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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Biblical Memorization and Meditation
as an Effective Means of Spiritual Warfare**

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

by

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This action research project aims to evidence how biblical memorization and meditation are effective means of spiritual warfare. The need for this type of study arises from the neglect of biblical memorization and especially biblical meditation in many evangelical churches. This author hopes the research project will help retrieve these spiritual disciplines for his home church Calvary Chapel of the Hills and broader evangelicalism. To promote biblical memorization and meditation in the author's home church, he self-published a workbook titled *Memorization and Meditation Manual: A Guided Workbook to Memorize and Meditate on Ephesians 6:10-18*. This workbook guides readers in a step-by-step process to memorize and meditate upon the classic armor of God text in Ephesians 6:10-18. A small group of participants at Calvary Chapel of the Hills agreed to use the workbook and practice biblical memorization and meditation for thirty-six days. To protect the privacy of participants, no proper names were used in the writing of this paper. Assessment tools were administered at the intervention's beginning, middle, and end to gauge whether biblical memorization and meditation improved participants' effectiveness in fighting the world, the flesh, and the devil. Specifically, these assessment tools measured participants' spiritual sobriety, spiritual preparedness, spiritual empowerment, and their ability to stand strong. The results demonstrated a strong correlation between practicing biblical memorization and meditation and one's effectiveness in spiritual combat. While the study is specific to Calvary Chapel of the Hills, both the intervention and concomitant implications offer fruitful avenues for the wider body of Christ to become more victorious in spiritual battle.

Keywords: Biblical Memorization, Biblical Meditation, Spiritual Warfare, Spiritual Disciplines, The Armor of God.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Need for Biblical Memorization and Meditation

A significant turning point in this writer's walk with God came when he began to memorize and meditate on the Word of God. Feeling oppressed by the enemy, this writer read many books on the topic of spiritual warfare. Yet, lasting victory over sin and temptation proved elusive. In fact, several of those books fostered more bondage in his life.¹ It was only when he began to memorize Scripture and meditate daily upon it that victory ensued. His worldview became more biblical which led to changes in behavior and lifestyle. What began in the mind, finally flooded over into the whole life.

The author came to the conviction that the primary weapon of *believers*, in spiritual warfare, is the Word of God. This conviction starkly contrasts against recent trends in evangelicalism that tout the necessity of “deliverance ministry” to provide freedom from the enemy and victory over sin.² While doing historical research, this writer discovered that the Word of God has been seen as the primary means of spiritual warfare for many saints of the past. William Gurnall, the great Puritan writer, stated: “All the great conquests which Christ and His followers achieve in the world are accomplished with this sword.”³

Having determined the sufficiency of the Scriptures for the believer's warfare, the only question left was the best means of utilizing the Scriptures. Hence the second conviction this writer came to was that the Word of God must be *memorized* and *meditated* upon. He also

¹Neil Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2019); Charles H. Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity: Evangelicals and the Missing Dimension* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002).

²Jon Thompson, *Deliverance: A Journey Towards the Unexpected* (Ontario, CA: Sanctus Church, 2021); Sam Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: A Comprehensive Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021).

³William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour* Vol 3 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), 110.

discovered that memorization and meditation on Scripture are classic disciplines that have been practiced by many saints of old.⁴ In fact, Jesus himself exemplifies how to use the disciplines of memorization and meditation in spiritual warfare (Luke 4: 1-13).⁵ When tempted by the enemy, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy and stated “it is written.” He was able to do this because he had previously memorized those passages and considered their implications, which is what it means to meditate on Scripture. Jesus is the preeminent example of how to wield the sword of the Spirit against the temptations of the evil one.

This DMIN thesis project will argue that biblical memorization and meditation are disciplines that must be engaged in if one is going to be victorious in spiritual warfare. In other words, they are effective means of fighting the spiritual battle. The remainder of Chapter One will describe in depth the ministry context for the project, the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the thesis statement. The problem statement will describe what exactly is the problem to be addressed in this paper. The purpose statement explains what the DMIN action research aims to accomplish, the goal. The thesis statement will predict the results of the DMIN action research.

Ministry Context

The ministry context for the DMIN action research is Calvary Chapel of the Hills, located in Cobleskill, NY. By all accounts the church is very ordinary. It epitomizes generic evangelicalism in many ways. It represents broader evangelicalism both in what it has and what it lacks. Like many evangelical churches spiritual disciplines specifically and spiritual formation more generally, are seldom discussed at Calvary Chapel of the Hills. This makes the church a

⁴ William Evans, *How to Memorize the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Crossreach Publications, 2016), 14.

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

perfect test case to evaluate the retrieval of two spiritual disciplines, namely biblical memorization, and biblical meditation. Since it well represents evangelicalism, the results of this study can justly be extrapolated far beyond Calvary Chapel of the Hills itself. A brief survey of the church's location, history, and structures will follow.

Location

The church is in a suburban neighborhood in Schoharie County, NY. The population is listed at around 4,500.⁶ Located nearby is a shopping center and the state University of New York-SUNY Cobleskill. The village, as well as the church, consists predominantly of white middle-class Americans. The church is quite balanced between youth, young adults, and seniors. This balance is both indicative of and generates a sense of vitality. It demonstrates that the church is not irrelevant to young people or off-putting to seniors.

There are more than ten other churches in the area, including Evangelical, Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches. There does not appear to be any significant influence upon Calvary Chapel of the Hills from the other churches in the area or vice versa. In other words, no church in the area influences Calvary Chapel of the Hills worship service, philosophy of ministry, or any other aspect of the church. Instead, global networks are more influential on local churches. For Calvary Chapel of the Hills, that network is Calvary Chapel Association. Presumably, this tendency to be shaped by global networks is just as true for the Wesleyan and Roman Catholic churches in the area as it is for Calvary Chapel of the Hills.

⁶ "Town of Cobleskill," Schoharie County, NY, Accessed December 5, 2021, <https://www4.schohariecounty-ny.gov/government/town-of-cobleskill/>.

History

The church is relatively new (established circa 2012) and averages around seventy people in attendance on Sunday mornings. The church shifted from a Wesleyan church to a Calvary Chapel church. There was an incident of sexual impropriety by one of the Wesleyan leaders. Many people left and new leadership and affiliation resulted. The senior pastor was ordained by a Calvary Chapel church in Rochester, NY. He then accepted the call to take up a dying church plant in Cobleskill, NY. They soon acquired the property that formerly belonged to the Wesleyan church and relaunched it as Calvary Chapel of the Hills in 2005.

The Calvary Chapel movement is quasi-denominational, consisting of an “international family” of churches.⁷ The movement was birthed by Chuck Smith in Costa Mesa, CA. Smith was initially in leadership in the Pentecostal denomination known as the FourSquare Gospel. He became disenchanted with denominations in general. Smith believed that all denominational structures were flawed in that they attracted people desirous of power. Consequently, Smith liked to say that the more spiritual a man became, the less denominational he would become.⁸ Trademarks of relatively casual atmosphere of dress, contemporary worship, expositional teaching, and minimal denominational oversight mark Smith’s movement. As the founder of the movement, Chuck Smith, wrote, “Another distinctive characteristic of Calvary Chapel is our relaxed style.”⁹

⁷ “About Calvary Chapel,” Accessed December 5, 2021, <https://calvarychapel.com/about/calvary-chapel-history>.

⁸ Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (London, UK: University of California Press, 1997), 32.

⁹ Chuck Smith, *Calvary Chapel Distinctives* (Costa Mesa, CA: Word for Today, 1993), 422.

Structure and Trademarks

The leadership structure is neither Presbyterian, Episcopal, or Congregational. Rather, Chuck Smith looked to Moses as the model for church leadership.¹⁰ That is to say, the pastor is not under the jurisdiction of elders or the congregation. He is ultimately accountable to the Lord. The elders provide wise guidance in lesser matters, and assistant pastors assist in meeting spiritual needs. The Congregation has no authority and does not vote on any matters. The pastors and elders make all the decisions. In practical terms, the structure is similar to an elder-led church with the difference that the pastor has a unique status and authority over and above the other elders. In other words, while some elder-led churches have a first among equals in term of function, in Calvary Chapel churches, the pastor is also first among equals in terms of authority as well.

Calvary Chapel of the Hills prioritizes the Bible and deprioritizes tradition and creeds. As an evangelical church, they have no formal creed. On the website, “What We Believe” is relatively brief.¹¹ They emphasize agape love, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible. In that sense, they are like most Baptist and charismatic churches. They believe, along with those other groups, that the Scriptures are immediately accessible to modern readers. Moreover, in connection with charismatic and Pentecostal churches, they believe that they will encounter God speaking within the pages of the Word.

Another hallmark of Calvary Chapel of the Hills is expositional teaching. They believe the entire Bible should be taught from cover to cover. It is not rare to find sermons from the Old Testament, including less popular portions like wisdom literature. This is true at all levels of the

¹⁰ Ibid., 222.

¹¹ “Who We Are,” Calvary Chapel of the Hills, Accessed December 5, 2021, <https://www.calvarychapelofthehills.com/whoweare>.

church, from Sunday school to Sunday morning sermons. In fact, the Sunday school teachers teach the same passage of Scripture that the pastor preaches his sermons on, in order to foster unity.

The priority of the Bible is also seen in the church's promotion of reading the Scriptures. The church follows a reading plan so that all members of the congregation, should they choose to participate, will read through the Bible in a year. Once again, the emphasis is to cover the whole Bible and not just the more popular parts of it.

The church practices two ordinances or sacraments, namely baptism and communion. Baptism is celebrated whenever people come to faith. In the summertime, the public pool is used to facilitate evangelism and fellowship with outsiders. The Lord's Supper is celebrated weekly at the conclusion of the service. The goal is to set a familial tone, wherein all are in constant remembrance that it is the grace of God that sustains them. Pot-luck lunches are hosted monthly to foster fellowship.

The worship service is contemporary. The "hymnal" is handmade and contains a mixture of contemporary songs from across the worship spectrum. There is no dim lighting or smoke. While these have become popular in some large evangelical churches, it is felt they would create an "experience" that only the Holy Spirit can rightly bestow. One aspect which makes the service feel surprisingly liturgical is the public reading of Scripture. Two passages are read every Sunday. One passage is read to the congregation, while the congregation reads out loud the second passage. The selected texts are intended to be in harmony with the passage to be preached on.

The Sunday night prayer meeting is another important service. This is the meeting where "charismatic" expressions are allowed and encouraged. During the morning service, there is no

place for the free exercise of gifts such as prophecy or tongues. However, in the prayer meeting, since it is a smaller setting, believers are allowed to follow the promptings of the Spirit.

In conclusion, Calvary Chapel of the Hills, located in upstate NY, is in many ways a typical evangelical church. It contains its own ecological habitat, yet like many churches in the modern world is often more influenced by global networks rather than its own neighborhood. While Calvary Chapel rejects the large swath of church history, it has a history all its own.¹² It is a family of churches that above all seeks to be led by the Spirit in and through the Word of God.

The DNA of a Calvary Chapel church as described above tends to attract certain types of believers. Because of its relaxed atmosphere, believers who have been disenfranchised by more institutional forms of Christianity find this environment attractive. The pastor's wife and many others are former Roman Catholics. This is to be expected due to the dominance of Roman Catholicism in the northeast region of the country. It also attracts new believers who have little to no church background whatsoever. These factors create a ministry context wherein new congregants have very little knowledge of spiritual disciplines such as memorization and meditation. The church is not against spiritual disciplines. No, they are simply not emphasized and taught.

Problem Presented

The problem is that Calvary Chapel of the Hills, like many evangelical churches, in the observation of this writer, does not foster and teach the spiritual disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation, especially biblical meditation. As Donald Whitney laments "One sad feature of our modern culture is that meditation has become identified more with

¹² Rob Moll, "Day of Reckoning: Chuck Smith and Calvary Chapel Face An Uncertain Future" *Christianity Today* 51, no. 3 (2007): 52-56; Kate Shellnutt, "Calvary Chapel Goes Global" *Christianity Today* 61, no. 2 (Mar 2017): 15-17.

nonChristian systems of thought than with biblical Christianity."¹³ The literature review will discuss the renaissance of biblical meditation that is occurring among many evangelicals in more detail. This thesis contends that biblical memorization and meditation are an effective means of spiritual warfare. Hence, the lack of training in these two disciplines results in congregants not being as effective as they could be in the spiritual battle. This presents an opportunity to fill a gap within the church.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to guide the congregants of Calvary Chapel through a workbook that will help them develop the spiritual disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation. This guidance will enable them to be more effective in the spiritual battle. To accomplish this goal, a self-published workbook will be written and utilized in three seminars to help participants develop the habits needed for spiritual victory.

The workbook will explain the importance of these disciplines and defend their validity as biblical disciplines. Additionally, it will teach readers how to practice these disciplines in a step-by-step format. Moreover, it will guide congregants as they memorize and meditate upon a specific passage, namely Ephesians 6:10-18. In sum, the workbook aims to instruct believers on both why and how to memorize and meditate on Scripture.

Ephesians 6:10-18 teaches four basic truths. First, believers need to be vigilant against unseen spiritual forces (Eph 6:12). Second, believers need to utilize the resources God provides, namely the armor of God (Eph 6:13-17). Third, believers need to depend on God's strength in the spiritual battle (Eph 6:10,18). Fourth, believers need to stand strong against the enemy and

¹³ Donald L. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 47.

his wiles (Eph 6:11,13). These four characteristics constitute a victorious Christian soldier.

While many believers know these truths intellectually, these truths do not shape the matrix of their thought life. Such change requires sustained effort utilizing the disciplines of memorization and meditation.

In summary, the workbook has two goals. Firstly, it aims to teach participants both why and how to effectively memorize and meditate upon Scripture. Secondly, by memorizing and meditating upon Ephesians 6:10-18, it is hoped that participants will become vigilant, furnished, dependent on God in the spiritual battle, and able to stand strong against the enemy and his wiles. To supplement the workbook, three seminars will be conducted to help participants properly process the workbook. The workbook and the seminars are both intended to help the participants develop holy habits to become victorious in the war against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Basic Assumptions

The first and most important assumption made in this paper is the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture. Inspiration means that God “breathed out” the words of Scripture.¹⁴ The Bible has a divine origin. Infallibility refers to the enduring authority of the Bible. In John 10:34-35, Jesus said the Scriptures cannot be broken. The Bible’s affirmations and teachings cannot fail. Hence, they have enduring authority. Inerrancy simply means that the Bible is without error. This inerrancy applies not only to matters pertaining to salvation but also to incidental historical and scientific matters it addresses.¹⁵ This truth is foundational because

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 3:16.

¹⁵ Norman L. Geisler and Shawn Nelson, “What is Inerrancy and Why Should We Care?” in *Vital Issues in the Inerrancy Debate* ed. F. David Farnell (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 627-636.

without it there is no source of authority from which to formulate a right understanding of spiritual warfare.

The second most important assumption is the sufficiency of Scripture. The sufficiency of Scripture simply means that the Word of God “contains everything necessary for one’s spiritual life.”¹⁶ In other words, Christians do not need to turn to additional help to solve their spiritual problems. The Bible, properly interpreted and applied, is all that one needs to live a godly life. As Scripture itself puts the matter, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).”

The sufficiency of Scripture in no way eschews knowledge or learning outside the Bible. It makes no comment on either natural revelation or the prospect of natural Theology. The claim of Scripture is to be sufficient for each person to have a flourishing spiritual life. The Bible is not designed to instruct someone in how to cook, how to sew, or how to train for a marathon. There are many historical, literary, scientific, political, and philosophical areas of knowledge that the Bible does not directly address. Other disciplines may be helpful for those areas where Scripture remains silent; yet even though other disciplines may be helpful they are not necessary for one’s spiritual life. Scripture, on the other hand, is the only necessary resource for a healthy spiritual life. This becomes very important in the field of spiritual warfare, as many teachers advocate the necessity of acquiring knowledge of the spiritual world from sources outside the Bible, including demons themselves.

Stemming from the first two assumptions is a third assumption, namely the reality of the supernatural world as presented in the Bible. In both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible

¹⁶ John F. Macarthur, “The Sufficiency of Scripture,” *The Masters Seminary Journal* 15, no 2. (2004): 165.

depicts an unseen world full of spiritual beings (Gen 18:1-2, Gen 19:1, Isa 37: 36, Dan 10:10-14, Matt 1:20, Matt 4:24, Acts 12:7). These beings, whether angels or demons, have a significant influence upon the visible world of humanity. Satan, the chief adversary of mankind and of God Himself, is also assumed to be a literal being, just as he is depicted in the pages of Scripture (Lk 4:1-12, Lk 22:3). In addition, human beings are personally involved in this cosmic conflict (Lk 10:17, Mk 8:33).

Fourth, a methodological assumption of the study is that the participants will be truthful. This is not to say they will be completely transparent in their responses and participation. However, it is to suggest that the assumption is they will not be lying and intending to deceive as they fill out the forms, go through the workbook and participate in the seminars.

A final methodological assumption is that the participants involved in the study will adequately represent the whole. That is to say, the sample size of the study will have enough similarities with the rest of the church to fairly represent the church body as a whole. The church body is going to contain members from diverse backgrounds and walks of life, and no limited sample in a small group of individuals is going to exhaustively represent the group. However, the assumption is that participants will *adequately* stand in place of the whole, however imperfectly.

Definitions

The literature on spiritual warfare uses terms that could confuse someone unfamiliar with the field. This section of the paper will define key terms relevant to this thesis topic. The key terms will cover the three areas relevant to this thesis topic, namely biblical memorization, biblical meditation, and spiritual warfare.

Biblical Memorization

One writer uses the term “memorization” to simply mean storing God’s Word in one’s mind.¹⁷ William Evans, who memorized the entire Bible, taught that memory consists of three aspects. The first aspect is the ability to receive with comparative ease what is taught or learned. The second aspect consists of the ability to retain that information for an indefinite and considerable length of time. The third aspect is the ability to recall without error that which has been retained.¹⁸ Scripture memorization can thus be defined as the absorption and retaining of passages of Scripture so that they can be recalled whenever desired.¹⁹

Biblical Meditation

Donald Whitney, author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, defines biblical meditation simply as “deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purposes of understanding, application, and prayer.”²⁰ David D. Eddington defines biblical meditation as preaching or counseling to one’s own soul. He says, “It is not just explaining the truth, or studying and understanding the truth. What is needed is the application of the truth to your soul.”²¹ John Coe, a well-known teacher in the spiritual formation movement, defines biblical meditation as “deep cogitation of the Word and work of God whereby the Spirit employs truth and love to transform the heart of the person.”²² In light of these definitions, throughout this

¹⁷ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 42.

¹⁸ Evans, *How to Memorize the Bible*, 18.

¹⁹ This definition of scripture memorization as a spiritual discipline is the writer’s own, which is indebted to the three aspects of memorization taught by William Evans. To the writer’s knowledge, no one else defines Scripture memorization in precisely these terms.

²⁰ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 48.

²¹ David D. Eddington, *The Beauty of Biblical Meditation: Counseling your Mind through the Scriptures* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2020), 27.

²² John H. Coe, “The Controversy Over Contemplation and Contemplative Prayer,” in *Embracing Contemplation: Reclaiming a Christian Spiritual Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 30.

thesis biblical meditation will mean concentrated thought about the Word and works of God for the purpose of heart transformation.

Deliverance Ministry

Deliverance Ministry is a particular model of spiritual warfare that focuses on “delivering” people from varying levels of demonic oppression, including Christians. Central to this model is the belief that demonic beings can inhabit people and that exorcism or “deliverance” is necessary for their liberation and growth.²³ Within this model is a spectrum of beliefs regarding the nature of deliverance. Some advocate dealing directly with the demonic spirits, while others prefer to deal with the demonized individual themselves.

For those who advocate a confrontation with the demons, there are disagreements over the form this takes as well. Some promote using a team of people to pray over the afflicted. Others interview the demon and see it as necessary to deal with the demon’s grounds or legal rights for being there in the first place. Yet others, like Greg Boyd, believe one should follow Jesus’ example in using simple commands when confronting the demonic.²⁴ Most of the debates in the spiritual warfare literature concern various aspects of this model.

Demonization

Many advocates of deliverance ministry who promote the idea that Christians can be either indwelt or seriously oppressed by demons favor the term “demonized” over demon possession.²⁵ They argue that possession implies ownership and Christians cannot be both owned

²³ James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012), 46-47.

²⁴ Beilby and Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 48.

²⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 545-547; Storms, *Spiritual Warfare*, 151-152.

by God and Satan and therefore the issue of ownership is settled. However, the issue of influence and harassment is not settled.

The Greek term *daimonizomai* which appears thirteen times in the Gospels was translated as “possessed” by the KJV. This translation choice established a long tradition of referring to the phenomenon in such terminology. As stated above, many reject such a translation because of its connotations of “ownership.”²⁶ Instead, they believe the term should simply be transliterated as *demonized*. To be demonized is synonymous with having a demon. One writer states, “It refers to a demon either entering, dwelling in, or being cast out of the person.”²⁷ Hence, writers who prefer the term *demonized* use it in a way that is virtually synonymous with being demon-possessed.

Demon-Possession

Classically understood, this term signifies a demonic entity taking up residence in the body of a human being. People are said to be inhabited, indwelt, or possessed by a demon. The characteristic marks of demon possession include: speaking with different voices, superhuman strength, inner conflict within the person, resistance to the things of God, and clairvoyance or fortune-telling.²⁸ While there may be some benefits to the possessed person, such as fortune-telling, it also induces great physical and mental suffering to various degrees.

Exorcism (Dispossession)

This term refers to the act of casting out demons from those who are demon inhabited. There is some debate about whether Christians should use this term at all. The renowned Old

²⁶ Storms, *Spiritual Warfare*, 152; Clinton R. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1997), 78-81.

²⁷ Storms, *Spiritual Warfare*, 152.

²⁸ Kurt E. Koch, *Demonology Past and Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1973), 136-140.

Testament Scholar Merrill F. Unger suggests that there are “strictly speaking” no exorcisms in the Bible. He states, “the word signifying, as it does, the casting out of evil spirits by conjurations, incantations, or religious or magical ceremonies, is singularly appropriate to describe Jewish and ethnic practice, but is in salient contrast to that of our Lord and His followers, who employed no such methods.”²⁹ However, in popular parlance and even in most academic contexts this is purely a semantic difference. While Jesus and His followers may employ different methods, the goal was the same, to rid people of inhabiting evil spirits. This paper will follow common practice and use “exorcism” in its generic sense. Previous eras of the church sometimes referred to this act of deliverance as “dispossession.”³⁰

Spiritual Warfare

Consider the following definitions of spiritual warfare:

- “Spiritual warfare is a theological term used to describe the ongoing battle between the church and the Devil and his angels.”³¹
- “Spiritual warfare is a battle between invisible, angelic forces that affects you and me.”³²
- “Spiritual warfare needs to be understood in the context of the conflict between two kingdoms: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.”³³
- “Spiritual warfare is a metaphor for standing on the Lord’s side in the epic struggle between the Lord and his enemies.”³⁴

²⁹ Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1994), 101.

³⁰ Thomas Sweeney, “Reformed Demonology: The Theology and Practice of Spiritual Warfare in English Puritanism” (MA. Thesis., McMaster Divinity College, 2011), McMaster University Libraries Institutional Repository.

³¹ John R. Gilhooly, *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2018), 23.

³² Tony Evans, *Warfare: Winning the Spiritual Battle* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2018), 10.

³³ Michael S. Heiser, *Demons: What the Bible Really Says About the Powers of Darkness* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 328.

³⁴ David Powlison, *Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2019), 13.

- “God wages war against Satan in which he enlists and equips angels and his people. Satan and his fallen angels, in return, are waging a war against God, his angels, and his people.”³⁵
- “The ongoing battle between the church and the devil and his forces, with the church standing in the armor of God, defensively resisting the devil, and offensively proclaiming the gospel in a battle already won.”³⁶

There is enough in common among these definitions to arrive at a consensus. First, all recognize that there exists a battle between God and His people over and against Satan and those under his dominion. Second, for the most part, humans are not aware of the battle. That is, it takes place in the spiritual realm. The precise wording may vary, but the point is the same. For the sake of clarity, however, whenever spiritual warfare is used in the remainder of this paper, it will utilize the last definition by William Cook and Chuck Lawless because it is the most comprehensive.

Consequently, while the term spiritual warfare itself is never used in scripture, it is a theological construct describing the three-fold conflict which occupies the Christian life.³⁷ The three enemies of every believer are the world, the flesh, and the devil. Further, spiritual warfare is a metaphor for standing on the Lord’s side in His war against Satan and his cohorts. The constituent elements that make up this war are the existence of real spiritual beings called demons, as well as Satan himself. Moreover, spiritual warfare entails that although God created all things good, Satan and his minions rebelled against God and are bent on ruining God’s creation. God will eventually remove all evil influence from the world, but in the meantime, the active opposition from the enemy is very real. This general theological description provides very

³⁵ Mike McKinley, *Did the Devil Make Me Do It? And Other Questions About Satan, Demons and Evil Spirits* (United Kingdom: The Good Book Company, 2013), 528.

³⁶ William F. Cook and Chuck Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2019), 3.

³⁷ David Powlison, “Stand Up to the Powers,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 31, no. 2 (2017): 6.

little to disagree upon. Most disagreements regarding spiritual warfare come about when discussing what involvement of a believer ought to look like in this war.

Limitations

There are three primary limitations in evaluating the success of this intervention. First, participants may be inclined to exaggerate the benefits of the workbook in an effort to aid the researcher. It is natural for participants to want the project they are involved in to be successful. Second, participants may not be willing to be completely honest about results. The thesis is that once equipped, congregants will find more victory in the spiritual battles they face. However, congregants may not be entirely forthright about their struggles with sin. To explain how internalizing certain biblical truths helps them overcome specific lies of the enemy, congregants will need to be honest about which lies they have been falling prey to. Some participants may only reveal their victory over lesser or “acceptable” sins. Yet the workbook could in fact be helping them more than they are willing to acknowledge.

The third limitation relates to the age of participants and the ability to evaluate them over the long haul. Some participants may be as young as eighteen and many of the primary temptations they will face are different than the temptations of adulthood. One goal of the workbook is to inoculate them against those temptations. Whether or not it will succeed in that regard will take years to determine. This is not to suggest that the intervention yields no immediate returns. On the contrary, it is hoped that believers of all ages will experience immediate improvement in withstanding temptations due to the workbook. It is only to say that there is a potential benefit to participants which lies beyond the scope of research.

Delimitations

The primary delimitation is the sample size. Calvary Chapel of the Hills is an average size church consisting of roughly seventy people when full, ranging from children to adults. Normal attendance fluctuates. The number of members is between thirty-five and fifty.

Therefore, the study will only utilize members of the congregation. Those who show up sporadically will be too inconsistent to make effective research participants. Limiting the study to church members will ensure that participants have enough dedication to complete the study. The study will utilize between ten and twenty people, depending on scheduling and availability.

