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A LIFESTYLE WHO IS CHRIST: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF SPIRITUAL

FORMATION

by

Katherine L. Pang

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APPROVED BY:

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Dr. Mary E. Lowe, Dissertation Supervisor

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Dr. Benjamin Laird, Reader

Abstract

The field of spiritual formation is replete with models, ways, and processes, including many that propose the integration of psychology and Christianity and have further examined the psychology of Paul. Yet, none emphasize the impact of neuroscience, our brain function, neurochemistry, and neurobiology integrated with the tools and techniques of psychological science facilitated by the Holy Spirit and scripture-based truths derived primarily from Pauline theology in the Christ-follower for growth in spiritual maturity. A model formulated from Pauline theology, psychology, and neuroscience, as such, is novel within the field of spiritual formation. Therefore, the claim stems from the need for an integrated spiritual formation model, as spiritual formation inherently emphasizes *praxis,* practice distinguished from theory integrating a symbiotic relationship between action with thinking, what the model refers to as connecting cognitions with actions resulting in spiritual growth which is intrinsically linked to our psychological and neurobiological selves. This dissertation presents a model that aims to facilitate Christ-followers' development by equipping them with a spiritual toolbox designed to provide a lifestyle for living Christ in but not of the world in the here and now. The model emphasizes the process of sanctification, theologically described as the continual process of the Holy Spirit refining us into the image of God—progressive sanctification as evidenced, for example, in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Key Words: Spiritual Formation, Psychology, Neuroscience, Pauline Theology

Copyright

Dedication and Acknowledgements

First, I am grateful to the One who created me and found a way to extend His grace to a 30-year-old Jewish woman seeking a way past the externalities of life. The God who was, and is, and is to come called me to Himself, and I, as Paul, pray to be faithful to the calling to exhort others who profess Christ toward a deeper and fulfilling recognition of His love and provision. Second, I am grateful for the man the Lord placed in my life 20+ years ago, to come alongside with a passion for theological truth and accuracy, wise counsel, and guidance and support, as the Lord birthed this dissertation. Third, I am grateful to Lori Keaton, as she assisted with compiling definitions and sorting through previous content the Lord had provided in the ministry of the Christian Life Institute. Fourth, I am grateful to Lori Smith, Tracey Setters, Terri Williams, Regilyn Carter, Susan Aldridge, and many others who have supported and prayed for me during this process. Finally, I am thankful and appreciative of the gracious support and guidance provided by Dr. R. Wayne Stacy, the Program Director and Professor of my program in practical theology, and Dr. Mary Lowe, my dissertation supervisor, who stepped in and graciously guided me to the completion of this phase of my journey and Dr. Benjamin Laird for his insightful review of the work.

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Abbreviations and Definitions

AB: The Anchor Bible.

ACT: Acceptance-commitment Therapy.

Active Awareness: A therapeutic tool that helps Christ-followers live with an attitude of paying attention and intentionality.

Adrenocorticotropic Hormone (ACTH): A hormone produced in the pituitary gland that regulates levels of cortisol released from the adrenal gland.

Affect: The conscious or nonconscious awareness of the dynamic state of the body's vital organs registered and mapped by the mind

Affective Operations: Those relating to moods, feelings, and attitudes.

Affect Regulation Theory: This developmental theory understands a person's mental state to be organized and driven by affective states. The theory posits that healthy regulation of affect is foundational for human flourishing and that dysregulation of affect is foundational to all developmental disorders.

Affective Social Neurobiology: The neuroscientific subdiscipline that involves the roles of both the central and autonomic nervous systems in human relational and emotive experiences.

Agitators: Anyone who is, through words or actions, implying, suggesting, proposing, or asserting a way to Christ (salvation) or to be declared righteous (justification) or to live Christ (sanctification) that does not comport with scripture.

Alignment with Christ: A spiritual tool that reminds participants to remember their position in Christ.

Amygdala: A roughly almond-shaped mass of gray matter inside each cerebral hemisphere. The amygdala is involved with emotional experience and generates fear in response to stress, among other functions.

Anchoring In: A therapeutic tool to anchor into a choice, a mindset, a perspective.

Approaching the Word of God: A reflective therapeutic and spiritual tool combining the Deep Dive and Active Awareness to guide one's approach to the Word of God.

Authentic Intent: It is proper resolve, attention to, and determination toward an action from a place of deep truth and genuineness.

Authentic modeling: A spiritual tool designed for Christ-followers to imitate Christ and model Him in all aspects of life.

Authentic Self: The truth of how the person positions and sees oneself in Christ. Knowing God through a circumcised heart

Autonomic Nervous System (ANS): A component of the peripheral nervous system that regulates involuntary physiologic processes, including heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, digestion, and sexual arousal.

