each point will be addressed in more detail. For seeking God’s wisdom, the Christian community/Christian church must come together in prayer during times of crisis and during times of teaching the church in Christian education. The only way this is going to take place is if clergy hierarchy devotes time each week to meeting at the church other than Sunday services. This also includes a weekly prayer group. When the church administration accepts and advises from an accurate prayerful scriptural basis, and God’s Spirit is invited and included, then Christian education commences. The key is to find people who are willing, motivated, and heart driven by God’s Spirit and Word who want to invest time, energy, and resources into developing Christian programs and activities and who have a desire to come together in prayer.

Another step is to clearly draw out a plan based on the most important Biblical scripture which reflects and mirrors Christ’ teachings and is seen and understood through various scriptures from both the O.T. and the N.T. It is important to ask the question in this phase: ‘what do we need to accomplish this goal?’ When Solomon began putting together the Temple, he called on many different craftsmen to carry out the many different tasks that would be necessary for day to day construction to take place, found in 1 Chronicles, and II Chronicles, I Kings, and II Kings. To establish any Christian program, the need for qualified, properly trained, people is necessary. The church elder team and ministerial staff must come together to meet and discuss, write up, and agree, on a suitable scriptural plan which emphasizes how, and why, their church is taking steps to implement the plan they have prayed upon and drawn up.

The next important item is the church team must target a specific age group for who the Bible study is for. It is important during this phase to ask the question: ‘who are we trying to
reach?’ It is necessary to remain on focus and not stray with tedious details. Details can be discussed after the preliminary plan writing has been accomplished. The age group the church targets can be fluid and diverse or completely structured and specific. The elder team and clergy identify who they are trying to reach and how they attempt to reach this group with correct accurate Biblical theological doctrine and praxis.

Next is the develop a strategy phase. It is important to ask the question: ‘why are we trying to reach them and how do we go about it?’ The developing strategy should be based upon various scriptures throughout the O.T. and N.T. to find which scripture(s) match the teams projected strategy. In the O.T., Moses was overwhelmed with the immense task of finding food, water, and shelter for the masses that he was leading through the desert. It is understood that his father in law, Jethro, said to him doing all the work alone is not good, therefore appoint people to help you (found in Exodus 18:18-23). Establish teams and people to be in charge of each separate team which have bi-weekly meetings to report on progress, and shortcomings, and obstacles, and triumphs, and what works and what does not work and why. The key is to be flexible enough to be a reed swaying in the wind not breaking under the strain of the storm.

Next the team chooses a scripturally accurate approach. It is important to ask the question: ‘which scripture best suits the object we are trying to accomplish?’ In this phase the team has to identify ‘what’ they are trying to accomplish, and ‘how’ they are trying to accomplish this missionary task. The team must not forget to invite God in each and every step through continual prayer and let the Holy Spirit of God lead them to how best to serve Christ. There are many and varied approaches which are listed throughout the O.T. and N.T., some will work for the purpose and some may be out of bounds. The church leadership needs to be cognizant of this fact and (with God’s help) choose the approach that is most readily going to assist them and the church
team to accomplish the chosen missionary task. The key is that all members of the church team must be open and available to honest communication that uplifts and supports the purpose they have chosen. They must be willing to listen to alternative suggestions that may suit and justify the scriptural basis for accomplishing the purpose.

Another step is to choose and train small group leaders. The selection of choosing and training small group leaders will result from the Senior Pastor and Elder team’s discussion of who should be appropriate for this stage. Keys to remember are that small group leaders are chosen based upon criteria found in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, and who are known to already be reading their Bible every day and attempting to live by Biblical principles, doctrines, and theology. Training small group leaders is crucial. Train small group leaders by informing them of your purpose and how you are accomplishing your mission. Explain to small group leaders what their primary goal is and how they are to go about accomplishing this task. It is important to remember that the small group leaders selected may have suggestions. Listen to their suggestions and inform the Senior Pastor and Elder team of their requests and then vote on whether their requests are scripturally based (if so, identify which scripture(s)) and if their suggestions are cohesive to your ministry mission.

The last two phases of integrating Christian education into a church setting are replicate and learn, apply, and adapt. These last two phases are simultaneous as they are directly dependent upon the Senior Pastor and Elder team’s ability: 1) open communication among one another, 2) prayerful response to God, 3) listening for an answer from God and obeying that answer, 4) commitment and investment on at least a bi-weekly basis to go over how the plan is proceeding or stalling and why, and what changes are necessary 5) open transparency to the congregation (in summation) about all resources, finances, activities, programs …etc. that are
commencing or about to begin, 6) encourage congregational support/participation and enthusiasm, 7) do not be afraid to learn from mistakes, adapt to new scripturally based ideas, and apply new scripturally based ideas, 8) do not be afraid to begin during early phases to write and re-write a plan, a target group, or accomplished goal. The key is to always be flexible, always be prayerful to God, listen to God’s answer and obey God when He tells you to do something that is scripturally correct and based. A final key is to remember that the plan and ideas and suggestions all must be scripturally based. The determining elements that need to be continually observed, understood, and followed strictly throughout the entire Christian education program are inviting God into your church situation, praying to God, listening to God, obeying God’s answers, following God’s Word, and actively participating in the mission God calls you to do. A final note, God will not call people to do things or mission work contrary to His Word or the group that He has selected to work together. God calls people together to work together on specific goals and missions in order to accomplish His kingdom purpose to further reach a community, village, city, state, world with the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ.

Conclusionary summation

The impetus for this research project sprang from many years of observation in the contemporary Christian church, and specifically the five years spent at Brick by Brick Bible church. What was witnessed by the researcher was within Brick by Brick Bible church there had been the acceptance of secular belief and Biblical apathy leading to a sharp decline in participation in Sunday services, Bible study, and meaningful discipleship efforts. The researcher hypothesized that the introduction of a discipleship program project study that introduced, re-examined, and focused upon correct scriptural teaching and doctrine would have a positive effect on the congregants and ecclesiastical hierarchy at Brick by Brick Bible church. The results were
mixed, presenting a combination of positive and negative outcomes. While there were some strides observed in the understanding of two of the most important Biblical doctrines, the Great Commission, and the doctrine of sufficiency, the six week discipleship program project study, failed to produce a long term change in attitude and mind-set. In retrospect, there are limits to what a short term discipleship program project study can accomplish. Although the researcher anticipated a bigger increase in scriptural understanding and praxis, many positive aspects arose as a result of the implementation of the program study. Brick by Brick Bible church was able to increase its weekly attendance with the incorporation of Facebook and YouTube services. As more people are viewing on a weekly basis, there may be an opportunity to grow church membership, and implement the nine strategies presented earlier.

As the project comes to completion, there remains essential questions to further research that are vital to improving Biblical comprehension. Don Stewart, in his article “What is the Sufficiency of Scripture?” illuminates difficult scriptural understanding in mere simplistic terms; but brings to the forefront “the basic idea behind the sufficiency of Scripture is that nothing else needs to be revealed to humanity about God or His plan for the human race.” This statement encapsulates why it is so imminently important to be reading God’s Word daily and applying it to our daily life. Kevin J. Vanhoozer counters by stating “while Scripture alone is the supreme norm, it is not alone as a source or resource; even the Reformers acknowledged the role of the Holy Spirit, church tradition, and scholarly tools. Scripture is its own interpreter in the sense that it provides the primary context for its interpretation (the canon).” Which is right? Which is

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wrong? It is never a matter of right or wrong when dealing with the lost and following the Great Commission and bringing them to a relationship with Jesus Christ; because the over-arching framework consists of establishing Christian exclusivity so that the lost can be saved. A point of growth throughout this process has been a deeper understanding that one must demonstrate that even the man in the pulpit is a sinner in need of saving. People need to make a connection between Christ’ Cross and the Word He said,, and the importance that it still holds for their life in the modern world. In brief, we are all sinners in need of a Savior and that Savior is Jesus Christ. Sir Robert Anderson, in his book The Coming Prince states, “the reign of creeds is past. The days are gone forever when men will believe what their fathers believed, without a question. Rome, in some phase of its development, has a strange charm for minds of a certain caste, and rationalism is fascinating to not a few; but orthodoxy in the old sense is dead, and if any are to be delivered it must be by a deeper and more thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.” Sir Robert Anderson first penned these words and published them in 1894. Is orthodoxy in the old sense dead as he stated so very long ago? Preachers, Ministers, Bible scholars, Bible practitioners, must be astute men, thoroughly knowledgeable in the Scriptures and this researcher would also add that they must be sensitive and compassionate to the human hearts they are addressing. The mainspring for this research was to garner a deeper understanding for the acceptance of secular ideological belief, and the erosion of theological belief at Brick by Brick Bible church. Although important insights were gained, more research is needed, particularly as to why this phenomenon occurs, and the active steps that can be taken to remedy it.

Bibliography


Appendix A

Brick by Brick Bible church

Research Facilitator: Pastor Tom Sleeth – Assistant Pastor Brick by Brick Bible church

Phone: 1(XXX)XXX-XXXX

The Brick by Brick Bible church has the opportunity to assist Pastor Tom Sleeth in a Doctor of Ministry Project under the auspices of a discipleship program which will be held at Brick by Brick Bible church for a six-week period. Participation is on a voluntary basis. There are no risks involved in parishioner participation. All participants in the discipleship program will be anonymous for issues of privacy. Participants will fill out a pre-questionnaire at the beginning of the discipleship program and a post questionnaire at the end of the program. The collected results will be published toward Pastor Tom’s Doctor of Ministry Project. I realize my participation is completely voluntary and I am under no duress, obligation, or mandate to participate. By signing below, I am agreeing to participate in Pastor Tom’s Doctor of Ministry Project, allowing him to collect data anonymously, and publish the results in Pastor Tom’s Doctor of Ministry Project. No research in the field will commence until every participant has submitted their approval to participate in writing.

I, ________________________________ have read the information above, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this six-week activity on the understanding that data collected through two anonymous questionnaires’ will be published toward Pastor Tom’s Doctor of Ministry Project. I agree to this provided my name is not used and that I am not otherwise identified.

Signed: ________________________________ (voluntary Participant) Date: ___________

Research Facilitator’s signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________
Appendix B
Pre/Post Discipleship Program Questionnaire

(when you return this questionnaire, your name will be retracted and ascribed a number for privacy purposes)

Name:________________________________

Please circle your age group:
   A) Born before 1945
   B) Born between 1946 and 1964
   C) Born between 1965 and 1980
   D) Born between 1980 and 2000
   E) Born 2001 and after

1) I characterize my attendance to church with the following,
   A) attending every Sunday
   B) attending once a month
   C) attending during holiday seasons only
   D) I do not attend church

2) When I attend church, I find the sermons,
   A) have an organized structure
   B) have a clear central idea or theme
   C) are put into words I can easily understand
   D) All of the above
   E) none of the above
3) I characterize my Bible reading with the following,
   A) I read my Bible every day
   B) I read my Bible once a week
   C) I never read my Bible
   D) I read my Bible sporadically throughout the year
   E) I read my Bible only when I need help from God

4) I would characterize my belief and faith in Jesus as,
   A) strong
   B) weak
   C) moderate
   D) devoted
   E) optional

5) I would characterize myself applying Biblical standards to my life as,
   A) strong
   B) weak
   C) moderate
   D) devoted
   E) optional

6) I would characterize my understanding of scripture as,
   A) strong
   B) weak
   C) moderate
   D) devoted
   E) optional
7) I believe,
   A) all religious organizations contain truth
   B) religious scriptures in other religions are equally from God
   C) there are no differences in religions
   D) All of the above
   E) none of the above

8) I believe,
   A) if you are a good person leading a good life that’s all that matters
   B) life is a game you can’t win
   C) how I lead my life matters to God
   D) how I lead my life doesn’t matter to God
   E) how I lead my life matters to me

9) All religions are the same at their core
   A) completely agree
   B) somewhat agree
   C) somewhat disagree
   D) completely disagree
   E) unsure

10) I can easily follow what the Bible says because,
    A) I understand it completely
    B) I ask for help when I don’t understand a scripture passage or verse
    C) much of the Bible I do not understand at all
    D) I don’t bother because most of the Bible is outdated
    E) I never ask for help understanding Bible scripture
11) Sermons are,
   A) not inspiring to me
   B) over my head in understanding
   C) inspiring to me
   D) boring
   E) I don’t like being preached at with the obvious

12) A person should be allowed to believe whatever they want
   A) completely agree
   B) somewhat agree
   C) somewhat disagree
   D) completely disagree
   E) unsure

13) I attend weekly Prayer Meeting,
   A) attending every week
   B) attending once a month
   C) attending during holiday seasons only
   D) I do not attend meetings

14) I believe all Christian denominations are basically similar
   A) completely agree
   B) somewhat agree
   C) somewhat disagree
   D) completely disagree
   E) unsure
15) The most important quality I look for in a church is,
   A) church programs and events
   B) friendliness of other attendees
   C) preaching and message is Biblically accurate and scripturally based
   D) other ________________________________ (please fill in)
   E) convenience of location

16) The most essential criteria of worship service and a sermon is that it be:
   A) fun
   B) happy
   C) serious
   D) challenging
   E) engaging
   F) All of the above
   G) none of the above

17) How long have you been attending/ viewing church services at Brick by Brick Bible Church?
   A) less than a year
   B) two to four years
   C) five to seven years
   D) eight to ten years
   E) eleven to fifteen years
   F) more than fifteen years
18) In childhood, what was the most influential experience in my development in becoming a Christian?
   A) reading Bible stories
   B) my parent’s beliefs
   C) attending church
   D) hearing the Word of God and responding to it
   E) my peer groups beliefs
   F) I did not attend church as a child

19) Which type of church service/sermon is more scripturally based?
   A) contemporary (uses modern music and instruments for worship)
   B) modern (uses modern music and instruments/ or voice for worship)
   C) traditional (uses hymns for worship)
   D) orthodox (recites liturgical scripture in solo singing format worship)
   E) technologically driven (uses stage, lights, fog, and other modern technology for worship)
   F) secular/humanistic (uses whatever of the above, randomly in each worship)

20) What single characteristic best defines a person who is saved?
   A) have a forgiving spirit
   B) being a good person
   C) accepting Jesus
   D) I am unsure
   E) showing grace and mercy
   F) accepting my forgiveness
21) In defending regular church attendance, which of the following arguments would you say is the strongest?

A) it’s an important social connection  
B) it’s a family tradition  
C) my spouse encourages me to go  
D) scripture says so  
E) it is important I have a church to tithe to  
F) it is part of being a good person

22) Which form of government best describes the relationship between believers and the Creator?

A) democracy (system of government ruled by whole population)  
B) republic (system of government where people elect representatives to rule)  
C) aristocracy (system of government ruled by a noble/upper class)  
D) presidential democracy (system of government where the president is elected separately from the legislative and judicial branch)  
E) monarchy (system of government ruled by a king/queen)  
F) theocracy (system of government ruled by Divine guidance and religious law)  
G) autocracy (system of government where one person has absolute power)  
H) oligarchy (system of government where a small group have control)  
I) parliamentary democracy (system of government where the majority political party chooses its leader and forms the government)  
J) Bureaucracy (system of government where decisions are made by state officials, not elected representatives)

23) What is the most important element of the Great Commission? (please explain)
24) Which of these is equal in authority to the Bible?
   A) Islamic Quran
   B) Hindu Bhagavad Gita
   C) Jewish Kabbalah
   D) Buddhist Tripitaka (Pali Canon)
   F) ___________________________ (write in)

25) In my opinion, the Bible is: (circle all that apply)
   A) trustworthy
   B) authoritative
   C) authentic
   D) reliable
   E) equal with other sacred texts
   F) divinely inspired and written

26) How would you define the doctrine of sufficiency? (write in your answer)

______________________________

______________________________

27) In times of trouble, where do you look for support? (please number 1-4 in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important).
   ___________ Friends/ Family
   ___________ Scripture
   ___________ Pastor
   ___________ Medical/ Psychological Community
28) Which statement best describes your belief on the relevance of scripture in today’s world?

A) the scriptures would be more relevant with additional information

B) the scriptures would be more relevant if deletions were made taking into consideration how our modern world has changed

C) the scriptures are as relevant today as when they were originally written
Appendix C

Step by Step Outline of the discipleship program is as follows:

For week 1, step 1, read introduction to six sermon project Thesis discipleship program series,

In this Six Sermon Project Thesis Discipleship Program Series there are hard truths to face. Each of us, in our own right, deserves the punishment of God, for having not kept His Word, nor obeyed His voice when He has called to us.

Hard Truths. Like the Hard truths we read about every day in our newspaper or hear broadcast on our daily news.

Hard Truths. Like the Hard truths we read about in Proverbs 1:22-31

How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

The Hard Truth is – if we want to live a life pleasing to God, then we will find what that is only in His Word and nowhere else.

There is no other word written by man which compares to that which has been written by God.
The simple fact of the matter is this: if we turn to God through Jesus Christ, individually and as a nation, a people, God will respect the desire of our heart and lead us, talk to us, have relationship with us.

A Hard Truth. Much of what is discussed in this Six Sermon Project Thesis Discipleship Program Series will challenge us, inspire us, motivate us to get out of our seat and choose Jesus and work for God.

Much of what is discussed in this Six Sermon Project Thesis Discipleship Program Series will harangue us, rebuke us, may leave us upset at times – but then that’s part of the point. We all need to be challenged and motivated, otherwise we’ll stand in 3 inches of stagnant water our entire life and never move a muscle or lift a finger.

This Six Sermon Project Thesis Discipleship Program Series challenges me too, do not think it does not. We are all in the same boat together. But then, God never promised any of us a safe ride through life – He promises us a safe arrival at the end of our earthly journey through Jesus Christ.

Each of us needs to think of this Six Sermon Project Thesis Discipleship Program Series, which from now on will be referred to as Discipleship Program, in the manner of Jacobs Ladder or Jacobs staircase.

In the scriptural passage of Jacobs Ladder, found in Genesis chapter 28 verses 11 thru 22, we understand that Jacobs Ladder, our Ladder, is None Other Than Jesus Christ. Jesus has done all the work for us to be saved; but, we must take our free will and choose to repent of our sin and accept Him and then we must become an active participant, with Jesus, in His Work, by reading
His Word, applying it to our life, teaching it to our children, and telling others that they can have salvation through Jesus Christ too. We cannot simply take our salvation like a raw egg, put it in our pocket and walk away – we must choose to get involved.

Jesus tells us this in Matthew chapter 13, the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. Further Jesus tells us this again in Matthew 25 verses 1 thru 13, the Parable of the 10 virgins, and the Parable of the 3 Servants, Matthew 25 verses 14 thru 30.

The Main Idea of these Parables is found in Matthew 13:15

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Jesus wants to heal us, help us, guide us, but we have to read His Word to find ears for His voice on a daily basis.

We either choose to see, hear, and understand, or by direct default we have chosen to reject Jesus. These are the only two choices available to us.

And seeing, hearing, and understanding are all action verbs requiring our action.

Will we stumble and fall along the path of this journey in our repentance of sin and acceptance of Jesus Christ? Yes. But Jesus will help us up.

Will we make mistakes along the way? Yes. But the Holy Spirit of God will guide us correctly.
Will we succumb to gross negligent error during our lives? Possibly. But God stands at the ready to help us avoid many of the pitfalls, terrors, and temptations…if we choose to take the way out, provided by God.

The Christian life is not always cheery, rosey, and delightful; sometimes the Christian life is fraught with peril, turmoil, destruction, death of our loved ones, betrayal…etc. You get the idea.

But we make this journey together with Jesus’ Help. If we choose Jesus.

We make this journey together with each and every other believer. If we choose to surround our life and selves with other believers and followers of Christ Jesus.