Regarding age and gender, this study will utilize members at least 18 years of age, both male and female. It is well known that older people have a more difficult time memorizing material than younger people. On the other hand, adults are exposed to a wider range of temptations. Hence, the mixture of ages will generate a variety of variables and help gauge the effectiveness of both the memorization techniques as well as how fruitful those techniques are in resisting manifold temptations.

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement of this action research project is that if congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills memorize and meditate on Ephesians 6:10-18 they will be more effective at spiritual warfare. This specific thesis stems from the broader theoretical thesis that biblical memorization and meditation together are effective means of spiritual warfare.

To reiterate the problem, the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills lack training in biblical memorization and meditation. It will be argued later in the paper that biblical memorization and meditation are effective means of spiritual warfare. Hence, to get the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills to a place of greater effectiveness in spiritual warfare, they need to practice biblical memorization and meditation. Currently, however, the congregants

are ignorant of the disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation and thus are not as effective as they could be in spiritual warfare. The intervention aims to correct that.

The intervention will center around the *Memorization and Meditation Manual: A guided workbook to memorize and meditate upon Ephesians 6:10-18*, written by this researcher. The workbook guides participants in a step-by-step process of the *why* and the *how* of biblical memorization and meditation. Moreover, it does so by guiding them in memorizing and meditating upon a specific passage, Ephesians 6:10-18. Because this passage instructs believers in the basics of spiritual combat, it is believed that memorization and meditation on this passage will increase participants' effectiveness in spiritual warfare.

Additionally, the intervention features three live seminars held in person on the grounds of Calvary Chapel of the Hills. These seminars aim to reinforce the material taught in the workbook. Once participants complete the workbook, they will be given surveys and questionnaires which measure one's effectiveness in spiritual warfare. If the participants show greater effectiveness at the end of the intervention because of memorizing and meditating on Ephesians 6:10-18, then the thesis is substantiated.

In summary, the broad theoretical thesis is that biblical memorization and meditation are effective means of spiritual warfare. The problem is that the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills lack training in these disciplines. The intervention aims to correct that. In so doing, it seeks to substantiate the thesis that if congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills memorize and meditate on Ephesians 6:10-18 they will be more effective in spiritual warfare.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will provide the conceptual framework for the thesis project by surveying pertinent fields of literature in order to establish a theological and theoretical foundation. Finally, a theoretical foundation will provide the practical and applied precepts that will be used to generate the workbook for the action research.

Literature Review

Three independent fields of literature will be surveyed due to the scope of this thesis project. The project encompasses biblical memorization, biblical meditation, and spiritual warfare. Any one of these fields could easily generate a lengthy literature review. Hence, this review will be necessarily brief as it seeks to adequately, but by no means exhaustively, survey the most relevant and up-to-date literature in these three fields. Finally, a synthesis will be weaved together at the end to show how these fields together constitute relevant literature for this action research project. Much of the contemporary literature on spiritual warfare pertains to deliverance ministry. This writer takes an opposing view, yet a full critique of that topic is beyond the scope of this paper. However, questions related to that field are addressed in appendices D and E.

The Armor of God for Effective Spiritual Warfare

The armor of God text found in Ephesians 6:10-18 is a well-known passage to many believers. This review will survey classic works on this text from the Puritan era, contemporary scholarship, and popular literature. The goal of this portion of the review is to highlight precedent literature pertinent to the thesis topic. To reiterate, the thesis of this paper is that biblical memorization and meditation are effective means of spiritual warfare. Specifically, it is

argued that memorizing and meditating upon the armor of God makes one more effective in spiritual combat. Hence, the works that will be analyzed address that topic.

However, the author should make brief mention of how his methodology defers from other writers on spiritual warfare. A growing number of evangelical writers embrace the idea the genuine believers can be demonized (See Appendix D). This writer's views stand in opposition to that trend. Appendix D offers a refutation of some of the chief arguments given by proponents of the demonization of believers.

Another controversial topic is whether believers should perform exorcisms at all or simply preach the gospel. The central question in that debate is whether believers retain the right and responsibility to perform exorcisms in the mode and manner of Jesus and the apostles. Appendix E offers a moderating view wherein it is possible but not always necessary. Exorcism should be done in total dependence upon the Holy Spirit and his guidance in that moment. In some cases that might mean preaching the gospel and in other cases the Spirit may direct believers to boldly proclaim "get out." The point is that "power encounters" of that sort are guided by the Spirit and there is no formula or special words or phrases to invoke God's power. It is relational.

Having said that, the focus of this thesis project is on preparing for believers to stand strong against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is not designed to prepare believers to perform exorcisms on unbelievers. It is therefore sufficient to understand that genuine believers are safe from the powers of darkness via their union with Christ (See Appendices D and E for further treatment of demonic influence and exorcism). Hence, the literature review will survey literature that pertains to the equipping of the saints to avail themselves of the resources at their

disposal. It is believed that the Ephesians 6:10-18 is the optimal text for such equipping. Hence, the review of literature shall begin there.

Classic Works

This review begins with Richard Rogers, author of *Seven Treatises*, for several reasons. The first is historical. He lived and wrote during the headwater period of the Puritan movement. As a pioneer, Rogers was one of the first to express a uniquely Protestant piety. This form of piety stood in contrast to Medieval Catholic mysticism and legalism. In that sense, this pioneer embodied the religious sentiments that he inherited from the reformers. These sentiments were chiefly expressed by Rogers in his work titled *Seven Treatises*. In the words of William Haller:

Seven Treatises was the first important exposition of the code of behavior which expressed the English Calvinist, or more broadly speaking, the Puritan conception of the spiritual and moral life. As such it inaugurated a literature the extent and influence of which in all departments of life can hardly be exaggerated.”³⁸

Rogers seven Treatises was the first to define two important Protestant disciplines relevant to this thesis project. He was the first to explicitly list biblical meditation as a Scriptural means of grace and he was also the first to write on the armor of God in a devotional way.³⁹ While there is previous extant literature to be found on the armor of God from either Chrysostom’s homilies or Calvin’s commentaries, Rogers is truly a pioneer in the sense that he explicitly focused on practical application of the armor of God.⁴⁰ Other Puritans also wrote on

³⁸ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 36.

³⁹ O.R. Johnston, “The Means of Grace in Puritan Theology,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (1953): 212.

⁴⁰ John Chrysostom, “Homily XXIV on Ephesians 6:14-17” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Vol.13*, ed. Philip Schaff, (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.iii.iv.xxv.html>; John Calvin, *Commentary on Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. Rev. William Pringle, (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1854), <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom41.iv.vii.iii.html>.

the armor such as William Gurnall and John Downname, but Rogers preceded both men.⁴¹ He also stressed putting on the armor as a vital spiritual discipline. Interestingly, he taught meditating upon the armor of God as a chief way of putting on the armor, making him especially relevant to this project. Rogers states, “When we have been taught about the armor, prayer and holy meditation should be used upon each piece, until we know how to benefit from it.”⁴²

Regarding the armor, Rogers focuses on its application and does not deal with historical-critical issues such as whether the imagery is from Isaiah or a Roman guard. His interest is chiefly devotional. When it comes to the question of whether armor pieces are blessings that believers put on or virtues to be cultivated, Rogers favors the latter.

He views the belt of truth as the believer walking in sincerity and uprightness.⁴³ The breastplate of righteousness is seen as an endeavor to walk innocently and deal righteously with all.⁴⁴ Rogers takes the shoes of the gospel of peace to be a readiness to deny oneself and take up one’s cross. The shield of faith is seen to be trusting in the promises of God. Namely, the believer trusts that Christ is for the believer and grants him forgiveness of sins and all other good things necessary for this life.⁴⁵ Rogers views the helmet of salvation likewise as trusting in the promises of God. The focus, however, is on those promises that pertain to temporal and eternal deliverance.⁴⁶ The sword of the Spirit is taken to be having one’s mind well permeated with the

⁴¹ Brian C. Hedges, *Holy Helps for a Godly Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

Scriptures. This prevents one from being deceived and to instead be able to say “it is written,” just as Christ did against Satan.

Rogers believed that the armor is indispensable to the Christian life. He states flatly, “The Christian life without the armor of God cannot be continued.”⁴⁷ The way in which one puts on the armor, according to Rogers, is to have the feeling and acquaintance of it.⁴⁸ In order to achieve the feeling of each piece of the armor, Rogers advises three disciplines: watchfulness, prayer, and meditation.⁴⁹ This final quote by Rogers himself will conclude this review of him and demonstrate his relevance to the project at hand. He states,

You have put the armor on when by reading, hearing, and godly conversation you see how your armor helps you to rightly frame your heart and life; and when you have meditated on the different pieces of it as I have prescribed and have duly weighed and mused upon the same to affect and season your heart with it; and when by confident prayer you have sought God to strengthen you with each piece of the armor. This is how you must put it on.⁵⁰

In sum, Rogers was a pioneer of Protestant piety and one of the first to catalog and explain spiritual disciplines from such a perspective. Among those spiritual disciplines were meditation and putting on the armor of God. Meditation is not uncommon in listings of the disciplines, but putting on the armor of God is unique. Moreover, Rogers taught that to put on the armor one should understand it, pray, and meditate upon each piece.

⁴⁷ Hedges, *Holy Helps*, 61.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 62.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 63-64. Emphasis mine.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 64-65.

The second notable classic work is William Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour*.⁵¹ *Complete Armour* is divided into two discussions: "A short but powerful encouragement to the War" and "Directions for managing the War successfully." The work is massive in scope and comprises multiple volumes. Hence, this review will only highlight some of the broad themes of Gurnall's work.

First, Gurnall emphasizes the theme of the Christian life as brutal spiritual conflict. Higdon writes, "For Gurnall, the Christian lives in the trenches of a cosmic conflict. A daily battle of continued warfare awaits the saints from conversion to consummation."⁵² The battle Christians fight is also a close battle, fought in the trenches. Gurnall writes, "The Christian is to proclaim and prosecute an irreconcilable war against his bosom sins; those sins which have lain nearest his heart, must now be trampled under his feet."⁵³ The enemy lies within as well as without.

Second, Gurnall focuses on the theme that the most dangerous power of Satan is his deception. He states, "*the devil is a very subtle enemy*. The Christian is endangered most by his policy and craft."⁵⁴ Gurnall describes the enemy as a being of immense power, highlighting that the whole world lies in his power. However, he also reassures readers that the "devil is God's slave"⁵⁵ and his power extends no further than God allows.

⁵¹ John Newton said that if he were to read just one book beside the Bible, it would be William Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour*; quoted in Cory D. Higdon, "The Spirituality of William Gurnall: The Devil's threat to Puritan Piety" *Reformed Journal* 11, no 2. (2019): 116. Higdon himself describes the work as "the most definitive work on spiritual warfare in the history of the church."

⁵² Higdon, "The Spirituality of William Gurnall," 118.

⁵³ William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour* Vol 1. (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library). <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/gurnall/armour/files/gurnal01a.htm>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

The third theme one finds in *Complete Armour* is that in the face of such opposition, Gurnall admonished believers to the simple but powerful weapons of faith, Scripture, and prayer. Regarding faith, he writes “Faith strips away the veil from the Christian’s eyes so he can see sin in its nakedness before Satan disguises it with flattering costumes. Faith’s piercing eye sees ‘the evidence of things not seen.’”⁵⁶ Faith allows believers to see things as they really are, thereby robbing temptations of their deceptive powers.

Regarding the “sword” of the spirit, Gurnall says, “All the great conquests which Christ and His followers achieve in the world are accomplished with this sword.”⁵⁷ As an example he points to Augustine who struggled for years with his lust. Gurnall writes “He opened the Bible at Romans chapter 13 and what he read caused a mighty earthquake in his soul. The prison doors of his heart immediately flew open and the chains of lusts which his own efforts could never file off now dropped away.”⁵⁸

Lastly, all the armor in the world would be useless for the Christian apart from prayer. He believed a prayer-less saint to be no saint at all. In closing this section on Gurnall, his fatherly and pastoral advice regarding prayer deserves to be heard in full:

Well, Christian, thou seest thy duty plainly laid before thee. As thou wouldst have God prosper thy labour in the day, and sweeten thy rest in the night, clasp them both together with thy morning and evening devotions. He that takes no care to set forth God’s portion of time in the morning, doth not only rob God of his due, but is a thief to himself all the day after, by losing the blessing which a faithful prayer might bring from heaven on his undertakings. And he that closeth his eyes at night without prayer, lies down before his bed is made. He is like a foolish captain in a garrison, who betakes himself to his rest before he hath set the watch for the city’s safeguard.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour Vol 3*, 110.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 246.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 252.

⁵⁹ William Gurnall, *Christian in Complete Armour Vol 2*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library). <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/gurnall/armour/files/gurnal06b.htm>.

Contemporary Works

There have been several commentaries on Ephesians published within the last ten to fifteen years. One of the most recent commentaries on Ephesians is Lynn H. Cohick's *The Letter to the Ephesians* in the New International Commentary on the New Testament.⁶⁰ As with most modern commentaries, Cohick focuses on historical background and literary issues. One insight from literary analysis is that Paul's conclusion in the armor of God passage is meant to restate and reemphasize key themes already expounded in the letter.⁶¹

Cohick, like others, believes Paul has both the Messianic warrior of Isaiah in mind as well as a Roman soldier.⁶² On the question of whether the armor pieces are blessings to appropriate or virtues to acquire, Cohick takes a both-and approach. For example, when discussing the breastplate of righteousness she states, "he likely has in mind both the righteousness that justifies believers in Christ and also the righteousness incumbent upon believers."⁶³ All in all, Cohick's commentary is up to date and conversant with other commentaries.

Also of relevance to the thesis project are study guides or workbooks published on the armor of God. These are different from books in that they are narrowly focused and interactive. The interaction may be in the form of prompts for meditation or filling in questions or other blanks. They also may be designed for either individual or group use.

⁶⁰ Lynn H. Cohick, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary, eds. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020).

⁶¹ Ibid., 745.

⁶² Ibid., 751, 758.

⁶³ Ibid., 761.

One recent study guide is *The Armor of God Bible Study* published by Rose Publishing as part of their visual bible study series.⁶⁴ It could be described as a workbook due to the many prompts contained throughout. The study guide has optional readings to help illuminate other texts. It also contains commentary from a variety of sources such as John Piper and William Gurnall.⁶⁵ Life application questions are also asked, such as “What lie do you hear most often whispered to you? What is God’s truth you need in that area of your life right now?”⁶⁶ Hence, these questions are designed to facilitate retention and comprehension.

The Armor of God is divided into six sessions; Spiritual Warfare, Battle Gear, The Enemy’s Lies, Prayer & God’s Word, The Good Fight, and Victory in Jesus. Scattered throughout are charts, full-color pictures, space for notetaking, and a leader’s guide as it is designed for group use. In essence, the workbook aims to instruct through a variety of means.

Biblical Memorization

As previously stated, this action research project seeks to apply two aspects of Christian discipleship, namely Scripture memorization, and meditation. It will be argued that these disciplines are vital in the fight against Satanic deception and temptation. Hence, a brief review of contemporary literature on these fields is also in order. Regarding Bible memorization, two main differences in approach emerge in the field: how to memorize, and what to memorize. In other words, there are differences regarding the best method of memorization, as well as the content to be memorized.

⁶⁴ Len Woods, *The Armor of God Bible Study* (Carol Stream, IL: Rose Publishing, 2018).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 15, 59.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 52.

The Method

Most books and instruction manuals on Bible memorization teach memorization by rote repetition. For example, Adam Houge, author of *How to Memorize the Bible Fast and Easy*, says “there is really only one method that has worked for thousands of years. Rote. By this method, billions of people throughout time have memorized whole books, sacred texts, musical symphonies, mathematical laws, and countless documents.”⁶⁷ This is also the method taught by Baptist pastor Andrew M. Davis. As of 2017, Davis had memorized 42 books of the Bible.⁶⁸ Clearly, the method works.

The alternative to rote repetition is to cultivate memory using mnemonics, the science of memory. This is perhaps best seen in the aptly titled book *How to Memorize the Bible*. Evans was converted under the ministry of D.L. Moody and later taught at Moody Bible Institute.⁶⁹ He himself is said to have memorized the entire King James Bible as well as the New Testament a second time in the American Standard Version.⁷⁰ Evans stresses the importance of cultivating a good memory. He lists six essential principles. These principles include developing fixity of thought, a clear and definite conception of the matter to be memorized, analysis of the text, suggestive association, developing recall, and constant review. Clearly, these principles worked well for Evans.

⁶⁷ Adam Houge, *How to Memorize the Bible Fast and Easy* (Living Tree Publishing, 2015), .

⁶⁸ Donald Whitney, “He’s Memorized 42 Books of the Bible and You Can, Too,” Southern Equip. Accessed April 2, 2022, <https://equip.sbs.edu/article/hes-memorized-42-books-bible-can/>

⁶⁹ Kevin Belmonte, *D.L. Moody—A Life: Innovator, Evangelist, World Changer* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2014), 139. Proquest Ebook Central.

⁷⁰ Evans, *How to Memorize the Bible*, Front Matter.

Other writers employ some of the same principles as Evans. Emily and Aaron House emphasize tapping into one's learning style, whether that be auditory, visual or kinesthetic.⁷¹ Particular mnemonic devices are to be employed for each learning style. Such devices include speaking a passage out loud in a foreign accent or creating visual mental pictures.

A more specific application of creating vivid mental pictures is often called the *Loci Method*.⁷² The *Loci Method* originated with Simonides (circa 500 B.C), after he could successfully remember the identity of all the dinner guests after the roof collapsed on them while at a dinner party. He could remember the guests because he associated them with the location where they were standing, so goes the story.⁷³ In common parlance this method is often referred to as a "memory palace." Blair Kasfeldt finds this method particularly helpful for memorizing long passages.⁷⁴

Ancient Roman writers often distinguished between "memory for things" and "memory for words."⁷⁵ Kevin Vost, a Roman Catholic scholar and expert on memorization, argues that while the *Loci Method* is great for remembering things, it is not ideal for remembering lengthy passages. When it comes to remembering the "exact words of a lengthy passage" he recommends the "old-fashioned but tried-and-true- system of rote rehearsal to begin with and to continue with, even if mnemonic images are called in to assist."⁷⁶ So there is disagreement about the

⁷¹ Aaron House and Emily House, *Warriors of the Word: The Bible Memorization Battle Guide for Winning Spiritual Victories* (Lancaster, PA: Piercing Word, 2021), 121-12.

⁷² House and House, *Warriors of the Word*, 135.

⁷³ Blair Kasfeldt, *Memorize the Bible! The Comprehensive Guide to Memorizing Bible Verses, Facts and More* (Smashwords, 2013), 17.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Kevin Vost, *Memorize the Faith! (And Most Anything Else): Using the Methods of the Great Catholic Medieval Memory Masters* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2006), 204.

⁷⁶ Vost, *Memorize the Faith*, 204.

helpfulness of the *Loci Method* when it comes to lengthy passages. Advocates of using the *Loci Method* for passages of Scripture do not necessarily disagree with Vost. The utility they find in the method has more to do with memory storage. In other words, memory palaces act as file folders in the mind to store content, whether that content was learned via rote memorization or otherwise.⁷⁷

The Content

The majority of Bible memory curriculums advocate a topical approach. Two examples are the *Topical Memory System* produced by the Navigators and *The MacArthur Scripture Memory System* by John MacArthur. Both systems use a topical approach.⁷⁸ The downside of this method is that students often memorize verses without any context. Andrew Davis, on the other hand, in his book *An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture*, advocates memorizing entire books of the Bible. The advantages that Davis sees are twofold. First, one absorbs the entire context and those parts one deems to be insignificant. He says, “If we continue to focus only on our ‘favorite’ passages of Scripture, we may well miss something new that God wants to say to the church through a neglected portion of His Word.”⁷⁹ Second, many portions of Scripture make logical arguments. To understand the flow of argumentation one must have the whole passage memorized. As Davis says “This person will be able to tell you the overall flow of the book of Galatians, for example, as well as how each paragraph fits into this flow, and how each verse contributes to each paragraph.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Anthony Metivier. *How to Learn and Memorize the Psalms of the Bible*. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2014), 35.

⁷⁸ The Navigators, *Topical Memory System* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2020); *The MacArthur Scripture Memory System* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

⁷⁹ Andrew M. Davis, *An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture* (Greenville, SC: Emerald House, 2014), 15. Kindle.

⁸⁰ Davis, *An Approach*, 15.

Warriors of the Word by Emily and Aaron House is particularly relevant to this literature review because its theme is memorization for spiritual warfare. It emphasizes arming believers for spiritual victories through memorizing Scripture. The authors advocate memorizing a life verse, Gospel verses, and “temptation or fear-fighter verses.” In other words, memorize a verse to guide the whole of one’s life, then verses which articulate the gospel, lastly verses relevant to specific temptations.

The principles in the book utilize many principles of mnemonics, not just rote memorization. Emily and Aaron House emphasize tapping into one’s learning style, whether that be auditory, visual or kinesthetic.⁸¹ Particular mnemonic devices are to be employed for each learning style.

In short, the book has two components. Half of the book aims to persuade one of the necessity of memorization for spiritual warfare. It does so through anecdotes, biblical exposition, and encouragement. The other half is focused on helping memorize effectively. The Houses’ talk about selecting appropriate passages (chap. 3), analyzing and understanding a passage (chap. 5), and developing a plan for ongoing memorization (chap. 4).

Biblical Meditation

While bible memorization is a well-known evangelical discipline, biblical meditation is not. However, this writer observes that some evangelicals are once again embracing the lost art of biblical meditation. What follows is a brief survey featuring the evangelical recovery, a definition of biblical mediation, and a brief analysis of the practice of biblical meditation. Lastly, some brief insights from the field of neuroscience will be discussed.

⁸¹ House and House, *Warriors of the Word*, 121-122.

An Evangelical Recovery

For the purposes of clarity, this part of the review will only look at *biblical* meditation. A study of all forms of meditation, whether secular or religious, is beyond the scope of this review. Indeed, even exploring scholarship on all forms of Christian meditation are beyond the bounds of this review. One subset of Christian meditation that has become controversial is known as “contemplative prayer.” This is not to be confused with a similar term, although it often is, known as “contemplation.” While these trends are very important to understand a survey of such literature is beyond the scope of this review (See Appendix F for a deeper analysis of contemplative prayer). Instead, this review will focus on one aspect of Christian meditation, namely biblical meditation or simply meditation upon Scripture.

As stated above, this writer observes that biblical meditation is a discipline currently being retrieved by some evangelicals. For instance, when Puritan scholar David Saxton was asked what is wrong with modern Christianity, his answer was: “It has become thoughtless, superficial, and self-absorbed.”⁸² Saxton’s solution to this problem is biblical meditation.⁸³ Likewise, Reformed author Steven Midgley laments that “Today, meditation has become a forgotten and neglected art.”⁸⁴ David Eddington, author of *The Beauty of Biblical Meditation*, observes that in his experience he has not yet found a church that emphasizes meditation over memorization. Furthermore, in his three Post Graduate degrees he was never “urged to ‘meditate’ on God’s Word.”⁸⁵

⁸² David Saxton, *God’s Battle Plan for the Mind: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Meditation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), 1.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Steven Midgley, “Meditation for Change: Embracing a Lost Art,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 34, no. 1 (2020): 21.

⁸⁵ Eddington, *The Beauty of Biblical Meditation*, 4.

The exact reasons for this neglect of biblical meditation can only be speculated upon. Another writer on meditation, William Carlton Babatunde, offers one suggestion. With the influx of Eastern forms of meditation in the 70's and 80's into Western Culture, Babatunde surmises that the church viewed any type of meditation with suspicion, thereby falling prey to the enemy's classic maneuver: "make people let go of a powerful truth by calling a falsehood by the same name."⁸⁶ Yet all of the above authors who lament the absence of biblical meditation are writing books about it. The tide appears to be turning.

Defining Biblical Meditation

Donald Whitney, author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, defines biblical meditation simply as "deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purposes of understanding, application, and prayer."⁸⁷ Douglas Groothuis states that "In the Bible, meditation traditionally understood has meant focused, conscious rumination on a passage of Scripture, an attribute of God, a mighty act of God, or the like."⁸⁸

Many other evangelicals like Tom Schwanda and John Coe provide a similar definition.⁸⁹ Other writers like David Eddington add elements such as preaching or counseling to one's own soul. Eddington says, "It is not just explaining the truth, or studying and understanding the truth. What is needed is the application of the truth to your soul."⁹⁰ All of the practices described above

⁸⁶ Carlton Babatunde Williams, *Biblical Meditation: The Secret to a Transformed Life* (United Kingdom: Sound Ink, 2017), 55, Kindle.

⁸⁷ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 48.

⁸⁸ Douglas R. Groothuis and Sarah C. Geis, "Examining Contemplative Prayer," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172, no. 685. (2015): 12-23.

⁸⁹ Tom Schwanda, "'To Gaze on the Beauty of the Lord:' The Evangelical Resistance and Retrieval of Contemplation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 7, no. 1 (2014): 68; Coe, "The Controversy Over Contemplation," 30.

⁹⁰ Eddington, *The Beauty of Biblical Meditation*, 27.

contribute to the renewal of one's mind. In summary, then, this writer defines biblical meditation as "that practice which seeks to actively renew the mind through rumination on scripture."

Practicing Biblical Meditation

Regarding the practice of biblical meditation, two works cover the diversity in the field due to approaching the topic from different ends of the theological spectrum: John Jefferson Davis' *Meditation and Communion with God: Contemplating Scripture in an age of Distraction* and Donald Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Davis is comfortable utilizing the Catholic tradition, including its more mystical elements. Whereas Whitney sits more comfortably in the Reformed and Puritan tradition.

Davis advocates a modified form of M. Basil Pennington's method of prayer and contemplation. Pennington was a Trappist monk and served as a leader in the post-Vatican II renewal of contemplative prayer.⁹¹ Davis's "slightly adapted" method is formulated in four easy steps. First comes the intention and invocation. These steps involve intending to place yourself in the presence of God and asking for the Holy Spirit to illuminate the text.⁹² The second step is reading and reflection. Davis recommends spending at least thirty minutes reading the text and slowly pondering its words. Third, one ought to pray and "Thank God for this time and any insights or leading that he may have given you."⁹³ Fourth, meditation requires recollection, which involves recalling at some later point in the day one's time in the presence of the Lord through the text and any insights one may have gleaned."⁹⁴

⁹¹ John Jefferson Davis, *Meditation and Communion with God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 125.

⁹² Ibid., 125-126

⁹³ Ibid., 126.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Donald Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines* is written in the Reformed tradition. Hence, Whitney has a firm opposition to utilizing Catholic sources, especially writings from the mystics. His book went through a reprinting in 2014 that removed any references to either Richard Foster or Dallas Willard which were found in the original 1991 edition.⁹⁵ Whitney has a catalog of a total of seventeen suggestions on how to practice biblical meditation effectively.⁹⁶ These include emphasizing different words as one recites the verse, paraphrasing the text, finding applications or illustrations of the text, praying through the text, and memorizing the text.