Awareness of Self: A combined conscious knowledge of affect (feelings and emotions), motives, and desires (goals) combined with thinking, learning, and decision-making processes, as well as strategies.

Basal Ganglia: Interconnected with the cerebral cortex, thalamus, and brainstem, involving routine behaviors and voluntary movements.

BECNT: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.

Big Bucket Words: Words replete with various meanings, generalized and self-defeating.

Buy-In: The act of embracing the Biblical truths of Christ as personal Lord and Savior and the sanctified life. A choice to buy-in to who God declared Himself to be and proclaimed His son to be according to the truths of God's Word.

Catastrophizing: Believing something is far worse than it is in reality, and it tends to manifest as irrational thoughts.

CBT: Cognitive-behavioral Therapy.

Cerebellum: Contributes to movement and coordination and is involved in motor learning.

Cerebral Cortex: The brain's outer layer involves memory, thought, perception, awareness, language, and consciousness.

Christ-centered Awareness: A desire to choose to allow the Lord to reveal areas prone to cause one to 'step in the flesh.'

Christ-centric: Centered on Christ and Biblical truths.

Christ-follower: Represents the regenerate as one who intentionally chooses to pursue Christ and grow in obedience to Christ.

Church: When capitalized, the word Church refers to the invisible, universal body of Christians.

Clarity: Derived from knowing God personally, intimately, and experientially through the truth of His Word that produces an accurate understanding of Who God is and what He desires, generally, for His children.

Cognition: Refers to the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.

Constructivist-oriented**:** Constructing/building one's understanding and knowledge through experience and reflection to actively seek continuous growth and improvement.

Cortisol: The steroid hormone produced in the adrenal gland, also known as the stress hormone.

Courageous Conversations: A spiritual tool used to speak truth in love to another after one has conducted a Deep Dive.

Cranial Nerves: Nerves carry information into and out of the brain stem.

Creator: Refers to God in His role as Creator of all.

Cultivating Authenticity: A spiritual tool to develop a way for living in transparent authenticity with Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Cultivating Intentionality: The therapeutic art of acting with intent – with purpose – with clarity, insight, and wisdom.

Cultivating of Specificity: The therapeutic art of developing granularity in word choices to identify the accuracy of a word's use specifically.

Dead to Self: For purposes of this dissertation and the model, this term carries the redemptive-historical significance intended in Gal. 2:19-20, representing a new life that is now lived in the Spirit. The significance of this term denotes the believer's choice to, in Paul's language, walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

Deep Dive: A spiritual tool that allows a Christ-follower to conduct an authentic and transparent journey inward to uncover blockages and roots that create stumbling blocks to walking moment-by-moment with the Lord.

Deep-diving Scuba Gear: A spiritual tool intended to conduct the deep dive for internal examination.

Digestion: The name of Module 3 symbolizes a process that promotes growth and flourishment as participants deeply internalize God's word for living application—to live Christ in a fallen world.

Discernment: Perspective to obtain spiritual guidance and understanding, or also as an ability to see (have perspective) with wisdom.

Distraction Discovery Tool: A therapeutic tool to identify areas of susceptibility to externalities.

Dorsal Raphe Nucleus: Provides serotonin to the forebrain.

Duct Tape: A therapeutic tool that presents a powerful visual of resisting the urge to speak or act. Duct Tape is a safeguard for the Christ-follower.

EBC: The Expositor's Bible Commentary.

Endocrine and Neuroendocrine Systems**:** Regulate the body by releasing hormones.

Epinephrine (Adrenaline) and Norepinephrine (Noradrenaline): These are neurotransmitters that increase blood flow to the muscles and heart output. A higher arousal state is connected with fear and negative emotions.

ESV: The English Standard Version of the Bible.

Executive Function: Refers to higher-order cognitive processes, such as initiating, planning, and organizing.

Expectations: A belief that someone will or should do something. The state of looking forward to or waiting for something. The state of believing that something should be a certain way.

Extraction: A technique used in approaching God's Word.

Externalities: All that which is external to us, all events, all actions, all environments.

Filtering: Seeing through the flesh (used synonymously to mean 'self'), a process that blocks clarity and prevents accurate discernment.

Ganglia: A cluster of nerve cells located in the autonomic nervous system (ANS).

Genetics: A branch of biology that studies the genetic composition of DNA molecules and organisms and the heredity of traits within genetic processes.

Ginosko: A New Testament Greek word that means to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of perceive, become known, and understand fully and intimately.

God's PET Scan**:** Represents an imaging device that reveals all the areas of unhealthiness – all the fleshly tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities so that the Christ-follower can cultivate the awareness that allows him to proactively avoid reacting to his own triggers and falling prey to his flesh.