Which brings us to the heart of the matter of the Discipleship Program, and that is, the doctrine of sufficiency.

Because where do we find our help? In Jesus and His Word – The Bible.

The doctrine of sufficiency is the focus of the Discipleship Program, just as Jesus is; that Jesus’ Word contains all the help and information we need to successfully navigate our earthly life, in every aspect, to eventually meet Him at the end of our destination and receive from Him a warm hug and hear those words – Welcome Home good and faithful servant.

So, let us take this journey together with Jesus and His Word, and come to learn and know what it is God expects of us all.

For week 1, step 2, explain to listeners the relevant scripture for sermon 1, week 1, is Acts 2 verses 42 through 47 and the title for this week is, the importance of correct scriptural, Christian community, and the doctrine of sufficiency. Then read provided script as follows:
Scriptural accuracy and correct scriptural understanding are vital necessity when it comes to the doctrine of sufficiency and God’s Word. If we do not understand the scripture correctly, we will be easily led astray by incorrect scripture versions and those who tell us incorrectly the scripture says something that, in fact, it does not say. We will also give faulty information to others in our witness for Jesus Christ.

First, a definition of the doctrine of sufficiency, by John MacArthur,

God’s Word is sufficient to meet every need of the human soul as David verifies frequently in his psalms. Psalm 19:7-14 is the most comprehensive statement regarding the sufficiency of Scripture. It is an inspired statement about Scripture as a qualified guide for every situation. Scripture is comprehensive, containing everything necessary for one’s spiritual life. Scripture is surer than a human experience that one may look to in proving God’s power and presence. Scripture contains divine principles that are the best guide for character and conduct. Scripture is lucid rather than mystifying so that it enlightens the eyes. Scripture is void of any flaws and therefore lasts forever. Scripture is true regarding all things that matter, making it capable of producing comprehensive righteousness. Because it meets every need in life, Scripture is infinitely more precious than anything this world has to offer.

Let us simplify Dr. MacArthur’s definition to something we can easily remember by stating: the doctrine of sufficiency means – God’s Word is all sufficient for every area of our human life – right now – on earth, and our afterlife; or more simply stated the Bible, God’s Word, is sufficient for all areas of our daily life. The Scripture that specifically denotes this Biblical principle is Psalms 19:7-14. This scripture also emphasizes and describes the relationship we have with our Creator in the governmental form of a theocracy where we are ruled by Divine guidance and religious law. This means that when we do not understand a passage of scripture we ask someone for help who is more knowledgeable in that area, our pastor, for instance, and it also means we

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have to look up in our Bible if what we’ve been told is true or not. And if we have further questions then we go back to our pastor and state those questions. This is not an invitation for us to play ‘Bible hockey’ with our pastor, it is an invitation to be and act like those Christians in Thessalonica who were more noble and looked in the scriptures daily to see if what they said was true.

In the same instance we understand we are going to maintain a continuous dialogue with our Pastor on scripture on a daily basis. This regular scriptural maintenance incorporates a behaviour pattern in our life which is characterized through our daily Bible reading our belief and faith in Jesus, our applying Biblical scripture and standards to our daily life, and our understanding of Bible scripture which all becomes strong. At this point we cannot read faulty versions of scripture, we need to be reading a King James Bible, and there is a world of difference between the King James Bible and other versions.

For instance, our target scripture for sermon #1 is Acts 2:42-47. In the King James Bible, reads,

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

And in the New International Version it reads,

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and
possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

But what is the difference between these two scriptural passages? In the very first verse of both scripture versions we note that the King James Bible states, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,” and in the New International Version it changes the sentence structure to, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship.” What is the difference? The Main difference is the KJB states continued steadfastly which is the Greek Koine word proskarterountes from the root Greek Koine word proskartereó which is defined as: to attend constantly, I persist, persevere in, continue steadfast in; I wait upon. Continued steadfastly is understood as regular daily maintenance whereas devoted is defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary as: to commit by a solemn act, to give over or direct (time, money, effort, etc.) to a cause, enterprise, or activity. The difference here between continued steadfastly and devoted is vast. Continued steadfastly specifically implies, by definition, to regularly maintain every minute of a day whereas devoted is a one-time act of a one-time event that is not continually maintained.

So, if we follow an NIV version of the Bible we are not getting the correct information or idea that God expects us to maintain our reading of His Word every minute of our daily life, not just one time a day, one time a week, or sporadically throughout the month or year. Every day, every minute of our day, we do not read God’s Word, or are thinking about God’s Word, is a minute or a day we have relinquished control by God to control by the devil. If we read faulty versions of God’s Word then we will directly state faulty scripture and be a faulty witness for
Christ. And how do we know the KJB is so specific? That was proven in 1947 when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found on the north western shore of the Dead Sea. This archaeological discovery dated the Old Testament to 1200 years earlier, verified and confirmed Old Testament books of the Bible like Isaiah, cast new light on the beginnings of Christian community, and verified the KJB to a 99.9999% word for word accuracy of God’s Word. The other .0001% were contraction and conjunction words like and, if, but, for, nor. Further, the King James Bible was known since its inception in 1611 as the authorized version of God’s Word. No other modern Bible version carries the same classification, authenticity, reliability, or accuracy, translated from the original languages of Hebrew, Greek Koine, and Aramaic.

Is all of this important, this detail minutia? Yes, it was important enough for Jesus, who we say we obey and follow, to have stated, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Matthew 24:35 (KJV) That scripture is a command statement, it is not subject to speculation, private interpretation, or is it optional. We either believe and trust Jesus and His Word, or we do not. The entirety of the Bible is from God, it is His specific Words and we are not allowed to add to them or subtract from them in any fashion. Jesus tells us this in the Matthew 24:35 scripture that we just heard that His Words shall not pass away. Jesus doesn’t say a version of my words shall not pass away, He says, my words shall not pass away. Basically, we understand that there is a definitive point that we need to come to grips with – Do we want to know, specifically, what Jesus expects of us? How we are saved? What will happen after we die? How God expects us to live our daily life? How the Holy Spirit of God acts in us and through us? How Christian Community functions according to God’s Word? What God’s Word specifically says? Or do we feel and operate our lives under the slogan close enough is good enough?
Examples that illustrate close enough is not good enough are: would we ride in a bus or plane where the driver or pilot was sort of or kind of trained to drive the bus or fly the plane? Would close enough be good enough in this instance? Would we buy meat from the butcher who subscribed to close enough is good enough for his cleanliness habits in the slaughter, packaging, and distribution of our hamburger? Would close enough be good enough for our health? Would we go to a doctor or nurse who may have completed their medical training, or earned D minus/ C plus grades in medical school, under the mantra of close enough is good enough? Would we want them operating on us or trust them to heal our wounds? Would close enough be alright for the vows we take when a man marries a woman? Is close enough good enough alright for our children or grandchildren whether they behave in a civilized, humane, positive manner in society? In these examples the answer is always no.

We want trained professionals to drive us in a bus or fly us in a plane or handle our meat purchases at the grocery store or operate on us during surgical procedures. We expect a man and a woman will make a commitment and stick to it when they get married. We want our children and grandchildren to be and act civilized, humane toward others, and be positive producing members of society – not rioting in the streets, burning businesses to the ground, toppling statues, taking over police precincts, supporting anarchistic groups and movements that espouse Marxism or Socialism which tear down society rather than building up society. Then why would we take such a lassie-faire attitude and approach when it comes to our spiritual health, our spiritual well-being, our relationship with Jesus, the accuracy of God’s Word, the work of the Holy Spirit of God in our life and our after-life?
Regarding our target scripture for sermon #1, Acts 2:42-47, we now realize we need to be careful handling and understanding what God’s Word states. We need to get it right. Scriptural accuracy and scriptural understanding go hand in hand when it comes to Biblical scripture. In order to understand the doctrine of sufficiency we must first have an accurate translation of God’s Word from the original languages of Hebrew, Greek Koine, and Aramaic, which is found only in the KJB.

The doctrine of sufficiency is the Biblical principle that serves as pivotal foundation for addressing whether or not we are living the scripture in daily life and for convincing us to become more dedicated disciples for Jesus Christ. A strong understanding of the doctrine of sufficiency through careful exegesis is critical. Ample amounts of scriptural reference elucidate the fact that a Christian church is to be crucicentric in format (which means operated by Jesus) and based upon accurate theological scriptural understanding which stress the doctrine of sufficiency. Examples of scriptural doctrine of sufficiency which will be discussed through the six-part sermon series are Acts 2:42-47; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalms 19:7-11; John 2:22; and Luke 24:44-45. For sermon #1 we are delving into Acts 2:42-47. Again, our target scripture states,

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.
While the book of Acts is sometimes thought of being anonymously written, traditionally, Luke the Physician was responsible for writing Acts of the Apostles. A strong emphasis in Acts resides in the work of the Holy Spirit through Christian believers, such as the eleven remaining disciples (1:13) with responsibility as leadership having been placed with Peter, and Philip, for spreading the Gospel Message of Jesus throughout Jerusalem. Paul and his companions, who accompanied him on three of his four missionary trips is also outlined in the Acts of the Apostles. The setting and backdrop of the beginning of Acts takes place immediately with Jesus’ ascension into heaven (1:9), witnessed by his disciples (1:13) in the Mt. of Olives (1:12), and Jesus’ instructions for his disciples (1:4-8) which include waiting for baptism (baptizō) from the Holy Spirit (Hagio Pneumati)[Theos] a descriptive reference for the upcoming Pentecost (2:1-8). The Acts of the Apostles ties the New Testament together by depicting the character of Jesus’ disciples in proclaiming that the kingdom of God did not end with Jesus’ ascension forty days after his crucifixion, but continues on in believers whom are indwelt, embodied, and empowered with the Holy Spirit of God. Acts gives a view into the very first Christian community and how they functioned within the strict confines of overpowering Roman governmental rule (4:26-27) and Jewish religious authority (2:23,36; 4:1) which attempted a stranglehold on the burgeoning Christian faith. The book of Acts demonstrates how Christian community is delegated and is ordered by scripture, illuminating the doctrine of sufficiency via everyday life activities, physical and spiritual needs, and public and private life.

Acts 2:42 specifically denotes four practices that are essential within the Christian community, the apostle’s doctrine (apostolōn didachē), fellowship (koinōnia), breaking of bread
These Christian practices are highlighted as residing within the Christian believer, as a member of the Christian community, and are denoted as a responsible commitment of the individual to other Christians as well as the Christian community at large. Another significance is placed upon the immediate unquestionable authority that the apostles had among the Christian community to teach the doctrines of Christ precisely as Christ had taught them. Further, the Greek Koine proskarterountes, an action verb, conveys the deep, close, relationship that Christian believers maintained within their community as Christ followers. Proskarterountes also implies the intimate relationship the community had with Christ and to his teachings (didachē) due to the fact proskarterountes is transliterated as ‘steadfastly continuing.’\footnote{Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019).} There is significant weight given to fellowship (koinōnia) in Acts 2:42 as the inference is a clear message where mutually shared activities and possessions are the benefit of the Christian community, established through the Holy Spirit of God. The form of intimate fellowship that exists in Christian community is not only in sharing of a meal, but also in the sharing of socio-economic welfare provided for all, which includes the breakdown of ethnic barriers.

Acts 2:43 expressly designates the tying of two significant elements which specified the apostles were operating within the Holy Spirit of God and were to be believed and accepted. The emotion that overcame the disciples as well as those in the crowd was fear, which every soul (phobōs pasē psychē), had experienced through wonders and signs (terata kai sēmeia).\footnote{Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019).} 

\footnote{James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1894/1984).}
two elements relate to Divine intervention and miracles taking place within the abilities of the apostles and are purposely demonstrated in Luke 1:12; 2:9; and 5:26; and 7:16 respectively. In each scriptural reference, the depiction is representative of Divine intervention (1:12; 2:9), and Jesus’ miracles (5:26; 7:16) which the apostles were reflecting through their works and is supernatural. Luke validates the apostle’s ability and its source – the Holy Spirit of God, which further confirms the reason for three thousand coming to repentance and belief in Christ Jesus (2:41).

Acts 2:44 explicitly signifies three unique qualities of Christian community; mutual belief (pistēuontes), togetherness or fellowship (koinōnia), and like-mindedness of thought or having all things in common (eichōn hapanta koina). Luke is expressing that their mutually shared fellowship and belief went beyond the bounds of shared material possessions. It extended to a voluntary congealment where fellow members pool resources and knowledge about Jesus Christ that develops into spiritual connectedness as well as reciprocated care for one another’s spiritual and physical needs.

Acts 2:45 plainly indicates Luke describing that Christian community members anticipate their fellow members physical needs by combining, sharing, selling, and distributing their own physical goods for the benefit of the collective group. This Christian community belief is designated through the use of ktēmata (physical possessions in terms of land/ property) hyparxeis (goods in terms of property/ subsistence and possessions) epipraskon (they were selling) diemerizon (were dividing). Luke portrays the Christian community as having an abundant emphasis and a profound sense of absence of discriminatory practice in the distribution of goods

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185 Ibid.
186 Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English.
and a united common experience shared by all regardless of social status or wealth. Further, Luke is describing a common bond in Christ that develops over time as members become more aware of each other’s needs that were completely voluntary in substance and nature.

Acts 2:46 exclusively suggests that Christian members of a Christian community are in one accord (one mind of belief)(homothymadon) regarding natural place, temple (hierō) or home (oikon) in the apportioning of daily meals on a regular basis. Luke implies their private and public communal Christian life experience intertwined, which expanded beyond the formal bounds of temple worship. Moreover, Luke demonstrates how living the Christian community experience developed, connecting their familial bonds with other Christian believers. Luke also accentuates an overwhelming sense of fellowship and joy that was not obligatory, but from a place in each individual’s heart that exude with abundant gladness (agalliasen – exuberant exultation) and cemented their common belief in Christ. This sense of Christian community was a visible extension of the Holy Spirit of God at work, showing authenticity and genuineness.

Acts 2:47 indicates three crucial elements that are a result of Christian community: praising God (ainountes Theon), having favor with all the people (echontes charin pros holon ton laon), and the Lord adding to the church daily such as should be saved (Kyrios prosetithei tous sōzomenous kath’ hēmeran epi to auto). Luke directly implies an immediate response is necessary to Christ’ offer of salvation and that it is the Lord Jesus who is doing the complete work via the Holy Spirit of God through the people and community. Luke further states that believers are receiving favor from God which naturally spilled out into the surrounding non-believing community to entice them to become believers. The overall arching reiteration that is

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187 Ibid.
present in verse 47 is the presence of urgency that compels people to repent and come to belief in Christ, and that being saved takes place in the present tense. The specific words kath’ hēmeran (καθ’ ἡμέραν), a preposition and noun respectively, signify the concept of ‘every day,’ meaning the Holy Spirit of God does not rest from doing His work, and multiplies everything He does. This is evidenced in Genesis 1:28, “…be fruitful and multiply…” Albeit in context, God said this to Adam and Eve to bring forth children, it shows a characteristic quality of God’s person and nature, that He is fruitful and multiplies in His work. There is a direct correlation between the Greek Koine prostithémi and the Hebrew rabah, as both words purposefully depict God’s ability, desire, and intention to increase, which translates in Acts 2:47 to people being saved daily or the Lord added (Kyrios prosetithei). 188

Questions to help us remember the important scriptures and Biblical concepts from today’s study:

1. What is the scripture verse that states Jesus’ Words shall not pass away? Matthew 24:35

2. Which Bible is the only authorized version of God’s Word from the original languages of Hebrew, Greek Koine, and Aramaic? King James Bible

3. What document found in 1947 on the north western shore of the Dead Sea verified the King James Bible reliability to an accuracy of word for word of 99.9999%? Dead Sea Scrolls

4. The scripture that specifically denotes the doctrine of sufficiency is Psalms 19:7-14

188 Lancelot C.L. Brenton, The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English.
5. God’s Word is sufficient for all areas of our daily life is the definition of ‘what’? the doctrine of sufficiency


8. There are many elements of Christian Community that Acts 2:42-47 talks about. Which do you feel are the most important? Why do you feel these are the most important? Explain.

9. What important Biblical concept did the disciples of Jesus (and believers today) use in the book of Acts, to tie the New Testament together? That the kingdom of God did not end with the ascension

10. The book of Acts demonstrates how Christian community is delegated and is ordered by scripture

11. If we do not understand the scripture correctly, we will be easily led astray by incorrect scripture versions. We will also give faulty information to others in our witness for Jesus Christ.

For week 2, step 1, explain to listeners the relevant scripture for sermon 2, week 2, is 2nd Timothy 2 chapter 3 verses 16 through 17 and the title for this week is, how to operate and manage God’s Christian Church on earth, and living out our faith in Jesus Christ. Then read provided script as follows:
In the first sermon for week 1 we learned about the doctrine of sufficiency, were given a definition of it, and we also learned about Christian Community. Further, we understand now that God’s Word demonstrates the how (everything we need to know for living our earthly life is in God’s Word) and why we are to live by God’s Word (a life pleasing to God, which is also given to us in God’s Word). We also learned that God’s Word is sufficient for all areas of our daily life, as it is, in the KJB, and why it is important to be reading the KJB and asking someone like our Pastor when we don’t understand scripture or need more explanation. The only ways we will know how God wants us to live our life is if we open and read our Bible daily and attend Christian Church services weekly. We should also be involved in a weekly Bible Study group with a qualified Bible instructor who will give us correct scriptural understanding and help us when we have questions. We also need to be attending a weekly Bible Prayer Meeting in order to be strengthened and sharpened by other Christians. When we attend Christian Church services the sermons should have an organized structure, have a clear central idea or theme, and be put into words we can easily understand. Sermons also need to be inspiring to us and challenge us and motivate us to do things God’s Way – not our own. These are the only ways our understanding of scripture will become stronger, more mature, and grow, just like our relationship with Jesus. We also need the indwelling, direction, and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God to accomplish these tasks within us: and that is where a lot of prayer and faith comes in. This is the moment we start to develop Christian habits, and when the Holy Spirit of God cultivates in us, Christian habits we will become more Christ like.

We know the scripture tells us to pray without ceasing, this means as we go through our day of events, we are to keep a firm mind and heart upon Jesus and His Word. Why is it important to attend so many Christian events, Christian Bible Study, Christian Bible Prayer
Meeting, Christian Church services, weekly? To keep a continuous connection with Jesus and other Christians, so that we will hear the Word of God and respond to it, and because scripture tells us so. The Apostle Paul gave an example of this Biblical principle when he stated, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” What Paul is saying in this scripture directly, found in Hebrews 10 verse 25, when we forsake Christian Church attendance, Christian Bible Study, Christian Bible Prayer Meeting, Christian Community, Christian gathering, we are intentionally jeopardizing our own spiritual growth and relationship with Jesus and other Christians. We also sacrifice being a positive productive member in the Body of Christ in order to help other fellow Christians with the spiritual gifts that God has given us (this Biblical principle is illustrated in 1 Corinthians chapter 12). We also sacrifice hearing the Word of God in our ears which will contribute to thinking, believing, and acting in un-Biblical ways in our daily life. This Biblical principle is illustrated in Romans chapter 10 verse 14. Which by direct understanding, we realize, the most important and only quality to look for in a Christian Church is preaching and message is Biblically accurate and scripturally correct and based. When we read our Bible continuously, daily, and hear the Word of God preached to us we come to understand that the single characteristic that defines a person who is saved is accepting Christ and nothing else. We build our entire life upon the foundation of Christ, as is illustrated in 1 Corinthians 3:10.