Whitney's approach is focused on techniques that aid in the comprehension of the truth of the text, whereas Davis is more mystical and focused on encountering the presence of God in and through the text. One gets the sense that Whitney seeks to deliberately distance his approach from any hint of promoting a mystical experience. However, others in his tradition, such as Tom Schwanda, aim to demonstrate that even the Puritan tradition itself offers a robust biblically rooted mysticism.⁹⁷ Hence, the reality is that different authors like Davis and Whitney differ primarily in *emphasis*. Both schools of thought have insights worth appropriating.

Insights from Neuroscience

John Jefferson Davis rightly states that any argument for a recovery of the discipline of meditation today “needs to take into account the rapidly increasing body of scientific studies of meditation and advances in neuroscience that have taken place since the 1950s.”⁹⁸ A better

⁹⁵ Both Foster and Willard are comfortable appropriating Roman Catholic mystics.

⁹⁶ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 80-94.

⁹⁷ Schwanda, “To Gaze on the Beauty of the Lord,” 68-69.

⁹⁸ Davis, *Meditation and Communion*, 25.

understanding of how the mind interfaces with the brain may prove useful for Christian practices of spiritual formation.⁹⁹

Meditation specifically is shown to profoundly change one's brain. Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland points out that contemplative prayer practiced for just twelve minutes a day over an eight-week period can change anxiety-producing grooves in the brain for the better.¹⁰⁰ However, the longer and more frequently one meditates the more changes occur in the brain.¹⁰¹ Those who meditate for thirty minutes or more, for many years, develop "extraordinary skills in manipulating specific parts of the brain that control thoughts and emotions, including the capacity to generate compassion in situations that virtually no one else can obtain."¹⁰² One study has also shown that meditation enhances the brain's thickness and neuroplasticity (ability to change).¹⁰³ Normally when one ages one's cerebral cortex thins, but meditation apparently can offset that. In short, meditation increases one's emotional health and well-being.

Not only can meditation change the physicality of one's brain, but it can also reorganize it.¹⁰⁴ That is, one's default mode network (DMN) can be positively altered. The DMN is involved in mind-wandering, introspection, and self-assessment.¹⁰⁵ A wandering mind can result in being off-task, while an overly introspective mind can often lead to negative self-assessment.

⁹⁹ It is recognized that the "mind-body" relationship is a topic of tremendous debate. For a good survey of all viewpoints see James R. Beck and Bruce Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005), 163-177.

¹⁰⁰ J.P. Moreland, *Finding Quiet* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 97.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2010), 62.

¹⁰² Newberg and Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain*, 62.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ James Woods, *Putting on the Mind of Christ: Contemplative Prayer and Holistic Unity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2021), 79.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

Research shows that contemplative practices can create a “new normal” in which one’s DMN is significantly more “present-centered.”¹⁰⁶ Contemplatives tend to be more focused, less susceptible to criticism and have a better sense of self-awareness.¹⁰⁷ This optimal state of mind is known as “flow.”¹⁰⁸ Flow refers to a harmoniously ordered consciousness where one is extremely calm and focused and all external as well as internal disturbances are blocked out.¹⁰⁹

In short, it is now realized that one’s thoughts can have a profound effect on one’s brain. Meditation specifically can greatly improve one’s brain functioning and mental health. Understanding that focused concentration of the mind has these effects helps one to understand why meditation is physically and spiritually important. Moreover, knowing the mind can affect the body provides avenues for further study regarding the nature of change with a fully integrated view of the whole person.

Not Just One or the Other, But Both

Three different areas of literature were reviewed: the armor of God, biblical memorization, and biblical meditation. Richard Rogers was the first to write devotionally on the armor of God and urged the meditation of each piece. Many study guides promote a right understanding of the armor. However, to this writer’s knowledge, none advocates memorizing and meditating upon it. No study has yet synthesized knowledge from mnemonics and meditation while also teaching one how to apply and perform these disciplines on the armor of God text found in Ephesians 6:10-18. Hence, the *Memorization & Meditation Manual* created by this writer is the first to provide hands-on guidance of these disciplines while applying them to

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Woods, *Putting on the Mind of Christ*, 76

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 80.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

memorizing and meditating Ephesians 6:10-18. Using both biblical memorization and biblical meditation as described in the *Memorization & Meditation Manual* enables a believer to put on the full armor of God and be more effective in fighting the spiritual battle.

Theological Foundations

There are three forms of evil influence that seek to dominate and destroy believers.¹¹⁰ Those are the world, the flesh, and the devil. This section of the paper will explain what these three influences are and how they relate to each other. In addition, it will emphasize the deceptive nature of these influences and the need for constant reinforcement of the truth. Knowing who the spiritual enemy is will help individuals to utilize biblical memorization and meditation to fight the spiritual battle.

The Evil Triumvirate

The Bible depicts the world, the flesh, and the devil as three enemies every believer needs to be on guard against (Eph. 2:2-3, 1 John 2:15-17). Clinton Arnold defines the *world* as “the unhealthy social environment in which we live.”¹¹¹ Steven J. Lawson calls the world the evil system around believers which is in opposition to God.¹¹² Arnold describes the flesh as the inner propensity or inclination to do evil.¹¹³ He describes the devil as “an intelligent, powerful spirit-being that is thoroughly evil and directly involved in perpetrating evil in the lives of individuals as well as on a much larger scale.”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions*, 32.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 34.

¹¹² Brian S. Borgman and Rob Ventura, *Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical and Balanced Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 47.

¹¹³ Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions*, 34.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 35.

In sum, believers fight against their own evil inclinations, a world system in opposition to God, and a supernatural being bent on destroying them. These three influences work in concert to fight against the believer.¹¹⁵ It is probably not possible nor necessary to distinguish where one influence begins and another ends.¹¹⁶ For instance, if a person struggles with lustful thoughts the devil will actively tempt his flesh in that area. Moreover, the enemy influences world systems to provide temptations for the flesh and avenues to fulfill those desires. For example, Western society is littered with lude and pornographic material. Hence, all three enemies of the believer work together against him.

The Flesh

In Ephesians 4:22 Paul writes, “Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.” Matthew Henry’s words are still worth hearing on this passage: “Sinful inclinations and desires are deceitful lusts: they promise men happiness, but render them more miserable, and if not subdued and mortified betray them into destruction.”¹¹⁷ The fleshly impulses of mankind are wrongly “programmed.” For this reason, they promise what they cannot deliver upon. The glutton thinks one more bite will satisfy, but it will not. The alcoholic thinks one more drink will satisfy him, yet his desires are lying to him.

Fundamentally, our fleshly desires lust after anything except God to satisfy our souls. The Epistle of James also highlights lust’s deceptive nature. After warning his readers about the dangers of being led astray by lustful desires he then says, “Do not be deceived, my beloved

¹¹⁵ Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions*, 35.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary Ephesians Verses 17-32* (BibleGateway), <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/Eph.4.17-Eph.4.32>.

brothers. Every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change (James 1:16-17)."

The World

The First Epistle of John states: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world (1 John 2:15-16)." The word translated "world" in this passage is the Greek word *kosmos*. Ben Witherington states that what John means by *kosmos* is humanity organized against God.¹¹⁸ What people should align themselves against is not the planet or people per se, but the spirit of the age, the zeitgeist. Dallas Willard offers a helpful definition of "the world" when he defines it as "Our cultural and social practices, that are under the control of Satan, and, thus, opposed to God."¹¹⁹ This definition highlights the interrelationship of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The reason people should not love their contemporary cultural and social practices becomes obvious in verse 16. The world promotes and exploits the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life. According to Witherington, the desires of the flesh refer to sinful desires. The next two clauses elaborate on the meaning of those desires, he believes. Desires of the eyes refer to sinful desire that can be aroused by things that can be seen. This includes physical objects, food, and members of the opposite sex, or even the same sex; visual stimuli in general. Witherington says the pride of life refers to "arrogance and showing off, pride

¹¹⁸ Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians Vol. 1* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 478.

¹¹⁹ John Mark Comer, *Live No Lies* (Colorado Springs, CO: Random House, 2021), 154.

that is in or comes as a result of having the things of this world.”¹²⁰ This includes but is not limited to possessions. One’s job title, the type of car one drives, and what neighborhood one lives in are all ways one can be proud or shameful in the eyes of the culture.

The problem with these desires, aside from the fact that they are in opposition to God, is that they are deceitful. As Paul explained in the letter to the Ephesians, these lusts are full of empty promises. They are out of alignment with the way God designed humanity. God designed humans to love God and love others. Moreover, as previously stated, these values are influenced by Satan, as he has the whole world under his power (1 John 5:19).

The Devil

While the study of Satan’s deceptive practices is worthy of a whole book, several observations should suffice. If one were to build a biblical Theology of Satan, the “deceiver” would be chief among his titles. Wayne Grudem summarizes the work of the enemy by saying that “the tactics of Satan and his demons are to use lies (John 8:44), deception (Rev 12:0, murder (Ps. 106:37 John 8:44), and every other kind of destructive activity to attempt to cause people to turn away from God and destroy themselves.”¹²¹ While deception and temptation are not the only activities of Satan, they are certainly among the primary activities. Indeed, his deceptive nature is seen in his work from the beginning.

Regarding Genesis 3:1-19, Cook and Lawless write, “It is an understatement to say that this passage is of central importance to a study on spiritual warfare. In a very real sense, it is foundational to all that follows in the Bible.”¹²² The passage has three sections: the serpent

¹²⁰ Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies*, 479.

¹²¹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 536.

¹²² Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, 9.

questions God's Word; the serpent contradicts God's Word and slanders God's character; followed by God's punishment on Adam, Eve, and the serpent. The serpent attempts to intentionally deceive the first couple by purposefully misconstruing God's Word.¹²³ Eve was deceived, and Adam chose to join her in rebellion, thereby causing all of humanity thereafter to fall headfirst into ruin.

Three principles pertaining to spiritual warfare are worth noting. First, Satan comes in the guise of an advocate. He does not present himself nor his intentions as they really are. Paul says much the same thing when he says that Satan presents himself as an angel of light.¹²⁴ Second, although the battle rages on in the present day, the victory was assured from the beginning. The *protoevangelium* in Genesis 3:15 declares God's ultimate victory in the midst of seeming defeat. Third, the failure of Adam and Eve demonstrates the "absolute necessity of knowing God's Word."¹²⁵ The temptation in the garden showcases some of Satan's chief strategies, namely distorting, casting doubt on, and disparaging both God and His Word.

Satan's tactics are also well documented in the Gospels, particularly his temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Darrell Bock points out that while Jesus' specific temptations are unique, the principles of temptation and resistance are not. Believers are tempted to pursue provision, personal goals, and power all apart from God. Moreover, they might also be tempted to force God to act on their behalf. At the heart of all these temptations is the question of loyalty, according to Bock.

¹²³ John H. Walton, *Genesis*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 204.

¹²⁴ 2 Corinthians 11:14.

¹²⁵ Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, 13.

He provides two practical applications. First, knowledge of God's Word is a "bridge."¹²⁶ It is the "means by which we come to understand God's will and direction."¹²⁷ Second, Jesus does not think or rationalize his way out of the temptations. Instead, he simply declares "it is written." That phrase needs to be on the lips of every believer during times of temptations. It must be remembered that Satan also quoted Scripture to Jesus, wrongly of course, but nonetheless. Without a contextual knowledge of the Word of God, it will be difficult for believers to respond against false teachers who purposely distort Scripture, as Satan and his cohorts have a history of doing.

The Epistles also show Satan's scheming and deceptive tactics. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 11:3, "But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ." In the same way that the serpent ruined Eve through spiritual seduction, Paul is afraid the false teachers would spiritually seduce the Corinthian church. New Testament scholar David Garland writes that Paul's smooth-talking rivals "have snaked their way into the Corinthians affection and captured their minds with a more alluring gospel but a deadly one since it is no gospel."¹²⁸ Ultimately, what is at issue in deceptions of this sort is loyalty to the truth in both mind and heart. Commentator Colin G. Kruse points out that the term translated as "mind" in this passage, *noemata*, is found five times in 2 Corinthians and used only once elsewhere in the New Testament.¹²⁹ The mind is often the primary target for Satan. Therefore, knowing the truth and standing in the truth is a foundational

¹²⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 130.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holdman, 1999), 806.

¹²⁹ Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 241.

aspect of spiritual warfare. Indeed, as Paul says, “Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth.”¹³⁰

As the end of this age draws to a close and the age to come dawns, there is no indication false teaching will abate. On the contrary, false teachers will continue throughout this age.¹³¹ The Epistles are full of warnings about deception and false teaching. 1 Timothy provides a sobering warning, stating “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.”¹³² In commenting on this passage, Robert W. Yarbrough states that “Timothy must have no illusions regarding the difficulties that the progress of the gospel and the purity of the church will face. The pure milk of God’s Word and the gospel message are under constant threat of adulteration.”¹³³ It must be emphasized, however, that the source of such opposition and adulteration is ultimately demonic in origin.¹³⁴

In Second Timothy, the same theme is repeated when Paul writes regarding the false teachers, “God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”¹³⁵ False teachers who deliberately oppose the truth are not merely uninformed.

¹³⁰ Ephesians 6:14

¹³¹ D.A. Carson, *Matthew*, The Expositors Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 622. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹³² 1 Timothy 4:1.

¹³³ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, ed. D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 423.

¹³⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Letter and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 304.

¹³⁵ 2 Timothy 2:25-26.

Rather, they are captured alive by Satan to do his will.¹³⁶ People in such a condition cannot merely change their minds, as Witherington writes, “There must be an internal change in them wrought by God.”¹³⁷

The Deception of the Flesh, World, and Devil

In summary, believers face three powerful foes. Believers battle against their own flesh, the spirit of the age, and the devil and his cohorts. All three enemies work together in unison, and all three tempt believers with deception. Lustful pleasures promise satisfaction. A certain status in the “world” promises fulfillment. These promises are lies and will ruin believers and make them miserable as well as enemies of God.

Moreover, Satan and his cohorts are incessantly trying to lead the church away from the truth. He attacks the mind and hearts of believers to lead them away from Christ, just as he deceived Eve in the garden. Second, Satan uses people to do his bidding. The church must therefore be ever vigilant against false teachers. Moreover, they must rebuke them gently, in hopes that God would grant them repentance.

Since the believer is surrounded by lies everywhere, it is incumbent upon the church to know the Word of God so that they will be able to stand in the truth. They need the truth to stand against the lies of their flesh, the lies of the world system, and the lies of the devil. Additionally, they need the truth to recognize false teaching when they see it. The church must be devoted to teaching the Word and storing the Word in their hearts if they are going to be victorious in spiritual warfare.

¹³⁶ Gordon D. Fee, *1-2 Timothy, Titus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 416.

¹³⁷ Witherington III, *Letter and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 429.

Memorization & Meditation: The Means of Warfare

Having seen by way of inference that storing the Word of God in one's heart and mind is a necessity to stand strong in the spiritual battle, this principle is also taught throughout in Scripture. After exhorting his readers to put on the belt of truth in Ephesians 6, Paul then exhorts them to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. While many commentators see Scripture as the only offensive weapon in Paul's list, Borgman and Ventura point out that the word for "sword" in this passage is the Greek word *machaira*, which refers to both an offensive and a defensive weapon. The *machaira* was a shorter sword, suited for close-quarter combat and perfect for both offense and defense.¹³⁸

Returning to the narrative of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness provides the premiere example of how to utilize the *machaira* against the enemy's temptations. Michael J. Wilkins argues that while Jesus' temptations are unique to his messianic mission, they nonetheless provide an example of how all Christians can do spiritual warfare.¹³⁹ The passage teaches that the heart of spiritual warfare is knowing and appropriating Scripture to combat temptation. Michael Green says, "the Spirit, which came upon him so powerfully at his baptism, was able to take the Scriptures that he had learnt and use them in spiritual warfare."¹⁴⁰ As Cook and Lawless state, "Jesus did not use supernatural powers to defeat the devil in the wilderness but God's holy Word—understood, believed, and obeyed. This same Word is available to every believer in the battle against the spiritual forces of darkness."¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Borgman and Ventura, *Spiritual Warfare*, 1316.

¹³⁹ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), Scribd, 235.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020) 71.

¹⁴¹ Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, 50.

Scripture must be memorized because it must be called upon during temptations. Presumably, Jesus did not carry a Torah scroll with him into the wilderness. No, he could declare “it is written” because he had done the hard work of memorizing the Word beforehand. Similarly, if believers are going to stand firm against the wiles of the devil, then they must be people of the Book.¹⁴² To be effective people of the Book, the Bible must be memorized. Believers must be able to declare as their Lord did, “it is written.”

Neither is this emphasis on the power of the Word of God an isolated teaching in Scripture. Psalm 1, the introduction to the Psalter as a whole, admonishes all to meditate on God’s *Torah* day and night.¹⁴³ *Torah* in this instance should be taken as God’s instruction as a whole and not limited to the five books of Moses.¹⁴⁴ He who meditates upon God’s Word day and night will be like a tree planted by rivers of water. In the technical sense, the “verb *haga* is normally translated as ‘meditates,’ but it should be noted that the term does not imply a strictly internalized, cognitive exercise. It properly denotes a verbalized rumination, because the ancients did not read silently but out loud.”¹⁴⁵ It is used to describe the cooing of a pigeon, the growling of a lion, and the voice of a human.¹⁴⁶ One writer in more poetic fashion describes what the end goal of this sort of contemplation is, saying “The goal of meditating on God’s Word is to look at it long enough so that we see its beauty and our hearts catch fire.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Borgman and Ventura, *Spiritual Warfare*, 767.

¹⁴³ Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms-Volume 1*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 144, Scribd.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Nancy deClaissie-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, eds. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 120.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ James Johnston, *The Psalms (Vol. 1): Rejoice, the Lord is King*, Ed. by R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 38.

Proverbs chapter two invites the wise person to “treasure up” or “store up” the commandments. The wise person is to hide or conceal the commandments of the LORD for a definite purpose. As Bruce Waltke, a well-respected commentator on Proverbs, states, “The metaphor signifies to memorize with religious affection Solomon’s ‘sound bites’ in order to have them ready when the occasion demands them.”¹⁴⁸ Memorization is therefore a staple teaching in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament.

The Shema of Israel found in Deuteronomy 6:4 also teaches one the importance of memorizing. The words that Moses commanded must be on the heart and must be taught to the children as they engage all aspects of life, from talking to sitting in the house. Eugene Merrill brings the passage to life by explaining that “The image is that of the engraver of a monument who takes hammer and chisel in hand and with painstaking care etches a text into the face of a solid slab of granite.”¹⁴⁹ This etching takes consistency and discipline. However, the net effect is that the Word is stored within the children; it becomes a part of them. In short, the Word is memorized.

Nor is such teaching on the critical importance of memorization restricted to the Old Testament. In John 15, Jesus compares himself to a vine and his disciples to branches. He states, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”¹⁵⁰ Regarding “my words,” John MacArthur writes that “‘words’ translates the plural form of the noun *rhema*, and refers to the individual utterances of Christ.”¹⁵¹ Andrew Davis (Baptist

¹⁴⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1-15:29*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, eds. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 447.

¹⁴⁹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy Volume. 4*, The New American Commentary: New International Version (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 1994), 253.

¹⁵⁰ John 15:7.

¹⁵¹ John MacArthur, *John 12-21*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2008), 238.

pastor and respected author on memorization) aptly states, “It is hard for me to see how this can be done as fully as Jesus intends apart from memorization.”¹⁵²

While the Bible may not explain how to memorize, it does indeed teach the necessity of constant meditation on God’s Word. Moreover, it stresses the need to store God’s Word in one’s heart and mind. Whatever one would like to call storing God’s word in one’s heart, this writer would suggest that it is synonymous with what is known today as “memorization.” Again, no specific methods are taught aside from constant exposure to the Word, combined with a desire to treasure and as worth storing away. The methods of memorization will be discussed subsequently in the theoretical foundations section. If it has been sufficiently established that the Bible teaches the necessity of both memorizing God’s Word and meditating on God’s Word, then the goals of this section of the thesis are accomplished.

In sum, the believer is at war with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Because this battle consists primarily in a battle for the truth, the principal means of spiritual warfare is to memorize and meditate upon the truth, namely the Word of God. In order to defend themselves against the deceptions of the world, the flesh, and the devil, believers must be able to declare “it is written” just like Jesus did. In short, the way that believers “declare it is written” is by practicing the spiritual disciplines of biblical memorization and biblical meditation. The theological foundations justify why this action research is important: they provide the foundational truth that each believer is caught up in a real spiritual war and has a duty to engage rightly with the Word of God (2Tim 2:15) in order to successfully win each battle brought by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Theoretical Foundations

¹⁵² Davis, *An Approach*, 4.

The theological foundations section demonstrated the biblical emphasis on storing up God's Word (memorization) and ruminating on God's Word (meditation) to be able to stand against the schemes of the evil one. Again, Jesus himself is the chief exemplar of these disciplines. The theological foundations section provided a biblical justification for conducting the intervention of this thesis. The theoretical foundations portion of this paper aims to address the method of both disciplines, which will in turn shape the method used in the intervention. As David Saxton writes, "Few things in life are more frustrating than when we are told to do something without receiving a practical explanation of how it is to be done."¹⁵³ Both memorization and meditation are skills that can be taught, developed, and improved.

First, memorization will be defined. Then, as discussed in the literature review, any Bible memorization program must address two elements: the "how" and the "what." In other words, one must provide instruction on the best method of memorization and make decisions regarding the content. Second, biblical meditation will be defined followed by a discussion regarding the method. Third and finally, a synthesis will be proposed between the two disciplines. This will be a distinguishing feature of this work. Many works have been written on each topic. To this writer's knowledge none discuss the two of them together.

Biblical Memorization

Recall from chapter one that William Evans, who memorized the entire Bible, taught that memory consists of three aspects. The first aspect is the ability to receive with comparative ease what is taught or learned. The second aspect consists of the ability to retain that information for an indefinite and considerable length of time. Third, one needs to have the ability to recall

¹⁵³ Saxton, *God's Battle Plan*, 51.

without error that which has been retained.¹⁵⁴ Scripture memorization can thus be defined as the absorption and retention of Scripture passages so that they can be recalled whenever desired.

The Method of Memorization: Rote-Picture Memorization

The literature review highlighted two traditional approaches to Bible memorization, rote repetition and the use of mnemonics. A biblical memorization workbook should incorporate both approaches. A substantial part of Evans' approach focuses on training the memory just as one would train a muscle. Training the memory as Evans prescribes is useful, but difficult. Most people have never given any thought to training their memory. For some, cultivating and training their memory might prove a hurdle too difficult to overcome. Hence, for beginners, rote repetition is the easiest way to get started.

Rote repetition, despite its tedious nature, is also still one of the most effective methods of memorization. As memory writer Adam Houge states, "Due to the results this method produces, it has been employed by billions of people for thousands of years. This method works so well for any individual that all major religions have employed it."¹⁵⁵ While the practice of rote repetition is somewhat obvious and self-explanatory, it does have some nuances to it. Some stress that the passage being memorized should be said out loud and not just in one's head.¹⁵⁶ Some advocate writing out the verses by hand. Others emphasize that during the repetitions one should be recalling the text and not merely reciting it. One writer says that one "needs to let your brain practice recalling the information."¹⁵⁷ In other words, the brain needs practice retrieving the stored words. Merely reading the words off the page several times does not produce real

¹⁵⁴ Evans, *How to Memorize the Bible*, 18.

¹⁵⁵ Houge, *How to Memorize the Bible Fast and Easy*, 12.

¹⁵⁶ Davis, *An Approach*, 21.

¹⁵⁷ Jacob Freidman, *How to Memorize Scripture Quickly and Easily*, 294. Emphasis original.

training or strengthening of recall. Good rote repetition must be open to all these techniques. Some decisions regarding technique are preferential and dependent on learning style.¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, mnemonic devices are useful aids and make the task of memorizing both more enjoyable as well as easier. One mnemonic device is particularly helpful, namely using one's imagination. From Thomas Aquinas to Moody Bible professors, all great memory teachers stress the importance of creating vivid mental pictures if one is going to have a good memory.¹⁵⁹ Often, the more bizarre and outlandish the image is, the easier it is to remember.¹⁶⁰ One writer even compares the creation of these mental images to a filmmaking process.¹⁶¹

For example, if one is memorizing Psalm one, when the text states that "He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season" one can visualize oneself literally becoming a tree. One then pictures this tree planted by rivers, and as the seasons change, God brings forth plenty of good fruit.¹⁶² In other words, the goal is to make a sort of movie scene, a visual story. There is a reason that people do not have to try very hard to memorize scenes from their favorite movies. They enjoy the movie as it is presented to their minds visually. Consequently, the idea behind this mnemonic device is to tap into how the mind most easily absorbs and retains information, namely, through images.

Furthermore, a hybrid model will utilize the best of rote repetition and cultivate the imagination. To just use rote repetition would be to ignore one of the most powerful memorization tools, namely the imagination. Yet only using mental pictures would be too

¹⁵⁸ House and House, *Warriors of the Word*, 133.

¹⁵⁹ Vost, *Memorize the Faith*, 26; Evans, *How to Memorize the Bible*, 48-49.

¹⁶⁰ House and House, *Warriors of the Word*, 187.

¹⁶¹ Leilani Charis, *Scripture Memorization Made Possible: Moving Beyond Rote to Memorize Large Portions of the Bible* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 13.

¹⁶² Psalm 1:3.

abstract. To use only mental pictures is too abstract. The mental pictures need to be tethered to the concrete words of the text. The two must go hand in hand. They ought to be two sides of the same coin.

For example, if one is memorizing Psalm 1:1, one day they would simply read it out loud ten times.¹⁶³ An attempt should be made to photograph the words with one's eyes. Practically, that is why it is important to use the same Bible every time for memorization. The image of the page is a small but important aspect of memorization. Once the passage is recalled ten times, the memory work is done for the day. The next day, that same verse should be recited ten times again. However, this time one should also attempt to attach a mental image to it. For example, one could imagine a path full of ungodly people who are all giving each other counsel. It is important that the person creating the mental picture fill the image with associations meaningful to them. Perhaps the image would include an ungodly family member or a famous atheist. Then, in the image, one purposefully avoids walking down that path full of ungodly counsel. After two days, one has memorized the words of Psalm 1:1 through rote repetition and then fortified that memory by attaching a vivid mental image to it.

To give a more pertinent example, when memorizing the classic armor of God passage in Ephesians 6, one could create a picture of oneself putting on the armor. In fact, this passage makes creating a mental picture easy because the images are already there in the text. All one needs to do is picture the "helmet of salvation" and the "shield of faith" protecting oneself from the "fiery darts" of the wicked, with the mind's eye. Hence, the most successful method of biblical memorization involves the two-step process of rote-picture memorization.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Davis, *An Approach*, 21.

¹⁶⁴ This is a term original to this author so far as he knows.

The Content to Memorize: Ephesians 6:10-18

The literature review also mentioned two approaches to memorization, namely the topical and extended passages of Scripture approaches. There are admittedly strengths and weaknesses of each. The topical approach allows one to memorize many different portions of Scripture. A person using such a method has the flexibility to memorize important themes of Scripture as well as verses that are perceived to speak directly to particular troubles or situations. The downside of such an approach is twofold. First, every individual is necessarily selective and arbitrary as to what they choose to memorize. Second, one often memorizes verses without context.