Grain of Sand Level: Moving through the Boulder, Rock, Pebble, Grain of Sand metaphor to live at the "Grain of Sand Level" in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hardness of Heart Syndrome: This develops when one steps into the flesh. Hardness of heart sets in when one does not seek, disobey, or turn away from God's voice, His Way, His Word, and

His conviction.

Head to Heart: Shifting from an intellectual/theological head knowledge of God and the Bible into a circumcised heart attitude of His word to promote healthy digestion of the truth of God's character and His word.

Hippocampus**:** This is the part of the brain that controls emotion, memory, the autonomic nervous system, memory formation, mood, and motivation.

HolBD: The Holman Bible Dictionary.

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is a person. He is one person of the triune God, the Trinity. He, Himself, is God. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. The Holy Spirit is our advocate, Comforter, Helper, and Counselor.

Holy Spirit Inspired Awareness: A spiritual tool and the starting point for the Deep Dive.

Holy Spirit Ziplock: This spiritual tool symbolizes the Holy Spirit's protective care. It is protective gear akin to the armor of God.

Homeostasis: Refers to the body's return to pre-stress levels following the activation of the sympathetic nervous system's "fight or flight response."

HPA Axis: The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, which is associated with the release of stress hormones. It directly influences three endocrine glands: the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland (a pea-shaped structure located below the thalamus), and the adrenal (also called "suprarenal") glands (small, conical organs on top of the kidneys).

Hyperthyroidism: Too much thyroid hormone production.

Hypothalamus: Connects the nervous system to the endocrine system.

Hypothyroidism: Not enough thyroid hormone production.

ICC: International Critical Commentary.

Idol Box: A spiritual tool representing where idols are placed during an idol identifier exercise in Module 1.

Idol Identifier: A spiritual tool used to identify any "idols" that are usurping God's prioritization in the life of the Christ-follower

Idols: The model generically defines idols as anything that deprioritizes God's place, is more important than God, or receives more of our time and attention than God.

Intentionality: The art of acting with intent, purpose, clarity, insight, and wisdom.

Intrinsically-generated Thinking: A spiritual too that includes doing and being to allow the Christ-follower to be, think, and do with Holy Spirit-generated guidance rather than flesh-driven reactions.

JSNT: *Journal for the Study of the New Testament.*

Keeping the Truth of His Word**:** This is an outcome of Infusion and a spiritual tool that reminds participants to keep (guard, protect) the truth of His Word in implementing and executing the riches of His Word through obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leading of the Spirit: A state of the believer walking with an attitude of dependence upon the power of the Spirit in confrontation to the Flesh and its self-centered ambitions and desires.

Lifestyle Who is Christ: This phrase has been coined by the author to symbolize a way of living as a Christ-follower, in but not of the world, in the here and now, which is a view towards the eschatological truths of God's Word. This terminology implies a willingness to crucify the flesh and a dependence on the Spirit.

Limbic System: Responsible for emotional well-being, anger, motivation, aggressive behaviors, and long-term memory.

Metacognition: Refers to what one knows about one's learning and thinking. Metacognition is "thinking about thinking or as a person's cognition about cognition."

Modules: Refers to the modules of the model.

Model: This refers to the author's novel integrative model of spiritual formation, which is the focus of the dissertation.

Moving the Bookmark: The mantra of infusion refers to turning the pages as one infuses and reads the word of God from Genesis to Revelation.

NAC: The New American Commentary.

Narrative Therapy: Narrative Therapy provides a way to identify and change by re-framing the noise, negativity, and notions inside our minds. We choose to re-frame and move forward with perspective, not perception.

Narrow Road: Referred to as The Way of the Cross or by the Bible as sanctification.

Negative Thinking: A thought process where one looks for or thinks the worst and focuses on pessimistic and worse-case scenarios.

Nervous System: Composed of the central nervous and peripheral systems.

Neuropsychology: A specialty in professional psychology that studies and treats behavior that occurs because of the normal and abnormal functioning of the central nervous system.

NIDNTT: The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology.

NIGTC: New International Greek Testament Commentary.

NTC: New Testament Commentary.

ODCC: Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.

Perception: A way of seeing, of viewing something or someone with a particular attitude, from a particular paradigm, or viewed from a particular position and is usually based on filters of prior experiences, expectations, and other limiting and set-up ways of viewing that diminish accuracy and clarity. Perception is guided by one (or several) prevailing principles, precepts, and propositions - in other words, perception is prejudiced by our flawed humanness.

Personhood: Used to depict a person comprised of a physical body with soul, self, and mind.

Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS)**:** Performs the opposite function of the sympathetic system by restoring the body to homeostasis. It is responsible for slowing things down.

Perspective: A way of seeing or viewing something or someone with a particular attitude, from a particular paradigm, or viewed from a particular position derived from the mind of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Physical: Refers to the tangible physical reality of the Person.