Now for this week, sermon 2, we’re exegeting 2 Timothy 3:16-17, regarding operating and managing God’s Christian Church on earth, and living out our faith in Jesus, and how these relate to the doctrine of sufficiency. Our target scripture, 2nd Timothy 3:16-17, reads,

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Commonly, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus are referred to as the Pastoral Epistles, and are specific in construct as they are written on how to deal with church structures and forms of ecclesiastical leadership, and men serving in pastoral roles. A strong emphasis in the Pastoral Epistles teach Christian living/ conduct (1 Tim. 2:8-15; 2 Tim. 1:8-12), combat false teaching (1 Tim. 4:1-5), and its harmful effects in a Christian church. Christians are to adhere to and hold up on correct/ right doctrine (2 Tim. 4:1-4) which must result in proper scriptural living (2 Tim. 3:14-15). In 2 Timothy, Paul prepares Timothy to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ after he is gone. An overarching theme in 2 Timothy is the importance of the individual’s response to God’s act of salvation through Jesus Christ. Another enormously valuable insight that is derived from 2 Timothy is the prominence it places on church leadership. The connection that 2 Timothy has with the doctrine of sufficiency is living out your faith in Jesus Christ and teaching others to do the same. The Pastoral Epistles reveal the unique view of Christian church government for a Christian community. All believers belong to the family of God (1 Tim. 3:5,15) and as such there is a tremendous responsibility that the Christian church be built upon a foundation of doctrinal and ethical truth (2 Tim. 1:13-18) that is firmly rooted in teaching Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16 concretely endorses four discerning Christian virtues which are found throughout the entirety of both the Old and New Testament. Immediately the reader understands ‘all scripture is given by inspiration of God,’ which in the Greek Koine is pasa graphē theopneustos (πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος).\(^\text{189}\) The significance of pasa graphē theopneustos, God breathed, references more than just the scripture found in 2 Timothy 3:16, it is a precisely

\(^{189}\)Lancelot C.L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English.*
detailed indication that both the Old and New Testaments, and Apocrypha, are given to us as a gift from God and are divinely inspired and written. The scripture further illuminates this point, “knowing that no prophecy of scripture is for private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20), and further designates “for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). These scriptures attest to the authority, authenticity, and reliability of scripture as divine utterance.

The four instructional constructs God’s Word facilitates in its entirety are: profitable for doctrine (ōphelimos pros didaskalian), for reproof (conviction)(pros elegmon), for correction (pros epanorthōsin), for instruction (training) in righteousness (pros paideian tēn en dikaiosynē). Each of these Biblical concepts stand on their own, relaying important theological and ethical Biblical doctrine which underpins the doctrine of sufficiency. The Biblical concept, profitable for doctrine (ōphelimos pros didaskalian), is immersed throughout Old and New Testament scripture. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to didaskalian (training/ instruction) is מָ֫דָּה׃ from the root Hebrew word lamad, a Verb, and is defined as: to exercise in, learn, instruct, instructors. In context, lamad is used as a The verb lamad precisely describes how God is angry that people fear other people rather than fearing God who the Hebrew people are disrespecting. The relevant scripture for this discussion reads,

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this

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190Ibid.
191Ibid.
192James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 194
people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Isaiah 29:13-14 (KJV)

The significance of this Old Testament scripture directly implies a more laser focused view of the doctrine of sufficiency in the sentence structure, specifically the words ‘by the precept of men,’ which states conclusively that humanity gives lip-service to God instead of genuine, heartfelt, spirit filled, worship in both private and public life. Further, the Isaiah scripture is a warning that God will perish the wisdom of their wise men and hide understanding of their prudent men provided the people do not return to right scriptural understanding and right worship of God. Both warnings are intertwined with the doctrine of sufficiency and inform the reader of God’s Word to apply Biblical teaching to their daily life or their lives and success will perish and be hidden from their view. Confirmation of these facts are deliberately stated in Joshua; “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

The Biblical concept for reproof (conviction) (pros elegmon), is also found throughout Old and New Testament scripture. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to reproof (conviction) (elegmon) is יָכְחָכ from the root Hebrew word yakach and is defined as: to decide, adjudge, prove, reproof, refute, rebuke. In context, yakach exactly states how God judges and corrects those who show Him proper fear and respect. On the
contrary, God will punish those who openly disrespect Him and His Word and reject Christ. The relevant scripture for this discussion is,

Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment? Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? *Job 22:4-5* (KJV)

In context, this Old Testament scripture provides a more precise understanding of the doctrine of sufficiency specifically by the words reprove thee which are understood as being used in a rhetorical question format. Decidedly, God will reprove, prove, refute, correct, rebuke, us when we have sinned because the wickedness of our sin before a righteously just, and perfectly sinless God, is an abomination to Him. Moreover, God’s correction for us and our sin is God showing us that He loves us. Confirmation of this Biblical concept is stated in Proverbs, “For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.” (*Proverbs* 3:12)

The fact that God corrects those whom He loves is also evidenced in the New Testament, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (*Hebrews* 12:6)

The Biblical concept for correction (pros epanorthōsin), is found throughout Old and New Testament scripture. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to correction (epanorthōsin), in context with the 2 Tim. 3:16 scripture, is בֹּשׂכְּרָעַח וּצְדִיקָה from the root Hebrew word tsidqah, and is defined as right-doing.\(^{195}\) In context, tsidqah expressly conveys Daniel the Prophet is speaking to king Nebuchadnezzar imploring him to repent of his sin and accept God. The relevant scripture for this discussion is,

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\(^{195}\) Ibid.
Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.  

Daniel 4:27 (KJV)

In context, this scripture from the Old Testament establishes a more profound understanding of the doctrine of sufficiency in overall summation as Daniel’s plea for king Nebuchadnezzar, however, it also was prophetic in the sense that Daniel’s statement came true. Confirmation of this is evidenced in Daniel 4:33, along with its future prophetic counterpart found in Daniel 4:25. The overall Biblical concept that is understood, in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency, is right-doing or living a scripturally accurate life, which king Nebuchadnezzar did not follow.

The Biblical concept for instruction (training) in righteousness (pros paideian tên en dikaiosynē) is found throughout Old and New Testament scripture. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to instruction in righteousness (paideian tên en dikaiosynē), or righteousness training (dikaiosynē paideian), is ḥā·nōḵ حنوك from the root Hebrew word chanak, and is defined as: to train up, dedicate. In context, chanak unambiguously communicates the way we raise up our children is the way they will follow throughout their entire life. The scripture which defines this Biblical principle states, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6 KJV. This Old Testament scripture describes and details a specific educational methodology regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, which is to be adhered to, without question, in the raising of children. Further proof of the doctrine of sufficiency can be found in 2 Timothy, “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:17 KJV.

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196 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
2 Timothy 3:17 definitively, clearly, and unequivocally, instructs three essential Christian characteristic virtues: perfect, thoroughly furnished, good works, which are bedrock principles for Christian life which are displayed in private and in public. These characteristic qualities are built upon post Christ conversion. Instantly, the reader is acutely compelled with the words ‘that the man of God may be perfect,’ which in the Greek Koine are hina artios ἀρτιὸς ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος. The significance of hina artios ἀρτιὸς ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος (that the man of God may be perfect), is found in the specific word artios. The word artios has more relevance than just for the 2 Tim. 3:17 scripture, it is a depiction found throughout the Old and New Testament of those people that God chose to perform His many unique and different missionary tasks. The Greek Koine word artios, is an adjective and is defined as: fitted, complete, perfect, ready. In context, it is a description of the character of the man who possesses the quality of following and obeying God and God’s Word. Further, it describes a character attribute of God who endowed the ability, referring to God’s immutability which attests to God’s unchanging and eternal nature. Scripture which confirms this attribute of God, He is unchanging reads, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17 KJV) Ultimately, God expects that we, as believers in Christ Jesus, will emulate and reflect the same character attribute in our self, a completeness, that surpasses worldly secular instruction.

The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to artios (fitted, complete, perfect, ready), is נָכּוֹן from the root Hebrew word kun, a verb, is

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197 Lancelot C.L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English.*

198 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*
defined as: to be firm, appointed, established, makes ready, prepared. In context, nā·ḵō·wn is used in reference to Joseph interpreting Pharaoh’s dream. The scripture relevant for this point reads, “And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” Genesis 41:32 KJV. The significance of the scripture and the Hebrew nā·ḵō·wn to the doctrine of sufficiency is found in the wording of the sentence structure Joseph states to Pharaoh, ‘it is because the thing is established by God.’ The reader comprehends that only God establishes, makes ready, prepares (completes). In other words, the Biblical principle – God completes – is firmly formed, through the relational value between the Greek Koine artios and the Hebrew nā·ḵō·wn.

The second necessary Christian characteristic imparted to believers in 2 Tim. 3:17, thoroughly furnished, originates with God and is given to human beings from God, solely. There is nothing any human can do to acquire it, create it, or earn it, the characteristic quality must be bestowed from On High to a human. This foundational principle, built on the teachings and words of Jesus Christ, is relayed through Holy writ in the Greek Koine word exērtismenos. The Greek Koine word exērtismenos ἐξηρτισμένος is a verb from the root Greek Koine word exartizó ἐξαρτίζω and is defined as: to complete, to equip fully, I fit up, completely furnish, equip, furnish, supply, accomplish, finish.200 This word is particular in its usage indicates action required on the part of the recipient. This attests to the fact that the doctrine of sufficiency is given through both God’s Word and God’s actions as a benefit on behalf of God toward the person God gives this characteristic to, and relays the message – God is sufficient in all areas, completely. It also directly implies God gives the person everything that they need to complete

199 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

200 Ibid.
the missionary task He calls them to do. Further, after God has conferred this gift to the individual, they must act upon it by obeying what God wants them to do.

The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to exērtismenos, to equip fully, can be comprehended through a specific passage of Bible scripture, Isaiah 28:23-39,

Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. Isaiah 28:23-29 (KJV)

In this Biblical passage, and relevant for this discussion, is the Hebrew word found in verse 26, yō·w·ren·nū יֹרֵנִנּוּ from the root Hebrew word yarah (yara), a verb, defined as: to throw, shoot, instruct, teach. 201 The Hebrew word yō·w·ren·nū is used as the Prophet Isaiah endeavoring to tell the people of Judah, through the use of a parable, their future behavior will determine God’s judgment. The significance of yō·w·ren·nū identifies how God responds to His people by teaching them to obey His Word. In relation to the Greek Koine exērtismenos, to equip fully, it is but one of many ways God instructs, teaches, and equips people to be fully prepared for the task assigned to them for His kingdoms purpose. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, both the Greek Koine word exērtismenos and the Hebrew word yō·w·ren·nū work in direct relationship.

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201 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
They impart the need for correct detailed discernment of God’s Word as to how God expects we are to think, speak, and act during our daily life, as witnesses for Christ. Further, scripture that speaks to this Biblical principle, God instructs and equips, is found in Psalms, “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.” (Psalm 32:8 KJV)

The third Christian characteristic conferred to believers in 2 Tim. 3:17, good works, rests entirely upon the shoulders of the human God has chosen. The Greek Koine words for good works, are agathon and ergon, respectively. The significance of these Greek Koine words imply a character quality of the individual who possesses them and says just as much about the person that embodies these qualities as it does about God who provides them. In contrast, it also attests to those who intentionally wreak mischief, chaos, destruction, and evil, in the fact that their actions speak louder than words as to who and what they are as individuals. These people who partake in heinous acts, believe, and follow the powers of darkness and destruction rather than God. Scripture which confirms this Biblical principle reads,

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Matthew 7:16-20 (KJV)

This scripture holds two elements. It speaks directly about the person and about God, in that we know the character quality of people by the fruit they produce just as we know God’s character attributes by the good and gracious gifts He gives.

The Greek Koine word agathon ἀγαθὸν is derived from the root Greek Koine word agathos ἄγαθος and is defined as: intrinsically good, good in nature, good whether it be seen to
be so or not. Agathon is an adjective and signifies an inward psychological manifestation and condition of belief which is displayed outwardly in the world through the individual’s actions, words, and deeds. The Biblical principle of intrinsically good can be found in summated in 1 Timothy, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” (I Timothy 6:11 KJV) The overall theme that is symbiotic in relationship to the doctrine of sufficiency, which is conveyed through the previous scripture passage, is that a person is known by their actions as to whether they are good or not and there is only one place that information exists, in God’s Word.

The Biblical concept for intrinsically good is found throughout the Old and New Testament. The correlational word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to agathon, intrinsically good, is hay·yā·šār הָיָשָּׁר from the root Hebrew word yashar, an adjective, defined as: straight, right, upright, which was right, who are upright, who is upright.202 Hay·yā·šār is used to definitively announce Moses speaking to the Israelite people as they have come to the end of their forty year exodus in Deut. 6:18. Moses is warning the Israelite people to honor the Lord in everything they do during their daily life. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, the Greek Koine word agathon, and the Hebrew word hay·yā·šār, speak to the Biblical principle that God’s Word contains definitive moral and ethical requirements for the individual if followed and appropriately applied. God wants people with character attributes that reflect His goodness, righteousness, and uprightness. Scripture which exemplifies the Biblical principle of uprightness is,

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202 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

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And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers.  Deuteronomy 6:18 KJV

The second character quality that God expects will be developed in a mature believer is found in the Greek Koine word ergon. The Greek Koine word (ergon or) erga ἔργα, from the root Greek Koine word ergon ἔργον, a noun, defined as: work, task, deed, employment, action, that which is wrought or made, behavior, in an owned business, a product made, or a deed done. In context, the Greek Koine word erga in its usage represents an action that God expects a believer in Christ Jesus to reflect in their private and public life – good deeds, works, for others. This Biblical principle is illustrated in Matthew,

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.  Matthew 5:16 KJV

The connection to the doctrine of sufficiency is found in the action that a believer in Christ Jesus is to bestow upon other people, the most important good deed that a person can do for another person – helping them come to belief in Christ.

The Biblical concept of good deeds toward others, erga, especially helping a non-believer come to belief in God, is found throughout the Old and New Testament. The correlative word in Hebrew found in the Old Testament that is relative to erga, good deeds, is ma·‘ā·šē·ḵā מ‘에שא from the root Hebrew word maaseh, a noun, and is defined as: a deed, work, achievement, conduct, actions, regarding work done in a business, a thing made, or work done for others. Ma·‘ā·šē·ḵā in its usage is found to be a command to be generous to the poor in Deut. 15:10. The significant Biblical principle is to work as if one is directly working for the Lord in all they do

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203 James Strong, The Exhustive Concordance of the Bible.

204 Ibid.
toward others and for others’ benefit. Colossians illustrates this Biblical principle, “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” (Colossians 3:23 KJV) The relation between erga and ma·ʻā·še·ḵā, regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, is found in the decisive comprehension that God’s Word explicates when we work for others benefit we are really working for God Himself.

Questions to help us remember the important scriptures and Biblical concepts from today’s study:

1. The four instructional constructs God’s Word facilitates in its entirety are profitable for **doctrine**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for **instruction** training in righteousness.

2. In Isaiah 29:13-14 it tells us: **People draw near to God with their mouth & lips but have removed their heart form God & fear of God is taught by the precept of men. Therefore God will do a marvelous work & wonder among the people, because wisdom of wise men will perish & understanding of prudent men will be hid.**

3. Humanity gives **lip** service to God instead of genuine, heart-felt, spirit filled, worship in both **private** and **public** life.

4. Joshua 1:8 tells us: **We meditate on God’s Word day & night then our way shall be prosperous & we’ll have good success.**

5. God **judges** and **corrects** those who show Him proper fear and **respect**.

6. God’s correction for us and our sin is God showing us that He **loves** us.

7. The Biblical concept of God showing His love for us when He corrects us is illustrated by scripture **Proverbs 3:12; and Hebrews 12:6.**
8. We should always be willing to let our counsel be **acceptable** unto God. Daniel 4:27

9. **Right** doing or **living** a scripturally accurate life, is important to God.

10. The way we raise up our children is the way they will **follow** throughout their entire life.

11. Ultimately, God expects that we, as believers in Christ Jesus, will emulate and **reflect** the same character attribute in our self, a completeness, that surpasses worldly secular instruction.

12. Why do we emulate and reflect a Christ like character in our life to others? Because the thing is established by **God**.

13. To be thoroughly furnished and equipped is **bestowed** from God to a **person**.

14. There is nothing we can to acquire it, create it, or earn it, the **characteristic quality** must be bestowed to us from God.

15. We must **receive** it from God and **act** upon it.

16. God gives the person **everything** that they need to **complete** the **missionary** task He calls them to do.

17. Once God has conferred this gift to the individual, they must **act** upon it by obeying what God wants them to do.

18. The OverArching Main Idea of Isaiah 28:23-29 is that God **instructs** and **teaches**.

19. Our responsibility is to scatter **seeds** that God will **grow**.

20. God **instructs**, **teaches**, and **equips** people to be fully prepared.

21. Their **actions** speak louder than **words** of those who intentionally wreak mischief, chaos, destruction, and evil.
22. God’s Word instructs us that those who engage in evil acts, we shall know them by their fruit, in Matthew 7:16-20.

23. The Matthew 7:16-20 scripture speaks about the person in that we will know them by the fruit they produce.

24. The Biblical principle of intrinsically good is summated in 1 Timothy 6:11.

25. A person is known by their actions.

26. Deuteronomy 6:18 tells us we shall do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord.

27. Matthew 5:16 tells us to let our light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

28. The most important good deed that a person can do for another person is in helping them come to belief in Jesus Christ.

29. Colossians 3:23 tells us whatsoever we do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men.

30. Over all emphasis of today’s study tells us that our action is necessary in God’s eyes.

For week 3, step 1, explain to listeners the relevant scripture for sermon 3, week 3, is Psalms 19 verses 7 through 11 and the title for this week is, the doctrine of sufficiency explained in Psalms 19 verses 7 through 11, our action is required, maintaining our relationship with God through Jesus our Savior while the Holy Spirit of God guides our path. Then read provided introduction as follows:

When we began this journey, it was likened to the steps of Jacob’s Ladder, or staircase, if you prefer. Now, we have only stepped a few tentative steps, but they are the most difficult steps
to take, trust and belief in Jesus, repentance of our sin to Jesus, and accepting, trusting, and believing His Word.

Today, for sermon three, we will take a few more steps, as we learn to maintain our daily connection with our Saviour Christ, and with other Christians; which is also incredibly difficult, and takes complete faith on our part that Jesus is who He says He is, and that we can believe Him, and He has done and will do everything the scripture tells us.

Even though the steps are hard and difficult, at times, the road appears rocky, and uneven, or the seasons of our lives are full of hardship, toil, and despair, we never walk that road alone; Jesus is always with us, each and every step of the way.

Let us continue this journey today, and every day of the rest of our earthly lives, together, knowing full well, we truly never walk alone – our Saviour Jesus is with us, always, unto the very end. We may not always experience a safe travel journey, but we will have a safe landing and arrival with Jesus.

For week 3, step 2, read provided script as follows:

In the second sermon for Week 2 we learned about two very valuable Biblical tenants through the exegeting of 2nd Timothy 3:16-17, those being, (One) operating and managing God’s Christian Church on earth, and (Two) how to live out our faith in Jesus Christ on a daily basis. Further, we learned how both these Christian elements relate to the doctrine of sufficiency and that God’s Word instructs, teaches, and equips us to be fully prepared for our earthly life in the mission God calls us to do, both individually and as belonging to the Body of Christ.