On the other hand, memorizing extended passages of scripture has the disadvantage of being limited in scope. One passage of Scripture can never address all that the believer needs to know to prepare for spiritual battle. However, the benefits are manifold. First, this method has the advantage of memorizing the flow of thought in the passage. Second, one must memorize all the words and is thereby forced to engage parts of the text they might otherwise ignore and deem unimportant.

Hence, a difficult decision presented itself in the creation of this action research project. When training others how to memorize scripture as preparation for spiritual battle, does one teach topically or use extended passages of Scripture? After much consideration, it was decided that memorizing the classic armor of God passage found in Ephesians 6:10-18 was the most prudent decision. The rationale for this decision was twofold. First, it is a relatively short passage and makes the time commitment on the part of both researcher and participants manageable. Second, while it is an extended passage of Scripture, it covers a broad thematic range. Although not exhaustive, it is a comprehensive passage. It does not provide participants with every truth of Scripture to fight spiritual battles, but it does provide the essential truths.

It is certainly hoped that all participants would make memorization and meditation lifelong spiritual disciplines. However, memorizing large quantities of material is unnecessary and even potentially counterproductive to proving the thesis of this paper. The goal is to demonstrate a correlation between biblical memorization and meditation and one's success in spiritual warfare. Put another way, if participants improve their victory in spiritual warfare because of practicing biblical memorization and meditation, then the intervention is successful. If measurable improvement can be achieved by memorizing a lower volume of material, then adding unnecessary material would be unwise.

Moreover, in Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul provides a rubric for evaluating one's performance in spiritual warfare. He does so by laying out four vital characteristics for anyone who is going to be victorious in spiritual warfare. Those characteristics are sober-mindedness, dependence, being equipped, and standing strong.

A victorious Christian soldier is sober regarding the spiritual conflict he finds himself in. This includes knowing that he wrestles against principalities and powers, not mere flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12). Also, the believer is sober in that he is watchful (Eph. 6:18) and on guard against spiritual attacks. A Christian soldier is also dependent. He recognizes that he has no hope of victory apart from the Lord's power (Eph. 6:10). He demonstrates this dependency by "praying at all times in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18)." A victorious Christian soldier is also equipped. That is, he utilizes God's resources as found in the armor of God (Eph. 6:13-17). Lastly, a person victorious in spiritual warfare can stand firm against temptations and trials (Eph. 6:13).

Hence, by measuring these four characteristics one can ascertain one's performance in spiritual warfare. If participants increase in these four characteristics as a result of biblical memorization and meditation on the armor of God text, then this intervention will be successful.

If they remain the same or decrease in these characteristics, then the intervention can be considered a failure.

How the Conceptual Framework Influences the Action Research

Several choices had to be made to discern the best course of action for this study. A choice had to be made regarding the method of memorization. It was decided that a hybrid model called rote-picture memorization combined the best of both approaches. A choice also had to be made regarding the content to be memorized. While there are pros and cons of each method, ultimately it was decided that memorizing a short but comprehensive passage like Ephesians 6:10-18 was best, due to time constraints. Moreover, in this passage, Paul articulates the essential characteristics of a victorious Christian soldier which the assessment tools seek to measure. To reiterate, these characteristics are sobriety, dependency, being equipped, and standing strong. It is these four characteristics that the workbook aims to inculcate and the Spiritual-Warfare Survey and Questionnaire will measure.

Many passages which were examined in the theological foundation's portion of this paper demonstrated the necessity of meditating on the Word of God. Before proceeding, however, remember the definition of biblical meditation provided in chapter one of this thesis. Donald Whitney, author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, defines biblical meditation simply as "deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purposes of understanding, application, and prayer."¹⁶⁵ David D. Eddington likens meditation more to preaching or counseling one's own soul. He says, "It is not just explaining the truth, or studying and understanding the truth. What is needed is the application of the truth to your soul."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 48.

¹⁶⁶ Eddington, *The Beauty of Biblical Meditation*, 27.

Taking elements from both perspectives, a good definition of biblical meditation is dwelling upon Scripture truths with the goal of changing the heart.

In that sense, biblical meditation is more than merely a cognitive exercise. Memorization can often be just that, purely cerebral. Meditation, on the other hand, is designed to take the truth from the head to the heart. The Puritans referred to this difference with the terms “light” and “heat.”¹⁶⁷ “Light” refers to the comprehension of God’s Word or some aspect of Theology. It is focused on understanding. “Heat,” by contrast, refers to the passions and the affections. It is focused on emotions. Memorization creates “light” and meditation aims to produce “heat.” Heart transformation is the ultimate aim of meditation. As one writer puts it, “The word of God in your mind will not change your life, but the word of God in your heart will transform you.”¹⁶⁸

The Puritan perspective on meditation is also backed by neuroscience. In a *Christianity Today* article titled “Your Brain & Bible Memorization,” K.J. Ramsey describes two kinds of memory, “autobiographical memory” and “semantic memory.”¹⁶⁹ Autobiographical memory refers to one’s long-term conception of oneself. This conception includes one’s past and future. In other words, it is the type of memory that becomes a part of someone and their worldview. Autobiographical memory shapes their story. In contrast, semantic memory is used to memorize something as a data fact. The way one gets memories to become part of “one’s story” is to engage the Bible as a relationship with the living God. Practical suggestions on how to do this include reading the text out loud, writing the text, and meditating on it. Meditation, then, is shown to genuinely change a person because it creates autobiographical memories. Without

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶⁸ Williams, *Biblical Meditation*, 694.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 59.

knowing the science behind it, the benefits of Puritan (biblical) meditation are backed by modern neuroscience.

Having defined biblical meditation as “dwelling upon Scripture truths with the goal of heart change,” the next step is to explain how to do it. The workbook designed for this intervention will follow each step of the practice of biblical meditation as a means of encouraging participants to improve their biblical memorization skills.

The first step to renewing one’s mind and heart with the Word of God is prayer. It is vital that believers understand that meditation done rightly is a spiritual exercise. It is supernatural in that it seeks assistance from the Holy Spirit to understand and apply the Word. As David Saxton writes, “there is an art, and a divine skill of meditation, which none can teach but God alone.”¹⁷⁰ So, meditation upon Scripture must first seek the help of the author of Scripture. Hence, in the workbook that participants of the intervention will use, the first step is always prayer.

After having prayed, the workbook utilizes what theologian John Jefferson Davis calls “whole-brain meditation.”¹⁷¹ Davis’s method is based on the latest research in cognitive science and educational psychology. Simply put, whole-brain meditation activates both left and right brain ways of thinking while meditating on Scripture. This method of meditation works to pair a propositional text with one or more pictorial or narrative texts that share a common theme. This way, words and concepts are combined with images and narratives.¹⁷² Whole-brain meditation parallels the rote-picture memorization method discussed above in the Theoretical Foundations section. Both assume that words and pictures complement each other in one’s mental processes.

¹⁷⁰ Saxton, *God’s Battle Plan*, 130.

¹⁷¹ Davis, *Meditation and Communion*, 142.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 144.

To illustrate, suppose someone is meditating on James 4:7, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” One could pair that text with the narrative account of Christ’s temptation in the wilderness. Christ resisted, and Satan fled. Or suppose one is meditating on Ephesians 6:12 where Paul describes the “principalities and powers.” Pairing that verse with the narrative of the angelic war in the heavens recorded in Daniel 10 brings to life what Paul is saying. In the workbook, an appropriate narrative passage is selected to correspond to the verse of Ephesians 6:10-18 that participants are meditating on that day. The hope is to stimulate whole-brain meditation, thereby making the verse more memorable and more impactful. This type of whole-brain meditation will also foster more long-term autobiographical memory. Hence, more change should result because the memories are becoming a part of one’s story and worldview, not just data facts.

After considering the narrative passage, participants will engage in a meditation technique. The five techniques utilized in the workbook will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. For now, suffice it to say that participants purposefully set aside time to do nothing but meditate. In addition to these five techniques, participants will also employ what the Puritans called occasional or spontaneous meditation.¹⁷³ The meditation practice is the same, however, the timing or occasion is different. In occasional meditation, participants are encouraged to recall the verse and subsequently as much of the passage as they have memorized at least twice throughout the day. They are advised to do this whenever they find their thoughts drifting to vanity, anything unprofitable, or temptation to outright sin. In this way, one puts off vain thought patterns and replaces them with Scripture. Practically, this form of meditation is also how one

¹⁷³ Ibid., 35.

fulfills the exhortation to meditate on Scripture both day and night.¹⁷⁴ It is hoped that this constant meditation will renew participants' minds, thereby causing greater resistance to the enemy's wiles and inculcating the characteristics vital to success in spiritual warfare.

In sum, biblical meditation was defined as dwelling on Scripture truths with the goal of heart change. It is designed to engage the whole person and not just the intellect. To further this end in the action research project, John Jefferson Davis's whole-brain meditation will be utilized. This simple method activates both the left and right brain hemispheres by tying narrative texts to propositional texts. In so doing, the meaning of the propositional text is illustrated and made more memorable. Several techniques are also given to meditate effectively. These include creating mental pictures, paraphrasing, finding applications, praying the text, and using art. Lastly, participants will be admonished to practice recalling the memory passage at least twice throughout the day.

The Synthesis

As previously stated, many books have been written about biblical memorization as well as biblical meditation. None to this author's knowledge, however, treat the two together as two sides of the same coin. That is one of the goals of this action research project. It is believed that employing both together will enable a believer to more effectively fight the spiritual battle that they find themselves in. To attain that goal, the *Memorization & Meditation Manual* workbook guides learners through a very methodical and gradual process. The volume of memorized material is of less importance than the volume of material that is internalized and believed.

Consequently, the *Memorization & Meditation Manual* is designed so that participants spend no more than five to fifteen minutes per day on the workbook assignments. In addition, the

¹⁷⁴ Psalm 1:3.

goal is to call to mind the memorized passage whenever one finds their thoughts to be unedifying. Or simply call the passage to mind twice throughout the day. The end goal of meditating on the Word is so that one's thinking patterns gradually conform to Scripture more and more.

The benefits of this synthesis are that they are reinforcing. The better one becomes at memorization, the easier it will be to meditate. The reverse is also true. Much time in meditation on a Scripture passage reinforces memorization of that passage. Change begins in the mind, but it must also rise to the level of the affections, that is, heart change. Practically speaking, when people fail morally or succumb to some temptation it is rarely because of intellectual reasons. Such moral collapses are generally because the heart loves sin more than God. Undivided hearts which love God above all, keep people from false teaching and giving into Satan's deceptions and temptations. That is what spiritual warfare is all about. To wage spiritual warfare well, believers must both memorize and meditate on Scripture.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 1 explained the problem this action research aims to remedy: the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills are not effectively utilizing biblical memorization and meditation to engage in spiritual warfare. As a result, many are struggling to find victory over temptations in their life. After reviewing pertinent literature, Chapter 2 argued that biblical memorization and meditation is an effective means of spiritual warfare both theologically and theoretically. It is also supported by a plethora of literature on the subject (both historical and contemporary). Hence, this action research project aims to equip the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills for spiritual warfare by teaching them how to memorize and meditate on Scripture. The project can also be applied to other churches whose congregants desire to be effectively prepared for spiritual warfare. This chapter discusses the intervention design and its implementation.

Intervention Design

To equip the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills for spiritual warfare, an intervention was designed. The intervention was comprised of several facets. It contains a research component, where data was collected from research participants in multiple forms. It also contained an instruction component, which a workbook and three seminars. Each component will be explained in detail below.

Research Methodology

The research methodology to be employed is known as action research. The goal of action research is to design a solution to a problem that is tailored to a specific context. Broader application and use of the project are desirable and possible, but not the main goal. The distinguishing mark of action research is that the research participants are integrally involved in

the research.¹⁷⁵ They are involved in two senses. First, they provide data. In this project, rather than merely theorizing about congregants' practices of memorization, meditation, and concomitant spiritual lives, action research discovers the actual state of affairs. Therefore, this action research also involves participants is by evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention program. Hence, the marks that distinguish action research from theoretical research are its specificity and its proven efficacy, or lack thereof. Theoretical research generalizes problems as well as solutions. Action research accomplishes the opposite; it addresses a specific problem in a specific context and intervenes with a tailor-made solution. Finally, action research discovers if the thesis is true or not.

Permissions

Approval for this research project was sought from two sources. First, the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted approval for this project (see Appendix L). Second, a written agreement was obtained for the research project by the senior pastor of Calvary Chapel of the Hills (see Appendix G and Appendix H).

Promotion and Recruitment

Recruiting participants for this research project occurred from within Calvary Chapel of the Hills on Sunday morning gatherings. Participants were sought via one-on-one conversation during the coming and going process of Sunday mornings. Calvary Chapel of the Hills is a small church that fosters a close-knit community. Promotion spread in part by word of mouth. In addition, a promotional flyer (see Appendix I) was distributed once, on Sunday February 5th. The flyer explained the nature of the research, the benefits, and commitments of participation.

¹⁷⁵ Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research 4th Edition* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 6.

More than twenty people expressed interest in the project during personal conversation with the researcher.

Project Participants

Project participants were limited to adult members of Calvary Chapel of the Hills. There were practical reasons for this decision. First, some measure of openness was necessary regarding one's private life of sin and temptation. Avoiding such conversations with minors seemed prudent. In addition, the commitment to the project required a measure of perseverance and self-discipline which is more often found in adults. Moreover, if attendees of Calvary Chapel of the Hills did not demonstrate enough commitment to a church to become members, it seemed unlikely they would have enough commitment to finish a research project. All research participants also signed a written consent form (see Appendix F).

Of the participants, six have been believers for five years or less. Five have been believers for five years or longer. Hence, it is almost an even number between the two categories. This was helpful for gauging how seasoned believers and new believers responded to the program. All of them were at the church for less than ten years. However, given that the church itself was new, this was no surprise. None of the participants were in leadership in the church. Accordingly, all in all, the participants constituted a good sample of the larger body of believers, due to their diversity.

Project Conceptualization

This research project sought to prepare congregants for spiritual warfare by guiding them in memorizing and meditating upon Scripture, specifically Ephesians 6:10-18. Spiritual warfare aptitude measurement tools were created to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. These tools consist of a spiritual warfare survey, questionnaire, and exit interview (see appendices A-

C). In short, the project gathered data, provided instruction and facilitated memorization and meditation, then gathered more data. Finally, the data was analyzed to see if the intervention improved their aptitude in spiritual warfare. Each stage of the project will now be explained in detail.

Workbook

The core of the intervention plan is the workbook created by the researcher. The full title is *Memorization & Meditation Manual: Two Spiritual Disciplines as an Effective Means for Spiritual Warfare*.¹⁷⁶ The workbook is designed to guide participants progressively through the process of memorization and meditation. The workbook has a total of thirty guided lessons, each designed to take the participant no more than five to fifteen minutes per day. The reason for this number of lessons was dictated solely by the length of the chosen Scripture passage. Workbooks are helpful in allowing people to learn things in small increments by following a short and specific, laid-out assignment. This researcher got the idea of using a workbook format from handwriting workbooks which foster improvement of skill with simple step-by-step assignments that take about ten minutes per day.¹⁷⁷ Some workbooks even combine theory with practice. Consequently, it seemed it would be a fitting format in which to learn the foundations of biblical memorization and meditation.

For every Bible verse, participants spend two days memorizing it and one day meditating upon it. Participants worked on lessons five days per week. Limiting lessons to five days per week allowed for participants to catch up if they missed a day or two. This flexibility made the

¹⁷⁶ Scott Ahern, *Memorization & Meditation Manual: Two Spiritual Disciplines as Effective Means of Spiritual Warfare* (Independently Published: Amazon, 2023). Hereafter referred to simply as “the manual” or “memorization and meditation manual.”

¹⁷⁷ Platt Rogers Spencer, *Spencerian Handwriting: The Complete Collection of Theory and Practical Workbooks for Perfect Cursive and Hand Lettering* (Berkley, CA: Ulysses Press, 2016).

lessons manageable and enabled participants to finish. Hence, the goal was that participants would do five-minute lessons, five days per week, for thirty-seven days. Upon completion of the workbook, all of Ephesians 6:10-18 was memorized and meditated upon.

The workbook employs a simple three or four step process, depending on whether a day requires review of previous material or not. For instance, day one has no previous material to review. Also, once participants have memorized four verses, a review of those verses is no longer a part of the exercise.

The first step of the workbook is always prayer. A verse that has prayer as a central theme is given as a prayer prompt. However, no specific prayer is recommended. The workbook only encourages prayer as the Spirit leads. Most exercises then move to review, but not all. The third step guides participants in a specific method for memorization and meditation, as discussed above in Chapter 2.

The following is excerpted from the introduction of the manual and explains how the workbook is structured:

Day 1: Memorize the Truth

Step 1 – Pray

A verse describing the importance of prayer will be provided. The verse is intended as a prompt, to inspire you to meet with God and request His help before beginning.

Step 2 – Analysis

Instruction will be provided on how to go about memorizing the given verse for that day.

Step 3 – Recall

This step contains a prompt to remind you to use what you have memorized throughout the day. There is no point in memorizing Scripture if you never call it to mind as you go through life. Thus, this last section admonishes you to practice meditating on what you have memorized. When you do the recall, you are to recall as much of the passage as you have memorized up to that point.

Figure 3.1 Excerpt from *Memorization and Meditation Manual* Instructions for Day 1

The workbook utilizes insights from a variety of sources to create a unique approach to practicing both spiritual disciplines. One of the most significant influences is William Evans, who memorized the entire Bible. Evans emphasized clarity of thought and exactness. His teaching on how to break apart a sentence for memorization is an essential feature in the workbook. The following excerpt from the workbook illustrates how readers are guided to analyze a sentence to aid their memory.

Memorization Skill #1 – Analyze

The master of Bible memory, William Evans said “It is a great mistake to seek to memorize anything that has not been before analyzed.” Analysis is the process of taking a verse apart and putting it back together. In so doing, you will have virtually memorized the verse without trying. This first lesson will guide you in how to analyze a verse.

Find the shortest clause in the sentence that makes sense.

A clause is defined as: a group of words containing a subject and predicate and functioning as a member of a complex or compound sentence. The sentence "When it rained, they went inside" consists of two *clauses*: "when it rained" and "they went inside." For the present verse, the results will look something like this:

brethren, be strong

my brethren, be strong

Finally, my brethren, be strong

Finally, my brethren, be strong *in the Lord*

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, *and his might*

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and *in the power* of his might

This process breaks the verse apart and puts it back together. The important part is not grammatical precision. Rather, what matters is analyzing the verse to see what it is communicating. The more one thinks about the grammar, however inaccurately, the better you will be able to remember what it says. Use the space provided if you want to try doing it yourself. Your analysis does not need to look identical to the one above.

The second memorization skill readers will be guided to learn is rote repetition. Once a verse has been analyzed, then the tried-and-true method of rote repetition becomes extremely valuable to solidify what has been analyzed. God has made the brain in such a way so that through the process of repetition thoughts become cemented, for good or for ill. When one cements wrong thinking patterns, it is damaging. However, when one proactively cements truth into their minds, it becomes like a wall of defense against the world, the flesh, and the devil. In other words, practice makes perfect. To memorize anything requires time and attention.

The more senses one involves, the stronger the memory will be. So, saying the repetitions in one's head, speaking them out loud, writing them down, and telling them to someone else, all help cement the verse into one's mind. However, each person tends to favor some methods more than others. For some, writing out the verse by hand will be invaluable. For others, that exercise will be tedious and contribute little to their memory. The important thing is that participants find their own memorization learning style and what works best for them.

In addition, the workbook will employ four meditation techniques.¹⁷⁸ These four techniques can be utilized together, all on the same day. However, the lessons are designed to be brief and so these techniques are meant to be used on different days. The first method is to form a mental picture to attach to the verse. Rightly done, memorization and meditation are two sides of the same coin. While one memorizes a verse, one is meditating on it. Conversely, while one meditates on it, one is memorizing that verse. They feed and strengthen each other.

¹⁷⁸ The techniques were taken from Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines*. For a full catalogue of his techniques see pages 80-94.

Meditation technique number two is to rewrite the verse in one's own words.

Paraphrasing or rephrasing the verse forces one to think more deeply about it. Sometimes people memorize a verse without truly understanding it. This exercise will help to keep that from happening.

The third meditation technique is to think of applications from the text. One interacts with the text by asking some questions. These questions could include asking whether there is a promise to believe, a command to obey, something to rejoice in, and so forth. The verse dictates which questions are most relevant. For instance, in the first half of Paul's epistles, it is well known that they are full of indicatives. Accordingly, in these chapters, there will be lots of truths to believe and internalize. The second half of Paul's epistles contain numerous imperatives. Hence, there will be many commands to obey in these portions of Scripture.

Lastly, the use of art is recommended as an effective meditation technique. It can be profitable to draw pictures or even makeup songs that image the Scripture. For those with propensities towards drawing and journal keeping, mind mapping is recommended.¹⁷⁹ One starts with a keyword or idea and creates a visual diagram. The diagram may include colors, different kinds of lines, or whatever else is helpful. The point is to use both sides of your brain and help you stay focused on an idea. Figure 3.3 shown below is an example of a mind-map based on the keyword "Time."

¹⁷⁹ Joseph Rodrigues, "Everything You Need to Know About Mind Mapping," Iris, accessed October 10, 2022. <https://irisreading.com/mindmap/>.

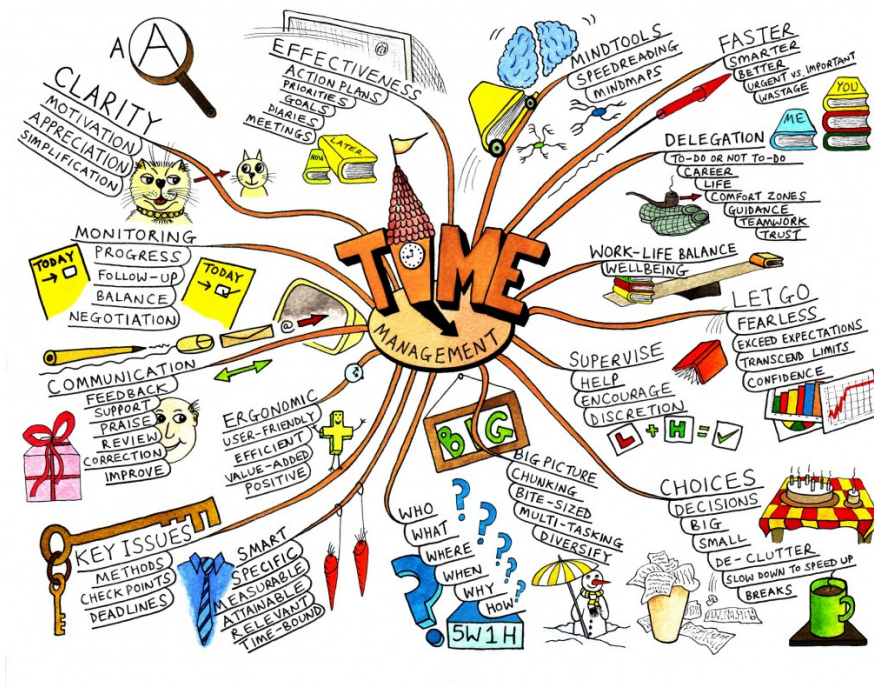


Figure 3.3 Example of A Mind Map¹⁸⁰

To help facilitate meditation, this workbook uses what theologian John Jefferson Davis refers to as “whole-brain meditation.”¹⁸¹ This is more of a philosophy of meditation than a technique and will be utilized for every meditation session in the workbook. Whole-brain meditation is based on left brain and right brain distinctions. While this distinction can be overblown, it does have some scientific validity to it. Research shows that learning comprehension and retention is improved when pictures are added to words. So, as Davis says, “we intentionally try to combine words and concepts with concrete images and narratives.”¹⁸² God is the master storyteller, so for the intervention workbook all of the narrative passages or illustrations, come from Scripture itself. Therefore, before they meditate readers will read a

¹⁸⁰ Rodrigues, “Everything You Need to Know About Mind Mapping.”

¹⁸¹ Davis, *Meditation and Communion*, 142.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 144.

narrative passage which illustrates the text in some way to help fuel meditation. The goal of this method is for the propositional text to have a greater impact upon the heart. The following excerpt from the workbook provides an example.

Step 2 - Narrative Passage

It is helpful to find a narrative passage to meditate on in conjunction with the propositional statement which you are memorizing. This practice helps illustrate the truth one is meditating on and triggers both hemispheres of the brain. The following narrative passage involves Samson.

⁵ Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

⁶ And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.
Judges 14:5-6

This may seem an odd example, however, it provides a vivid illustration of what Spirit empowered people can do. In this age, the Spirit empowers believers to a) murder our flesh (Romans 8:13), b) stand strong against the enemy (Ephesians 6:13), c) share the gospel (Matt 28:19-20), and d) use our spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:7-8). Being strengthened to resist the enemy is the focus of Ephesians 6:10. Nonetheless, the dramatic supernatural empowerment of Samson for physical strength *illustrates* the way God is willing to empower us for spiritual strength.

Figure 3.4 Excerpt from *Memorization and Meditation Manual*: Lesson on Whole-Brain Meditation.¹⁸³

In summary, the workbook teaches two memorization skills and four meditation skills.

The table (3.1) below shows these skills for easy reference.

Memorization Skills	Meditation Skills
#1 - Analysis	#1 - Imagination – Creating a Mental Picture
#2 – Rote Repetition	#2 – Finding Applications
	#3 – Paraphrasing
	#4 – Art (Mind-Mapping encouraged)

Table 3.1: Memorization vs. Meditation Skills

¹⁸³ Ahern, *Memorization & Meditation Manual*.

Brief commentary is also included in the workbook to illuminate the text. These comments fall under headings called Key Insights. The insights from academic commentaries are distilled in succinct summaries. These insights pertain primarily to the various pieces of the armor of God and how understanding the first century context illuminates the significance of Paul's metaphors.

In total, the workbook has thirty guided lessons which teach readers step by step the process of biblical memorization and meditation. It takes thirty-seven days to complete, since Saturday is a catch-up day and Sunday a rest day. The manual inculcates two memorization skills and four meditation skills, as described above. While learning these skills, readers will be guided to memorize Ephesians 6:10-18 and hopefully have a good habit for memorizing and meditating on other scriptures.

Seminars

As a supplement to the workbook, three seminars were given. The first seminar marked the beginning of the research project. During this seminar, participants were briefed on what the project entailed, what it aimed to discover, and their involvement. The second and third seminars answered questions and kept people invested in the project. These seminars also answered questions pertaining to biblical memorization and meditation as they relate to spiritual warfare. Finally, they clarified the mechanics of memorization and meditation that might have been ambiguous or unclear in the workbook.