Physiology: A branch of biology that studies how living organisms function.

Pituitary Gland: Controls hormone secretion that fights disease, responds to stress, and develops bone, muscle, and sexual development.

Pons: Part of the brainstem involved in sleep, facial expressions, swallowing, and taste.

Preemptive: It requires choosing to move with the Spirit in discernment and timing and resisting the urge to move/step in or out based on feelings, filters, fears, and other factors of the flesh.

Pre-frontal Cortex (PFC): The PFC contains our higher-level cognitive functions, also known as executive functions. We refer to the Pre-frontal cortex or the PFC as the Responder.

Procedural Learning: Involves the acquisition of motor skills and habits.

Propensities: A propensity encompasses a tendency, a preference, or an attraction. Propensities are tendencies to act or behave in particular ways.

Proactive: This means being aware, intentional, discerning, and wise and stepping in as the Spirit guides.

Reactor: This is referred to as the limbic system when one reacts out of feelings rather than responding out of the prefrontal cortex in higher-level cognitive skills.

Reaction: Used to denote speaking or acting from the Limbic System.

Re-align: A therapeutic and spiritual tool used when experiencing symptoms of wobbliness to pause, look up, and re-align with Christ.

Re-framing: A therapeutic tool derived from cognitive behavioral therapy. Re-framing applies to the specific ways a Christ-follower can choose to change mindsets and paradigms about reading the Bible for Infusion and use in the model.

Resiliency: The ability to move through a challenge or failure, overcome barriers, and continue when uncomfortable and challenging.

Response: Used to denote speaking or acting from the PFC.

Root: The source and the deeper cause of one's susceptibilities and idolatry. It is usually the reason for reacting in a certain way.

Root Revealer: A spiritual tool that is used to reveal roots.

Sanctified life: The growing, transforming, humbling way of living Christ in but not of the world. A phrase used to categorize the current stage of the believer's life in the present world. It is a journey of progressive sanctification and is compatible with and complementary to the term the Lifestyle Who is Christ.

Self-awareness (Affective): The development of awareness of one's feelings and emotions and their impact on your thinking and learning processes and strategies.

Self-awareness (Cognitive): The development of awareness of one's thinking, learning processes, and strategies.

Self-facilitation: The ability to manage oneself and make an action or process more manageable.

Self-reflection: Developing one's ability to reflect/think about using metacognitive and executive function skills.

Self-regulation: The ability to monitor and control thoughts, emotions, actions, and behaviors.

Serotonin: A neurotransmitter primarily found in the gastrointestinal tract.

Shift Up: A shift up from the limbic system to the PFC.

Somatic Nervous System (SNS): The system includes spinal and cranial nerves focused on control of body movements through voluntary skeletal muscle

Specificity: Used to identify accuracy in word choices.

Spinal Nerves: Nerves that carry sensory information into the spinal cord and motor commands out of it.

Spiritual Check-up: Checking oneself to assess, "How am I in Christ?"

Spiritual Pressure (sin) Wound: An interruption in the integrity of one's walk with Christ. A wound that causes a temporary break in the intimacy of our fellowship with our Savior. A wound can come from another, an event, or even oneself.

Stability: This is a therapeutic term found in Anchoring In Christ and is not a function of externalities but rather internal grounding and rootedness in Him, who is ever stable.

Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS): Responsible for the "fight or flight response and leading to an overall increase in heart rate and other bodily functions.

Susceptibility Scanner: A tool that equips one to identify susceptibilities, allowing the Holy Spirit to examine, search, try, and test.

Susceptibilities: A more sensitive and intense form of a tendency or propensity.

Shepherding Soul Care or Soul Care Shepherd: For purposes of the model, these titles, roles, positions, and descriptions are used interchangeably depending on the context for those who believe they are serving in some capacity to influence the lives of others who identify as believers in Christ.

Susceptibility Scanner: A spiritual tool that scans for and identifies susceptibilities.

TDNT: Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.

Tendencies: A tendency is a likelihood of behaving in a particular way or going in a particular direction, a tending toward. A tendency is a potential way of being, acting, and thinking but does not necessarily manifest externally. Tendencies may be more distressful internally than externally.

Thalamus: relays motor and sensory signals to the cerebral cortex and regulates sleep.

The 4-Axis model: This term refers to Gruenberg and Asumang's Axes of Formation: A model for Assessing Theories of Spiritual Formation.

TNICNT: The New International Commentary on the New Testament.

Transformation: Transformation is God–achieved and God–sustained, requiring no effort on our part to attain it or live it out. Transformation is not trying to be like Jesus but rather the fruit of the Spirit.

Truth Anchors: A spiritual tool used to symbolize anchoring into the scriptural truth of God.