One thing that is not emphasized nationwide, or worldwide, is the overall importance of living out our faith in Jesus Christ and teaching others to do the same – disciple making. When
we see a lack of disciple making in other churches that claim Christian status, we realize that all religious organizations do not contain truth. This leads us to the understanding that other literature that other religious organizations hear and read are not equally from God. There are vast differences between Christ believers and followers and other religious organizations. As a matter of fact, only Christianity, believers and followers of Christ, reading, applying and teaching God’s Word, are where truth of who Jesus Christ is and how Jesus Christ expects us to live is truly found. Christians know that the only thing that matters is how I lead my life matters to God (period). How we lead our life does not matter to the individual and should not be the priority. Basically, when we ascribe to the idea that how I lead my life matters to me – then we are in the driver’s seat of our life rather than placing God in the driver’s seat of our life.

Today, sermon 3, we’re going to learn a great deal about the book of Psalms and that church services and sermons need to be scripturally accurate, understood correctly, and that music which relays scripture and scriptural content is to be utilized as outlined and defined by God’s Word. One place where that is found is the book of Psalms. Even Jesus and His disciples sang songs of praise to God from Psalms – we know this in the New Testament found in Matthew 26:30 which states, “And when they had sung an hymn they went out into the mount of Olives.” The complete confirmation of this Biblical concept is in the Greek Koine word for hymn which is humneó which means specifically to sing a hymn of praise to God. The reason why this is important is due to praise and worship to God is based upon God’s Word not an emotional response. Now, this doesn’t mean that often times praise songs, which bring out an emotional response in us is wrong, it means that we are not to lean on emotions for praising and worshiping God – we rely upon learning God’s Word in all areas of our life – this includes praise songs and worship music. Therefore, we realize that praise songs and worship music are an
extension of our reading, understanding, and hearing scripture. Fortunately for us here at Brick by Brick Bible Church, our music leader, leads us in many wonderful songs that portray love, respect, grace, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness, sovereignty …etc. of God toward us, and us to each other, which are complete Biblical concepts, as well as many other wonderful songs that contain many scripture verses week to week. Now, let us, delve into sermon 3 with more scriptural understanding and a grow a closer relationship to our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Decisive scriptural understanding is imperative, especially in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency. Scripture found in Psalms depicts (summates) this Biblical principle,

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. *Psalms 19:7-11* (KJV)

The word for Psalms, in the Greek Koine is psalmos (psalmos, ψαλμός), and in the Hebrew is tehillim (tehillah תֶּהִלָּה), which means songs of praise or praise/ song of praise, respectively. The Greek Koine, psalmos, is the source from which the combined title Psalmoi is taken, which then became the English name Psalms. The Hebrew word tehillim, songs of praise, is an intriguing mixture of a Feminine Noun and a Masculine Plural ending. The Psalms are a collection of 150 prayers and hymns that were used in ancient Israel’s worship toward God. Authors of the Psalms include King David, King Solomon his son (72; 172), Asaph (50; 70-83), the sons of Korah (42; 44-49), Ethan (89), Heman son of Korah (88), and Moses (90). The date of Psalms extends from the time of Moses, 15th century B.C., to the 6th century B.C. There are a myriad of messages scattered throughout the Psalms, however, the overall theme is teaching people how to relate to
God in different life situations. The Psalms further elucidate God’s sovereignty and kindness, righteousness, and integrity toward His creation, human beings, to encourage unambiguous belief and faith in those who trust Him. One of the most significant contributions that Psalms establishes is that God is actively at work in people’s day to day lives. The five major divisions of the Psalms are categorized as petition, thanksgiving, praise, instruction/teaching, and profession of trust. The doctrine of sufficiency is found throughout the Psalms in many scriptural passages, the most prevalent being Psalms 19:7-11 which attests to the orthodox Christian theological belief system that is cornerstone to Christian belief. Psalms 19:7-11 can be divided into two major Biblical concepts: the glorious character of God’s Word (verses 7 thru 9), and the great value of God’s Word (verses 10 thru 11).

Psalm 19:7 signifies two major Biblical concepts which explain the doctrine of sufficiency and directly indicate God’s Word is perfect (נְֽמִימָּה, נְֽמִימָּה) and sure (נֶ֝אֱמָּנָָּ֗ה). There are two principles illustrated which are converting (מָֽשִּׁיבַת, מָֽשִּׁיבַת) the soul (נָֽפִי, נָֽפִי) and making wise (מַחְּכִּיָּת, מַחְּכִּיָּת) the simple (פָּתי, פָּתי). For purposes of the discussion of the doctrine of sufficiency the focus is upon the Hebrew word mah·ki·ma, making wise. Making wise is the evidence that directly states God’s Word is sufficient for all people in all circumstances and situations of daily life. The Hebrew word mah·ki·ma is from the root Hebrew word chakam, a verb, and is defined as: to be wise, become wise, make wise, making wise, acting wise. The Hebrew word mah·ki·ma is in reference to the ability one receives from reading, studying and memorizing God’s Word and applying it to their daily life. Further, it


206 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

207 Ibid.
implies that daily Biblical study will make one wise in all areas of life: spiritual, family, relationships, and business. In correlation to the Hebrew word maḥ·kî·maṯ, making wise, is the Greek Koine word sophos σοφός found in the New Testament. The Greek Koine word sophos is an adjective, and is defined as: wise, learned, cultivated, skilled, clever, governed by piety and integrity, forming the best plans and using the best means. Confirmation of this Biblical principle is,

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:15-17 (KJV)

Directly, the Apostle Paul is giving theological insight to all those who would listen, follow, and obey Jesus Christ and His Word. The direct implication significant for the doctrine of sufficiency is the fact that all who are believers and followers of Christ must consign themselves to daily reading, memorizing, and the study of God’s Word. It is the only way to achieve true wisdom and the only source where true wisdom is found.

Psalm 19:8 expresses two major Biblical doctrines, the Lord’s statutes (piq·qū·ḏê פיקוד) are right (yə·šā·rîm שרים), and the commandments (miṣ·waṯ מצות) of the Lord enlighten (mə·ʾî·raṯ ה伸びים) (open) the eyes (of understanding).208 For purposes of discussion of the doctrine of sufficiency the focus is upon the Hebrew word mə·ʾî·raṯ, open the eyes of understanding. The Biblical concept of open the eyes of understanding directly implies it is God who opens understanding. The Hebrew word mə·ʾî·raṯ is a verb, and is defined as: to be or become light, enlightened, give light, illumine, in reference to physical light of sun, stars, moon, a person, and

208James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
lighten of the eyes (understanding). In correlation to the Hebrew word ָכִּרֹא, open the eyes of understanding, is the Greek Koine word φῶς φῶς a noun, and is defined as: light, a source of light, radiance, in terms of God’s divine illumination imparted through Christ. Two scriptures that confirm this Biblical principle are, “And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven,” Acts 9:3 KJV, and “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” Luke 2:32 KJV. In context, both scriptures reference Jesus, the first when Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, and the second when Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to be circumcised in the Temple when the elderly man Simeon beheld the baby Jesus. Both scripture references elude to Saul and Simeon’s eyes of understanding having been opened which affirms the doctrine of sufficiency regarding God opens the understanding of a person.

Psalm 19:9 explains two vitally important Biblical concepts of God’s Word relating to the doctrine of sufficiency, righteous (שָׁדַקָו) and enduring ( עוֹמֶדֶת). Both Hebrew words posit concrete postulates about scripture; completely just and completely standing on its own. The Hebrew word שָׁדַקָו is from the root Hebrew word תַּסָדַק or תַסָדַק, a verb, defined as: to be just or righteous in reference to character. In context, שָׁדַקָו reveals a quality of how God’s Word acts upon the person(s) who continually reads it and applies it to their daily life. In correlation to the Hebrew word שָׁדַקָו is the Greek Koine word δίκαιος, an adjective, defined as: correct, righteous, by implication innocent, just in the eyes of

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210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
212 Ibid.
God. Scripture which validates God’s Word is just, confirming the doctrine of sufficiency can be found in Romans, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” Romans 7:12 KJV.

The second critical Biblical concept about God’s Word, enduring, is the Hebrew word ֥֧וֹמֵ֣ד ת from the root Hebrew word amad הָֽ֣דַּת a Verb, is defined as: to take one’s stand, to make a stand, remain, establish, in reference to enduring (lasting). The Hebrew word ֥֧וֹמֵ֣ד ת describes a shift of one’s nature and soul from taking part in earthly and worldly pursuits to being converted to Christ with an emphasis upon an attitude of obedience and reverence toward God and His Word. In correlation to the Hebrew word ֥֧וֹמֵ֣ד ת is the Greek Koine word ὑπομένω, a Verb, defined as: to await, to endure, to show endurance, to bear up against, to persevere, with respect to bearing hardship, literally and figuratively, and remain and abide as in God’s Word. Scripture that confirms God’s Word remains forever is located in 1 Peter, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Peter 1:25 KJV. The doctrine of sufficiency is connected specifically through the nature of the quality that God’s Word possesses long term meaning and truth in perpetuity.

Psalm 19:10 emphasizes the Biblical concept that God’s Word is to be more desired (חָנַ֥ן הֵֽאָֽ֖מַּר) than refined gold (עַמִּֽפַּז) and is sweeter (עַמִּֽפַּז) than honeycomb (סֵפִֽפַּמ). For this discussion the focus is on the Hebrew word

213 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
216 James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
The Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏīm is from the root Hebrew word chamad צמא, a verb, and is defined as: to desire, to take pleasure in. The Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏīm is an Article Verb Participle Masculine Plural, and emphasizes the spiritual, emotional, logical and physical connection that exists between God’s Word and the human who reads, memorizes, studies, and applies it to their daily life. In correlation to the Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏīm is the Greek Koine word epithumeó ἐπιθυμέω, a verb, defined as: desire, lust after, I long for, set the heart upon, regarding to show focused passion.

Scripture which exemplifies this Biblical principle is found in Matthew,

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Matthew 13:15-17 (KJV)

Jesus is relaying the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, which teaches several related truths; people with calloused hearts reject truth of God’s Word, Jesus describing the fulfillment of Isaiah 6:9-10 (Jesus is Israel’s healer and redeemer), Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and one day God would preserve a remnant of the Jewish people who will accept Christ as Lord.

The parallel connection between the Hebrew word han·ne·ḥē·mā·ḏīm, the Greek Koine word

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217Ibid.
218Ibid.
219Ibid.
epithumeó, and the doctrine of sufficiency is found in the fact that one’s heart should yearn for God’s Word as is evidenced in scripture that states,

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Matthew 13:44 (KJV)

The implication is that one desires the kingdom of heaven with their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, which is exactly how one should desire reading, memorizing, and studying God’s Word.

Psalm 19:11 underscores a Biblical principle for the preceding four scripture verses, and that is reward to those who keep God’s Word. The Biblical concept, reward (ê·qeb הֶקֶם), and in keeping them (bə·šā·mə·rām וַשָּׁמַר), are foundational structures God expects humans will act upon as they traverse their earthly journey. The Hebrew word ê·qeb is a noun, defined as: a consequence of, in relation to gain or reward (literally, or figuratively). This is poignant regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, demonstrating both a positive reward when one keeps God’s Word and a negative consequence when one disobeys God’s Word. The positive reward is exhibited in Genesis, “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” Genesis 26:5 KJV. In this scripture is the Word that God expected Abraham to keep, and his reward for keeping God’s Word is illustrated in the verse prior that states, “And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” Genesis 26:4 KJV. There is also negative consequence for those who disregard and disobey God’s Word, which is evidenced in Psalms, “For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but

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220James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
the way of the ungodly shall perish.” *Psalms* 1:6 KJV. The negative consequence portrayed in this scripture is the ways of the wicked will perish.

In correlation to the Hebrew word ê·qeḇ, reward, is the Greek Koine word hupakouó ὑπακούω, a verb, defined as: to listen to, to attend to, to obey.\(^{221}\) Scripture which reinforces this Biblical concept as mandate is found in Acts, “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” *Acts* 6:7 KJV. In this scripture, God’s Word is purposeful with intent, provided a person follows and obeys. This Biblical concept proves the doctrine of sufficiency in God’s Word, that obedient life-long faith will result in accurate witness for Christ and disciple making.

The second Hebrew word, bə·šā·mā·rām, in keeping them, describes a relational value that one must maintain with God’s Word and remain true to throughout one’s entire life. The Hebrew word bə·šā·mā·rām is derived from the root Hebrew word shamar שָּמַר a verb, defined as: to keep watch, preserve, take heed of.\(^ {222}\) Shamar specifically refers to what one must do with God’s Word, preserve it and take instruction from it. In Psalm 19:11 the Hebrew word describes and highlights the responsibility of the individual reading, memorizing, and studying God’s Word. Scripture which embodies this Biblical principle can be found in Genesis, “And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations” *Genesis* 17:9 KJV.

\(^ {221}\)James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

\(^ {222}\)Ibid.
This scripture portrays that God expects people will follow His Word and teach it to their children.

In correlation to the Hebrew word shamar, to preserve, is the Greek Koine word diatéreó διατηρέω, a verb, defined as: I keep safe, hold fast.\textsuperscript{223} Scriptures that epitomize the Biblical concept of keeping God’s Word, which is truth, can be found in Colossians and John,

\begin{quote}
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. \textit{Colossians} 3:16 (KJV)
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. \textit{John} 17:17 (KJV)
\end{quote}

These scriptures reinforce the doctrine of sufficiency in God’s Word; further, they are summated and explained in 2 Thessalonians, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” 2 \textit{Thessalonians} 2:15 KJV. In this scripture, the Apostle Paul gives direct instruction on how to live the Christian life correctly by keeping God’s Word while we await the return of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Questions to help us remember the important scriptures and Biblical concepts from today’s study:

1. The word for Psalms in the Greek Koine is psalmos and in the Hebrew is tehillim (tehillah) which means \textbf{songs of praise or praise / song of praise}. \textsuperscript{223}

2. The Psalms are a collection of 150 \textbf{prayers} and \textbf{hymns} that were used in ancient Israel’s worship toward God.

\textsuperscript{223}James Strong, \textit{The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible}. 

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3. The Psalms elucidate God’s **sovereignty** and **kindness**, **righteousness**, and **integrity** toward His creation human beings.

4. The Psalms encourage **unambiguous belief** and **faith** in those who trust Him.

5. The doctrine of sufficiency is found throughout the Psalms in many scriptural passages the most prevalent is [*Psalms 19:7-11*].

6. Psalms 19:7-11 attests to the **orthodox Christian** theological belief system that is **cornerstone** to **Christian belief**.

7. What are the two major Biblical concepts that Psalms 19:7-11 can be divided into? **The glorious character of God’s Word (verses 7 thru 9), and the great value of God’s Word (verses 10-11).**

8. God’s Word is **perfect**.

9. God’s Word is **sure**.

10. God’s Word **converts the soul**, and **makes wise** the **simple**.

11. Daily Biblical study will **make one wise** in all areas of life: **spiritual**, **family**, **relationships**, and **business**.

12. The Apostle Paul gives theological insight to all those who would **listen**, **follow**, and **obey** Jesus Christ and His Word.

13. The Lord’s statutes are **right**.

14. The Lord’s statuettes and commandments **enlighten** the **eyes** of **understanding**.

15. Two scriptures that confirm the Biblical concept that the Lord’s Word enlighten the eyes of understanding are: [*Acts 9:3*], and [*Luke 2:32*].
16. The Hebrew word tsadoq means righteous and reveals a quality of how God’s Word acts upon the person(s) who continually reads it and applies it to their daily life.

17. Scripture which validates God’s Word is just confirming the doctrine of sufficiency is, Romans 7:12.

18. The Hebrew word amad means to take one’s stand, to make a stand, remain, and describes a shift of one’s nature and soul from taking part in earthly and worldly pursuits to being converted to Christ.

19. The Hebrew word amad places an emphasis upon an attitude of obedience and reverence toward God and His Word.

20. God’s Word possesses long term meaning and truth in perpetuity.

21. God’s Word is to be more desired than refined gold and sweeter than honeycomb.

22. We as Christ followers and believers are to take desire in, and pleasure in, reading, memorizing, studying, applying, God’s Word to our daily life.

23. The scripture which exemplifies the Biblical concept of desiring, and taking pleasure in reading, memorizing, studying, and applying God’s Word to our daily life is Matthew 13:15-17.

24. People with calloused hearts reject truth of God’s Word.

25. Scripture that confirms the Biblical principle that one’s heart should yearn for God’s Word is Matthew 13:44.

26. There is reward to those who keep God’s Word.
27. Abraham experienced positive reward for keeping God’s Word, which is found in Genesis 26:4-5.

28. There is negative consequence for those who disregard God’s Word, which is found in Psalms 1:6.

29. One must keep a relational value with God’s Word and remain true throughout one’s entire life.

30. The Hebrew word shamar describes and highlights the responsibility of the individual reading, memorizing, studying, and applying God’s Word.

31. Scripture which embodies the Biblical principle that a person is responsible for keeping God’s Word and teaching it to their children is found in Genesis 17:9, Colossians 3:16, and John 17:17.

32. Scriptures Genesis 17:9, Colossians 3:16; and John 17:17 reinforce the doctrine of sufficiency.

33. The Apostle Paul gives direct instruction on how to live the Christian life correctly, which is found in 2nd Thessalonians 2:15, while we await the Return of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

    For week 4, step 1, explain to listeners the relevant scripture for sermon 4, week 4, is John 2 verse 22 and the title for this week is, believe, trust, and have faith in Jesus and His Word – the scriptures. Then read provided introduction as follows:

    Pastor, we noticed that for Sermon 1 a definition of the doctrine of sufficiency is Psalms 19:7-14, however, you only explained verses 7 thru 11. What about verses 12 thru 14?
Very good question. First, the exegeting of Sermon 3 was 51 minutes, we did not have time for the last three verses, and second, this discipleship program is designed intentionally to be interactive – we need to look up verses 12 thru 14 of Psalms 19 and ask questions.

For week 4, step 2, read the script as follows:

In the third sermon for Week 3 we learned about how praise and worship is focused and centered around God’s Word, as outlined and defined in the Psalms, in the Greek Koine Psalmos, and in the Hebrew tehillim (tehillah). We learned about prayers and hymns and their importance in private and public worship of God. We realize that the Psalms describes God’s sovereignty, kindness, righteousness, and integrity and encourages unambiguous belief and faith in those who believe and trust in faith in God through Jesus Christ our Saviour. We discussed many scriptures from the Old Testament and the New Testament how the Biblical principle of praise worship from the book of Psalms is confirmed in scriptures and mentioned how Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn of praise to God at the conclusion of the Last Supper found in Matthew 26:30. Further scriptural evidence of the Biblical concept, singing praises to God, is found in Psalms 118:15; and Psalms 47:6. Sermon 3 also told us that it is God who opens our eyes to the truth of His Word and enlightens our understanding found in Acts 9:3; and Luke 2:32. Sermon 3 also told us how we are responsible through our action and attitude of obedience and reverence toward God, His Word, and worship service, to keep a constant connection with our Saviour Jesus throughout our waking moments and our night time of rest. This leads us to the conclusion that Christianity, and the Christian life, emulates and reflects Jesus Christ, which explains to us that not all religions are the same at their core. Our entire life is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word. Confirmation of the Biblical principle our life is built on Jesus and His word is found in 1 Corinthians 3:10,11; and Matthew 7:24. Further, all Christian
denominations are not all the same either; Christianity is built upon Jesus Christ, His teachings, and His Word, and nothing nor anyone else. We want to keep in mind from week 2 that our action and involvement is required after we’ve accepted Christ as our Saviour and that God will instruct, teach, and equip us for all He wants us to do. We also keep in mind from sermon one week 1 that a King James Bible is completely trustworthy, authoritative, authentic, reliable, and Divinely inspired and written and that nothing else, no other literature is equal to God’s Divinely Inspired and Written Word on the face of the earth. So, then, where do we go for help, aid and comfort in times of trouble; and where do we go to sing praise in times of great exuberant joy?