Full-Timeline Breakdown

Initial approval from the IRB was obtained on June 6th 2022, followed by approval from the senior pastor of Calvary Chapel on the Hill on September 9th 2022. As previously mentioned, promotion of the research project occurred through organic connections in casual conversations,

fellowship meals, and a flyer. A full month was allotted for the promotion of the project. This allowed prospective participants adequate time to evaluate if they were interested and had the time and dedication to be involved in such a project.

At the close of that one-month mark, the first seminar was held on February 12th, 2023. During this seminar, participants received the workbook, filled out the survey and questionnaire and signed the consent form. The researcher provided a tutorial on how to use the workbook and what the research is intended for. The next seminar was held roughly two weeks later, presumably on February 26th, 2023. The last seminar was held just after the completion of the workbook by the participants, on March 19th, 2023. Figure 3.5 below illustrates the timeline.

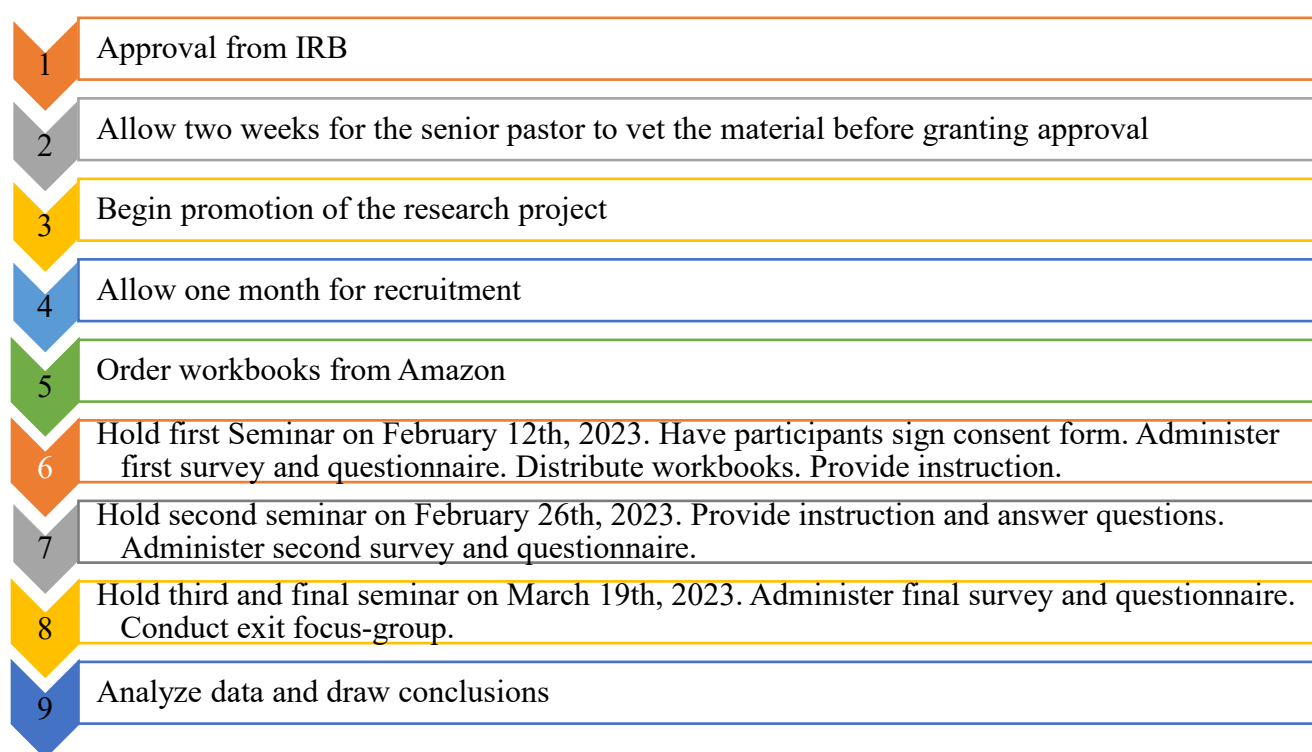


Figure 3.5: Timeline of Action Research Project

Projection

The goal of this project was to improve one's spiritual warfare effectiveness through the spiritual disciplines of biblical memorization and biblical meditation. The following table

illustrates the expectation of this thesis. Namely, a believer's spiritual warfare effectiveness will increase the longer one memorizes and meditates on relevant Scripture passages. The only variable that will change in this process is the length of time spent using the workbook.¹⁸⁴ So, if there is an increase in one's spiritual warfare aptitude, one can rightly surmise that it is in some way a direct result of using the workbook.

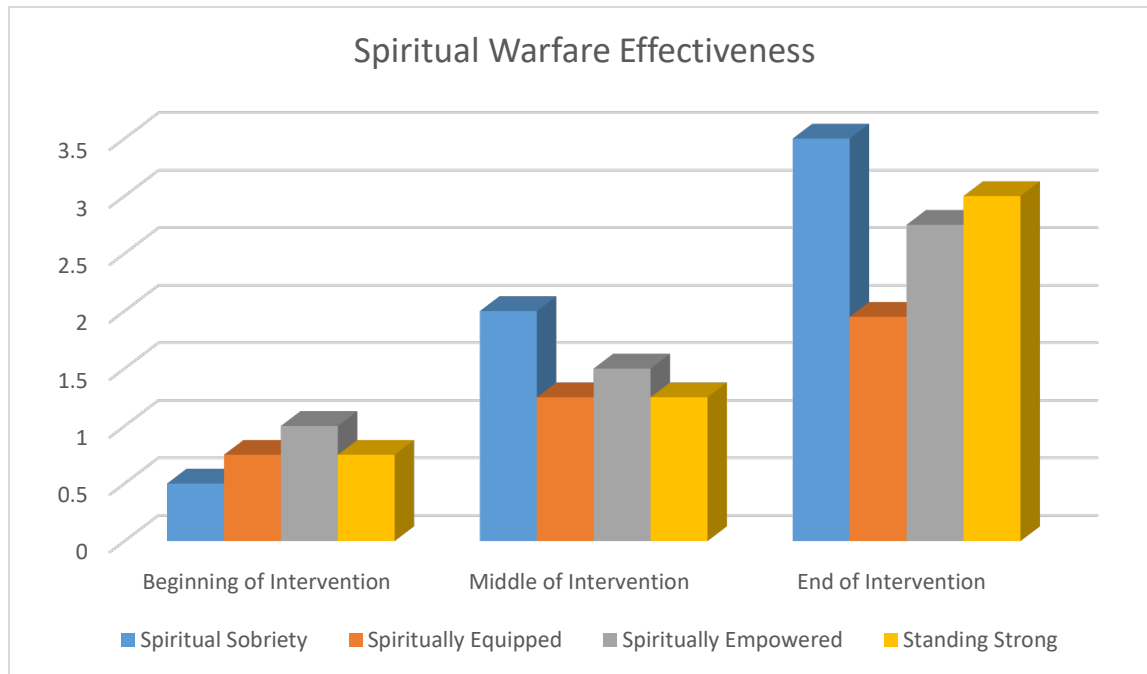


Table 3.2: Spiritual Warfare Effectiveness

The columns represent one's spiritual warfare aptitude or effectiveness. Remember, "effectiveness" in spiritual warfare was described in both the purpose statement and the Theoretical Foundations as having four core attributes: being spiritually sober-minded, spiritually equipped, spiritually empowered, and standing strong. The blue column represents spiritual sobriety, the orange column represents being spiritually equipped, the gray, being spiritually empowered, and the yellow shows the degree to which participants are standing strong against

¹⁸⁴ Other variables that could affect results will hopefully be ascertained in the interview process.

the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Hence, the projection is that one's effectiveness in spiritual warfare will increase throughout the intervention.

It will be noticed however that the columns do not rise evenly. It is expected that participants will make more progress in some of these attributes than another. For example, it would make sense for a participant to rise greatly in terms of spiritual sobriety and yet not be able to stand strong. In other words, greater awareness of the spiritual battle is not synonymous with victory in that battle.

In summary, the research project aimed to discover one thing. That one thing was whether memorizing and meditating upon Scripture, specifically Ephesians 6:10-18, improved one's effectiveness in spiritual warfare. To discover if the *Memorization & Meditation Manual Workbook*, along with supplementary seminars, enhanced one's spiritual warfare effectiveness, aptitude testing tools were created. These comprised a survey, questionnaire, field notes, and an exit interview. The data provided information regarding the participant's spiritual warfare effectiveness before, during, and after the intervention. If the data showed that participants have greater effectiveness at the end of the intervention, the intervention was a success.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Seminars

Those who agreed to participate in the aims of the research project formed a "small group." The small group met a total of three times. It was the researcher's position at the church and availability on the part of the participants that dictated the number of seminars. The researcher is not on staff with the church and desired not to overextend his authority and position. Additionally, most congregants do not linger very long after the service, due to the

length of the service itself. The researcher feared conducting weekly meetings would discourage participation, rather than encourage it.

After promoting the project and agreeing upon a start date, the first seminar was held on Sunday, February 12th, 2023. This seminar properly introduced the project to all participants. In particular, the researcher explained the consent form thoroughly to ensure that participants knew exactly what the purpose of the project was, what it aimed to prove, and their role in the research. Specifically, the researcher explained that the goal of the project was to demonstrate a correlation between biblical memorization and meditation and one's aptitude in spiritual warfare. The *Memorization and Meditation Manual Workbook* was also explained. Then the workbooks were distributed, along with the survey and questionnaire. All participants were assured complete anonymity through the use of pseudonyms when research is reported. Once participants had the opportunity to peruse all the documents, they were encouraged to ask any questions they might have.

All in attendance decided to sign the consent form and commit to the project. A total of 16 people signed the consent forms and committed to the study. The senior pastor was also in attendance. Since the survey and questionnaire asked questions that are best answered upon careful reflection, it was decided that participants should fill them out at home during their leisure. The participants then gave the researcher their completed surveys and questionnaires the following Sunday, February 19th, 2023.

During this first seminar the researcher also introduced the general topic of spiritual warfare. He also outlined the broad field known as "deliverance ministry" as a point of comparison and contrast to his own views. As expected, most in attendance were very familiar with deliverance ministry and confirmed the project's relevance. The themes of union with Christ

and seeing Jesus' victory over Satan in the wilderness as the prototypical example of spiritual warfare (as outlined in the theological foundations section in Chapter 3), were also shared.

The researcher explained that there are two primary differences between the “deliverance ministry” model versus the spiritual disciplines model (memorization and meditation).¹⁸⁵ The first area of difference is the area of diagnosis. In the deliverance model, problems of the flesh such as anger, lust, and sloth are treated as instances of demonization. This characterization leads to the second problem, in the area of prescription. If the problem is “demonization,” then the solution is “deliverance.”

In contrast, the spiritual disciplines model assumes that if genuine believers are safe in Christ, and exempt from overt demonization, then the remaining problems of the flesh are diagnosed as sanctification problems. If there is a problem with the flesh (anger, lust, etc.) then the flesh needs to be put to death. If there is a problem with a negative thinking pattern, then the mind needs to be renewed. Hence, in each scenario, the cure follows the diagnosis. These two competing paradigms were made clear to the prospective participants.

This writer believes genuine believers are exempt from demon possession. Hence, he subscribes to the spiritual disciplines model of spiritual warfare. He arrived at this conclusion for several reasons. The scriptural evidence for believers being demon possessed appeared lacking. Also, his belief in the sufficiency of Scripture caused him to exclude practices and anecdotes that were extra-biblical such as receiving testimony from demons regarding their supposed legal right to take up residence and the necessity of verbal renunciation from previous sins and occult involvement.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ While “deliverance ministry” is a popular term, the phrase “spiritual disciplines model” as applied to spiritual warfare is unique to this author.

¹⁸⁶ Appendices D and E.

In contrast to the methods of deliverance ministry, the biblical pattern is simply to repent and walk in righteousness. Spiritual warfare to be relational. Believers are transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13). Moreover, believers are united to Christ and seated with him in the heavens (Gal 2:20, Col. 3:1). Therefore, they share in Christ's victory over the powers of evil. He has "disarmed" all such powers (Col 2:15). Moreover, all things visible and invisible are mere creations of Christ (Col 1:16). Just as demons are subject to Christ and his authority, so too are demons subject to Christ's followers. They might harass believers, but they have no power or authority over them. This being the case, the spiritual battle for believers is largely about believing the truth and walking in it. Jesus himself was seen to be the model for such spiritual warfare in his victory of Satan in the wilderness (Lk 4, Matt 4).

The researcher also explained how important the spiritual disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation are to him personally. Indeed, they changed his life. In addition, the researcher answered questions about the project and the participant's involvement in it. Lastly, after the project was made sufficiently clear, sixteen people decided to commit to it.

The next seminar was held two weeks later, on Sunday, February 26th, 2023. This seminar had three objectives. First, it aimed to keep participants engaged in the project. Meeting together and discussing the workbook, as a collective group, served the purpose of keeping people invested and excited about biblical memorization and meditation. Secondly, this seminar provided the opportunity for further instruction. While the workbook is intended to be simple enough for one to complete on one's own, inevitably participants have questions about the lessons. The researcher answered any questions and clarified that which was ambiguous in the workbook. Moreover, questions pertaining to spiritual warfare were also invited and discussed. Thirdly, the second seminar served as an opportunity to gather more data. Field notes were taken.

The relevant data centered around comments participants made in relation to their performance and aptitude in spiritual warfare. Participants were also given the second spiritual warfare survey and spiritual warfare questionnaire to fill out.

The last seminar was held shortly after participants finished the workbook on Sunday, March 19th, 2023. The final survey and questionnaire were completed before coming to the seminar. This last seminar had similar goals to the second seminar. It aimed to clarify anything that was confusing and ambiguous about biblical memorization and meditation. However, the emphasis lay more on eliciting information that is relevant to the relationship between those disciplines and the participant's aptitude in spiritual warfare. Fostering discussion was the primary goal of this seminar. The pertinent data lay in getting participants to share relevant comments about their aptitude in spiritual warfare, and what difference, if any, biblical memorization and meditation was having upon that aptitude.

As an additional source of qualitative data, during the last seminar, participants completed the exit-interview (see Appendix C). The exit-interview question provides qualitative feedback by directly asking participants how memorizing and meditating upon Ephesians 6:10-18 affected their spiritual warfare effectiveness, if at all. The question asks how memorization and meditation effected the core attributes of a victorious spiritual warrior: their spiritual sobriety, preparedness, being empowered by God, and walking victoriously.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data was collected using several methods. These methods included the spiritual warfare survey, which uses a Likert Scale, the spiritual warfare questionnaire, field notes based on participant observation, and an exit-interview. As Ernest Stringer states, "the credibility of a

study is enhanced when multiple sources of information are incorporated.”¹⁸⁷ This research project gathered quantitative and qualitative data from four different sources in total.

The spiritual warfare survey (Likert Scale) provided quantitative data (See appendix A). Likert Scale surveys ask straight forward questions and give a range of possible answers. For example, the first question on the survey is the following.

Question 1 – To what degree are you consciously aware you are in a spiritual battle?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Figure 3.6 Excerpt from Spiritual Warfare Survey

The spiritual warfare questionnaires (see Appendix B), field notes, and the exit-interview provide qualitative data. This data is qualitative in the sense that it uses open ended questions and gets participants to use their own words to answer questions. The questionnaire asks open ended questions such as “describe your spiritual sobriety.” The exit-interview asks more direct questions. For example, one question asks: “Do you believe that memorization and meditation has improved your ability to withstand temptation? If so, how?” While it is not technically an open-ended question, it encourages them to answer in their own words with more than a simple yes or no, and for that reason is considered qualitative.

The data collection was designed to measure the participants’ spiritual warfare aptitude throughout the intervention. To reiterate, four attributes were deemed essential for someone to be victorious in spiritual warfare. These four attributes, drawn from Ephesians 6:10-18, include being spiritually sober-minded, spiritually equipped, spiritually empowered, and standing strong. The spiritual warfare aptitude survey and questionnaire were administered three times, at the

¹⁸⁷ Stringer, *Action Research*, 93.

beginning, middle and end of the intervention. This provided a window into the aptitude of the participants at the beginning, middle, and end stages of the intervention.

To supplement the data collection, field notes were taken by the researcher. These notes pertained to participant *comments* and *actions* during the seminars. Observing participant feedback, comments, and questions during the seminars was an additional source of qualitative data. Lastly, an exit interview (see Appendix F) was conducted to elicit *direct* feedback. The goal of the interview was to discover how and if the participants conclude that their spiritual warfare aptitude changed as a result of the intervention. The interview included four simple questions that directly elicited feedback as to whether or not participants believed their aptitude changed in each of the four areas listed above as a direct result of memorizing and meditating upon Ephesians 6:10-18.

The analysis was simple and straightforward. All questions were designed to provide data regarding the four essential attributes of a victorious Christian soldier. Some questions merely gauge the participant's performance in these four areas. Other questions probe for the perceived effect biblical memorization and meditation is having upon these four attributes. Consequently, both qualitative and quantitative data were available to provide information to be able to indirectly and directly address whether or not biblical memorization and meditation are improving participants' aptitude in the four attributes of a victorious Christian soldier. The following table summarizes the sources of data and how they were collected.

Qualitative Data	Quantitative Data	Number of Times Collected	When Collected	Measuring

	Spiritual Warfare Survey	3x	Between Seminars	Spiritual Warfare Effectiveness
Spiritual Warfare Questionnaire		3x	Between Seminars	Spiritual Warfare Effectiveness
Field Notes		3x	During Seminars	Spiritual Warfare Effectiveness
Exit-Interview		1x	At Third Seminar	Spiritual Warfare Effectiveness

Table 3.3: Data Triangulation

In summary, the main piece of the intervention is the *Memorization and Meditation* workbook. The workbook sought to teach participants the art and skill of both biblical memorization and meditation for the purpose of strengthening victory in spiritual warfare. To reiterate, a workbook was chosen because of its perceived value in being able to effectively teach a new skill by guiding one on how to perform that skill in step-by-step increments. Since participants are not merely learning new information, but rather acquiring the twin skills of memorization and meditation, a workbook format seemed more appropriate than any other.

The three seminars were supplemental in nature. The researcher chose to only do three seminars because of his position within the church and his desire to be sensitive to participants' busy schedules. While the small number of seminars probably increased the likelihood that participants would sign up for the project, it does limit the amount of face-to-face time with participants. This could in turn cause some participants to be less invested in the project and perhaps even not finish the project. There was a trade-off with this decision.

Additionally, two forms of data were collected, qualitative and quantitative. This data came in the form of surveys, questionnaires, field notes, and an exit-interview question. The qualitative data and the quantitative data are designed to measure participants' effectiveness in spiritual warfare characterized by four specific attributes: spiritual sobriety, dependence upon God, preparedness for the battle, and ability to stand strong in the midst of battle. By measuring these four characteristics, the researcher was able to measure the participant's effectiveness in spiritual warfare. If the data shows an increase in effectiveness in spiritual warfare as a result of practicing biblical memorization and meditation, then the intervention was successful.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter answers the question, what were the results of the action research? The problem was that the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills were not adequately equipped for Spiritual Warfare. The intervention plan consisted of the workbook – *Memorization & Meditation Manual: A guided workbook to memorize and meditate Ephesians 6:10-18*, and three seminars. It was projected that by completing the workbook, and thereby practicing biblical memorization and meditation for thirty days, congregants would be more equipped for spiritual battle. If successful, the action research would substantiate the thesis that biblical memorization and biblical meditation are effective means of gaining spiritual victory.

The quantitative and qualitative data produced in the intervention both yielded positive results. In other words, the results substantiate a correlation between biblical memorization and meditation and one's victory in spiritual warfare. As expected, not all participants provided a complete set of data. Some provided partial data, while others provided none. There are different reasons for this inconsistency ranging from lack of interest, lack of commitment, busy schedules, and other miscellaneous issues.

Regarding the participant pool, sixteen individuals committed to the project, including eleven females and five males. The participants ranged in age from late teens to mid-fifties. The median age of participants was thirty. A majority of the participants were veteran believers, having been a believer for decades. Only four participants were new to the faith, having been a believer for a few years or less. Not unsurprisingly, nine out of the sixteen participants yielded complete or mostly complete data.

Quantitative Data: Spiritual Warfare Survey

A brief word of explanation is needed to properly understand the following table.

Remember, the spiritual warfare survey (Lykert Scale) was given three times. This was to judge participants spiritual warfare effectiveness at the beginning, middle, and end of the intervention. Those who only submitted two spiritual warfare surveys submitted both the first and last surveys. Therefore, the data at least provides a window into the participant's mind at the beginning and end of the intervention, rather than stopping somewhere in the middle of the process.

To facilitate ease of reading this chart, the data that yields positive results is in red, while negative results are in blue. Neutral results are colored black.¹⁸⁸ Positive results are results showing improvement in spiritual warfare effectiveness. For instance, if participants become more aware they are in a spiritual battle that is considered a positive result. Negative results are results showing decline in spiritual warfare effectiveness. If one became less aware of the spiritual battle, that would be a negative result. If results show no change, that is a neutral result. In other words, one is just as aware of the spiritual battle, but no less or no more than before.

	Survey Question Number									
Participant Identification #		# 1	# 3	# 4	# 7	# 8	# 9	# 11	# 14	# 16
Results	Question 1 – To what degree are you									

¹⁸⁸ See Appendix A for the original form.

	consciously aware you are in a spiritual battle? Little	4, 5, 5	4, 5	5, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 3, 5	2, 4, 4	3, 4	3, 4, 5	4, 4, 4
	Question 2 - To what extent do you view the trials and temptations of life as having a supernatural origin?	3, 5, 5	5, 5	5, 5	5, 5, 5	3, 4, 5	2, 3, 4		4, 4, 5	4, 5, 4
	Question 3 – Rate to what degree you are consciously aware that you have a powerful and intelligent enemy who is actively trying to destroy you?	5, 5, 5	5, 4	5, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 4, 4	3, 4, 5		4, 4, 4	4, 4, 4

Table 4.1 Spiritual Warfare Survey Questions 1-3

As the above table (4.1) shows, five out of nine became more aware that they are in a spiritual battle because of using the workbook. The other four participants were already quite

aware that they are in a spiritual battle and reported little to no change as a consequence of the workbook. Likewise, four out of nine became more aware that the trials in their life may have a supernatural origin. Again, the others were already quite aware before beginning the study. Only two participants became more aware of the enemy's intent to destroy them as a consequence of the workbook study. Yet again, the other seven reported being already very aware of this issue.

	Question 4 – To what extent are you “on guard” against ways the enemy might try to exploit you?	4, 4, 4	4, 4	4, 5	4, 4, 4	3, 3, 4	3, 4, 4	3, 4	2, 3, 4	4,4,5
	Question 5 – Rate how much you agree with this statement. “If I rely on my own power to walk victoriously and stand against the enemy, I will most <i>certainly</i> fail.”	5, 5, 5	5, 5	5, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 5, 4	5, 5	5, 5, 5	5,4,5

	Question 6 – To what extent do you view prayer as your primary lifeline in the spiritual battle?	3, 4, 5	4, 5	5, 5	5, 5, 5	3, 4, 5	3, 4, 5	4, 4	3, 3, 3	4,4,5
	Question 7 – How vital is truth to your walk currently? (That is, truth regarding doctrine and ideas in general.)	5, 5, 5	5, 5	5, 5	5, 5, 5	4, 4, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 4	4, 4, 4	4.4,5
	Question 8 – How important is it to you that you see yourself clothed in the righteousness of Christ?	5, 5, 5	5, 5	5, 4	5, 5, 5	4, 4, 5	3, 5, 5	5, 4	5, 5, 5	4,5,5

Table 4.2 Spiritual Warfare Survey Questions 4-8

The results in Table 4.2 show that six out of nine participants thought they became more vigilant or “on guard” in the spiritual battle. Five out of nine increasingly saw prayer as one’s

primary lifeline in the spiritual battle. Truth was already a high priority for all the participants before beginning the study. Nonetheless, two participants still grew in recognizing the importance of truth. To see oneself as clothed in the righteousness of Christ was important to all participants from the start. Nonetheless, three increasingly saw this as a priority in their survey responses. One participant regressed in this area. Any number of possibilities could account for this data point. Perhaps the participant simply forgot what answer they gave previously. Or perhaps the issue of seeing oneself in light of Christ's righteousness had not been on their mind much around the time they filled out the survey.

	Question 9 – Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement. “Apart from faith in God and His word, the enemy will certainly destroy me.”	5, 5, 5	5, 5	5, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 5, 4		5, 5, 5	3, 4, 5
	Question 10 – How significant is the return of Jesus for your outlook and decision making right now?		2, 3	4, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 5, 5	3, 4, 5		3, 3, 4	4, 4, 4

		4, 5, 5								
	Question 11 – Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement. “I should prepare for temptations by finding a relevant Scripture passage.”	3, 4, 5	4, 5	5, 5	5, 5, 5	4, 4, 5	5, 5, 5	5, 5	3, 4, 5	3, 4, 5

Table 4.3 Spiritual Survey Questions 9-11

Table 4.3 demonstrates that most participants already agreed that apart from faith in God and His Word, the enemy will certainly destroy them. Nonetheless, two participants still grew in this area. The return of Jesus became more significant to six out of nine participants. Three already ranked quite high in this regard. Likewise, six participants grew in recognizing that finding a relevant Scripture verse is a good way to fight off temptation. The other three were already quite aware of this truth.

	Question 12 – Rate how much this statement reflects your own walk with God “While not perfect,				5, 4, 4	3, 3, 4	3, 4, 5		3, 3, 4	4, 4, 4
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	<i>victory- rather than defeat, is the general characteristic of my life.”</i>	4, 4, 5	4, 5	3, 4						
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Table 4.4 Spiritual Warfare Survey Question 12

One of the most important questions on the survey is question 12 (Table 4.4), which asks if victory rather than defeat is the pattern of their spiritual life. Seven out of nine participants made progress in this area. Walking victoriously lies at the core of spiritual warfare. That so many participants made significant progress in this rigorously evidences the thesis that biblical memorization and meditation are effective means of spiritual warfare.

	Question 13 – To what degree are you most often successful in resisting temptations when they come?	3, 4, 4	4, 4	3, 5	4, 4, 4	3, 3, 3	2, 4, 4	4, 3	3, 3, 4	3, 4, 4
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Table 4.5 Spiritual Warfare Survey Question 13

Question 13 (Table 4.5) is also highly relevant to proving the efficacy of the spiritual disciplines taught in the workbook. This question asks what success participants have in resisting temptations. Five out of nine made progress in this regard. Two were stagnant, while one regressed. There are many variables that could affect results on a question like this. Some struggle with addictive sins and temptations related to those sins tend to be harder for people to

resist. In other words, change takes longer for certain problems. The fact that more than fifty percent of the participants made progress in this area in such a short time testifies to the fruitfulness of memorization and meditation.

	Question 14 – Rate the time you currently spend memorizing and meditating upon Scripture.									
		3, 4,	3, 3	3, 4	3, 3,	1, 4,	2, 3,		1, 3,	3, 4,
		4			4	3	5	2, 3	4	5

Table 4.6 Spiritual Warfare Survey Question 14

According to Table 4.6, eight out of nine participants spent more time practicing biblical memorization and biblical meditation as a result of the intervention. The fact that other responses demonstrate progress in various aspects of spiritual warfare while these disciplines were being practiced more than before (for virtually all participants) is an argument that biblical memorization and meditation are the reason for the increased effectiveness in spiritual warfare.