Truth Light: A spiritual tool used to represent shining the light of Christ into one's own life and in Courageous Conversations with others. It reveals the truth about areas in their lives that require Christ's transforming work and power.

Truth Statements: A spiritual tool that reminds Christ-followers to speak truth in love in conformity to the Word of God and the person of Christ.

Tryptophan: An amino acid found in everyday foods, such as chocolate, oats, and turkey.

Untangling: A therapeutic tool derived from a cognitive-behavioral perspective to identify hurtful and unhealthy memories, experiences, thoughts, or feelings to identify, sort, examine, and come to understand the significance, impact, or influence to move through to overcome, resolve, understand, or accept.

Vessel: A container designed to be filled, to hold something, or in this case, someone, more specifically, the person of the Holy Spirit.

Walking in the Spirit: Living in a way that allows the Spirit to maintain control. To respond to the Spirit, obeying His reminders when navigating life.

Walking Velcro: Symbolizes walking in the flesh in a manner that attracts and attaches to anything and everything that comes near.

Water Bottle and Coffee Cup: A metaphor used to demonstrate that each person is unique and the differences between people do not need to create tension or conflict.

WBC: World Biblical Commentary.

"What's in Your Box?": An exercise that presents practical ways to identify and remove idols and learn to touch everything lightly.

ZECNT: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.

CHAPTER 1: DEFINING THE PARAMETERS FOR THE STUDY

The field of spiritual formation is replete with models, ways, and processes, including

many that propose the integration of psychology and Christianity and have further examined the

psychology of Paul; however, none of these have created an integrated model derived from

psychology, cognitive science, and neurobiology as a frame through which we can explore how

one can construct his or her identity in Christ. These works focus more on psychological and

philosophical concepts in approaching the Bible, the New Testament, and, more specifically,

Pauline theology.[1] Yet, none emphasize the impact of neuroscience, our brain function,

neurochemistry, and neurobiology integrated with the tools and techniques of psychological

science facilitated by the Holy Spirit and scripture-based truths derived primarily from Pauline

theology in the Christ-follower for growth in spiritual maturity. This dissertation presents a

model formulated from Pauline theology, psychology, and neuroscience, which is novel within

the field of spiritual formation. Therefore, the development of the model stems from the need for

an integrated spiritual formation model, as spiritual formation inherently emphasizes *praxis,*

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[1] See, for example, Eric L. Johnson, ed., *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010); James R. Beck, *The Psychology of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002). Note also that over the last few decades and beyond, there have been publications regarding cognitive science and the New Testament (e.g., Czachesz, 2017), psychology and the Bible (e.g., Ellens and Rollins, 2004), the psychology of Paul (e.g., Beck, 2002), psychological aspects of Pauline theology (e.g., Theissen, 1987), and the psychology of the New Testament (e.g., Fletcher, 1923). A significant concern with the work of Czachesz is that he presents a disjointed basic overview of various topics, such as the human brain, evolution, some anatomy, and certain aspects of the brain, such as memory, from a non-neuroscience or psychological perspective. He presents a basic reader written by one not immersed in the workings of these cognitive science and psychologically oriented fields. He then addresses topics such as magic, religious experience, and morality, but in a very disconnected and general manner. There is little, if any, discussion of identity formation and aspects of self-development or focus on Pauline metaphors, as that is not the purpose of Czachesz's work. I. Czachesz, *Cognitive Science and the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); J. H. Ellens and W. G. Rollins, *Psychology and the Bible* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); G. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (New York: T & T Clark, 1987); M. S. Fletcher, *The Psychology of the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923).

practice distinguished from theory integrating a symbiotic relationship between action with thinking, what the model refers to as connecting cognitions with actions resulting in spiritual growth which is intrinsically linked to our psychological and neurobiological selves.[2] The dissertation presents a model that aims to facilitate Christ-followers' development by equipping them with a spiritual toolbox designed to provide a lifestyle for living Christ in but not of the world in the here and now. The model emphasizes the process of sanctification, theologically described as the continual process of the Holy Spirit refining us into the image of God—progressive sanctification as evidenced, for example, in 2 Corinthians 3:18.[3]

Paul's encounter and experience with the risen Christ formed the foundation for his call and his passion for a commitment to Jesus Christ. Paul's life became a testimony of strength and struggle, of flesh and spirit, as he soldiered onward to fulfill his call in Christ. His life forms a type of *praxis* for the modern church. His life became a way, a model, a template, for those then and now to live the Lifestyle Who is Christ. Benjamin D. Espinoza writes, "Practical theology must be more than simply practical application; it must deeply engage theology in a way so that theology speaks through action into the world."[4] Not only Paul's letters but the Bible, as a whole,

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[2] Hardin reminds us that spiritual formation draws the spotlight to the "praxis of the Christian life." L. T. Hardin, "Is a Pauline Spirituality Still Viable?" *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 82, (2015), 135. A model formulated from Pauline theology, psychology, and neuroscience is novel within the field of spiritual formation and finds its place within the doctrine of sanctification. Willard notes, "Spiritual formation is a 'Spirit-driven process which is not passive. Conformity to Christ arises out of an inner transformation accomplished through purposeful interaction." Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 22–23.