We always go to the scripture first and God first, a Pastor second, friends and family third – provided they are Christian and give Christian advice from God’s word, and medical professionals fourth. Overall, we need to bear in mind this is when we are in good health and not experiencing a profound medical emergency. If we are in a medical emergency, then pray to Jesus on your way to the hospital! We must use and apply our God given gift of discernment from God’s Word and the Holy Spirit of God as to which response is appropriate at which time. This Biblical principle is how we understand and know that the scriptures are as relevant today as when they were originally written. If we believe in Jesus and His Word then we also realize that a person is not allowed to believe whatever they want; we either believe Jesus and His Word completely, or we do not – there is no middle ground where the scriptures and secular humanity are cohesive. But wait a minute. How is it we are not allowed to believe whatever we want? For Sermon 3 we used, as example, the scripture John 3:16, and I recited from memory and asked ‘now what is it that I’m doing?’ And the answer was ‘reciting from memory,’ and that is correct. The point is we either are a believer, or we are not, there is no middle ground. The Biblical principal is either or. It is the same idea, in concept, when we realize it, which is stated as – ‘how
can we spend one day a week, or every other week, reading our Bible, yet feel that we will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus? The answer is in the form of a question: Do we feel that when we went through our life spending as little time with Jesus as possible that we will spend eternity with Jesus? We are expected to make the time now, in our earthly journey, every day, to spend time with Jesus and His Word. Belief in Jesus is either or, not one day a month, or one day a week, or one day a year. What Biblical principle are we talking about? The Biblical principle of ‘living the way God wants us to,’ saturating your mind with Jesus’ Word every day so that your mind and speech convey a Christ-like-witness. Whatever we put in our mind will come out our mouth. The scriptures tell us this Biblical principle in 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 13 thru 14 which state,

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance

When we read our Bible every day it changes our heart and mind to listen to Jesus, obey Jesus, and follow Him. When we gird up our mind we are taking active participation in our relationship with Christ on a daily basis.

For sermon four Week 4 we are going to discuss the scripture John 2 vs 22, the overarching Biblical concept of sermon four Week four is: we learn to believe, trust, and have faith in Jesus and His Word.

Scriptural precision and correct scriptural understanding, via the doctrine of sufficiency, can be located in Biblical scripture that states, “When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.” John 2:22 KJV.
This scripture, taken from the book of John, portrays Jesus as God’s Son (or God, Himself) and how one acts in response to His teachings – we are to believe His Word. The book of John is unique to the canonical Gospels, which comprise Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the synoptics themselves, which are only the first three books of the New Testament. Information in John equates Jesus with God by translating Aramaic concepts and principles into Greek Koine. John wrote with an evangelistic purpose, to convert non-believers into Christ believers and followers. Knowing and believing the Biblical Jesus is paramount (and foundational) and are concepts conveyed in response of a new believer and is actualized by that new believer’s (or a believer’s) action throughout the Gospel of John. Scripture which confirms the Biblical principle that everything we do is built on the foundation of Christ is found in 1 Corinthians 3:11; and Matthew 7:24. The clear, plain teaching in John’s Gospel is the deity and preexistence of Christ before creation. A significant theological concept from the book of John exists in his teaching of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and is the introductory information that exists which established Trinitarian and Christological theological framework and understanding for early Christians and early Christian belief.

John 2:22 accentuates one of the most important Biblical principles found in the New Testament – they believed (episteusan) the scriptures (graphē). In the Greek Koine episteusan ἐπίστευσαν, is from the root Greek Koine word pisteuó πιστεύω, a verb, defined as: to believe, entrust, I believe, have faith in, trust in, I am entrusted with. In context, the Greek Koine word episteusan describes Jesus cleansing the Temple of moneychangers who were profiting off of inflated sales of oxen, sheep, and doves for sin sacrifices required in Temple worship. We know

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224James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
today, however, Jesus is our eternal once and forever sacrifice. We know we are not bound to sacrificial laws depicted in the Old Testament as Jesus is our eternal once and forever sacrifice for our sin state and nature. We know that the Old Testament sacrificial laws are a complete depiction of Jesus Christ. We know the Biblical principle of Jesus being our once and for ever sacrifice (found in Hebrews chapter 10) is confirmed in Scripture when we read, “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,” *Hebrews* 10:10 KJV.

The significance of episteusan is appreciated from a two-fold angle which illustrates the actions of Jesus and the belief of His disciples. In the actions of Jesus, it is understood that He is naturally upset in the fact that people are profiting through a misuse of sacrificial sin offerings. The Temple, the House of God, was being used to fleece the public; these activities were contrary to the original intent and purpose of the Temple and Temple worship. In the belief of the disciples, the point of reference eludes to their understanding and comprehension of the scriptures being opened and that they realized the entire Tanakh, an acronym for the division of the Masoretic Text: Torah (Teaching, the five books of Moses), Nevi’im (the books of the Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings), spoke in their entirety of Jesus Christ. Scripture that defines God opening our understanding is demonstrated in Luke, “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” *Luke* 24:45 (KJV) This scripture passage will further be addressed and exegeted as the final Biblical scripture in this discipleship program expounding the doctrine of sufficiency.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word episteusan is the Hebrew word aman אָּמַן, a verb, defined as: to confirm, support, believe, assurance, establish, steadfast, in reference to a kingdom
In regard to the doctrine of sufficiency, both the Greek Koine episteusan and the Hebrew aman speak of the reliability of God’s kingdom and rule and His eternal Word. Scriptures from the Old Testament which confirm the validity of the doctrine of sufficiency are found in Exodus and Genesis,

And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped. *Exodus* 4:31 (KJV)

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. *Genesis* 15:6 (KJV)

In the first scriptural reference, Moses and his brother Aaron have gone to the enslaved Hebrew people of Egypt to tell them that God has heard their cries and will set them free. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, the Ex. 4:31 scripture denotes God still hears our cries and pleas today, and still sets us free today, provided we repent of our sin and accept Christ. In the second scriptural reference, a deep sleep came over Abraham and as he slept Abraham was told by God that the nation he would father would be in bondage four hundred years but would eventually be freed. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, the Gen. 15:6 scripture denotes God still speaks to us in dreams today, and explains His plans for us, if we take the time to listen. However, we are required to trust Him, believe in Him, and believe His Word.

In John 2:22 the second Greek Koine word γραφὴ is from the root Greek Koine word graphé, a noun, defined as: a writing, scripture, a passage of scripture, the scriptures. The Greek Koine word graphé speaks to the moment when the disciples came to grips with the recognition that Jesus is spoken of throughout the entire Hebrew Bible (what we know as the Old

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225 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

226 Ibid.
Testament), and has fulfilled prophecy as the Messiah. The significance in relation to the
doctrine of sufficiency is in the sentence structure “and they believed the scripture.” The words
ascribe the disciple’s action of belief to the totality of the Hebrew scriptures and is precisely the
mind-set God expects us to have regarding His Word found in the Old Testament and the New
Testament and Apocrypha. The Biblical concept, believing the scriptures, is alluded to in one of
the nine ‘I am scriptures’ only found in the book of John, “And Jesus said unto them, I am the
bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never
thirst.” John 6:35 KJV. Jesus and His Word are crucial in providing sustenance from hunger and
thirst, on a spiritual basis as well as a physical basis. If believers are to survive through the peril,
trials, and turmoil that they will experience during their earthly journey, then belief in Jesus and
His Word is imperative and primary. The nine ‘I Am’ scriptures are vitally important and will be
mentioned in Sermon 5.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word graphē is the Hebrew word miqra מִק רָּא a noun,
defined as: a convocation, convoking, reading, in regards to a sacred assembly for religious
gathering.227 The Biblical concept, gathering in groups to hear God’s Word, through the Hebrew
word miqra, is found in scripture which reads, “So they read in the book in the law of God
distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” Nehemiah 8:8 KJV.
The distinction is plainly clear, believers are to congregate in groups with other believers in order
to listen to the Word of God, at which time, God will give understanding about His Word as He
sees fit to do. Further, it is unambiguous, regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, that when we
gather as believers, God will see to it that we plainly comprehend and apply His Message. This
work takes place through the advent of the Holy Spirit of God. Scripture which confirms the

227James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
Biblical concept, the Holy Spirit gives understanding about God’s Word, is evidenced in John, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:26 KJV. This scriptural reference reinforces the doctrine of sufficiency by stating the Holy Spirit of God is sent in Jesus’ Name and explicates His Word.

Questions to help us remember the important scriptures and Biblical concepts from today’s study:

1. The John 2 vs 22 scripture portrays Jesus as God and that we are to believe the scriptures.


5. John wrote with an evangelistic purpose.

6. John wrote to convert non-believers into Christ believers and followers.

7. Knowing and believing the Biblical Jesus is paramount and foundational.

8. Knowing and believing the Biblical Jesus is demonstrated in a new believer’s or a believer’s action throughout the Gospel of John.

9. The clear plain teaching in John’s Gospel is the deity and preexistence of Christ before creation.
10. A significant theological concept and teaching in the book of John teaches the **Godhead** - **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**.

11. The Godhead established **Trinitarian** and **Christological framework** for early Christians and early Christian belief.

12. What is one of the most important Biblical principles found in the book of John in the New Testament? **They believed the scriptures.**

13. Why was Jesus upset and cleansed the Temple? **The House of God was being used to fleece the public.**

14. We know today, however, **Jesus** is our **eternal once** and **forever sacrifice**.

15. In the belief of the disciples, their point of reference, understanding, and comprehension of the scriptures was opened, and they realized **all the Hebrew text, in its entirety, spoke of Jesus Christ**.

16. The scripture that confirms God opens our understanding about His Word is found in **Luke 24:45**.

17. The Greek Koine word **episteusan** means to **believe trust** have **faith** in.

18. The Hebrew word **aman** means: **confirm believe assurance establish** in reference to a kingdom **literally** or **figuratively**.

19. Scriptures from the Old Testament which confirm the doctrine of sufficiency and speak of the reliability of God’s kingdom and rule and His eternal Word are **Exodus 4:31; and Genesis 15:6**.

20. Scripture denotes that God still hears our **cries** and **pleas** today.
21. Scripture denotes that God still sets us free today.

22. How are we set free today according to God’s Word? Provided we repent of our sin and accept Christ.

23. Scripture tells us God still speaks to us in dreams today and explains His plans for us if we take the time to listen.

24. We are required to trust and believe God and His Word.

25. The Greek Koine word graphē means: scripture, a passage of scripture, the scriptures.

26. God expects us to have the mind-set of believing His Word.

27. The Biblical concept of believing the scriptures is alluded to in one of the nine ‘I Am’ scriptures only found in the book of John.

28. Which scripture in the book of John confirms the doctrine of sufficiency and is one of the nine ‘I Am’ scriptures? John 6:35

29. If we are to survive through the perils, trials, and turmoil’s of our earthly life then belief in Jesus and His Word are imperative.

30. The Biblical concept of gathering in groups to hear God’s Word is found in scripture Nehemiah 8:8.

31. Believers congregate in groups.

32. Scripture that confirms the Biblical concept the Holy Spirit of God will teach us about God’s Word is found in John 14:26.

Extra Credit Questions
1. The scripture that says Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn after the Last Supper is?  
   **Matthew 26:30.**

2. Scriptural evidence of the Biblical concept – singing praises to God – is found in which scriptures?  
   **Psalms 118:15; and Psalms 47:6**

3. God opens our eyes to the truth of His Word and enlightens our understanding is found in scriptures:  
   **Acts 9:3 and Luke 2:32.**

4. Our entire life is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word. This Biblical principle is found in scriptures:  
   **1 Corinthians 3:10,11 and Matthew 7:24.**

5. we either are a believer, or we are not, there is no middle ground.

6. 1st Peter Chapter 1 verses 13 and 14 tell us about what Biblical principle?  
   **Living the way God wants us to, saturating our mind with Jesus’ Word daily.**

7. Who is our once and forever sacrifice?  
   **Jesus Christ**

8. What scripture specifically states the Biblical principle that Christ Jesus is our once and eternal sacrifice?  
   **Hebrews 10:10**

For week 5, step 1, explain to listeners the relevant scripture for sermon 5, week 5, is Luke 24 verses 44 through 45 and the title for this week is, strengthen faith of believers and challenge erroneous beliefs of non-believers. Then read provided script as follows:

In the fourth sermon we discussed Bible scripture John 2:22 and an overall Biblical concept that we learn to believe, trust, and have faith in Jesus and His Word. A crucial Biblical tenant was explained how the book of John describes and portrays Jesus as God’s Son (God Himself) and that we need to act in response to Jesus’ teachings. It is not enough for us to have faith and believe, we have to do something with our faith and belief. Scripture that confirms we must act upon our belief and faith is found when we read “What doth it profit, my brethren,
though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?”  
*James* 2:14 KJV. But isn’t James contradicting Paul when he says in Ephesians, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”  
*Ephesians* 2:8-9 KJV. No, there is no contradiction, we have to understand Paul gives us the Biblical concept and James further explains the concept; in other words, we must have an active living faith, an active living belief, with something to show that proves it. We must have all Christian elements at the same time. We have to understand that Paul and the other disciples are working together in concert (under guidance of the Holy Spirit of God), in the Body of Christ, just as we believers have to do as well.

For instance, if we say we are Christ followers and believers, yet are unmerciful then we are contradicting what the scripture says about showing mercy. This is confirmed by scripture that states, “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”  
*Luke* 6:36 KJV. If we say we are Christ followers and believers, yet judge wrongly, against what scripture confirms, and allow the guilty to go free and the innocent to be incarcerated and loose their freedom then we wrongly judge. This is confirmed by scripture that states, “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.”  
*Proverbs* 17:15 KJV. The example here is in light of, and specifically regarding, we cannot support any of those activities and lifestyles mentioned in Romans 1 verses 22 thru 32 which reads:

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into
that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Support of any wrong living on our behalf will find ourselves not living a life of belief and faith in Christ and His eternal Word, even if we support those people who do them. We will find ourselves living and believing a life of our own choosing. We will find ourselves taking what we want out of the scripture and throwing what we don’t want away as if it were a buffet dinner. We are not allowed to do that!

The scripture speaks plain, if we support or take part in the things that the scripture tells us not to do then rest assure God will give us over to a reprobate mind (God will allow us to be unprincipled, depraved, and morally corrupt). We must bear in mind the scripture speaks plainly, we invite people who are intentionally living an abominable life in the eyes of God to be a Christ follower and believer; we do not support and take part in their immoral activities. We invite them to Christian Church. We invite them to read our Bible with us. We pray with them and for them. We invite them to a Christian life. We invite them to repent of their sin and accept Christ as their Savior.

James and Paul are explaining, specifically, a Christ follower and believer has a ‘living active faith,’ a ‘living active belief,’ which supports what God’s Word states in its entirety; so
does John. We see that Jesus invited people to believe in Him, but Jesus never condoned, accepted, and approved of the abominable things or abominable life they were leading. We must use discernment. It comes down to either we believe the scriptures and what Jesus said, what Jesus did, and how Jesus did it, or we don’t; it’s as simple as that. And if we believe the scriptures then we will conform our life to what the scriptures say, not bend the scriptures to the life we desire, or the life we choose, or the life we want. Often, at this point, people will say, ‘but it’s impossible to live by the scriptures,’ or ‘we can’t live up to the scripture anyway so may as well not even bother trying.’ These people do not want sound Biblical doctrine, and they will tell us to give up, don’t bother trying, it’s impossible! Scripture that confirms people who won’t listen to sound Biblical doctrine is when we read, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” 2 Timothy 4:3 KJV.

Besides, if living according to scripture was impossible, then Jesus and the disciples would not have given us the examples they did as to how to live our life pleasing to God. If that were true, then we could live our life any way we see fit without consequence or liability. If that were true, we wouldn’t have the scriptures in the first place. If that were true, we wouldn’t need Jesus for our sin state. It is possible to live the scriptures. The scriptures are true and believable. And we can live by them. We can trust, believe, and have faith in the scriptures that they are completely reliable for every aspect of our daily life. But we need to come to Jesus, repent of our sin, accept Him as Saviour and read His Word – we must try. Scripture that confirms the Biblical principle of living life according to the scripture is found in Deuteronomy chapter 30 specifically verse 16.
We live an active life of faith, we live an active life of belief, as Christ believers and followers, when despite what others say, we continue to read our Bible every day. We live an active life of faith, we live an active life of belief, as Christ believers and followers, when despite what others say, we show compassion to the compassionless, mercy to the unmerciful, heart to the heartless, a moral life to the immoral, a witness for Christ where no witnesses for Christ are to be found. We live an active life of faith, we live an active life of belief, as Christ believers and followers, when despite what others say, we continue to be true to the Word of God in our heart, soul, mind, spirit, and strength. We live an active life of faith, we live an active life of belief, as Christ believers and followers, when despite the temptations and trials we face, we continue to believe that Jesus will enable us to overcome during our hour of despair. We live an active life of faith, we live an active life of belief, as Christ believers and followers, when despite how others are behaving around us, we do not partake in the horrors and atrocities we see taking place, and we openly condemn them. We live an active life of faith, we live an active life of belief, as Christ believers and followers, when we study our Bible, memorize scripture, apply it to our lives, and teach it to our children. We cannot forsake neglecting the practice of holiness and righteousness. Scripture that affirms the Biblical principle of living an active life of faith and belief and work for God is confirmed by Galatians 6:9.

God hears our cries and pleas. God understands we are struggling. God understands our lives are difficult and He has sent us His Word, Jesus, and His Holy Spirit to help us, we have to take initiative. God will set us free from the chains that bind us through Jesus Christ, if we come to Him, if we repent of our sin and accept Christ in belief and faith; if we live out our belief and faith in an active life of active belief and active faith. We need these Christian elements in our daily life.
Further, in sermon four we learned that one of the nine ‘I Am’ scriptures, found in John 6:35, “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst,” depicts when we believe Jesus and His Word, and come to Jesus, we will never hunger or be thirsty. John 6:35 KJV. The emphasis in Jesus’ Words are that we come to Him of our own accord and believe Him. Are we currently living our life believing in Jesus? Do we reflect Christ at our work? And in public?

The other ‘I Am’ scriptures that are in the book of John are: 8:12; 8:58; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; and 15:1. These scriptures challenge who we think Jesus is and challenge who we think we are and how we lead and live our life. Either our life is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word, as we learned in sermon 4, found in scriptures 1 Corinthians 3:10,11; and Matthew 7:24, or it is not. The emphasis in these scriptures is as Jesus tells us Himself, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:” Matthew 7:24 KJV. The emphasis is placed upon our ‘hearing’ and our ‘doing.’

The latter is in direct correlation to today’s sermon 5, and the Biblical scriptures, Biblical tenants, and Biblical principles, that strengthen the faith of believers and challenge erroneous beliefs of non-believers and how the scripture Luke 24:44-45 is further validation of the Biblical principle the doctrine of sufficiency, God’s Word is sufficient for all areas of our life.

Scriptural correctness and accurate scriptural understanding, via the doctrine of sufficiency, is also explained in Biblical scripture that states,

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the
In this scriptural passage lies the singularly most crucial Biblical concept that relates to the doctrine of sufficiency, logoi, the word, found in the Gospel of Luke. In brief, logoi is a reference to both Jesus Christ and His Word throughout the New Testament which is attested to in John 1:1-14. Logoi (logos) is a description of Jesus Christ and the Word of truth and eternal life that He brought as Messiah, Savior, Redeemer, to the world and those who would believe in Him. The book of Luke is the longest of the four Gospels and is book one of a two-part history combined with the book of Acts. A healthy emphasis on preaching the Word to Gentiles exists in the book of Luke, with the intended audience probably directed toward Greeks. The third Gospel is addressed to ‘most excellent Theophilus,’ which in the Greek Koine means friend of God. The purpose of the book of Luke is to strengthen the faith of believers and challenge erroneous belief of non-believers. The book of Luke highlights the divinity and perfect humanity of Jesus Christ our Savior. Distinctive themes of the book of Luke are Jesus’ compassion toward outcasts of the world He created, Jesus as Savior, and a typified Christology (which is the theological study of the nature and work of Jesus Christ) that is found specifically in Luke 24:44-45. Jesus (the word) mentioned in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, are utilized as examples that spoke of Jesus being revealed in the Old Testament. The significance in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency is that the ‘word,’ Jesus, fulfilled Prophecy and is the focus of all Old Testament scripture.