To make a concluding observation: readers should notice the large number of red responses in Tables 4.1-4.6. Similarly, some questions yielded a fair number of black responses. However, the amount of blue, which represents a regression, is negligible. This is powerful corroboration that practicing biblical memorization and meditation caused the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills to be more effective in spiritual warfare. The import of this is that it demonstrates a causal link between behaviors, namely biblical memorization and meditation, and a result. That result is greater effectiveness in spiritual warfare.

In summary, the thesis of this action research project is that if the congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills practice biblical memorization and meditation they will be more effective in spiritual warfare. The prediction was that participants would progress in key areas of spiritual warfare if they memorized and meditated on the armor of God for thirty days or more. To reiterate, the four characteristics derived from Ephesians 6:10-18 are spiritual sobriety, dependence upon God, being equipped with God's armor, and standing strong against the enemy. It is these four attributes that participants demonstrate growth in as a result of the intervention. In short, the quantitative data confirm the prediction.

Qualitative Data: Spiritual Warfare Questionnaire, Seminars & Exit Interview

Due to the subjective nature of this data, it was decided that a biographical analysis would best present the qualitative data collected in the action research. What follows is a sketch of what the qualitative data reveals about the participants who submitted enough data to be useful. The goal of the analysis is to discover if participants made progress as a result of the intervention.¹⁸⁹

Participant #1 was new to biblical memorization as a spiritual discipline, but not biblical meditation. Indeed, they were already practicing biblical meditation and finding it had a great effect on strengthening their relationship with Jesus, as well as their faith in him. Moreover, they already used the Word of God to resist the influence of the world. In addition, they already saw themselves as quite dependent upon God.

By the second questionnaire, however, Participant #1 described themselves as "quite vigilant" regarding the spiritual battle.¹⁹⁰ In the first questionnaire, they described their spiritual

¹⁸⁹ See Appendix B for the original form.

¹⁹⁰ Participant #1, Second Questionnaire.

walk as “far from perfect.”¹⁹¹ Yet, by the second questionnaire they seem to have improved, stating they were “not perfect, but more victorious.”¹⁹² Moreover, it is no longer just “the Bible” that helps guard them against the world, flesh, and devil but the memorized Word. They also state that memorization is having a great effect and they easily recall the truth when faced with difficult situations and temptations. In addition, biblical meditation has made memorization easier for them and fostered a deeper connection to God’s Word. The responses to the third questionnaire repeat the same and show little or no growth.

Participant #3 gave partial data. Not all questions were answered on the questionnaire. Biblical memorization was somewhat familiar to them, but biblical meditation less familiar. However, even the impartial data that was given yielded pertinent information. For example, the participant states, “Temptations are fewer due to thinking about the passage we have to memorize.”¹⁹³ In addition, they state, “Meditation simply helps me focus on God.”¹⁹⁴ When responding to the exit interview they said the following: “Having God’s Word memorized helps us to have the tools to combat the spiritual world.”¹⁹⁵ They state further that they believe participating in the program better equipped them for spiritual warfare. Moreover, in their opinion the importance of memorizing even one passage cannot be overstated, for its positive effect on one’s walk with God.

Participant #4 reveals the value of biblical meditation from the outset. They stated that they often refer to a passage of Scripture that has shaped their worldview. The passage

¹⁹¹ Participant #1, First Questionnaire.

¹⁹² Participant #1, Second Questionnaire.

¹⁹³ Participant #3, Third Questionnaire.

¹⁹⁴ Participant #3, Third Questionnaire.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

mentioned was Micah 6:8, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Having previously memorized this verse is significant because this participant exhibits these characteristics. Moreover, the researcher is acquainted with several of the participant’s siblings who are also Christians and yet do not exhibit these characteristics. This observation would suggest a causal link between the participant’s character and lifestyle with memorization and meditation. In other words, the participant evidences biblical characteristics because of *means* and not by accident.

They also describe biblical meditation as helping them be aware of what is most important and preventing them from becoming sidetracked. The feedback from the exit interview stated the following: “Basically I found memorization not so helpful for warfare but helpful for growth, Christian living, and purity of mind.”¹⁹⁶ When asked why they felt it was less helpful for “warfare” they stated they encountered more temptations and disturbing dreams than normal. The researcher is unsure of what the reason for this connection might be. Any number of plausible scenarios could account for this response. For instance, if the participant was making genuine progress in their spiritual life the enemy might attack them more to get them off course. Additionally, the participant seems to have an incomplete view of spiritual warfare. “Growth, Christian living, and purity of mind” are all vital aspects of spiritual warfare. They seem to be defining spiritual warfare in a narrower sense than the researcher.

In a private conversation with Participant #4, they explained further that they were not entirely sure what they meant by “spiritual warfare.” The researcher counseled this individual to memorize Luke 10:18 “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions,

¹⁹⁶ Participant # 4, Feedback-Exit Interview.

and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.” It would be beneficial to follow up with this participant in the future to see if this verse or others causes them to withstand the temptations and feelings of oppression. Nonetheless, they found the workbook practice valuable and thought the disciplines of biblical meditation and memorization better equipped them for vital aspects of Christian living. This demonstrates it helped them in at least some aspects of spiritual warfare, even if not in all aspects.

Participant #7 provides rich qualitative data. The answers in the first questionnaire depict someone struggling to walk victoriously and being vigilant over sin and the things that influence him. These answers also depict someone that has “never put much effort into memorizing Scripture” and does not “meditate on the Bible” as much as they should.¹⁹⁷ The participant is sure these actions have slowed their spiritual growth. Coincidentally, they also really struggle with pride and leaning on their own strength rather than God’s resources. By the second questionnaire, meditating on the Bible more had caused them to realize just how much they do lean on their own strength.¹⁹⁸

By the third questionnaire, Participant #7 was becoming more vigilant. Now when they are tempted, they “look away” and recite Ephesians 6:10-18.¹⁹⁹ While still struggling to obtain victory, they have become sober concerning their walk with God. They say, “This memorization program has made me more aware of attacks by the enemy and has made me want to study and memorize more.”²⁰⁰ Regarding biblical meditation specifically, they state, “I feel more

¹⁹⁷ Participant # 7, First Questionnaire.

¹⁹⁸ Participant # 7, Second Questionnaire.

¹⁹⁹ Participant # 7, Third Questionnaire.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

empowered to fight off spiritual battles than before.”²⁰¹ The feedback from Participant #7’s exit interview is deserving of full citation:

Oh my YES. I have become more aware of the spiritual attacks against me. Better able to identify them and where they are coming from [sic]. I have always suffered bouts of depression, melancholy and hopelessness. I am more aware that spiritual attacks against me are the core reason for that. God’s Word is the only weapon I have ever used that actually works. For this I am very grateful.²⁰²

Similarly, Participant #8 was another story of progress. The first questionnaire depicts a person whose spiritual walk fluctuates depending on the day. The only biblical memorization they have done is through VBS programs. Biblical meditation was entirely new. They struggle specifically with “letting condemnation creep” into their heart and relying upon God.

The main benefit to this participant seems to be in the realm of spiritual sobriety. They state, “This project has really opened my eyes to just how weak my flesh is.”²⁰³ Practicing biblical memorization has allowed them to recall Scripture they did not even realize they had memorized. Practicing biblical meditation helped them see how relevant God’s Word is. Responding to the exit interview, Participant #8 writes that completing the workbook has shown them that they underestimated the wiles of the devil. Now, they more quickly realize his schemes while experiencing trials or temptations.

Participant #9 was previously familiar with biblical memorization, having memorized the entire book of James already. They actively called upon memorized Scripture to replace bad thoughts. Biblical meditation, however, was new. There did not appear to be any discernible difference in this participant’s walk with God as a result of completing the workbook, judging from their written responses to the exit interview. However, the verbal feedback they provided

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Participant # 7, Exit Interview.

²⁰³ Participant #8, Third Questionnaire.

during a seminar stated that they found personal comprehension greatly increased through biblical meditation. In their words, being forced to slow down and chew on the text showed this participant that “there was value in the process.”²⁰⁴ It is reasonable to speculate that greater absorption of the meaning of Scripture will yield a more victorious walk with God for this individual in the future.

Participant #11 was also familiar with biblical memorization, having also memorized the entire book of James. They were also well acquainted with biblical meditation. It had been a habit for this participant to mull on Scripture throughout the day. The only demonstrable change from the questionnaires is that they began making biblical memorization and meditation a renewed daily habit. Years ago, Participant #11 suffered a traumatic brain injury that greatly impaired their cognitive abilities, including memory.²⁰⁵ This injury caused them to forgo the spiritual discipline of biblical memorization. However, as a result of his participation, they decided to renew the habit. The participant reports that they found their thoughts staying more centered on the Word of God throughout the day as a result.

Participant #11’s exit interview states that they feel more equipped for spiritual warfare because they have memorized the primary Bible passage that deals with it.²⁰⁶ In addition, they “learned some tips to better memorize Scripture, and by going through the workbook, I’ve made memorization part of my daily routine.”²⁰⁷ This shows the value of a structured workbook. It can inculcate a habit by modeling a simple disciplined approach.

²⁰⁴ Participant #9, Verbal Feedback, Third Seminar.

²⁰⁵ Shared via private conversation.

²⁰⁶ Participant #11, Third Questionnaire.

²⁰⁷ Participant #11, Exit Interview.

Participant #14 again demonstrates progress and someone newly discovering an effective means of spiritual warfare. The first questionnaire portrayed someone whose spiritual walk is “50/50” and who lacks a tool to effectively combat the world, the flesh, and the devil. This person is already quite aware of their sinfulness, and thus depends on God “a lot.”²⁰⁸ However, biblical memorization and meditation was new to them.

By the second questionnaire, this person’s walk was still described as “50/50.” Yet, calling Scripture to mind had become a key way that they now resist the world, the flesh, and the devil. They state, “having memorized about half so far has already had a great affect on me, just being able to pull them out of my heart when I feel the enemy creeping in!”²⁰⁹ By the third questionnaire, this person’s walk had moved beyond the 50/50 mark and is described as “becoming more victorious.”²¹⁰ They state that biblical memorization is having a great effect on them and they are excited to move on to more Scripture.²¹¹ This participant finds the disciplines invaluable but would find it more helpful to have specific passages of Scripture to memorize for their specific weaknesses.²¹² They plan to “find exact Scripture that will defend me against the exact sins that I face daily.”²¹³ Undoubtedly, memorizing and meditating upon only one passage can only accomplish so much. Nonetheless, the fact their walk is improving, and they see the importance of continuing to memorize and meditate on Scripture, demonstrates the efficacy of the workbook and these disciplines in general.

²⁰⁸ Participant #14, First Questionnaire.

²⁰⁹ Participant #14, Second Questionnaire.

²¹⁰ Participant #14, Third Questionnaire.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Participant #14, Verbal Feedback, Third Seminar.

²¹³ Participant #14, Third Questionnaire.

Participant 14's exit interview also revealed a positive correlation between biblical memorization, meditation, and spiritual warfare. They state they feel more equipped for spiritual warfare. They find being able to call to mind Scripture to be of great help. In addition, they have gained a greater understanding of the meaning of Ephesians 6:10-18, thereby gaining greater wisdom for spiritual warfare. Moreover, they now possess a "greater understanding of where and whom the battles are coming from and how great our God is to get us through and help us win those fights."²¹⁴

Lastly, Participant #16 presented an interesting case for how the seminars and workbook could work outside of the traditional face-to-face process. This participant lives out of state and was unable to be physically present for any seminar. However, their daughter, who was physically present, was able to videotape the seminars. This participant then mailed the researcher their completed workbook full of notes. Additionally, the exit interview they filled out contains rich qualitative data. It should be noted that this participant is in their fifties and has been a believer for decades. Consider their own words regarding participation in the project:

After participating in this biblical memorization and meditation study I have become so much more aware of the importance of having Scripture in my mind and heart. I now realize that when I have His word in my mind and heart I am so much more ready to allow His Spirit to be in me. I am then more open to hearing His voice and hopefully willing to follow His lead in service in the tasks He may be asking of me. This study also showed me, on a much deeper level the meaning of what it is to put on the "Armor of God." I now think on the meaning of these words daily throughout the day sometimes.²¹⁵

This participant testifies that because of practicing biblical memorization and meditation, they are significantly more willing to be led by God's Spirit and obey God's Word. The participant then lists the ways they plan to use biblical memorization and meditation going

²¹⁴ Participant #14, Exit Interview.

²¹⁵ Participant #16, Exit Interview.

forward. The list includes using these disciplines “to encourage myself,” “to stand firm,” and “to ward off fears, insecurities, and spiritual attacks.”²¹⁶ Hence, in their own words, Participant #14 provides powerful testimony that practicing biblical memorization and meditation has caused and will continue to enable them to be more effective in the spiritual battle.

In summary, the qualitative data from the questionnaires and exit interviews yielded a positive correlation between the disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation and one’s victory in spiritual warfare. Some already practiced these disciplines to varying degrees and expressed that it affected their warfare against the world, flesh, and devil in a positive regard. For many others, these disciplines were entirely new. Some increased their spiritual sobriety and vigilance. Others saw their spiritual walk move from mediocre to increasing levels of victory. Participants 7 and 8 became hopeful that real change and victory were possible.

All who completed the exit interviews testified that practicing biblical memorization and meditation for thirty days made them more equipped for spiritual warfare. The only exception to this result was Participant #4. However, Participant #4 stated the practice was helpful for Christian growth, Christian living, and purity of mind. These are all vital components of genuine spiritual warfare.

All in all, the data yielded the anticipated results. It proves a positive correlation between practicing the spiritual disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation and one’s victory in spiritual warfare. The qualitative data also yielded some expected comments. For instance, Participant #14 desired to memorize specific passages for particular sins they struggle with. It is expected that Ephesians 6:10-18 does not have all the information one needs to walk victoriously in spiritual warfare. The important thing is that memorizing Ephesians 6:10-18 gave her

²¹⁶ Participant #16, Exit Interview.

awareness of the principles of spiritual warfare, and the workbook inculcated the skills for how to go about memorizing successfully in the future.

The only genuine surprise to the researcher was the lack of any negative response. While he believes in the value of biblical memorization and meditation, he expected some criticism and negative feedback. However, this would probably have occurred in a larger sample size.

In sum, both the quantitative and qualitative data have been analyzed. In each scenario, the data confirmed the prediction made in Chapter 3. It was predicted that if participants memorized and meditated upon Ephesians 6:10-18 for thirty days they would be more effective in spiritual warfare. In short, the data supports the thesis.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter will address the “so what” question after analyzing the data. In other words, what are the implications of this research? To answer that question, the chapter will discuss final observations, data that surprised the researcher, suggest new applications of the *Memorization and Meditation Manual*, provide recommendations for duplicating the study in a different context, and survey areas where future research could occur.

Findings

The conclusion of the thesis project is that biblical memorization and meditation are indeed effective means of spiritual warfare. Whether lies and deception come from one’s own flesh, the world, or the devil, the source of truth to combat those lies is the same. In other words, one fights all three foes with the same sword of truth, the Word of God. All participants in the action research showed improvement, no matter how small, in their spiritual life by practicing biblical memorization and meditation. Evangelicalism is full of people hungry for spiritual direction. Being able to direct believers to proactively do something that will improve their victory against sin and temptation is remarkable.

The other conclusion of the project is that the disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation need to be recovered. These are disciplines that are unfamiliar to, or unpracticed by far too many believers, particularly biblical meditation. Some participants had practiced biblical memorization before. Two participants even memorized the entire book of James. Biblical meditation was new to virtually all participants. However, none were engaged in both biblical memorization and meditation in an ongoing and systematic way. The literature review explained the absence and retrieval of biblical meditation among evangelicals. It is hoped that this project will aid in that retrieval project.

Believers ought to practice biblical memorization and meditation as lifelong spiritual disciplines. Moreover, they ought to proceed systematically as they do so. There are two aspects to this process. First, believers need to understand and practice the ways that biblical meditation and memorization as spiritual disciplines work together in the mind to create correct attitudes in spiritual warfare. This thesis demonstrates this synergism between the disciplines. Second, believers should work systematically through specific issues in their lives, memorizing and meditating upon passages relevant to specific sins or spiritual deceptions they are prone to fail at. They also ought to systematically memorize and meditate upon Bible passages that summarize key topics in biblical and systematic theology, such as justification, the atonement, and the new heavens and new earth. Additionally, they ought to memorize and meditate upon extended passages of Scripture, including whole books of the Bible. All three methods of biblical meditation are necessary because it is the most efficient way to meditate on the whole counsel of God without getting bogged down in one part for too long.

Surprises

While much of the data was expected by this researcher, he was surprised that there was virtually no negative feedback. In other words, he expected that some participants would not find biblical memorization and meditation helpful for spiritual warfare. There could be various reasons someone might come to that conclusion.

For instance, some participants might have a deeply rooted and protracted sin problem, such as addiction to pornography. Succumbing to such a temptation falls within the realm of spiritual warfare. This researcher does not expect biblical memorization and meditation to quickly solve that person's problem. Yet ongoing practice of these disciplines should yield victorious results. It could be that such a person simply did not take part in the study. However,

judging from the questionnaires, it is likely that at least one participant did struggle with this sin. Indeed, this individual is one of those who found the project most helpful.

Other reasons someone might not have benefited from this study include erroneous views on spiritual warfare. Participant #4 did seem to hold some of these false views. In the exit interview, they stated they found the project helpful for Christian living but not for spiritual warfare. This writer thought more participants might hold such ideas, given the popularity of spiritual warfare literature. While the seminars and workbook provide brief teaching on some of the questions in the field of spiritual warfare, such as the demonization of believers, this researcher wondered if it was enough to counteract the wrong views that are so popular.

Of course, another reason why someone may not have benefited from the study is that a participant simply failed to put in the time and effort. While the workbook is straightforward, it does require hard work and commitment.

Given a larger sample size, this researcher expects more negative feedback would have resulted. However, the positive results make sense given the power of the Word of God and most believers having never practiced biblical memorization and meditation before.

Replication

As was stated in the introduction, Calvary Chapel churches, like most evangelical churches are theologically severed from much of church history. This research project utilizes methods and ideas from previous eras of the church, especially the Puritan era. Yet, this project was met with acceptance in a Calvary Chapel church. That is why this author believes that even churches that fear other theological traditions can appreciate insights from church history when approached in the right way.

Having achieved successful results at Calvary Chapel of the Hills, it is hoped similar interventions will occur. Whether such interventions occur at neighboring churches or within the Calvary Chapel movement, the process would differ little. Two options for replicating this study will be proposed, one for individuals and a second for small groups.

For small groups, a leader should be selected who is experienced in the disciplines of biblical memorization and meditation. Ideally, the leader should be someone who has regularly engaged in these disciplines for at least six months, preferably a year. These are disciplines that require time to grow in. Moreover, cultivating these disciplines has a transformative effect on someone. Therefore, having a leader who has not spent time in such spiritual disciplines will mean that he or she lacks not only experience but also personal transformation that is necessary to lead others.

Once a qualified leader has emerged, then participants should meet at least three times, but more if desired. When participants meet, they should primarily discuss the spiritual benefit of what they are learning. Sometimes participants can fixate on the minutia of memorization methods and forget that memorization is only a means to an end. That end is twofold. First, it is the ability to recall the Word of God whenever and wherever one finds themselves. Second, memorizing Ephesians 6:10-18 is a means of spiritual forming an individual.

An individual could also use the workbook on their own. The only drawbacks to this method would be a lack of accountability and fellowship. Yet for the disciplined and self-motivated individual, these drawbacks should not be an obstacle. The benefits of the workbook should be the same since the lessons are intended for use by an individual.

New Applications

One of the principles that this study sought to substantiate is the necessity of memorization and meditation for spiritual transformation. In other words, information must be cemented through memorization and meditation for someone to experience change, especially lasting change. This writer believes the results of this study substantiate such a belief. Several applications have emerged as a result.

First, any number of topical studies could employ the principles that were utilized in this research project. For example, one could create a workbook devoted to sanctification. While the broader topic of “sanctification” is related to spiritual warfare, they are not synonymous concepts. Spiritual formation workbooks exist, but none utilize the synergy between biblical memorization and meditation to promote spiritual formation. Another fruitful study would be a guided memorization and meditation workbook that surveys the major themes of either biblical or systematic Theology. These would be lengthier workbooks but could employ the same principles and approach as this thesis project. Again, what would set such workbooks apart would be the emphasis on permanent retention of the material through a practice of biblical meditation and memorization techniques discussed in Chapter 3, along with having the information transform participants and readers on the heart level.

Second, the guided workbook approach could be applied to whole books of the Bible. What prevents many people from memorizing a whole book of the Bible is a lack of guidance. A workbook would provide that guidance and structure. Due to the size of most books of the Bible, the workbook would not be as detailed as the workbook on Ephesians 6:10-18. It would instead contain abbreviated prompts on how to use the memorization and meditation techniques to memorize the Bible book. For instance, one should first start by memorizing and meditating upon a basic outline of a Bible book, followed by the contents of the chapters. This approach

provides an interpretive framework for any given book. Only after doing that is one ready to memorize the actual book word for word. Such a workbook would also include helps such as key insights on difficult passages, word studies, and so forth. That way, when people encounter difficulties in the text, they do not need to halt their memorization progress but have the information they need at their fingertips. It would also include prompts to spark meditation.

Third, understanding that one does not truly *know* something until one has memorized it should influence theological education. For most of his life, this researcher (like many others) had learned to memorize information only to pass a test. However, this form of memorization trains one's memory to retain information for only a very short time. The exact opposite approach should be used in theological education.

Students should be encouraged to learn how to memorize the material they are learning for a lifetime. As a result, they may cover less information in Seminary. However, they will be able to retain far more. Additionally, guidance should be given on how to perform a periodic review. It will always be necessary to continually review material, no matter how effective the memorization techniques may be.

Moreover, memorization and meditation could also comprise a greater portion of the theological curriculum itself. Seminarians could be encouraged to learn and memorize the major themes of all sixty-six books of the Bible. In addition, they could memorize a key verse that highlights the theme of the book. Knowing the basic content of all the biblical books would be an immense help to any pastor or theologian.

Additionally, memorizing and meditating upon a whole book of the Bible, or a large section of scripture like the Sermon on the Mount, would be a powerful transformative journey for a seminary student. Since the primary qualifications for church leaders are moral, not

intellectual, such an exercise could arguably better prepare a student for ministry. Consider the spiritual benefit of meditating paragraph by paragraph through John's Gospel, for instance, or the letter of Ephesians. Few would question the profound spiritual benefit of performing such an exercise, yet few are doing it. If theological education aims to produce transformed people, and not merely educated people, these types of activities should receive greater emphasis.

In summary, this writer believes that the approach used in the *Memorization and Meditation Manual* could easily be applied to other projects with great benefit. Some of these projects could be topical in nature, while others could be an extended passage of Scripture, even a whole book of the Bible. Additionally, this writer would like to see theological education place a greater emphasis on learning for a lifetime. To that end, he hopes to see these two classical disciplines as well as others receive greater emphasis in Seminary curriculums in order to profoundly shape students both intellectually and spiritually.

Further Research

Having demonstrated that biblical memorization and meditation is an effective means of spiritual warfare for congregants of Calvary Chapel of the Hills, several areas deserve further study. These areas range from studying participants long term to researching how these disciplines could help people with more specific problems such as intrusive and unwanted thoughts.

Long Term Studies

Perhaps the most significant issue deserving further attention is the length of time participants are studied. This study, start to finish, comprised thirty-seven days. Memorization and meditation are disciplines that take time to develop. The more one practices these disciplines, the better one becomes at them. In addition, the longer one practices these

disciplines, the more content one will have memorized. Hence, the more content one has available to draw upon during times of temptation or trial. Therefore, it is logical to expect that one would be more victorious in spiritual warfare the longer one practices these disciplines.

Consequently, tracking and researching participants over the span of several years would be desirable. The difficulty with this type of study is funding and interest. It is difficult to get people to commit to a thirty-day study, let alone a study lasting several years. In addition, one would need funding to be able to adequately do this type of research.

The need for long-term study can be artificially met, however, by doing historical research. This paper mentioned several believers of old who memorized enormous portions of Scripture. For instance, John Chrysostom memorized most, if not all the New Testament.²¹⁷ Thomas Cranmer and Nicholas Ridley both memorized the New Testament by heart.²¹⁸ It is said that Martin Luther memorized nearly the entire Bible in Latin.²¹⁹ Also, John Wesley memorized most of the Greek New Testament. As R. Kent Hughes states so well, “Effective Christian warriors are bound with God’s truth.”²²⁰ So, one could do biographical research on those known to be “Christian warriors” and see if there are any who did not memorize significant amounts of Scripture, as well as what are the notable and shared characteristics of those who devotedly memorized Scripture.

One could also do biographical research on those saints who began well but did not finish well. If one could ascertain their devotional habits and find out that memorization and meditation were not habits that they cultivated, that too would be confirmation of the thesis. When the

²¹⁷ Chris Hall, “Developing a Memory Soaked in Scripture,” *Renovare*, accessed November 19, 2022, <https://renovare.org/articles/developing-a-memory-soaked-in-scripture>.

²¹⁸ Evans, *How to Memorize the Bible*, 8.

²¹⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 296.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

presence of these disciplines makes “Christian warriors,” and the absence of them makes for defeated Christians, such biographical research would be a powerful argument that both meditation and memorization truly are an effective means of spiritual warfare.

Habit Formation

A related issue that merits further study is the area of habit formation. Several participants made statements to the researcher that the most important part of the project for them was that it forced them to make time to memorize and meditate.²²¹ Likewise, another participant requested guidance for knowing how to continue to practice these disciplines long term. The question is, what will happen to these participants without a guided workbook and the commitment of a research study to motivate them? Will they be able to continue these disciplines long-term?

Whether an individual can form the habit of practicing biblical memorization and meditation will likely determine their ongoing victory in spiritual warfare. More specifically, participants will likely need to review Ephesians 6:10-18 periodically for it to continue to strengthen them in the spiritual battle. As time elapses and they no longer bring those truths to their mind, it is likely that any progress made will be lost.

A good analogy is that of physical fitness. Many people get excited about physical fitness for a short season and see good immediate results. However, only those who can make exercise a habit and weave it into the fabric of their lives will continue to experience good results. For those who only make New Year’s resolutions and quickly forsake them, all the improvements they make will quickly be lost. Likewise, many participants in the project began to practice biblical memorization and meditation for the first time. For the first time, they experienced what it was

²²¹ Comments made by participants 3, 9, and 14 during seminars 2 and 3.

like to put Psalm 1 into action by meditating day and night upon Scripture. The initial difference in their thought life could be dramatic. However, more substantial changes in their thought life might take longer to achieve.