[3] Interestingly, Augustine represented the earliest view of what was adopted by the Reformed tradition; "It is he who makes us will what is good; …it is he who makes us act by supplying efficacious power to our will." Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, 17.32. The Reformed tradition holds that Christ desires the active participation of the believer in the process of sanctification. As the agent of regeneration, the Holy Spirit engages all parts of the believer – mind and body- in the progressive act of sanctification, a process that will not be completed until glory but one that we are to pursue with all haste.

[4] Benjamin D. Espinoza, "Between Text and Context: Practical Theology and the Ministry of Equipping," *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (2017): 391-404.

are replete with a way of life designed to create connection and conformity with the Creator, emphasizing the need for *praxis*.

Further, *praxis* is not biblically intended as a solo endeavor. God did not create us as isolated islands but fashioned us for relationships with Him and one another to function in the community. Evan B. Howard defines "spiritual formation as the human responsibilities in the pursuit of transformation in Christ with a desire to understand not just how people are 'transformed' in Christ, but how we might facilitate that 'formation' in ourselves and others." [5] As such, there is a need to recognize the insufficiency of self, a deep internalization of connection to Christ, and dependence on the Spirit with eschatological significance. As Jeremiah Gruenberg and Annang Asumang profess, "Any theory of spiritual formation will need to articulate the "end state" toward which spiritual formation is thus aimed. . . Christian existence is always described as a stage toward a final form of existence."[6]

The need for connection and community is at the core of God's creation. While individually, there is a call to personal connection and personal growth; there is simultaneously a call to serve one another, to come alongside and share in spiritual development through a process of care and concern for one another. Ruth Haley Barton notes that "spiritual formation requires integrating mind, body, and one's will cultivated by a "deep, intimate connection with God and others."[7] This author suggests that both

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[5] Evan B. Howard, "Advancing the Discussion: Reflections on the Study of Christian Spiritual Life," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 1, no. 1 (2008), 12.

[6] Jeremiah Gruenberg and Annang Asumang, "Axes of Formation: A model for Assessing Theories of Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 12, no. 2 (2019), 217–218.

[7] Ruth Haley Barton, Diane J. Chandler, Siang-Yang, Tan, Judy TenElshof, and James C, Wilhoit. "Spiritual Formation in the Church," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 7, no. 2 (2014), 299.

facilitating spiritual formation and providing soul care can be seen as a vocation, a calling, or a ministry. As such, it is much more than a role or function. D. S. Browning proposes, and this author agrees, that it is necessary to have "an approach to the ministry of equipping that is theologically faithful, developmentally and contextually appropriate, and *praxis-oriented*."[8] The author of this dissertation professes that spiritual formation as progressive sanctification is akin to a journey. In this journey, we travel personally with Christ and in the community of Christ as members of one another (Rom 12:5, ESV).[9] As such, there are those within the body of Christ who may serve to foster maturity, growth, and spiritual transformation. The model is one way to promote spiritual formation and also provide opportunities for shepherding soul care.

Some may also ask, is it spiritual formation, soul care, or both? It is, therefore, necessary to note that spiritual formation and soul care have significant differentiators and distinctives. In exploring the development of soul care, of which a comprehensive discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is relevant to identify a few thoughts on the philosophical etiology and conceptualization of the soul. In the dialogue on the soul, according to Millard J. Erickson:

> The point at issue here is whether there is any sense in which some part of the person can survive physical death and whether there is any type of death other than physical death. The answer is no if we assume that human existence is equivalent to the existence of the body. But the Bible uses the word "death" in different senses; it recognizes more than one type of death.[10]

Wayne Grudem suggests, "In the realm of secular thought, we find the idea that man cannot exist

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[8] D. S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

[9] The ESV Study Bible: English Standard Version. (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008). The ESV translation is used throughout the dissertation, and all quotations of the biblical text will derive from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

[10] See Matthew 10:28 where Jesus speaks of one death and Revelation 20:6 where John speaks of a second death. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Third Ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), 488.

apart from a physical body, and therefore, there can be no separate existence for any "soul" after

the body dies."[11] Thus, there is only one element, and that element is called *monism.* Evangelical

theologians have largely rejected this view because scripture seems to confirm that our soul

continues to live on after our body dies. An example is Genesis 35:18. The view that man

comprises *two parts* (body and soul/spirit) is called *dichotomy.* Grudem notes:

> The view that man is made of three parts (*body, soul, and spirit*) is called *trichotomy*. Though this has been a common view in popular evangelical Bible teaching, there are few scholarly defenses today. According to many trichotomists, man's *soul* includes intellect, emotions, and will.[12]

Further, according to Erickson:

> In the Old Testament, the human is regarded as a unity, But it does not end the size the unity to the point where the person ceases to exist after death, in other words, the soul does live on. In the New Testament, the body-soul terminology appears, but it cannot be precisely correlated with the idea of embodied and disembodied existence. While body and soul are sometimes contrasted (as in Jesus's statement in Matt. 10:28), they are not always clearly distinguished. Furthermore, the pictures of humans in scripture seem to regard them mostly as unitary beings. Seldom is a spiritual nature addressed independently of or apart from the body. the New Testament frequently uses the terms soul and spirit interchangeably John 12:27 and John 13:21). Further, the New Testament does not distinguish between soul and spirit as if they were separate things. The full range of the biblical data can best be accommodated by the view that we will term 'conditional unity.' According to this view, the normal state of a human is an embodied unitary being. The unity is dissolvable at death so that the immaterial aspect of the human lives on even as the material decomposes to be reconstituted at death.[13]

However, it is meaningful to note that many perceptions about spiritual formation were

initially linked to spiritual practices or exercises. Howard notes, for example, that "Ignatius of

Loyola denoted a way of examining one's conscience, meditating, praying, and contemplating,

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[11] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Second ed., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic 2020), 600.

[12] Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 600.

[13] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 491.

all to get rid of "disordered affections" before God."[14] Spiritual direction was still deemphasized in Protestant theology, as most spiritual directors were Jesuits, even though Ignatius, Luther, and Calvin's pastoral letters were in the "genre a great instrument of 'soul care' and direction, diffused, and suggestive of shepherding."[15]

The Model's Genesis and Benefit

The model's genesis is derived from the absence of an integrated model of spiritual formation providing a practical way to walk and live in the Spirit that recognizes the power of the flesh and the created function of one's brain, physiology, and psychological makeup. The derivation of the model stems from an opportunity for an integrated spiritual formation model derived from psychological science, neuroscience, and Pauline theology to equip Christians to live Christ (Phil 1:21), choosing to follow Christ in a lifestyle of obedience and walking in the Spirit, ultimately living in a way that demonstrates a commitment to live out Colossians 1:10. The author presents a model that will pave the way for an integrative approach to spiritual formation to grow the Christ-follower. The ultimate research objective is to demonstrate the model's viability as a pedagogical program in Christian ministry, such as discipleship, and a way to facilitate and foster spiritually formative opportunities. As such, establishing the model's fit within the 4-axis model proposed by Gruenberg and Asumang may facilitate its acceptance in Christendom.[16] The author of this dissertation proposes that the model deserves serious consideration in the scholarship and within spiritual formation programs.

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[14] James M. Houston, "Seeking Historical Perspectives for Spiritual Direction and Soul Care Today," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1, no. 1 (2008), 92.

[15] Houston, "Seeking Historical Perspectives for Spiritual Direction and Soul Care Today," 94.

[16] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation."

Circling back to the anticipated inquiry, why a new model for spiritual formation? In this author's view, one reason is that the church has become distracted with issues related to culture, politics, and economics, which are critical in many ways but not the local church's mission. Stacy reminds us, "Specifically, the kingdom community called church is not here to "fix" this world; rather, it is here to announce the end of this world (which is what "eschatological" means) and the advent of a whole new world only visible through the eyes of faith.[17] Howard emphasizes that numerous complex forces create disenchantment and disengagement, which intensifies the need for spiritual direction and soul care as never before."[18] As a result, the call is clear. How are we authentically, transparently, with vulnerability coming alongside those in the body of Christ to encourage, exhort, and appropriately admonish with purposeful intent for growth in intimacy with Christ and obedience to His Word for purposes of His glory?

We are called into community and are members of His body (Eph 5:30-33). Hebrews 3:13 is clear: we are called to exhort one another, and Paul reminds us in Colossians 3:16-17 we are to admonish one another. If we are to disciple and shepherd others, we must do so with authenticity, transparency, and vulnerability that reflects the humility of Christ. For example, Ben Witherington suggests that "Paul's view of the gospel, in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, is a narrative of persevering for the goal of Christlikeness."[19] Paul presents a three-fold vision in his epistles to the Thessalonians. He sets forth a focus and a goal for them to be united to Christ, servants for Christ, and representatives of Christ. Paul is intent and insistent that they imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Thess 1:6) and that they strive to be an example (1 Thess 1:7). Paul impresses

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[17] Stacy, R. Wayne, "On the Wicket Way: Kingdom Leadership in a Secular World," *Faculty Publications and Presentations* 50, (2020), 6.