Luke 24:44 explicated the singular Biblical concept of how relevant, distinct, and predominant, the word logoi, truly is, and that all else rests firmly upon Jesus – the word. The
Greek Koine word logoi λόγοι, is from the root Greek Koine word logos λόγος, a noun, defined as: a word, a statement, a speech, divine utterance, in relation to embodying an idea or expressing the thoughts of God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit of God. In context, the Greek Koine word logoi is a noun and is utilized explicitly that Jesus fulfills Prophecy from the Old Testament with three examples: the Law of Moses, the books of the Prophets, and the Psalms. There is also direct implication that Jesus is the one who imparted the words of the Old Testament to Moses, the Prophets, and the authors of the Psalms. Scriptural reference that directly states Jesus is the word and gave the word(s) can be found in John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1 KJV. This scriptural passage gives proof to the doctrine of sufficiency, that the word (God’s Word), is embodied within the Triune God who is preexistent to universal creation, and therefore is sufficient for all areas of life. Further, it attests to the fact Jesus Himself is the Word and we are to pay attention to what Jesus has to say and apply it to our daily life.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word logoi is the Hebrew word diḇ·rê דיבר which is from the Hebrew root word dabar דָּבָּר a noun, defined as: the word, speech, message, promise, in reference to the Word of God and God confirms His Word and promises. The Hebrew word diḇ·rê is utilized in scripture when Moses was with God a second time to re-write the Decalogue because Moses had broken it the first time (found in Exodus 32), due to the Hebrew people were worshiping a golden calf under the auspices of a sexual orgy. The Biblical principle that God’s Word is sufficient can be evidenced in Exodus 34, “And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the

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228 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*
229 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*
words of the covenant, the ten commandments.” *Exodus* 34:28 KJV. This scriptural passage affirms the doctrine of sufficiency, God’s Word supersedes physical required needs, lest we forget our Saviour’s Words when he told the disciples and us, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” *John* 4:32 KJV. In ancient Jewish religious belief, it was thought that God, who wrote the Decalogue, was to be feared and revered even though His creation (people) did not understand Him and His ways. Ancient Hebrews so feared God they would not say His Name aloud. This is illustrated in the Hebrew word for Lord: YHVH, tetragrammaton the 4-letter word for the God of Israel, which is read from right to left as yodh, he, waw, and he. Other Proper Names for the God of Israel are Yahweh or Jehovah, all references to Jesus Christ.

Another Biblical passage from the Old Testament that accounts for the doctrine of sufficiency and the Hebrew word diḇ-rē, Word of God, is the Hebrew word dib·ber הָדְרֵכֶן from the root Hebrew word dabar הָדָר a verb, defined as: to speak, pronounce, in relation to both speaking literally and the writing of literature.  

The Hebrew word dib·ber is a reference to the person doing the speaking or writing. This Hebrew word, dib·ber, to speak, pronounce, write, can be found in Deuteronomy, “And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.” *Deuteronomy* 10:4 KJV.

Immediately we realize the significance, that it is none other than Jesus who gave us His Word (Old Testament, New Testament, Apocrypha) as a gift, for our benefit, to live a life pleasing unto God. The significance of the Hebrew word dib·ber is that that God speaks and writes (communicates), His Word to those He has chosen to be His representative(s). This is

demonstrated when Jesus gave the ‘word’ to His people in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is specific proof which confirms the doctrine of sufficiency, that God’s Words (Jesus’ Words)(and the Words of the Holy Spirit of God) are one in the same as they are the same One God; and further, that Jesus’ Words are all sufficient.

The second scriptural passage from Luke 24:45 which relates to the doctrine of sufficiency and sheds further light on how understanding is acquired, and from where it originates, “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” Luke 24:45 KJV.

In this scriptural passage, it is noted where the understanding originates – from Jesus Himself. The two crucially vital Greek Koine words that illustrate this fact are diēnoixen and synienai. The first Greek Koine word diēnoixen is from the root Greek Koine word dianoigó διανοίγω, a verb, defined as: I open fully, to open up completely, in relation (both literally and figuratively) to opening the eyes and ears and mind, or the womb as in a first born.231 In context, diēnoixen specifically mentions the person performing the action of opening. Biblical scripture that confirms an opening of the mind must take place is found in Romans, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” Romans 12:2(KJV. The direct implication is that when a person comes to repent of sin and accept Christ they must be willing to open their mind to changing from their old ways of life to a new way of life which God enables them to accomplish through His Holy Spirit.

231James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
In correlation to the Greek Koine word diēnoixen is the Hebrew word way·yê·ḏə·‘ū וַיֵדַע, which is from the root Hebrew word yada יָדַע, a verb, defined as: to know, acknowledge, understand, take notice, recognize, learn to know, perceive, know by experience, in relation to God knowing persons. The Hebrew word way·yê·ḏə·‘ū is utilized in reference to an individual having an awakening or God specifically performing the action of awakening. Two Biblical references that demonstrate this point, opening of the eyes and ears and mind, are found in Genesis and 2 Kings,

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.  
*Genesis 3:7 (KJV)*

And Elisha prayed, and said, L ORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the L ORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.  
*2 Kings 6:17 (KJV)*

In the first scripture, Adam and Eve had a revelation, an understanding, they were naked, because of their intentional sin; and in the second Biblical passage, Elisha prays to the Lord, from where understanding originates, that his servant would recognize the reality of the situation before them. Regarding the doctrine of sufficiency, both scriptures illuminate the readers understanding of how mental comprehension occurs, and who performs that action. This validates God’s Word is sufficient for all mental processes. The opposite is also true, that it also resonates of the fact that those who reject God’s Word are spiritually blind to the truth of God’s Word and Jesus Christ. Biblical scripture which confirms spiritual blindness exists is when we read Jesus’ Own Words, that say, “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive,

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because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” *John* 14:17 KJV. Further proof of those who reject Christ’ teaching is found in 1st Corinthians that states, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” *1 Corinthians* 2:14 KJV.

The second Greek Koine word, from the Luke 24:45 Biblical passage, is synienai συνιέναι from the root Greek Koine word su̱nìémi συνίημι, a verb, defined as: I consider, understand, perceive, to set together, to understand, in relation to a human arriving at and understanding through mental capacity. In context, the Greek Koine word synienai relates to the person understanding and then acting with understanding. Scriptural reference that confirms this Biblical principle is found in Matthew, “But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” *Matthew* 13:23 KJV. Jesus confirms the doctrine of sufficiency when He states that His Word is enough and provides adequate instruction for a believer to hear the Word, believe and understand the Word, and make disciples who do the same. Again, the opposite is also equally true, those who do not understand Jesus’ Word do not believe, do not make disciples for Christ, and live alternative lifestyles which are in complete contradiction to Jesus’ Word and are considered an abomination; we find this in Biblical scripture Matthew 13:15.

In correlation to the Greek Koine word synienai, upright, is the Hebrew word yashar יָשָּׁר, an adjective, defined as: straight, right, conscientious, upright, in relation to a man that God

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233James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 

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made upright.\textsuperscript{234} The Hebrew word יָשָּׂר is very specific in scripture to the behavior of children. Scripture which validates being upright, and conscientious, located in Proverbs, “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” Proverbs 20:11 KJV.

It is clear, this scripture passage states that a child is known by his actions and behavior, and by implication, so are adults. The overall theological premise that these Greek Koine and Hebrew words point to is Jesus gives understanding of His Word. Additionally, the character of a person as he acts upon God’s Word or rejects it is well known to other people and readily visible. The Luke 24:44-45 Biblical passage summates the other scriptures, Acts 2:42-47; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalms 19:7-14; and John 2:22 in relation to the doctrine of sufficiency. It illustrates that active participation in God’s Word is mandatory in order to experience a ‘change of person,’ a ‘renewed mind.’ Otherwise, we are or become as James states, “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” James 1:23-24 KJV. As Christ followers and believers, Christians must become doers of the Word of God to navigate the treacherous waters of a turbulent earthly life.

It comes down to this fact, in the New Testament Jesus healed 10 lepers, only 1 came back to thank Jesus and worship Jesus. Is that Jesus’ fault? No. We have to take the initiative and we have to come to Jesus. We notice in the New Testament, Jesus wasn’t going to them, the crowds of people were coming to Jesus. We have to take the initiative. We have to come to Jesus and repent of our sin and ask for His forgiveness. If someone will not say there ‘sorry’ to another

\textsuperscript{234}Ibid.
person on earth you can rest assure they will not say they’re sorry to Jesus and repent of their sin to Jesus. We have to take the initiative.

Questions to help us remember the important scriptures and Biblical concepts from today’s study:

1. It is not enough for us to have belief and faith, we must do something with our faith and belief, is confirmed by scripture James 2:14.

2. If we are a hearer of the word and not a doer we are like a person beholding their natural face in a glass and goes his way and forgets what manner of person they are.


5. The nine ‘I Am’ scriptures are found in the book of John.

6. When we hear Jesus’ sayings and do them, Jesus likens us to a person who built his home upon a rock.

7. This scripture is found in Matthew 7:24.

8. Does James 2:14 contradict Ephesians 2:8-9? Yes or No?
9. What is the reason James 2:14 does not contradict Ephesians 2:8-9?  **No, there is no contradiction, because we have to understand Paul gives us the Biblical concept and James further explains the concept.**

10. What scripture says God sees, as abomination, those who allow the guilty to go free and the innocent to be incarcerated?  **Proverbs 17:15**

11. Where in the scripture are examples of wrong-doing God does not want us to take part in for our earthly lives found?  **Romans 1:22-32**

12. What do we do when we realize those around us are intentionally leading an abominable lifestyle?  **We invite them to Christian Church. We invite them to read our Bible with us. We invite them to a Christian life. We pray with them. We pray for them. We invite them to repent of their sin and accept Christ as their Saviour.**

13. James and Paul and John are explaining, specifically, a Christ follower and believer has a ‘living active faith,’ a ‘living active belief,’ which supports what God’s Word states in its entirety.  *This is one overarching core Biblical principle for sermon 5*

14. The scripture is not a buffet dinner where we can throw away what we don’t want and keep what we accept.

15. We cannot bend the scriptures to the life we desire, or the life we choose, or the life we want.

16. If we believe the scriptures then we will conform our life to what the scriptures say.
17. Often people will say, ‘but it’s impossible to live by the scriptures,’ or ‘we can’t live up to the scripture anyway so may as well not even bother trying.’ Scripture that confirms some people do not want sound Biblical doctrine is found in 2 Timothy 4:3.

18. It is possible to live the scriptures, we **must try**.

19. We cannot forsake neglecting the **practice** of **holiness** and **righteousness**.

20. God understands our lives are difficult and HE has sent us His Word, Jesus, and His Holy Spirit to help us, we have to take **initiative**. *This is a core Biblical principle in sermon 5*

21. We must **come** to **Jesus Christ**. *This is another core Biblical principle in sermon 5*

For week 6, step 1, explain to listeners the relevant scripture for sermon 6, week 6, is a recap of the previous five week’s sermons with a final emphasis on the Great Commission and making disciples. Then read provided script as follows:

“This Bible is a wonderful talking book; there is a great mass of blessed talk in this precious volume. It has told me a great many of my faults; it would tell you yours if you would let it. It has told me much to comfort me; and it has much to tell you if you will but incline your ear to it. It is a book that is wonderfully communicative; it knows all about you, all the ins and outs of where you are, and where you ought to be, it can tell you everything.” (quote by C.H. Spurgeon 1834-1892)

At the onset, this Discipleship program was likened to Jacob’s Ladder, and it was stated these first, few, tentative steps, are the most difficult to traverse; and they are. At times, scripture
riles up and stirs up passion within us, challenging our very being, what we think, what we do, what we say, what we support, how we act, how we live.

In Sermon 1, which exegeted Acts 2:42-47, we learned critical Biblical concepts and Biblical tenants to our faith as Christians, which were,

1. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Which are Jesus’ Own Words found in Matthew 24:35, and that Jesus did not say a version of His Words, or a close approximation of His Words – Jesus said ‘my words’ which are only found in the King James Bible. This was confirmed and verified when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947 which attested to the authenticity and high accuracy of only the King James Bible at a percentage of 99.9999%.

2. we also learned we do not want to learn a faulty version, mistranslation, or muddied form of God’s Word from other versions of the Bible.

3. we discussed how every minute we are not thinking about Jesus and His Word, the Bible, is a minute of our day we have given over to the devil and his demons.

4. we learned the doctrine of sufficiency is pivotal and foundational for our Christian faith, which is defined for us in Psalms 19:7-14. A simple definition of the doctrine of sufficiency is – God’s Word is all sufficient for every area of our human life.

5. we learned that there are 4 supporting Bible Scriptures to the doctrine of sufficiency (in addition to Psalms 19:7-14) which are Acts 2:43-47; 2nd Timothy 3:16-17, John 2:22; and Luke 24:44-45.
6. we learned Christian Community, Christian Church, our very Christian lives, are crucicentric by Scriptural definition which means – our community, church, and lives are Christ centered, run, and operated as defined by scripture.

In Sermon 2, which exegeted 2nd Timothy 3:16-17, we learned more critical Biblical concepts and Biblical tenants to our faith as Christians, which were,

1. God’s Word facilitates 4 illuminating constructs which are: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction.

2. we cannot give lip service to our relationship with Christ Jesus or His Word found in Isaiah 29:13-14, we must meditate on God’s Word day and night found in Joshua 1:8.

At this point I have often been asked – “So, Pastor, how do we mediate on God’s Word if we’re asleep?” to which my reply will always be – “the last thing you watch, listen to, read, at the end of the day, before you go to bed at night, having said your prayers to God, will stick in your mind all night long. If that last thing you think on and read is God’s Word, your mind will think about it all night long.”

3. God loves us when He corrects us for our sin, this Biblical concept is found in Proverbs 3:12; and Hebrews 12:6.

4. Right doing or living a scripturally accurate life is important to God, and the way a child is raised is the way he/ or she will follow their entire life (Proverbs 22:6), by direct implication this means the way an adult acts is reflective of how they were raised, what they choose and who
they choose to follow. We realize this in Matthew 7:16 which tells us “ye shall know them by their fruits.”

5. we learned “no prophecy of scripture is for private interpretation,” found in 2 Peter 1:20, which means we are not allowed to say “I think it means this,” or “I believe it means that.” We must be correct we have to get scriptural understanding correct.

6. God expects, we believers and followers of Christ Jesus, will reflect and emulate the same character attributes in our self.

7. we learned we are to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, as are illustrated in 1st Timothy 6:11, and “do what is right in the sight of the Lord,” found in Deuteronomy 6:18.

8. The overarching Main Idea we are to remember is that God instructs and teaches (aided by the Holy Spirit of God), found in Isaiah 28:23-39, we are to just scatter seeds, God will take care of the rest.

9. we also learned that a person is known by their actions, whether they are living a Godly life or not, and that the most important good deed we can do is to help another come to repentance of their sin and acceptance in Christ Jesus.

10. Our action is necessary in God’s eyes. Whatever we do (that is scripturally defined) we work as if we work directly for Jesus Christ our Saviour, found in Colossians 3:23.

In Sermon 3, which exegeted Psalms 19:7-11 (we are to look up verses 12 thru 14 on our own and ask questions), we learned more critical Biblical concepts and Biblical tenants to our faith as Christians, which were,
1. to maintain our daily connection with Jesus Christ through reading and applying His Word to our lives.

2. If we ascribe to ‘how I lead my life matters to me’ then we are in the driver’s seat rather than God. We are either a believer or not, there is no middle ground, it is an either or scenario.

3. sermons have to be scripturally accurate, Biblically correct, and understood and delivered correctly.

4. hymns are based upon God’s Word not emotional content. Whereas they may illicit emotional response within us, hymns and praise music leads us to Jesus Christ and His Word.

5. The overall theme of Psalms teaches us how to relate to God in different life situations.

6. studying and memorizing God’s Word and applying it to our daily life makes one wise in all areas of life: spiritual, family, relationships, and business.

7. God opens the eyes of our understanding, scripture which confirms this are Acts 9:3; and Luke 2:32. Also found in Luke 24:45.

8. The Word of Christ should dwell within us richly, scripture that supports this are Colossians 3:16; and John 17:17; and 3 Thessalonians 2:15.

9. a definition of the doctrine of sufficiency found in scripture is Psalms 19:7-14.

10. verses 7 thru 11 can be divided into two major Biblical principles: 1) the glorious character of God’s Word (vs 7-9), and 2) the great value of God’s Word (vs 10-11). Verses 12 thru 14 can be broken into two major Biblical principles: 1) the desire for inward cleansing (vs 12-13), and 2) a Prayer of surrender and purity (vs 14).
In Sermon 4, which exegeted John 2:22, we learned more critical Biblical concepts and Biblical tenants to our faith as Christians, which were,

1. we must gird up the loins of our mind as it states in 1 Peter 1:13-14 and obey and follow Christ submissively.

2. we are to believe and trust the scriptures, Jesus’ Word, just as the disciples did, which is found in John 2:22.

3. John wrote with an evangelistic purpose – to convert non-believers to repentance of sin and acceptance of Christ Jesus.

4. The entire Old Testament speaks about Jesus Christ.

5. the most important character attribute that the disciples engaged in was to believe the Word of Jesus (God) and act upon it. This is alluded to in one of the nine ‘I Am’ scriptures, John 6:35.

6. in the book of John the Godhead is established which contributes for Christian belief in the Trinity and was an early Christological framework for early Christians and early Christian belief.

7. scripture that confirms the Biblical principle that the Holy Spirit of God will teach us about God’s Word is found in John 14:26 “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

8. 1st Peter 1:13-14 tells us about the Biblical principle of: living the way God wants us to and saturating our mind with Jesus’ Word daily.

9. who is our once and forever sacrifice? Jesus Christ. What scripture denotes this Biblical principle? Hebrews 10:10
In Sermon 5, which exegeted Luke 24:44-45, we learned about faith of believers and challenging erroneous beliefs of non-believers. These and more critical Biblical concepts and Biblical tenants to our faith as Christians, were,

1. we have to be doers of the Word as Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:24 “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.” The emphasis is placed upon we Christians ‘hearing’ and ‘doing.’

2. the two Greek Koine words diēnoixen and suniémi are defined as to reveal that God gives us understanding about His Word, further, both words can be illustrated by the Matthew 13:23 scripture which states “But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” The emphasis is placed upon we Christians ‘doing.’

3. the scriptures tell us we are not to be conformed in the world, found in Romans 12:2, which reads “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The emphasis is placed upon we Christians having a change of heart and mind.

4. children as well as adults are known by how they act and behave and the things they say, whether they believe in Jesus Christ or have repented of their sin and accepted Christ or not, this Biblical principle is illustrated in Proverbs 20:11, which reads “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” Further it is illustrated in the New Testament, by Jesus’ Own Words, in Matthew 7:16-20 which reads, “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil
fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” The emphasis for both scriptures is placed upon what people say, how people act and behave, and what people do.