This researcher hypothesizes that individuals who develop a simple and effective plan for ongoing Scripture memorization and meditation will have good success in spiritual warfare. Likewise, those who fail to develop this habit and weave these disciplines into the fabric of their lives will most likely experience failure and defeat in spiritual warfare. This is true for most areas of Christian living, and spiritual warfare is no different.

Content to Be Memorized

The Scripture passages which are selected to be memorized are also a variable worth further study. This study saw good results with the selection of Ephesians 6:10-18. Had this study chosen a topical approach, one wonders what the results would have been. Perhaps passages that deal with common temptations and deceptions could have been used. Participant #14 stated she was eager to find passages that addressed her specific struggles. She might have benefited more from a topical approach. Others might have benefited less. This question is worth pursuing.

If one chooses an extended passage of Scripture, as this study did, one wonders how the results would differ if a different passage were selected. For instance, one could use the narrative of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness recorded in Luke 4 and Matthew 4. This passage has no didactic portion. Hence, participants would not be memorizing various resources to fight the spiritual battle. However, they would be memorizing and meditating upon the way Jesus fought.

In other words, successful spiritual warfare is perfectly modeled in this passage. For some, this method could yield better results. Yet, for others, it could prove less helpful.²²²

Hence, it was shown that biblical memorization and meditation are effective means of spiritual warfare. The questions which remain are what elements of the project can be augmented and still yield positive results. The approach and the content are significant factors worthy of further exploration. Topical approaches versus extended passages of Scripture are important variables that could greatly affect results. Additionally, the specific Scriptures which are chosen could prove more helpful or less helpful to people. Only further study will provide the answer.

Means of Instruction

Another area worth studying is the means of inculcating these disciplines. While it was tangential to this author's thesis, he chose to use a workbook to foster biblical memorization and meditation. There were several reasons for this. To reiterate, he believes that new things are best learned by putting them into practice and in small increments. In other words, a workbook format allows learning by increments to take place. The results were positive. However, one could pursue a study in which the only variable that was changed was the means of instruction. What would have happened in this study if lectures were given as the primary means of guidance instead of the workbook? How would that have changed the results?

This author believes that the results would not have been as positive. A workbook essentially takes one by the hand and leads them. Even the best lecture or some other means can leave many people feeling unsure of how to do something themselves. Also, even the best lectures often leave people unaffected practically. They sit and listen, but go home and are not inspired to put the words they heard into action. The workbook provides a structure that other forms

²²² See Appendix K for a topical listing of verses relevant to spiritual warfare created by the author.

of instruction lack. Hence, measuring the value of a workbook approach for inculcating spiritual disciplines would be a worthy study.

Case Studies

The final area for further research would be conducting case studies on the affects of biblical memorization and meditation upon personal spiritual warfare. Much of the literature that promotes “deliverance ministry” uses anecdotes involving emotional healing of one kind or another. One vivid example comes from the recent book by Sam Storms titled *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: A Comprehensive Guide*.²²³ He shares an anecdote involving his wife.

Sam did something thoughtless and offended his wife. Later that night, his wife heard a voice saying, “God hasn’t made you happy, Sam hasn’t made you happy, come with me, and I’ll make you happy.”²²⁴ As the story goes, Ann (Sam’s wife) made an inner vow never to be vulnerable with God or Sam ever again. Therefore, Ann “found herself in a daily conflict with the voice in her head.”²²⁵ The thoughts ranged from dissatisfaction and bitterness but eventually turned into perverse sexual images. After eighteen years of this struggle, Ann attended a worship event and received prayer. During this event, Ann was “delivered.”²²⁶

The literature on spiritual warfare is replete with stories like this one. Without discounting the reality that Ann experienced demonic temptation and oppression, this researcher would like to know how biblical memorization and meditation might have helped someone like Ann. In fact, it is one of the primary reasons that led him to pursue this avenue of study. There

²²³ Storms, *Spiritual Warfare*, 158-163.

²²⁴ Ibid., 158.

²²⁵ Ibid, 159.

²²⁶ Ibid., 162.

seem to be several ways biblical memorization and meditation may have helped Ann and spared her eighteen painful years.

First, Ann had some areas of sin that were left unchecked. She held faulty views about God, that Scripture could have corrected. She held unrealistic expectations of marriage, which, again, Scripture could have corrected. Ann also let the sun go down on her anger in direct violation of Ephesians 4:26, thereby giving the devil an opportunity.²²⁷ In addition; she seemed to entertain these rogue thoughts rather than resist the devil so that he would flee (James 4:7). She did not keep short accounts and she did not fill her mind with truth. Indeed, it seems all of Ann's problems could have been corrected by practicing biblical memorization and meditation.

In summary, Ann failed in her walk with God. The harsh reality is that Sam's wife lived in an unrepentant state for almost two decades. Again, without discounting the reality of her deliverance through prayer, this writer would like to suggest that such deliverance was wholly unnecessary had Ann simply repented, resisted the devil and drawn near to God (James 4:7). Moreover, he fears that suggesting anecdotally that the only answer to someone with Ann's struggles is deliverance from outside of oneself will leave people trapped and stagnant. God has already provided the resources for spiritual warfare, and they need to be utilized.

Had Ann meditated upon the truth, she would have seen that all the thoughts she was entertaining were lies. Additionally, she would have filled her mind with true, good, and beautiful things (Philippians 4:8-9). Moreover, she would have been vigilant and aware of the enemy's wiles and attempts to destroy her.

So, involving people like Ann in biblical memorization and meditation is a much-needed study. Specifically, this study can especially help someone whose life is an "ever-increasing hell

²²⁷ Storms, *Spiritual Warfare*, 159.

on earth” because of the battle in their mind.²²⁸ This writer was such a person. He can attest that while the battle for the mind is just that, a “battle,” it is manageable through biblical memorization and meditation. Victory is possible.

Rather than perform a study where characteristics such as spiritual sobriety, being equipped, and being dependent upon God are measured, this future study would measure continuous mental peace. Indeed, having a tranquil mind seems to be a significant result of a victorious spiritual warfare. In a church setting, one could recruit volunteers who suffer from negative and obsessive thoughts which they find intrusive. In other words, they do not want to have these thoughts. Then, one could instruct them to begin resisting these thoughts by practicing biblical memorization and meditation. This study is badly needed in the evangelical world today and would be a great benefit to the body of Christ.

In conclusion, the implications of the effectiveness of memorization and meditation as a means of effective spiritual warfare have only been briefly discussed. Moreover, avenues for new applications of this research beyond the realm of spiritual warfare were suggested. Lastly, several important areas of further study were addressed. These ranged from long-term studies to case studies. Essentially, biblical memorization and meditation renew the mind. These disciplines renew the mind for victory in spiritual warfare when passages pertaining to spiritual warfare are chosen. However, that is only one application. The Bible can renew the mind in any area that the Scriptures address. The only limitation is the believers willingness to practice these disciplines.

²²⁸ Storms, *Spiritual Warfare*, 159.

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APPENDIX A

Spiritual-Warfare Survey

Instructions: Read the questions below and circle which number best corresponds. It is important to answer these questions *honestly* and not what you think the best response is. It is best to go with your initial response and not to overthink it.

Question 1 – To what degree are you consciously aware you are in a spiritual battle?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 2 – To what extent do you view the trials and temptations of life as having a supernatural origin?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 3 – Rate to what degree you are consciously aware that you have a powerful and intelligent enemy who is actively trying to destroy you?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 4 – To what extent are you “on guard” against ways the enemy might try to exploit you?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 5 – Rate how much you agree with this statement. “If I rely on my own power to walk victoriously and stand against the enemy, I will most *certainly* fail.”

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 6 – To what extent do you view prayer as your primary lifeline in the spiritual battle?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 7 – How vital is **truth** to your walk currently? (That is, truth regarding doctrine and ideas in general.)

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 8 – How important is it to you that you see yourself clothed in the righteousness of Christ?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 9 – Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement. “Apart from **faith** in God and His word, the enemy will certainly destroy me.”

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 10 – How significant is the return of Jesus for your outlook and decision making right now?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 11 – Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement. “I should prepare for temptations by finding a relevant Scripture passage.”

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 12 – Rate how much this statement reflects your own walk with God: “While not perfect, *victory*, rather than defeat, is the general characteristic of my life.”

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 13 – To what degree are you most often successful in resisting temptations when they come?

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

Question 14 – Rate the time you currently spend memorizing and meditating upon Scripture.

Little		Some		Much
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B
Spiritual-Warfare Questionnaire

Instructions: In the space allotted, write as much or as little as is necessary to adequately represent yourself on the issues raised.

1: Describe your vigilance and sobriety regarding the enemy. For example...how are you actively protecting (or not) yourself from sins you are prone to?

2: Describe your walk. Is it more victorious over sin? Or more defeated by sin?

3: Write about *how* you resist the world, the flesh, and the devil. What do you do? What resources do you rely upon?

4: Describe your relationship to biblical memorization. **First Meeting** - Have you memorized much before? If so, how much? What affect has it had on you? **Second and Third Meeting** – What affect is it having upon you?

5: Write about biblical meditation. **First Meeting** - Is this something new to you or do you practice it regularly? If so, how much? What affect has it had on you? **Second** and **Third Meeting** – What affect is it having upon you?

6: How would you characterize and describe your *dependence* upon God?

APPENDIX C

Feedback – Exit Interview Question

Upon completion of the *Memorization and Meditation* workbook please answer the following question.

After practicing biblical memorization and meditation for thirty days, and completing the workbook, do you feel you are more equipped for spiritual warfare? Why or why not?

APPENDIX D

Can A Believer Be Demon-Possessed?

Perhaps the single most controversial issue in spiritual warfare today is whether genuine believers can be demon-possessed. Ever since Merrill Unger changed his mind on this issue a growing number of evangelicals support the idea that Christians can indeed be possessed by demons. In 1952 Unger published *Biblical Demonology*, where he concluded Christians could not have a demon.²²⁹ Then twenty years later, Unger published further work where he advocated that Christians can indeed be indwelt and controlled by demons.²³⁰ Clinton Arnold of Talbot School of Theology explains Unger's change of heart: "His change of perspective came as a result of numerous letters from missionaries all over the world claiming that they had witnessed cases of true believers manifesting possession behavior."²³¹ Bible prophecy expert Mark Hitchcock, a critic of this view, points out that "people who maintain that believers can be demon possessed often base their conclusion on personal, subjective experience rather than God's Word."²³²

Possession vs. Demonization

Most advocates of deliverance ministry also advocate the demonization of believers. However, they introduce what appears to them, a very important distinction. For example, Charles Kraft typifies this approach when he argues that "demon possession" is an improper

²²⁹ Beilby and Eddy state that "Those who hold that a Christian can, in fact, come under direct influence of a demon point not infrequently to a remarkable reversal of opinion on this matter by the well-known evangelical Old Testament scholar Merri Unger." *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 50. For original citation see Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology: A Study of Spiritual Forces behind the Present World Unrest* (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1952).

²³⁰ Merrill F. Unger, *Demons in the World Today: A Study of Occultism in the light of God's Word* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1971); *What Demons Can Do to Saints* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1977).

²³¹ Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions*, 76.

²³² Mark Hitchcock, *101 Answers to Questions about Satan, Demons & Spiritual Warfare* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2014), 185.

translation of the Greek terms.²³³ He prefers the term “demonized” so as not to give the impression the enemy has more power than he really does. Neil Anderson employs the same distinction. He argues that “The problem word is ‘possession,’ which doesn’t occur in the original Greek text. Possession implies ownership.”²³⁴ Yet, Anderson also believes Christians can indeed be demonized or have a demon. The distinction between “ownership” and “influence” is common parlance for those who believe in the demonization of believers.²³⁵

Dr. Michael Heiser, the former scholar in residence of Logos, stops short of suggesting that demons “inhabit” believers and cause the “bizarre physical torment of episodes in the Gospels.”²³⁶ Yet he too argues that while Christians cannot be owned by Satan, they can indeed be demonized. To Heiser, demonization includes “persecution, harassment, being captivated by false teaching, and enslavement to sin.”²³⁷ In sum, there is a spectrum of belief among those who advocate the “demonization” of believers. To people like Kraft and Anderson, demonization is synonymous with being inhabited by a demon. Whereas for others like Heiser, demonization amounts to severe oppression and bondage.

Virtually all recent proponents of the demonization of believers utilize the arguments developed by Clinton Arnold in his book *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*. While Arnold’s work is dated, being over twenty years old now, it remains relevant because his arguments are embraced by those evangelicals who support the idea of demon possession among

²³³ Charles R. Kraft, *Power Encounters*, loc 1734.

²³⁴ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 31.

²³⁵ Sam Storms also utilizes this distinction. He states, “The Bible never once talks about *demon possession*” and that “to ‘have’ a demon is to be ‘demonized’ or inhabited by a demon.” *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 151-152.

²³⁶ Heiser, *Demons*, 325.

²³⁷ Ibid.

believers. For example, Dr. Michael Heiser and Sam Storms both enthusiastically embrace Arnold's distinction between ownership versus being demonized.

Hence, Arnold's original argument deserves a closer look since it is the exegetical fuel for many modern proponents. Arnold's work contains some internal contradictions. For instance, in one place he states: "*A Christian cannot be owned and controlled by a demon.*"²³⁸ Then, elsewhere, he states that Christians can be profoundly influenced by evil spirits, "even to the extent that it can be said that they are inhabited and controlled by demons."²³⁹ This apparent contradiction is perhaps attributed to his nuancing of the word "possession." Arnold prefers the transliteration *demonized*, as it does not carry with it the concept of ownership.²⁴⁰ He therefore thinks that "the issue of ownership is settled once and for all," but the question of whether it is "possible for Christians to yield control of their bodies to a demonic spirit in the same way that they yield to the power of sin," is not.²⁴¹ However, for Arnold and his followers, the issue of "ownership" amounts to little more than securing one's destiny and status. This view entails that believe Christians are irrevocably set apart as God's property and yet at the same time can be both inhabited and controlled by demons.

Arnold's primary exegetical argument is taken from Ephesians 4:26-27, which reads "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." The term "translated 'foothold' is the Greek word *topos*."²⁴² Arnold writes, "The most

²³⁸ Heiser, *Demons*, 79.

²³⁹ Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions*, 88. He also states that "We have already demonstrated that there is sufficient biblical, theological, and historical evidence to assert a Christian can be inhabited and controlled by a demonic spirit" (114).

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 80.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*.

²⁴² Arnold, *3 Questions*, 88.

natural way to interpret the use of *topos* in Ephesians 4:27 is the idea of inhabitable space.”²⁴³ Thus, he believes that the passage teaches us that believers can relinquish ground to the enemy through sin and eventually find themselves controlled by a demon.²⁴⁴ One recent publication challenges this interpretation, however. Chuck Lawless and William F. Cook offer the following critique: “I do not find the thought that this verse is intended to teach the demonization of a believer to be very convincing. I think the more probable interpretation is the idea of opportunity (a foot in the door).”²⁴⁵ Following Arnold’s analysis, one area deserving further study is the Greek word *topos*. The amount of exegetical weight this one verse carries in the minds of recent writers is enormous. A thorough examination of its use in the New Testament and Classical Greek would be fruitful to see if in fact Paul has in mind the idea of “inhabitable space.” The primary exegetical argument for the demonization of believers would then either be established or demolished depending upon the results.

A Matter of Location

Sam Storms has made a recent contribution to the topic in his newly released title *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*. Storms work is sure to be influential due to the wide reading it will have. J.P. Moreland, an Arminian, and Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, both declare emphatically that “this is the best book” on the subject to date.²⁴⁶ Thus his work deserves careful attention.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, 144.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ J.P. Moreland, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: A Comprehensive Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021).

Storms also endorses Arnold's exegesis regarding Ephesians 4:26-27.²⁴⁷ He concludes: "Yes, in the final analysis, my opinion is that a Christian can be demonized."²⁴⁸ Yet, to Storms, the entire debate reduces to a matter of "location." He asks, "of what practical significance is the question? In other words, will the location of the demonic spirit affect how I pray for and minister to the person who is under attack?"²⁴⁹ This is, of course, a rhetorical question to Storms.

Another area in the literature that needs further attention and clarification is what constitutes "possession."²⁵⁰ Storms himself seems contradictory on the matter. On the one hand, Storms lists the way the New Testament depicts those who are demonized or demon inhabited. He lists evidences such as extraordinary physical strength, fits of violent behavior, physical maladies, an alien voice speaking through the victim's vocal cords, and even clairvoyance.²⁵¹ Then, on the other hand, Storms gives anecdotes of demonization which essentially amount to victims experiencing the enemies' powers of suggestion.²⁵² He is not alone in this procedure. Neil Anderson also depicts demonization among Christians as experiencing negative thoughts²⁵³ and emotions that one does not believe to originate from themselves.²⁵⁴

On one level, this distinction in attributes of demon possession is semantic. If people are truly oppressed by evil spirits and deliverance ministries set them free, it does not altogether matter what terms are used. However, on another level it does matter. To suggest that those who

²⁴⁷ Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 182.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 187.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

²⁵⁰ For a clinical perspective on what constitutes "possession" see Marta Illueca, "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Spirit Possession and Deliverance Ministries," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 72, no. 4 (2018): 269-277.

²⁵¹ Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 155-156.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 160-162, 186-187.

²⁵³ Christopher C.H. Cook, *Hearing Voices, Demonic and Divine* (London, UK: Routledge, 2018).

²⁵⁴ Anderson, *Bondage Breaker*, 34.

are transferred into the kingdom of light can then be inhabited and even come under the control of demons is certainly alarming. Moreover, to suggest that those who feel severely tempted and harassed with negative thoughts and emotions may in fact be indwelt by demons is a major pastoral issue. It could be that one merely needs to give more attention to sanctifying the thought life. Great care and prudence are required, regardless of which view is in fact correct. Moreover, the remedy follows the ailment. A previously stated, if one is demon possessed, then one needs an exorcism. If one is demon oppressed, then spiritual resistance is required.²⁵⁵ As James says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).” The location of the demon does matter.

Ephesians 4:27

A look at Ephesians 4:27 is needed because it is the primary exegetical anchor for the belief that believers can be demonized. The arguments to be critiqued here will not be repeated, as they were already explicated in the literature review. This section will presume one has already read the literature review. The text reads: “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no *opportunity* to the devil (Eph. 4:26-27).”²⁵⁶ It is worth noting that many major academic commentaries do not even mention Arnold’s suggestion that *topos* means inhabitable space.²⁵⁷

Now, it could be that the case that the majority are missing something. Or, more likely, Arnold is looking for a proof-text to support his belief. Only one of four commentaries surveyed even acknowledged that *topos* can mean physical space. For instance, Grant R. Osborne, in his Ephesians commentary, recognizes that while *topos* does mean “place,” he believes that Paul is

²⁵⁵ John MacArthur, *Standing Strong: How to Resist the Enemy of Your Soul* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2012).

²⁵⁶ Emphasis mine. *Opportunity* is how the ESV renders the Greek word *topos*.

²⁵⁷ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 863; Cohick, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 260; Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 142.

clearly using the word metaphorically. He states, “when anger turns into bitterness, we are giving Satan an opportunity to defeat us spiritually and to decimate our family or our church.”²⁵⁸ Therefore, David Powlison rightly argues that when “Paul says in Ephesians 4:27 not to give the devil a foothold, he is referring to divisions within the body of Christ.”²⁵⁹ Although Satan can exert considerable influence in the life of a believer and even the church, it is an *external* influence. Contrary to Sam Storms, the location does matter. It is one thing to be assaulted. It is quite another to have an alien intelligence exert control from the inside. As Borgman and Ventura put the matter, “The New Testament emphasis is that the devil’s influence on the Christian is primarily deceptive scheming and trickery, *not* indwelling and controlling.”²⁶⁰

Safe in Christ

The first foundational theological structure to establish comes by way of correction to a popular and growing trend. There may have been a time and place where such a discussion would be superfluous and unnecessary. However, the current literature on spiritual warfare demands interaction with this idea. The argument that believers are safe in Christ has three legs. They are: the sufficiency of Scripture, Christ’s victory over the powers of darkness, and the believer’s union with Him.²⁶¹

Sufficiency of Scripture

Another argument against the demonization of believers and thus deliverance ministry as a means of Christian growth is the argument from the sufficiency of Scripture. This argument has two parts. The first comes from the example in the Old Testament. It is often taught that people

²⁵⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017), 102.

²⁵⁹ David Powlison, *Safe & Sound*, 22.

²⁶⁰ Borgman and Ventura, *Spiritual Warfare*, 1910. Emphasis original.

²⁶¹ Colossians 1:13-14, Ephesians 2:2.

with a history of occult involvement need some sort of deliverance to have any hope of a normal Christian life.²⁶² However, it is often forgotten that many people in the Old Testament engaged in some of the most egregious forms of occult activity.

Consider Manasseh, who worshipped idols, burnt his sons in human sacrifice, used fortune-tellers, omens, sorcery, consulted mediums, and even necromancers.²⁶³ Eventually, while bound in chains and sent to exile, he humbled himself and prayed to God. God heard his prayer, restored him, and he lived out his days as a man of faith. As Powlison says, “the degree of spiritual perversity in his sin did not change either the mode of ministry or the dynamics of change.”²⁶⁴ In other words, no special rituals or processing of his spiritual past occurred. He simply repented, forsook his evil ways, and God restored him. Modern deliverance ministers would have presented the hopeless situation of looking for demons’ legal rights to Manasseh’s soul, what possible soul-ties he may have to this false god and so forth.

Second, the sufficiency of Scripture demands that scholars adhere closely to the way the Bible describes demonization.²⁶⁵ Those demonized are afflicted physically, mentally, or both. Often the impact of the alien entity is quite clear and striking. Yet, deliverance ministry often confuses moral evil with situational evil. They often claim to cast out ‘demons’ of lust, anger, gluttony, and other sin patterns. Neither Jesus nor the Apostles ever link demonization with sinful patterns of behavior.²⁶⁶ Rather, demons cause affliction and torment to be alleviated. Sam Storms is guilty of this confusion in many of the anecdotes he shares as examples of

²⁶² Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 61.

²⁶³ 2 Kings 21:11

²⁶⁴ Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 62.

²⁶⁵ John MacArthur, “The Sufficiency of Scripture.” *The Masters Seminary Journal* 15, no. 2 (2004): 165-174.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

“deliverance” throughout this recent book. One example in particular involves his wife and her issues with anger, bitterness and depression.²⁶⁷ This writer has no reason to doubt that Storms’ wife was being oppressed by an evil spirit. However, her problem could have been solved by repenting and correcting her thinking patterns. She harbored bitterness towards her husband that she nursed for almost twenty years. A demon can encourage her to do that sin, but she was ultimately willing to comply and not forgive. Attributing sinful behavior to demon possession robs people of their responsibility before God and stunts their spiritual growth, as they are taught true transformation requires more than what God has already given them.

In summary, Ephesians 4:27 provides little or no support for the belief that Christians can be demonized. Second, the sufficiency of Scripture is the idea that the Bible teaches all one *needs* to live a godly life. The Old Testament provides simple and straightforward examples of people coming out of the worst kind of occult involvement imaginable. Yet, the solution can be summed up in one word: repentance. Sticking with the text of Scripture also requires believers to use the categories that the Bible itself does when it comes to demonization. Nowhere are moral sin patterns attributed to a demon. Nowhere is the eradication of such fleshly tendencies attributed to exorcism. Such thinking is without any kind of Scriptural backing and ought to be abandoned. Now to present a positive case that believers are safe in Christ.

Christus Victor

The popularity of the “demonization of believers” viewpoint does provide a good opportunity to recover the importance of the Christ as victor motif. Church historian Gustaf Alan defines “*Christus Victor*” as a model of the atonement in which Christ “fights against and

²⁶⁷ Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 158-163.

triumphs over evil powers of the world.”²⁶⁸ Proponents of the demonization of believers distinguish “demonization” from “demon-possession.” However, this is a distinction without a difference. As was shown in the literature review, Clinton Arnold’s work suffers from internal contradictions. In one place he states “*A Christian cannot be owned and controlled by a demon.*”²⁶⁹ Then, elsewhere, he states that Christians can be profoundly influenced by evil spirits, “even to the extent that it can be said that they are inhabited and controlled by demons.”²⁷⁰ This is presumably an editorial oversight. However, it is one which arose because of internal tension in Arnold’s position. Sam Storms essentially repeats the same argument in his recent work.²⁷¹

To suggest that genuine believers who are bought with the blood of Christ, rescued from the kingdom of darkness, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, can be indwelt and controlled by demonic spirits is contrary the warp and woof of Christ’s victory over the powers.²⁷² Colossians states that Christ “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (2:15).” New Testament scholar Grant Osborne explains that Paul is using the imagery of Roman triumphal marches. After defeating the enemy, Roman generals would ride through the streets of Rome in a war chariot with the defeated enemy marching behind in chains.²⁷³ The point, according to Osborne, is that “both the evil powers and their minions, the

²⁶⁸ Gustaf Aulen and A.G. Hebert, *Christus Victor* (Edinburg, UK: CrossReach Publications, 2016), 13. This does not mean that other models of the atonement are thereby false, although some hold that viewpoint.

²⁶⁹ Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions*, 79.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 88. Arnold also states that “We have already demonstrated that there is sufficient biblical, theological, and historical evidence to assert a Christian can be inhabited and controlled by a demonic spirit” (114).

²⁷¹ Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 182.

²⁷² Colossians 2:15.

²⁷³ Grant R. Osborne, *Colossians & Philemon*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016) 124.

false teachers, have been defeated, and Christ's followers experience the spoils of that victory."²⁷⁴

In Ephesians, Paul also writes that Christ has been seated at the right hand of the father above every name and authority and power.²⁷⁵ In this densely packed section, Paul uses several affirmations to drive home one single point, namely that Christ is the highest power in the cosmos. The first affirmation is the language of sitting at the hand of the father, which Clinton Arnold believes harkens back to Psalm 110. In that Psalm, the expectation was that an Israelite king would one day reign with the power and authority of Yahweh himself.²⁷⁶ Second, Paul wants to clearly spell out the implications of Christ's exaltation by stating that Christ is above every principality and power. According to Arnold, "every" denotes the entire panoply of evil spirits, it is comprehensive.²⁷⁷ He thinks that Paul's point is that "Jesus is superior to all of his supernatural enemies."²⁷⁸ In short, Christ achieved a decisive victory of all evil spirits at the cross. Their hold over mankind is broken, at least for those united to Christ.

Union with Christ

Having seen the biblical witness that Christ is superior to all demons and evil spirits, the next step is demonstrating that believers share in that exalted position via union with Christ. The implicit teaching of the New Testament is that those who are in Christ are protected from demonic power by virtue of their transfer from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. They are seated with Christ in the heavens (Eph. 2:6). Jesus defeated and disarmed

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Eph. 1:20-21.