5. if we are not doers of the Word of Jesus our Saviour, we are rejecters of Christ and His Word, we become as James states in James 1:23-24 when we read, “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” The emphasis here is placed upon a person having heard the Word of God and walking away from it, not acting upon it.

6. two Biblical core tenents are listed as – 1) we have to take initiative, and 2) we must come to Jesus Christ. Both these core Biblical principles are illustrated in scriptures (Luke 11:9; John 1:12; and John 6:37) when we read, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” And, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name” And, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” A crucial Biblical principle to remember here is that God calls people and they ‘Go’ to Jesus and repent of their sin and accept Jesus as Saviour.

7. There are those who think they are believers (but they are those people who do not want sound doctrine only ideas that confirm their wrong choices which are against Biblical scripture) and non-believers who openly reject Christ. These two people groups are found in two Biblical principles illustrated in scriptures Romans 1:28; and 2nd Timothy 4:3. The emphasis here is that
God gives them over to have a reprobate (or corrupt, degenerate) mind to continue to lead a life of sin. Why? That is how these people choose intentionally to use their free will, further, they refuse to listen to what scripture says.

And after a comprehensive review of the last 5 sermons in the Discipleship Program this brings us to the culmination and week 6, sermon 6, which is based upon the last question of the questionnaire not yet answered, what is the most important element of The Great Commission, which is found in Bible scripture verses Matthew 28:18-20; and Mark 16:15, which read,

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

The emphasis is upon we as Christ followers and believers are making disciples for Christ as commanded by Christ. How many people in the last five weeks, over the course of the Discipleship Program have we told about Jesus Christ? How many people in the last week have we witnessed about our Savior Jesus Christ? Jesus' statements here in the Greek Koine are not optional suggestions – they are a command.

When can we witness for Christ? When we get coffee or breakfast in the morning with our Bible to start our day. When we get lunch in the afternoon, we can witness for Christ to anyone and everyone around us. When we’re at work, and when we are driving to or from work. When we get our groceries or go to the bank. When we go out to eat with our family at a restaurant in the evening for supper. All times are the right time, and all areas are the right area to witness for
Christ. Two scriptures which confirm this Biblical command from our Saviour Jesus are when we read in scripture, Romans 1:16-18; and 2nd Timothy 4:1-2,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

These scriptures are extremely clear, all of us are to be a witness and preach the Word of God to all we encounter in our day, whether it’s saying “God bless you in the Name of Jesus Christ,” or actually sitting with someone who has asked you to explain some scripture to them, or the Holy Spirit of God has led you to say a scripture to someone who needs it, wherever you are and whatever you are doing. Let me reiterate once again, Jesus tells us to do this as a command, not a suggestion. It is not just Preachers, Pastors, Reverends, Ministers, who witness about Christ and for Christ, it is all believers and followers of Christ. We’re either making disciples for Christ, or we’re not, it’s as simple as that, there is no middle ground, it is an either-or proposition.

What is the ultimate overarching theme that we are discussing here? Whether or not one has a heart for Jesus, His Word, and for other people. If we have a heart for Jesus, then we’ll obey and follow His Word. If we have a heart for other people, then we’ll tell them what the scripture says without any subtractions or additions whatsoever. Commonly, in today’s world, it is considered racist, bigoted, un-caring, un-sympathetic, when it comes to relaying to other
people that we need to follow Jesus Christ and what His Word says. But this is a fallacy. Having a mind and a heart for Jesus and His Word, and for other people, means we will want to warn them against the many vices and evils that exist in our modern society. Having a mind and a heart for Jesus and His Word, and for other people, means we will want to show them the well spring of eternal waters that bring forth eternal life, just as we have found and experienced. Having a mind and a heart for Jesus and His Word, and for other people, means we will want to share the joy, peace, comfort, love, that we have found through the changing and renewing of our minds and spirits. Having a mind and a heart for Jesus and His Word, and for other people, means we will want to make them disciples and believers and followers of Christ, just as we ourselves are. And those are not bad things as modern society would want citizens to believe. Those ideas are integrative, as they incorporate another soul into the kingdom of God’s heaven. Those ideas are humanitarian, as they reach out to a lost, starving world that cries out for help. Those ideas are caring and sympathetic, as they prepare another future generation for the horrible atrocities that they will experience in a perilous lifetime. At first glance it would appear that walking a path through life that follows an earthly modality would be invigorating, hopeful, but yet the opposite is true. Following an earthly path will only lead to eternal death. That life, that path, that a Christian believes in, follows, and resides in, is far more difficult a road to walk than an earthly path that exists. That is the path were truth, invigoration, hope, and eternal life are. But we do not walk that path alone, Jesus is right there with us, guiding our every step, guiding our every thought, guiding our hearts desire, giving a Christian the words to say. We may not have a safe journey through life, but with Jesus we will have a safe final landing to eternal life.
July 23, 2020

Thomas Sleeth
Seth Bible

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY19-20-438 The Erosion of Theological Understanding

Dear Thomas Sleeth, Seth Bible:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the date of the IRB meeting at which the protocol was approved: July 23, 2020. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make modifications in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update submission to the IRB. These submissions can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study involves surveying or interviewing minors, or it involves observing the public behavior of minors, and you will participate in the activities being observed.

Your stamped consent forms can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. These forms 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 documents should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
Appendix E

Appendix B

(Pre/Post Discipleship Program Questionnaire)

(when you return this questionnaire, your name will be retracted and assigned a number for privacy purposes)

Name: [Blank]

Please circle your age group:
A) Born before 1945 1 (1) 3 0%
B) Born between 1946 and 1964 11 (12) 39 0%
C) Born between 1965 and 1980 11 (8) 26 0%
D) Born between 1980 and 2000 11 (8) 26 0%
E) Born 2001 and after 11 (2) 0 0%

1) I characterize my attendance to church with the following.
A) Attending every Sunday 11 (16) 52 0%
B) Attending once a month 11 (7) 22 0%
C) Attending during holiday seasons only 11 (5) 16 0%
D) I do not attend church 11 (3) 10 0%

2) When I attend church, I find the sermons,
A) have an organized structure 11 (2) 20 0%
B) have a clear central idea or theme 11 (4) 20 0%
C) are put into words I can easily understand 11 (4) 20 0%
D) All of the above 11 (23) 71 0%
E) none of the above 1 (1) 3 0%
3) I characterize my Bible reading with the following:
   A) I read my Bible every day (19%)
   B) I read my Bible once a week (19%)
   C) I never read my Bible (26%)
   D) I read my Bible sporadically throughout the year (36%)
   E) I read my Bible only when I need help from God (8%)

4) I would characterize my belief and faith in Jesus as,
   A) strong (58%)
   B) weak (2%)
   C) moderate (33%)
   D) devoted (6%)
   E) optional (3%)
   Other (3%)

5) I would characterize myself applying Biblical standards to my life as,
   A) strong (36%)
   B) weak (2%)
   C) moderate (45%)
   D) devoted (13%)
   E) optional (3%)

6) I would characterize my understanding of scripture as,
   A) strong (39%)
   B) weak (13%)
   C) moderate (13%)
   D) devoted (46%)
   E) optional (3%)

Correct Answer: Strong

Why? Because ... is a one-time act!
7) I believe,
   A) all religious organizations contain truth  \(1\) (22\%)
   B) religious scriptures in other religions are equally from God \(1\) (3\%)
   C) there are no differences in religions  \(1\) (6\%)
   D) All of the above \(1\) (16\%)
   E) none of the above \(1\) (70\%)

8) I believe,
   A) if you are a good person leading a good life that’s all that matters \(1\) (19\%)
   B) life is a game you can’t win  \(0\)
   C) how I lead my life matters to God \(1\) (67\%)
   D) how I lead my life doesn’t matter to God \(1\) (6\%)
   E) how I lead my life matters to me \(1\) (16\%)
   Other \(1\) (none of the above) (3\%)

9) All religions are the same at their core
   A) completely agree \(1\) (16\%)
   B) somewhat agree \(1\) (33\%)
   C) somewhat disagree \(1\) (3\%)
   D) completely disagree \(1\) (16\%)
   E) unsure \(1\) (55\%)

10) I can easily follow what the Bible says because,
    A) I understand it completely \(1\) (30\%)
    B) I ask for help when I don’t understand a scripture passage or verse \(1\) (75\%)
    C) much of the Bible I do not understand at all \(1\) (3\%)
    D) I don’t bother because most of the Bible is outdated \(1\) (16\%)
    E) I never ask for help understanding Bible scripture \(1\) (16\%)

98
11) Sermons are,
A) not inspiring to me 11 (10%)
B) over my head in understanding
C) inspiring to me 1111 11111 1 (78%)
D) boring 11 1 (6%)
E) I don’t like being preached at with the obvious no answer 1 (3%)

12) A person should be allowed to believe whatever they want
A) completely agree 11111111 1 (52%)
B) somewhat agree 111 1 (19%)
C) somewhat disagree 111 1 (10%)
D) completely disagree 11 1 (19%)
E) unsure

13) I attend weekly Prayer Meeting,
A) attending every week 111 1 (22%)
B) attending once a month
C) attending during holiday seasons only
D) I do not attend meetings
E) Other... was weekly... then health issues 11111 (75%)

14) I believe all Christian denominations are basically similar
A) completely agree 11 (10%)
B) somewhat agree 1111111 1 (48%)
C) somewhat disagree 111 1 (16%)
D) completely disagree 11 1 (20%)
E) unsure 11 1 (6%)

99
15) The most important quality I look for in a church is,  
   A) church programs and events 1 (30%)  
   B) friendliness of other attendees 1 (48%)  
   C) preaching and message is Biblically accurate and scripturally based 1 (29%)  
   D) other 1 (please fill in)  
   E) convenience of location 1 (30%)  

16) The most essential criteria of worship service and a sermon is that it be:  
   A) fun 1 (30%)  
   B) happy 1 (0%)  
   C) serious 1 (0%)  
   D) challenging 1 (50%)  
   E) engaging 1 (50%)  
   F) All of the above 1 (62%)  
   G) none of the above 1 (0%)  
   H) other 1 (30%)  

17) How long have you been attending/viewing church services at Brick by Brick Bible Church?  
   A) less than a year 1 (58%)  
   B) two to four years 1 (60%)  
   C) five to seven years 1 (30%)  
   D) eight to ten years 1 (30%)  
   E) eleven to fifteen years 1 (20%)  
   F) more than fifteen years 1 (10%)
18) In childhood, what was the most influential experience in my development in becoming a Christian?
   A) reading Bible stories (42%)
   B) my parent's beliefs (20%)
   C) attending church (26%)
   D) hearing the Word of God and responding to it (26%)
   E) my peer groups beliefs (6%)
   F) I did not attend church as a child (6%)

19) Which type of church service/sermon is more scripturally based?
   A) contemporary (uses modern music and instruments for worship) (10%)
   B) modern (uses modern music and instruments or voice for worship) (20%)
   C) traditional (uses hymns for worship) (39%)
   D) orthodox (recites liturgical scripture in solo singing format worship) (6%)
   E) technologically driven (uses stage, lights, fog, and other modern technology for worship) (8%)
   F) secular/humanistic (uses whatever of the above, randomly in each worship) (13%)

20) What single characteristic best defines a person who is saved?
   A) have a forgiving spirit (9%)
   B) being a good person (9%)
   C) accepting Jesus (60%)
   D) I am unsure (6%)
   E) showing grace and mercy (13%)
   F) accepting my forgiveness (3%)
21) In defending regular church attendance, which of the following arguments would you say is the strongest?

- A) it's an important social connection (29%)
- B) it's a family tradition (18%)
- C) my spouse encourages me to go (12%)
- D) scripture says so (42%)
- E) it is important I have a church to tithe to (12%)
- F) it is part of being a good person (18%)

22) Which form of government best describes the relationship between believers and the Creator?

- A) democracy (system of government ruled by whole population) (30%)
- B) republic (system of government where people elect representatives to rule) (60%)
- C) aristocracy (system of government ruled by a noble/upper class) (30%)
- D) presidential democracy (system of government where the president is elected separately from the legislative and judicial branches) (30%)
- E) monarchy (system of government ruled by a king/queen) (53%)
- F) theocracy (system of government ruled by Divine guidance and religious law) (60%)
- G) autocracy (system of government where one person has absolute power) (32%)
- H) oligarchy (system of government where a small group have control) (30%)
- I) parliamentary democracy (system of government where the majority political party chooses its leader and forms the government) (32%)
- J) bureaucracy (system of government where decisions are made by state officials, not elected representatives) (50%)

IDK/Unknown (60%)

23) What is the most important element of the Great Commission? (please explain)

Making disciples for Christ as commanded

by Christ: Matt. 28:19-20

Mark 16:15

Partial correct idea: (30%)

Correct: (100%)
24) Which of these is equal in authority to the Bible?
A) Islamic Quran
B) Hindu Bhagavad Gita
C) Jewish Kabbalah
D) Buddhist Tripitaka (Pali Canon)

25) In my opinion, the Bible is: (circle all that apply)
A) trustworthy
B) authoritative
C) authentic
D) reliable
E) equal with other sacred texts
F) divinely inspired and written

26) How would you define the doctrine of sufficiency? (write in your answer)

The Bible, God's Word, is sufficient for all areas of our daily life.

27) In times of trouble, where do you look for support? (please number 1-4 in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important).

3 Friends/Family
1 Scripture
2 Pastor
4 Medical/Psychological Community

how many put in correct order (19%)
28) Which statement best describes your beliefs on the relevance of scripture in today's world?

A) the scriptures would be more relevant with additional information (19\%)

B) the scriptures would be more relevant if deletions were made taking into consideration how our modern world has changed (6\%)

C) the scriptures are as relevant today as when they were originally written (75\%)

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Post-Results

Pre-Post Discipleship Program Questionnaire

(when you return this questionnaire, your name will be retracted and ascribed a number for privacy purposes)

Name: ___________ TOTAL ___________

Please circle your age group:
A) Born before 1945 (1) ___________
B) Born between 1946 and 1964 (12) ___________
C) Born between 1965 and 1980 (8) ___________
D) Born between 1980 and 2000 (8) ___________
E) Born 2001 and after (2) ___________

1) I characterize my attendance to church with the following:
(A) attending every Sunday (18) ___________
(B) attending once a month (6) ___________
(C) attending during holiday seasons only (5) ___________
(D) I do not attend church (2) ___________

When possible
only online

2) When I attend church, I find the sermons:
A) have an organized structure (1) ___________
B) have a clear central idea or theme (2) ___________
C) are put into words I can easily understand (2) ___________
D) All of the above (2) ___________
E) none of the above (2) ___________
3) I characterize my Bible reading with the following.
A) I read my Bible every day
B) I read my Bible once a week
C) I never read my Bible
D) I read my Bible sporadically throughout the year
E) I read my Bible only when I need help from God

4) I would characterize my belief and faith in Jesus as,
A) strong
B) weak
C) moderate
D) devoted
E) optional

5) I would characterize myself applying Biblical standards to my life as,
A) strong
B) weak
C) moderate
D) devoted
E) optional

6) I would characterize my understanding of scripture as,
A) strong
B) weak
C) moderate
D) devoted
E) optional
7) I believe,
   A) all religious organizations contain truth
   B) religious scriptures in other religions are equally from God
   C) there are no differences in religions
   D) All of the above
   E) none of the above

8) I believe,
   A) if you are a good person leading a good life that’s all that matters
   B) life is a game you can’t win
   C) how I lead my life matters to God
   D) how I lead my life doesn’t matter to God
   E) how I lead my life matters to me

9) All religions are the same at their core
   A) completely agree
   B) somewhat agree
   C) somewhat disagree
   D) completely disagree
   E) unsure

10) I can easily follow what the Bible says because,
    A) I understand it completely
    B) I ask for help when I don’t understand a scripture passage or verse
    C) much of the Bible I do not understand at all
    D) I don’t bother because most of the Bible is outdated
    E) I never ask for help understanding Bible scripture
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A) not inspiring to me
B) over my head in understanding
C) inspiring to me
D) boring
E) I don’t like being preached at with the obvious

12) A person should be allowed to believe whatever they want
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B) somewhat agree
C) somewhat disagree
D) completely disagree
E) unsure

13) I attend weekly Prayer Meeting,
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C) somewhat disagree
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B) friendliness of other attendees
C) preaching and message is Biblically accurate and scripturally based
D) other ____________________________ (please fill in)
E) convenience of location

16) The most essential criteria of worship service and a sermon is that it be:

A) fun
B) happy
C) serious
D) challenging
E) engaging
F) All of the above
G) none of the above

17) How long have you been attending/viewing church services at Brick by Brick Bible Church?

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19) Which type of church service/ sermon is more scripturally based?

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F) secular/ humanistic (uses whatever of the above, randomly in each worship)

20) What single characteristic best defines a person who is saved?

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B) being a good person
C) accepting Jesus
D) I am unsure
E) showing grace and mercy
F) accepting my forgiveness
21) In defending regular church attendance, which of the following arguments would you say is the strongest?

A) it’s an important social connection  
B) it’s a family tradition  
C) my spouse encourages me to go  
D) scripture says so  
E) it is important I have a church to tithe to  
F) it is part of being a good person  

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A) democracy (system of government ruled by whole population)  
B) republic (system of government where people elect representatives to rule)  
C) aristocracy (system of government ruled by a noble/upper class)  
D) presidential democracy (system of government where the president is elected separately from the legislative and judicial branch)  
E) monarchy (system of government ruled by a king/queen)  
F) theocracy (system of government ruled by Divine guidance and religious law)  
G) autocracy (system of government where one person has absolute power)  
H) oligarchy (system of government where a small group have control)  
I) parliamentary democracy (system of government where the majority political party chooses its leader and forms the government)  
J) bureaucracy (system of government where decisions are made by state officials, not elected representatives)  

23) What is the most important element of the Great Commission? (please explain)

Making disciples for Christ as commanded by Christ

Matthew 28:19-20  Mark 16:15

Accurate  
Partial  
Wrong/I Don’t Know
24) Which of these is equal in authority to the Bible?
   A) Islamic Quran
   B) Hindu Bhagavad Gita
   C) Jewish Kabbalah
   D) Buddhist Tripitaka (Pali Canon)
   F) None
   Other
   (write in)

25) In my opinion, the Bible is: (circle all that apply)
   A) trustworthy
   B) authoritative
   C) authentic
   D) reliable
   E) equal with other sacred texts
   F) divinely inspired and written

26) How would you define the doctrine of sufficiency? (write in your answer)
The Bible, God's Word, is sufficient for all areas of our daily life.

27) In times of trouble, where do you look for support? (please number 1-4 in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important).
   1) Friends/ Family
   2) Scripture
   3) Pastor
   4) Medical/ Psychological Community

   Correct order

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28) Which statement best describes your belief on the relevance of scripture in today’s world?
   
   A) the scriptures would be more relevant with additional information 11/11(4) 13.0%
   
   B) the scriptures would be more relevant if deletions were made taking into consideration how our modern world has changed 11/12(2) 6.0%
   
   C) the scriptures are as relevant today as when they were originally written (25) 81.0%
Appendix F

# 5
Focus Group & **Personal Interview Questions** for Week 1

Trusting the authority, authenticity, and reliability of the Bible

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

*Genesis*— Christ is our Jacob’s Ladder

*Proverbs and Matthew*— We have become blind and deaf to God’s word and wisdom, but He wants us to hear

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

- be more willing to listen and accept “feedback” from the Lord
- turn to Scripture more for answers instead of the world
- ask our pastor for guidance in understanding scripture, do not take it as face value

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?

- realizing and accepting that what God speaks to me, I may not want to hear
- regular daily maintenance (making the time)
- turning to someone who can help me understand the Scripture
- pushing myself from close enough to good enough

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

No questions
**Focus Group & Personal Interview Questions for Week 1**

Trusting the authority, authenticity, and reliability of the Bible

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

Acts 2:42-47

Psalms 19:7-14

Matthew 24:35

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

Make more time for fellowship with other Christians

Join in groups/Bible Study/Prayer Together in Small/Large Groups

Read Bible More

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?

Time/Finding Time/Struggle to change thinking in order to make it a priority

Many places shut down right now limiting groups and services

Find more ways to connect in the current situation

**Suggestions from focus group:**

Pray more at home and in family groups

Call people and pray with them

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

No questions
Focus Group & **Personal Interview Questions** for Week 2

Why read the Bible

We should read the Bible because it is given to us by God. It will teach us what we should and shouldn’t be doing.

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

In my daily life, I try to be a good role model for others. A Christian is known by their actions="good fruit"

I know that God judges us and corrects us out of love. I also know that God will not ask us to do anything without providing the tools.

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?

No

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

How did early Christians decide which books were inspired by God and therefore be included in the New Testament?
Focus Group & Personal Interview Questions for Week 2

Why read the Bible

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?
Joshua 1:8—Reading and thinking on God’s Word all the time

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?
Very struck by prayer without ceasing…Everyday hand all your stuff to the Lord. Don’t be afraid He is always there, always listening. You must read His word in order to hear Him.

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?
Putting aside the excuses (time, other obligations) and making prayer and Bible reading a priority. It is a habit that once you develop it is easier to keep.

Do you have any questions for the researcher?
No
Focus Group & Personal Interview Questions for Week 3

Why apply Scripture to daily life

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

Psalms 19: 7-11 Doctrine of Suffering plus other Scriptures that reinforce in Genesis and Colossians

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

Undertaking daily Bible Study to make one wise in all areas (Spiritual, family, relationships)

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

And if so, what are they?

Time constraints/daily motivation/needs to become a habit

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

No
Focus Group & Personal Interview Questions for Week 3

Why apply Scripture to daily life

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

Psalms 19:7-11

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

Being more vocal to the people I encounter with sharing the Gospel

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?

Overcoming apprehensions specific people don’t want to interact with but really need it/making time

Overcoming fear of how people will react

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

Can we have a paper copy of the review questions at the end for further research and study?
What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

Singing of Hymns/Singing Praises to God

Psalms 118:47  Matthew 26:30  Last Supper Song Praise

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

As I was growing up going to church with my grandparents, I remember the hymns we sang in the church such as Holy, Holy, Holy, Onward Christian Soldiers, Just As I Am, Trust and Obey, In Christ Alone, How Great Thou Art and so many others; the words speak the message that we hear from the Bible, from God and from the Pastor - God is Great, He is Holy, He is our Ultimate Commander-in-Chief!!

In our daily life, we experience so many different events from raising our children in the way they should go, working in our various jobs, family and friends, illnesses, death, this pandemic, humorous times, and the words from so many hymns apply to those events.

For example, Trust and Obey! If we want to be happy in the Lord, "we need to trust and obey for there's no other way"!

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?

Everyday, Satan will do his best to encourage us to sin, so we need to know we are Christian Soldiers armed with God's power.

We can approach God Just as We are, and he enables us to be more Christlike.

There is much said In Christ Alone. We can live by the powerful message in this song, we are victorious in Christ alone. We do not fear death because we will stand in Christ's Power and receive His Strength!

Many times as these hymns are sung, it is possible to not really see the message God wants us to experience. Be sure to truly take in the wonderful words which can inspire us to follow God always and rely on Him for all our needs!!

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

No
#26 #27 #28

**Focus Group** & Personal Interview Questions

**Week 4**  The Importance of the Great Commission

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

Nehemiah 8:8—gathering in groups to hear God's word

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

Attend Church, Attend Church Events, and Attend Bible Study/Prayer Meetings.

Read the Bible with Family

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?

Right now can only do small groups Covid-19 restrictions have hurt many church gatherings. There have been a lot of cancellation. Virtual is OK and is working for now but it is not the same as Human contact.

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

No
Focus Group & Personal Interview Questions

Week 5 The Importance of Christian Community and Christian Fellowship

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?
2 Timothy 4:3 - Some do not want Biblical Doctrine
It is difficult to live a Biblical life but we must try

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?
We keep trying, even when it is hard. We take little steps and strive to live a more Biblical life. Mistakes are OK as long as we ask for forgiveness and keep going

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?
The pressures of the world/many mistakes/being criticized with others/rejection/having to live in the world but not being of the world

As far as Christian Community and Christian Fellowship, what does Brick by Brick Bible Church do well?
They are welcoming/friendly to strangers

As far as Christian Community and Christian Fellowship, what can Brick by Brick Bible Church do to improve?
More outreach
More opportunities for Community to gather

Do you have any questions for the researcher?
I would be interested in what the researcher’s ideas for outreach are?
Focus Group & Personal Interview Questions

Week 5 The Importance of Christian Community and Christian Fellowship

What were some of our Focus scriptures for this week’s message?

James 2:14—We must do something with our faith and belief

The examples of wrongdoing are found in Romans 1:22–32

What are some ways in which you can apply this week’s scriptures to your daily life?

Need to be more responsive to people’s needs even if it as inconvenience to myself, more willingness to help people in everyday life

We must do something with our faith and belief. It is not enough to just say we are believes. We cannot be morally corrupt, doing what is deemed corrupt in the scriptures. We cannot be lustful, greedy, sinful, etc...we must live in faith as Jesus has taught us. When we find those around us are living a sinful life it is our role to invite to read the Bible with us, attend church, accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Are there any challenges that you may have in applying this week’s scriptures to your daily life? And if so, what are they?

Many people will be resistant to the Word—but as Christians we must overcome that apprehension to reach out

This is a difficult and trying world in which we live, people seem to be doing whatever they choose against one another. This includes, theft, destruction of property, violence, and on and on. To live as Jesus taught us is difficult as people are not accepting of His word. Many use the excuse of the world and Covid as reasoning against our Lord. It is difficult to share the faith as we are told that it may be offensive and is punishable by write up or termination! I still ask people if I can pray with them or share the Bible, it is not easy though!

As far as Christian Community and Christian Fellowship, what does Brick by Brick Bible Church do well?

Welcoming to new people, talkative but not overwhelming at first, so as to scare them off

As far as Christian Community and Christian Fellowship, what can Brick by Brick Bible Church do to improve?

Better recruitment, more outreach—BBB feels stagnate, more opportunities for Christian community—find ways around the health crisis

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

No
Focus Group & **Personal Interview Questions**     Week 6     Discipleship Program Review

What was your biggest take away from the Discipleship program series?

After reading several versions of the Bible, I appreciate the importance of the KJV. Loved seeing that included in a Discipleship series...Also, the expanded explanation of the Doctrine of Sufficiency.

Which weekly topic do you believe will be the easiest to implement into daily life or our Christian Church Community?

Prayer/More Prayer

Which weekly topic do you believe will be the most difficult to implement into daily life or our Christian Church Community?

Trying to lead people to Christ who are resistant. We must rely on Christ to give us the words. But that kind of faith is not also easy.

After having taken the Discipleship program, do you see a relevance between your personal daily life and Biblical principle, doctrine, theology? (Comment fully)

The Discipleship program has re-affirmed for me what I believe. The value of 2 Peter 1:10—more encouraged to be diligent after the program

Please elaborate on how you see a connection between your personal daily life and Biblical principles, doctrines, and theology discussed in the Discipleship program. (Comment fully)

You have encouraged me to pursue a higher degree for myself....something I have been thinking about...I want to further that leaning

What are some ways in which Brick by Brick Bible Church can fulfill the Great Commission?

1st step—let His words be my words/let the Holy Spirit work through us

Do you have any questions for the researcher?

Just that it has really reinforces and invigorated me.
Focus Group & Personal Interview Questions  Week 6  Discipleship Program Review

What was your biggest take away from the Discipleship program series?
Learning how to approach people (I do not have to be an expert and it is up to all of us)
I need to read the Bible more and put it in action
The importance of the Great Commission
Which weekly topic do you believe will be the easiest to implement into daily life or our Christian Church Community?
More prayer/more Bible reading

Which weekly topic do you believe will be the most difficult to implement into daily life or our Christian Church Community?
The Great Commission. Approaching new people is the hardest

After having taken the Discipleship program, do you see a relevance between your personal daily life and Biblical principle, doctrine, theology? (Comment fully)
There is a connection in everything—the Doctrine of sufficiency tells us so, and provides us everything we need for our daily life, even the tough stuff.

Please elaborate on how you see a connection between your personal daily life and Biblical principles, doctrines, and theology discussed in the Discipleship program. (Comment fully)
The concepts impact my daily life—share the Gospel—read the Bible

What are some ways in which Brick by Brick Bible Church can fulfill the Great Commission?
More events/Overcome the difficulty of the present health crisis in unique ways—plan for the future when we can have larger events

Do you have any questions for the researcher?
No
Prayer Meeting Records

4 weeks leading up to Discipleship series the average viewership was 30.5

During the Discipleship series the average viewership increased to 38.2

The 4 weeks after the Discipleship series then average viewership is 35.25

BBB Church Christmas service December 24, 2020 online attendance was 60
During reading introduction and week 1 sermon 1 of Discipleship program, congregants and program participants appear interested and questioning, as if they’ve never heard basic theological Biblical doctrinal principles before. Going by the results of their pre-questionnaire answers – they have not! A question arises here: what is everyone’s background and upbringing regarding Biblical Christian doctrine? How can this question be asked without causing participant alarm, anger, or frustration?

In-person and online Discipleship program participation is at a total of 31. Hopefully, prayerfully, all thirty-one participants will maintain throughout the six-sermon series and engage each week.

After reading week 1, sermon 1 of Discipleship program, reaction of congregants and participants is mixed. Listening to individual discussions around the room, they seem to be curious – that’s a good thing! Interaction and engagement to summary questions was non-existent – that was expected. Hopefully, participant and congregation engagement picks up!

End of journal entry 1
Pastor Tom  IHS†

During reading introduction for week 2, and summary of week 1, and week 2, sermon 2 of Discipleship program, congregants and program participants are nodding in agreement. That is a wonderful, silent, response! That is a positive sign. They are receiving a great deal of correct theological Biblical understanding, hopefully it isn’t too much, too quick.

In-person and online participation stays consistent, thirty-one participants remain.

Research assistant has made week 1 Personal Interview Questions and week 1 Focus Group Questions available to me (prior to start of week 2 sermon), with numbers assigned instead of names. The ‘Jacob’s Ladder’ reference was well received. Participants have awareness and understanding they need to listen for God’s voice more. Participants have awareness and understanding they need to turn to God’s Word more. Participants have awareness and understanding they need to accept what God says to them more. These are positive signs! Participants are headed in correct scriptural direction.
After reading week 2, sermon 2 of Discipleship program, reaction of participants and congregants is still neutral, but showing signs of understanding and receiving new information! That is a positive sign! Interaction and engagement with summary section was better this week – some participants and congregants engaged vocally! Another positive sign! There was even light-hearted joking toward each other about knowing or not knowing a correct answer. Another positive sign participants and congregants are listening and thinking about what they’re hearing.

End of journal entry 2
Pastor Tom  IHS†

Personal Journal  entry 3  week 3  sermon 3 of Discipleship program  6 Sept 2020

During reading of introduction for week 3, summary of week 2, and week 3, sermon 3 of Discipleship program participants and congregants are extremely eager today despite Covid-19 mandatory restrictions, rules, and regulations imposed by the Governor of New York State, Mario Cuomo, the overall spirit and mood of the participants and congregants is up-beat! That’s a positive sign.

Research assistant has made week 2 Personal Interview Questions and week 2 Focus Group Questions available to me (prior to start of week 3 sermon), identities are obscured to me as each person is assigned a number. Participants are aware excuses need to cease when it comes to reading Bible each day. Participants are aware a Christian is known by their actions. Participants are aware of praying without ceasing. Participants asking questions in Personal Interview Questions! Positive Signs! It will be addressed at a later date after six-week Discipleship program series is complete.

(Reason for addressing question at later date: researcher focus must stay on delivery of six-week Discipleship program series, without interruption)

After reading week 3, sermon 3 of Discipleship program, participant/congregational engagement is continuing to increase. Again, light-hearted attitude prevails, and talking across the aisle is starting to take place! A positive sign that engaging with Discipleship program is taking place. Plus – during reading of week 3 summary questions engagement from participants and congregants increased slightly – positive sign!

End of journal entry 3
Pastor Tom  IHS†
Final Note: researcher was asked at conclusion of service why Psalms 19 verses 7 thru 11 were discussed without mentioning verses 12 thru 14. (a very good question!) Congregant/ participant was told it would be explained in sermon 4 next week. A positive sign someone is paying attention from week 1.

Personal Journal entry 4 week 4 sermon 4 of Discipleship program 13 Sept 2020

Before introduction to week 4, sermon 4 of Discipleship program it was stated that someone asked why were verses 12 thru 14 not mentioned of Psalms 19, and the participants and congregation were told because the Discipleship program is designed intentionally to be interactive – we need to look up verses 12 thru 14 of Psalms 19 and ask questions.

During reading of introduction for week 4, summary of week 3, and week 4, sermon 4 of Discipleship program, researcher noticed participants and congregants (that are in-person physically at church) seemed to wane off. A negative sign that participants and congregants may not be responding to Discipleship sermon program. A question arises: has in-person attendance dropped due to Biblical information overload? Or, the mandated restrictions enforced by NY state Governor and people are afraid?

On-line participants have not declined. On-line participation has elevated.

Research assistant has made week 3 Personal Interview Questions and week 3 Focus Group Questions available to me (prior to start of week 4 sermon), identities remain obscured for duration of project study. Participants are grappling with overcoming fear of approaching, talking to others, interacting with others, about their witness for Jesus Christ.

(Note to self: discuss ideas for witnessing and outreach to congregation after six-week Discipleship program has ended)

Participants are asking for a paper copy of review questions for each week. That’s positive!

After reading week 4, sermon 4 of Discipleship program, participant/ congregational engagement is continuing to increase during the ‘questions to help us remember’ section (best week to date with congregational engagement!) A person who will only be identified as R.S. had tremendous recall of Biblical principles from the previous three weeks. The remarkable thing to note is that R.S. did not choose to participate in project study. After service, mood of congregants and participants is exuberant and favorable toward learning more sound foundational Biblical theological principles from scripture. A positive sign overall!!

End of journal entry 4

Pastor Tom IHS†
During reading introduction for week 5, and summary from week 4, and week 5, and sermon 5 of Discipleship program, congregants and program participants appear more quiet and solemn as they appear to be engaged in self-inventory.

On-line participation increased while in-person participants and congregation remains consistent from last week.

Research assistant has made week 4 Personal Interview Questions and week 4 Focus Group Questions available to me (prior to start of week 5 sermon), identities of individuals remain unknown to researcher. Question from week 4 journal entry 4, answered in week 4 Focus Group session: people are afraid of becoming sick from Covid-19, but participants realize on-line is not the same as in-person human contact. That’s a positive!

After reading week 4, sermon 4 of Discipleship program, participant/ congregational engagement diminished a bit but was steady overall comparatively speaking. On a positive note – the participant of the week 4 Personal Interview Question section was highly complete in thought and purpose regarding Christian Biblical understanding and awareness of reasons why hymns are so vitally important to Christian worship service! This is a positive!

End of journal entry 5

Pastor Tom IHS†

During reading introduction for week 6, and summary from week 5, and week 6 Final Sermon of Discipleship program participants and congregants appear to be anticipatory for Discipleship program series to be wrapping up.

On-line participation remains consistent and increasing. In-person participants and congregants increased for Final Sermon.

Research assistant has made week 5 Personal Interview Questions and week 5 Focus Group Questions available to me (prior to start of Final Sermon), identities of individuals are consistently unknown to researcher. Participants are aware Christian identity is more than something we say we are, it is something we live out in our day to day life experience. This is positive! A good question from week 5 Personal Interview Questions: I would be interested in what the researcher’s ideas for outreach are?

(Decision was made to answer question after Discipleship program series is over. Reason? So researcher can focus on delivery of theological concepts to participants and congregants)
Another interesting comment from week 5 Focus Group session: participant states “It is difficult to share the faith as we are told that it may be offensive and is punishable by write up or termination!” This leads researcher to conclude many Christians are afraid of discussing Christ to anyone for fear of losing their career.

(Decision was made to respond to ways of witnessing for Christ, post Discipleship program. Reason: to have participants and congregants focus continue with learning correct scriptural Biblical theological constructs, and concepts)

Participants are aware that we must do something with our faith and belief. This is positive! Participants are aware that they can invite a person to read Bible scripture with them, attend church, and accept Jesus. This is positive!

Another interesting comment from week 5 Focus Group session: BBB church needs to find more ways around health crisis to enable more recruitment.

While reading Final Sermon of Discipleship program participants and congregants are attentive and fully engaged.

After reading Final Sermon of Discipleship program participant/ congregational overall mood appears more resolute to trying to live by scriptures, trying to witness to others about Christ. After Final Sermon was a Christian Fellowship Meal that was well received, discussions about scriptures abound.

End of journal entry 6

Pastor Tom   IHS†

Personal Journal entry    post Discipleship program     Friday 2 Oct 2020

Now that the Discipleship program has concluded it is interesting to note that participants and congregants attitudes (before, during, and after) appear to ebb, flow, wane, increase, decrease, and finally, increase again; much in the same manner as a surging tide comes in and goes out breaking against sandy shores.

The overall picture is one of an amplitude period and frequency graph which repeats indefinitely (wave after wave after wave). The visual and literary illustrations are depictive of the relationship the ancient Israelites had with God for thousands of years.

On-line attendance remains consistent and increases. In-person church attendance, however, decreases then increases, then decreases and increases again – continually fluctuating.

What are reasons for constant in-person church attendance fluctuation? Reasons are many and varied. In part, people are afraid of contracting Covid-19, in part the people are afraid of witnessing for Christ, in part people are afraid of saying they are Christian in the workplace due to fear of losing their job…etc. In the state of New York, strict mandated regulatory requirements make it extremely difficult to run, operate, and manage a Christian church. Not just
requirements due to Covid-19, New York is experiencing a shift from traditional Christian orthodox belief to embrace liberal, secular ideology, in educational institutions, businesses and religious organizations. Pagan beliefs and belief systems have overrun New York state, even in religious organizations, where acceptance of immoral practices which are viewed as an abomination in God’s Word, are openly accepted, condoned, and fought for.

What is the solution? People who identify as Christian in the state of New York, any other state in the United States, or the world for that matter, need to come to grips with the fact that scriptural integrity is central, belief in Jesus and His Word is key, obeying and following Jesus’ Word is foundational. Until these and other Biblical truths are acknowledged, accepted, followed, and taught, Christian thought and belief will continue to decline. That’s negative.

Has the Discipleship program been useful to Brick by Brick Bible Church, its congregants, church hierarchy, and those who voluntarily participated? Overall, it appears the Discipleship program has had a positive impact – there are more scripture conversations taking place after service during fellowship. That’s positive!

We need to remember, that it is all in God’s capable hands and that His timing for revival of Christian belief is true, good, and righteous. We must trust God through Jesus our Savior that He, and His Holy Spirit, know what They’re doing – regardless of appearances in the U.S. or worldwide.

In the final Personal Interview/ Focus Group Questions the research assistant made available to me, someone said, “there is a connection in everything – the doctrine of sufficiency tells us so and provides us everything we need for our daily life, even the tough stuff.”

Overall, that’s the point, trust Jesus and His Word…

End of journal entry

Pastor Tom    IHS†