²⁷⁶ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 211.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 213.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 212.

principalities and powers in his work on the cross, disarming them (Col. 2:15). Thus, believers united with Christ share in that disarmament.²⁷⁹

Moreover, the idea that a Christian can be indwelt and controlled by a demon lacks any explicit biblical support. As William F. Cook and Chuck Lawless admirably sum up the matter “finding incontrovertible biblical evidence of believers possessed by demons is difficult to do. External demonic oppression may be so severe that it almost seems like possession, but the proposed biblical examples for such a conclusion are weak.”²⁸⁰

In summary, *believers* do not need deliverance ministry.²⁸¹ Those who teach the demonization of believers diminish the “radical and transforming power of the gospel.”²⁸² They do so in two ways. First, their teaching detracts from Christ’s victory over the powers. It does this by suggesting union with Christ is insufficient to liberate from the demonic and additional steps are necessary.

Second, those who teach demonization of believers also risk weakening a proper sense of personal responsibility, distracting from the real issues of dealing with sin in the human heart. Powlison is right to point out that there are no examples of Jesus casting out demons of lust, demons of anger or any other sin.²⁸³ Demonization is an ailment to be cured, a curse to be lifted. To confuse this with recalcitrant sin in one’s life presents a false diagnosis and a false cure. Demonic affliction and possession require exorcism and deliverance. Sin requires repentance and

²⁷⁹ Borgman and Ventura, *Spiritual Warfare*, 1898. For biblical references teaching union with Christ see: Romans 6:5, 8:9-10, Galatians 2:20, 3:27, Ephesians 2:6, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 1 John 4:13, Colossians 1:27, Colossians 2:10.

²⁸⁰ Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, 283.

²⁸¹ This is not to suggest unbelievers do not need deliverance ministry. This writer’s opinion is that such activities are perfectly appropriate.

²⁸² Borgman and Ventura, *Spiritual Warfare*, 1908.

²⁸³ Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 65.

training in righteousness. Consequently, this misdiagnosis of sin for demonization is likely to stunt spiritual growth.

One caveat is worth mentioning. The position taken here applies to *genuine* believers, those authentically united to Christ. It is certainly possible in the mind of this writer for demonic possession to be a live option for those who exhibit merely a nominal faith in Christ. This helps explain anecdotes where it may appear that believers are experiencing demonic possession.²⁸⁴ What this paper argues is that those with a *genuine* relationship to Christ and united to him are exempt from demon possession. Mere profession of faith is another story. This was the failure of the seven sons of Sceva. After the failed attempt at exorcism the evil spirit said “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you (Acts 19:15)?” All authentic victory over evil spirits requires authentic union with Christ.

²⁸⁴ Kurt Koch, *Demonology Past and Present*, 141-142.

APPENDIX E

Exorcism Today

Not only do evangelicals disagree about whether believers can be demon-possessed, they also disagree about whether exorcism itself should be happening. Those who believe in the validity of exorcism fall under the general category of “deliverance ministry.”²⁸⁵ The controversy is not over whether or not demons possess unbelievers. Nor is the controversy over the removal of demonic entities from the possessed. The issue is how. Thus, the controversy is over whether believers retain the obligation and authority to *perform* exorcisms in the mode and manner of Jesus and the Apostles. That is the issue.

One of the most prominent critics of deliverance ministry is David Powlison. He served as the Executive Director at the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation, as well as the editor of *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*.²⁸⁶ His doctoral research focused on the history of psychiatry and his main area of publication is in the field of biblical counseling.²⁸⁷ He added his voice to the discussion on spiritual warfare in 1995 when he wrote *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare*, in which he argues that “Deliverance Ministry” has drifted far afield from the biblical model. He also contributed an essay on the *Classical Approach* to spiritual warfare in the book *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*.²⁸⁸

Powlison’s approach focuses on “the flesh” as the Christian’s primary enemy. He does not deny the validity of the struggle against the world and the devil. Rather, he emphasizes that

²⁸⁵ Beilby and Eddy state that central to this model “is the conviction that demon entities can take up residence in people’s lives and that exorcism-or ‘deliverance’ ministry in one form or another is frequently required for their liberation and healing,” in the Introduction to *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 47.

²⁸⁶ “David Powlison,” Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.ccef.org/people/david-powlison>.

²⁸⁷ David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010).

²⁸⁸ David Powlison, *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 1995); *Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2019).

the primary way in which the world system and the devil attack believers is through exploiting fleshly tendencies of believers. On this approach, “spiritual warfare and Christian growth/discipleship are seen as virtually one and the same.”²⁸⁹

There are three primary concerns that Powlison has regarding deliverance ministry, which he refers to as EMM, or an ekballistic mode of ministry.²⁹⁰ First, he believes advocates of deliverance ministry wrongly conflate demonic assaults with demonic possession, thereby necessitating an exorcism.²⁹¹ Such assaults might include temptations and implanting thoughts into the mind via suggestion. According to Powlison, believers suffering such assaults need prayer and the means of grace, not “deliverance.”

Second, Powlison believes the movement confuses moral evil and situational evil. For Powlison, demonic deliverance is a subset of healing.²⁹² In other words, the Bible depicts demons as afflicting people but “supposed ‘demons’ of sin are (e.g., pride, anger, lust, addiction) never identified, spoken to, bound, or cast out.”²⁹³ Thus, Powlison believes deliverance ministers present a false diagnosis as well as a false cure. They misdiagnosis patterns of sinful behavior as the influence and control of an evil spirit. Hence, they wrongly teach the cure for such sinful behaviors is exorcism or deliverance. In summation, Powlison articulates the essence of his approach in saying, “To fight well, we do normal things. We pray-pointedly. We listen to scripture-intently.”²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ Beilby and Edy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, 35.

²⁹⁰ Powlison states “Ekballistic comes from the Greek word *ekballo* which means to “cast out.” In David Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 85.

²⁹¹ Such as temptations and the insertion of thoughts into the mind via suggestion.

²⁹² Powlison, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 114. ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ David Powlison, “Stand up to the Powers,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 31, no. 2 (2017): 51.

Third, Powlison thinks deliverance ministers are mistaken for not recognizing a general “mode shift.”²⁹⁵ He believes that Jesus and the apostles utilized what he calls the “command-control” mode and that there is a switch to a “classic mode.” Simply put, only during Jesus earthly ministry and subsequently with the unique role of the Apostles did anyone exercise special authority via verbal commands. Theologian Peter Aiken echoes the same sentiment when he says, “Although the church follows Jesus’ example to a point, the Bible teaches that there is a fundamental discontinuity between what Jesus did and what we do.”²⁹⁶ Mark Hitchcock, who agrees with the idea of a “mode shift” puts it this way, “I believe the norm today for delivering demon-possessed unbelievers is the preaching of the gospel. Evangelism is the means of exorcism.”²⁹⁷ Therefore, it would be incorrect to think opponents of deliverance ministry reject exorcism writ large. Rather, they believe that exorcism comes about when people believe in the gospel and exercise saving faith.²⁹⁸

Critics of this approach, like Greg Boyd, believe Powlison’s approach is overly domesticated. Boyd worries that this mentality reduces spiritual warfare to nothing more than normal moral struggles. Moreover, he finds the approach question begging. Boyd states that the two most frequently cited activities of Jesus aside from teaching were casting out demons and healing people of afflictions. To Boyd, there is no evidence that this kind of ministry ceased. He states, “Jesus passed this ministry and this authority on to his disciples, and according to the book of Acts, they used it in a manner that closely followed his example.”²⁹⁹ To Boyd the

²⁹⁵ Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 101-103.

²⁹⁶ Peter Aiken, "Should Reformed Believers Engage in Spiritual Warfare?" *Puritan Reformed Journal* 7, no. 1 (2015): 251.

²⁹⁷ Hitchcock, *101 Questions*, 195.

²⁹⁸ Mike McKinley also supports this approach, stating in *Did the Devil Make Me Do It?* that “nowhere in Scripture are post-resurrection believers commanded or explicitly encouraged to attempt to cast out demons” (454).

²⁹⁹ Powlison, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 168.

absence of a “command control mode” in the epistles would be due to other reasons, like the genre and occasion for writing.

To Boyd and many others, it is important that believers recognize that performing exorcisms on the demonized is just as relevant as it was in Jesus’ day. Proponents of exorcism may have intramural debates regarding the precise means of exorcism, whether simple command or something more elaborate. Yet they all agree to not perform exorcisms is to neglect a significant aspect of ministry and of setting captives free.

In sum, the central question is whether believers in Jesus retain the obligation and authority to exercise demons from the possessed in the mode and manner of Jesus and the apostles. Both sides agree that demons still possess people. Some see the gospel itself as setting people free, like Hitchcock and Powlison. Others would argue that demons are expelled through prayer. Yet others like Greg Boyd, believe Christians still have the authority to command demons to leave the possessed, just like Jesus and the Apostles.

APPENDIX F THE CONTROVERSY OVER CONTEMPLATION AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

Contemplation & Contemplative Prayer

The terms “meditation” and “contemplation” are often used interchangeably. This was true of both Western Catholic and Puritan literature of the past as well.³⁰⁰ Yet as Schwanda states, “the contemporary discussion warrants greater clarity.”³⁰¹ Hence, the terms *meditation* and *contemplation* must be sharply distinguished. Schwanda defines meditation as “the active use of the mind to engage God through reading and praying of Scripture or some other devotional practices,” and contemplation as “a loving attentiveness or grateful gazing on God.”³⁰² Fellow evangelical John Coe provides similar but less helpful definitions. Regarding meditation he states, “meditation is typically understood as a deep cogitation of the Word and work of God whereby the Spirit employs truth and love to transform the heart of the person.”³⁰³ In contrast, Coe defines contemplation as the believer opening his or her heart to attend to the Holy Spirit. He writes, “To contemplate is simply to walk with, and be with, god in all I do.”³⁰⁴ This view of contemplation is too broad and loses the defining feature of *seeing* or gazing upon God that Schwanda brings out. Thus, *meditation* is ruminating on the Word and works of God

³⁰⁰ Tom Schwanda and Timothy A. Sisemore, “Experiencing God through Head and Heart: The Puritan Practices of Meditation and Contemplation and Their Relevance to Modern Psychology,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 39, no. 1 (2020): 43.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ John Coe, “The Controversy Over Contemplation and Contemplative Prayer: A Historical, Theological, and Biblical Resolution,” in *Embracing Contemplation: Reclaiming a Christian Spiritual Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 30.

³⁰⁴ Coe, 8.

for spiritual renewal and *contemplation* is a focused meditation upon God Himself or a gazing on God.

Biblical meditation logically leads into contemplation because many passages of scripture direct believers to meditate on God Himself (Psalm 27:4, 63:1-5, 77:12, John 14:23, 17:21, 24-26, 2 Cor. 12:1-4, Eph. 3:17, Col. 2:6-7). Thus, there is fluidity to the categories of meditation and contemplation. However, the specific goals are discernible enough to warrant distinct terms. To repeat, biblical meditation aims to mediate on Scripture, where contemplation aims to gaze upon the author of Scripture.

In recent years there has been a great deal of controversy regarding what is commonly known as “contemplative prayer (hereafter CP).”³⁰⁵ Just as meditation is often used interchangeably with contemplation, “contemplative prayer” is also used interchangeably with “contemplation.” However, in this writer’s opinion these are distinct concepts and separate terms ought to be used. One of the goals of this section of the review is to untangle these concepts.

The rise of this devotional practice coincides with the rise of the spiritual formation movement which was launched with Richard Foster’s book *Celebration of Discipline*.³⁰⁶ The primary propagators of this practice include Roman Catholic and Trappist monks Thomas Keating, M. Basil Pennington, Thomas Merton, and Richard Rohr.³⁰⁷ They trace the roots of contemplative prayer to Catholic mystics like St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and the

³⁰⁵ John Coe, “The Controversy Over Contemplation and Contemplative Prayer: A Historical, Theological, and Biblical Resolution,” in *Embracing Contemplation: Reclaiming a Christian Spiritual Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 20.

³⁰⁶ Douglas Groothuis, “Examining Contemplative Prayer,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172, no. 685 (2015): 13.

³⁰⁷ Groothuis, 13.

anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*.³⁰⁸ Evangelical advocates of contemplative prayer would include John Coe, Kyle Strobel, Tom Schwanda, and Hans Boersma.³⁰⁹

Defining and evaluating CP is difficult because different advocates mean different things by it. To Keating and Pennington, it involves a specific way to pray (usually including a mantra) with specific goals. That goal, as will be seen, is to transcend thought, image, and consciousness altogether. While others like John Coe and Kyle Strobel, as mentioned above, only mean meditating or gazing upon God with the hope of an experience of Him. These differences are substantial and warrant careful distinctions from those who seek to evaluate this practice.

Consider the detailed prescription of CP found M. Basil Pennington's *The Way Back Home*:

- 1) Sit relaxed and quiet (our back must be straight so that the vitalizing energies can flow easily.
- 2) Be in faith and love to God, who dwells in the center of your being.
- 3) Take up a love word and let it be gently present, supporting your being to God in faith-filled love.
- 4) Whenever you become aware of anything else, simply, gently return to the Lord with the use of your prayer word.
- 5) At the end of your prayer time let the Our Father (or some other prayer) pray itself within you.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Groothuis, 13

³⁰⁹ All authors contribute essays in favor of Contemplative Prayer or Contemplation in *Embracing Contemplation: Reclaiming a Christian Spiritual Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019).

³¹⁰ M. Basil Pennington, *The Way Back Home* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 19.

The purpose of repeating the love word is not to focus on the meaning of the word but rather to induce an altered state of consciousness. Indeed, to go “beyond thought and images.”³¹¹ Thomas Merton summarizes the goal of CP, stating, “The highest peak of contemplation is a mystical union with God in which the soul and its faculties are said to be ‘transformed’ in God, and enter into a full conscious participation in the hidden life of the Trinity of Persons in Unity of Nature.”³¹² Thus, one could summarize the goal of CP, as defined by its Roman Catholic proponents, as being mystical *union* with God. Whereas, as defined above by evangelicals like Coe, Schwanda, and Strobel, contemplation is the attempted *gazing* upon God. Thus, the promotion of a specific form of prayer involving a literally meaningless “love word” with the goal of mystical union of God seem to be the primary differences between Roman Catholic and Evangelical advocates of CP. There is surely overlap between the two as many evangelicals have been influenced by Roman Catholic literature.

There are three primary criticisms of CP. First, are allegations of syncretism with Eastern Meditation. Second, that it borrows too heavily from faulty Roman Catholic practices. Third, that it promotes unbiblical and even dangerous encounters with the spiritual world. Regarding the accusations of “new age” influence on CP evangelical writer Ray Yungen writes “Contemplative Prayer and panentheism go together like a hand in a glove – to promote one is to promote both. They are inseparable.”³¹³ Evangelical theologian and apologist Douglas Groothuis also criticizes contemplative prayer for its similarities to Eastern Meditation (hereafter EM). For instance, he highlights that both EM and CP aim to discover the true hidden self within, “thus

³¹¹ M. Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 18

³¹² Thomas Merton, *The Ascent to Truth* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1971), 22.

³¹³ Ray Yungen, *A Time of Departing* (Silverton, OR: Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 2002), 72.

transforming the consciousness of the meditator.”³¹⁴ He takes issue with the idea that prayer should ever be “thoughtless,” or transcend thought and consciousness.³¹⁵

Indeed, as shown above, for advocates like M. Basil Pennington, CP involves being with God and going beyond both thought and image.³¹⁶ Thomas Keating states that “deep prayer” involves going beyond thoughts, feelings, and emotions.³¹⁷ Thus, this version of CP yields itself to accusations of syncretism with Eastern religious thought. For example, it is difficult to deny those charges when popular CP advocate Richard Rohr writes the following, “Jesus calls us to exactly what the Zen master calls his students to.”³¹⁸ Rohr then compares the Zen Master’s handing out riddles to their pupils to Jesus’ statement in John 9 that, “Because you say, ‘we see,’ you are blind (John 9:41).”³¹⁹ To Rohr, both Jesus and Zen Masters are calling their followers to unlearn what they already know and become like children again. If one thinks they know truth, then they are blind. Rohrs’ rejection to “binary” truth is difficult to square with the history of Christian thought, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant. All in all, the version of CP taught by Pennington, Keating, and Rohr does indeed seem syncretic and to have unashamedly borrowed teaching from Eastern religions.

Yet, CP advocates like John Coe do not teach that one should transcend thought. For example, Coe writes that contemplative prayer can be understood as “an opening of the

³¹⁴ Groothuis, 18.

³¹⁵ Ibid, 14, 23.

³¹⁶ M. Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1980), 18.

³¹⁷ Thomas Keating, *Foundations for Centering Prayer and the Christian Contemplative Life* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 116.

³¹⁸ Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer* (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003), 28

³¹⁹ Ibid.

believer's heart to attend to the person and ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit."³²⁰ Others, like Kyle Strobel and Hans Boersma see contemplative prayer as foretaste of the beatific vision.³²¹ Thus, for many, CP is simply a way of communing with God.

The other critique of CP is that it borrows from faulty Roman Catholic practices. For example Ray Yungen in an article entitled "Learning From Rome," laments that evangelicals such as Ruth Haley Barton, Eugene Peterson, Pete Scazzerro, Richard Foster and Dallas Willard, have tapped into the "Catholic mystical tradition to go 'deeper' with God."³²² Ironically, Yungen's main critique of Roman Catholic mysticism, is that it borrows too heavily from Eastern religious. Thus, his critique of Catholic influence is the same accusation of syncretism, just a step removed.

Other critics like David Cloud of *Way of Life Literature* attack contemplative spirituality precisely because it is Roman Catholic. For example, Cloud critiques Chuck Swindoll for his commendation of Richard Foster, Henri Nouwen, and Dallas Willard. He laments, "There is no warning that Foster builds his contemplative practice upon Catholic monasticism, with its false sacramental gospel, veneration of Mary and the Host, purgatory, outrageous asceticism, extra-scriptural revelations, etc."³²³ Elsewhere in Cloud's critique he reveals the heart of the objection

³²⁰ John Coe, "The Controversy Over Contemplation and Contemplative Prayer: A Historical, Theological, and Biblical Resolution," in *Embracing Contemplation: Reclaiming a Christian Spiritual Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 30-31.

³²¹ See Kyle Strobel, "Contemplation by Son and Spirit: Reforming the Ascent of the Soul to God," and Hans Boersma, "The Beatific Vision: Contemplating Christ as the Future Present," in *Embracing Contemplation*.

³²² Ray Yungen, "Learning From Rome," <https://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=29111>, Accessed November 18, 2022.

³²³ David Cloud, "Evangelicals Turning to Catholic "Spirituality," https://www.wayoflife.org/database/evangelicals_turning_to_catholic_spirituality.html, Accessed November 18, 2022.

to Catholic influence. Namely that Rome originally borrowed its “contemplative practices” from paganism.³²⁴

Evangelical writer of spirituality Gerald Sittser seems to confirm that there is some truth in this accusation. Sittser believes that Christian mysticism “can trace its roots to the ancient philosopher Plato.”³²⁵ He then traces a line of descent from Plato to Plotinus to the Platonic Christian mystic of the Middle Ages, Pseudo-Dionysius.³²⁶ One’s attitude regarding the compatibility of Biblical Christianity with Platonic philosophy will likely determine how to interpret this historical connection. For instance, theologian Hans Boersma embraces Platonic influence. His maxim is “No Plato, No Scripture.”³²⁷ Boersma argues “without a good dose of Plato-it becomes difficult to retain the teaching of Scripture.”³²⁸ An opposing view would be that of Reformed theologian R.J. Rushdoony in his book *Flight from Humanity* where he examines the effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity. Rushdoony laments “Neoplatonism’s infection of thought and life in the early church as well as the medieval era.”³²⁹ Discerning between the two opinions rests upon basic theological and hermeneutical presuppositions that lie beyond the scope of this review.

³²⁴ David Cloud, “Evangelicals Turning to Catholic “Spirituality,” https://www.wayoflife.org/database/evangelicals_turning_to_catholic_spirituality.html, Accessed November 18, 2022.

³²⁵ Gerald L. Sittser, *Waters from a Deep Well* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 166.

³²⁶ Sittser, 166-167.

³²⁷ Hans Boersma, *Five Things I wish Biblical Theologians Knew* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 43, ProQuest EBook Central.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ R.J. Rushdoony, *Flight From Humanity* (Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon, 2008), page number available, Google Books.

Lastly, other evangelicals reject contemplative prayer for no other reason than it is experiential. For instance, reformed author David Saxton writes, “contemplative prayer is an unbiblical form of meditation that seeks a spiritual experience through some kind of existential encounter with God apart from His written revelation.”³³⁰ To Saxton, the danger is “maintaining spiritual communion with Lord apart from His ordained means of the Bible and prayer.”³³¹ Hence, one’s understanding of whether or not one can have existential encounters with God apart from his word is going to play a determining factor in assessing contemplation. In a work of retrieval Tom Schwanda has demonstrated that eighteenth-century American evangelicals from Jonathan Edwards to Francis Asbury “reveal deep appreciation for contemplation.”³³² Moreover, these evangelicals “recognized the centrality of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and the central role Scripture plays in the Christian life.”³³³ In other words, there was no inconsistency in their minds between the supreme authority of the written word and times where one deeply experiences and enjoys God.

In summary, contemplation is defined as the attempted gazing upon God. Contemplative prayer on the other hand refers to a posture of prayer using a love word, with the goal of transcending thought and achieving mystical union with God. To reiterate, these terms are often used interchangeably. It would be helpful if writers in this field came up with new terms so that their ideas could be more easily distinguishable. Critics of the movement allege that contemplation or

³³⁰ David W. Saxton, *God’s Battle Plan For the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), 19.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Tom Schwanda, “‘To Gaze on the Beauty of the Lord’: The Evangelical Resistance and Retrieval of Contemplation,” in *Embracing Contemplation: Reclaiming a Christian Spiritual Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 117.

³³³ Ibid.

CP is guilty of borrowing from Eastern religions, faulty Roman Catholic practices, and is dangerously experiential. There is some truth in these allegations. As in most issues, one's prior theological commitments will determine one's evaluation. This thesis project does not employ any form of contemplation so an assessment is unnecessary.

APPENDIX G
Request Letter

4/30/2022

Eric Austin
Senior Pastor
Calvary Chapel of the Hills
137 Legion Dr.
Cobleskill, NY 12043

Dear Eric Austin,

As a graduate student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my research project is “Classical Spiritual Warfare Applied,” and the purpose of my research is to evaluate the effect that memorizing Scripture has on fostering a spiritual wartime mentality.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at Calvary Chapel of the Hills and invite congregants of your organization to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to participate in 7 instructional classes, devote 5 minutes per day, 5 times a week to work on their instructional workbook, fill out several surveys/questionnaires and complete one interview at the end. The data will be used to measure the effectiveness of the instruction on memorization to inculcate a spiritual wartime mentality. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, a permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Scott E. Ahern
Researcher

APPENDIX H
Permission Letter

04/30/2022
Eric Austin
Senior Pastor
Calvary Chapel of the Hills
137 Legion Dr.
Cobleskill, NY 12043

Dear Scott E. Ahern:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled “Classical Spiritual Warfare Applied,” I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at Calvary Chapel of Hills and utilize our congregants in that study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

☐ I grant permission for Scott Ahern to contact congregants to invite them to participate in his research study.

☐ I am requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Eric Austin

Senior Pastor of Calvary Chapel of the Hills

APPENDIX I

Consent Form

Title of the Project: Classical Spiritual Warfare Applied

Principal Investigator: Scott E. Ahern, Doctor of Ministry Candidate, Liberty University

Co-investigator: Dr. Paul Esswein, Adjunct Professor, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a Bible memory program at fostering a spiritual wartime mentality. By “wartime mentality” we mean a Christian self-identity as a soldier-pilgrim.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- a) Fill out four surveys.
- b) Fill out two questionnaires
- c) Attend seven classes to learn why and how to memorize Scripture effectively.
- d) Spend five minutes working on memorization in your memorization workbook (will be provided for you), five days a week, for three months.
- e) Be interviewed about the project once it is completed.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include the following:

- a) Learn the art and skill of memorization (which can be applied to anything)
- b) Memorize many important Scripture verses
- c) Memorize a whole chapter of the Bible
- d) Develop the mindset of a soldier-pilgrim

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

There are no risks associated with this research.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

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

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

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

The researcher conducting this study is Scott Ahern. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Paul Esswein at [REDACTED].

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

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

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX J Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

What is needed?

- Desire to know more of the Bible by heart
- Be at least 18yrs old

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to measure the effect of biblical memorization and meditations impact at *equipping* you for spiritual warfare by renewing your mind with the truths of Ephesians 6:10-18.

What is required of participants?

Participants will meet three times, complete a workbook, fill out three surveys and questionnaires, and provide feedback.

How long will the study take?

The workbook has 10-minute lessons, 5 days a week, for 37 days, so the study takes just over a month.

What are the Benefits?

- Receive a free workbook to teach you how to memorize and meditate upon Scripture
- Become more skilled in Bible memorization and meditation.
- Become equipped to the fight the spiritual battle all believers are engaged in.

How do I sign up?

Two Ways. #1 - Contact the researcher at the phone number and/or email address provided below. # 2 – Show up at the first meeting after church, **Sunday February 12th**. A consent document will be provided at the first meeting. The meeting should last no longer than 30 minutes. **Lunch and Childcare will be provided! ☺**



Scott Ahern, a student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Scott Ahern at [REDACTED] for more information.

APPENDIX K

Spiritual-Warfare Select Verses

Spiritual Sobriety

Principle 1 – The whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19) and the devil prowls about as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Satan is also referred to as the ruler of this world, the god of this age, and the prince of the power of the air.

Major Deceptions

- Deception # 1 – Sin Satisfies (Eph 4:22)
- Deception # 2 – God will not provide (Matt 6:34)
- Deception # 3 – Worry helps (Phil 4:6)
- Deception # 4 – Has God really said? (Gen 3:1)
- Deception # 5 – Confidence in the flesh (Phil 3:1-4)

Gospel Truths

Bore our Sin

Truth #1 - Jesus bore our sins. Therefore, they are paid for and removed from us.
How much do you believe your sins are truly paid for and removed (1 Peter 2:24)?

Purifies the Conscience from Dead Works

Truth #2 - Jesus' blood can do what the blood of bulls cannot, namely purify the conscience and soul (Hebrews 9:13-14).

New Creatures

Truth #3 - Those in Christ have become new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Power

Truth #4 - God's Spirit empowers believers to kill their flesh and live a new life (Galatians 5:16-25).

Continued Cleansing & Forgiveness

Truth #5 - Through confession of sin there is continued cleansing and forgiveness available (1 John 1:7-9).

A Way of Escape

Truth #6 – God is faithful and will not allow believers to be tempted beyond what they can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Hope

Truth #7 – Though progress may seem slow, God promises to finish the work he began in us (Philippians 1:6).

Stand

Resist the devil and he will flee from you

Truth #1 - If we resist the devil, he will flee from us (James 4:4).

The Armor

Truth #2 – Through utilizing the armor of God we can stand against the enemy (Ephesians 6:14-18).

APPENDIX L
IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 9, 2022

Scott Ahern
Paul Esswein

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-1181 Classical Spiritual Warfare Applied

Dear Scott Ahern and Paul Esswein,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(2) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

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

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining

whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office