[18] Howard, "Advancing the Discussion: Reflections on the Study of Christian Spiritual Life," 22.

[19] Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Narrative Thought World. The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 339.

upon his readers the importance of obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thess 1:8) and the obligation to glorify the name of [the] Lord Jesus Christ within [them] (2 Thess 1:12). Paul continually points away from himself and points towards God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:6). Paul's authenticity, transparency and vulnerability as see in Galatians when he reveals his experience with bodily illness. As David A. deSilva orients us, "Paul offers an example here of a truly positive Spirit-led response to the frustrations of being hindered in one's plans, seeking out God's purposes amid otherwise inopportune circumstances."[20] In addition, Paul analogized a deep personal connection with parenting, childbirth, and childrearing metaphors, evidencing birthing and relational nurturing in growing others toward spiritual maturity. S. Harter notes, in his definition of authenticity, that it "stipulates the requirement for thoughts and feelings to be consistent with actions."[21]

Transparency has been studied within numerous cognates, and the author, for this paper, chooses to anchor into a basic epistemic of a perspective of self that aligns with a psychological understanding of one's flaws and a theological reckoning that Christ knows His own and, in such visibility, a revealing of oneself allows us to produce authenticity and open ourselves to accountability. We use the cultural word 'real' as synonymous with transparency. In Christ, our authenticity flows from a circumcised heart desire to be seen, not only by Christ, from whom we can hide nothing but also by one another to prefer one another (Rom 12:10) and serve one another in love (Gal 5:13). Transparency, for this paper, is an openness, a revealing of oneself in ways not designed to minimize flaws of imperfections, as Paul was chief of the sinners, as he

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[20] David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians, BECNT* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2018), 3.

[21] S. Harter, "Authenticity," in *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, eds. C. R. Snyder and S. J. Lopez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 382–394.

readily admits in 1 Timothy 1:5. Transparency also allows us to be self-disclosing, which presents authenticity. Transparency inherently requires vulnerability and often implicitly invites critique and evaluation by self and others. Transparency facilitates trust, which facilitates change.[22] Transparency, vulnerability, and accountability, among others, within the community of Christ promote shepherding others toward spiritual health and maturity in Christ as an outflow of the community. The model paves the way for an integrative approach to growing those in Christ into a more intimate relationship with the Savior and a practical theological way to "press on to maturity" (Heb 6:1).

The Rationale for The Study

Perhaps a reader asks why the author asserts there is an opportunity for another model when there are many ways and models. As Eric L Johnson notes, the five views of psychology and Christianity presented in his work are an opportunity to enter into the dialogue "about the value of psychology in general for Christians."[23] This author claims that the model is a way, one way, for Christ-followers to cultivate spiritual growth in themselves and others based on psychological science, neuroscience, and Pauline theology.[24] Based on Pauline theology, the model presents a way, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to experience a continuous transformation that births from God's Word and the power of prayer. An emphasis on spiritual growth and maturity. Spiritual formation,

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[22] A. K. Schnackenberg, Maurice Harris, Jon Panamaroff, Colleen Reilly, Lekshmy, and Sean Scally "Clearing Opacity: Change Management via Leader Transparency in Native American Neotraditional Organizations," *Business & Society*, 0, (2023): 1-40.

[23] Eric. L. Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, (Downers Grove: IL, Inter-Varsity, 2009), 7.

[24] Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, 7.

therefore, is represented by Alister E. McGrath "as a lived experience of God and the life of prayer and action that results from this."[25] The experience of God's Word engaging all aspects of oneself is biblical, according to White, who looks to the Psalms to propose that "the construct of the soul is the subject of more than prayer, praise, and thanksgiving but also reflective of a range of feelings, emotions, and experiences which could not be denied to psychology without denying it to any legitimate subject-matter at all."[26]

As Erik Konsmo reminds us, "Life must continually progress toward a likeness of Christ and the person's nature and actions. The observable manifestations of a person who has been filled and refilled give testimony to the power of the Spirit who enables such [Spirit-led] behavior in fallen humanity." [27] Dallas Willard notes, "Spiritual formation is a 'Spirit-driven process which is not passive. Conformity to Christ arises from an inner transformation accomplished through purposeful interaction."[28] As a result, the model leans heavily toward the choice to walk in the Spirit instead of the flesh.[29] As George Eldon Ladd states, "Walking in the Spirit means to live each moment under the control of the Holy Spirit. Walking involves living a step at a time, moment by moment, and to walk in the Spirit means to take each step of my

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[25] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 1999), 109.

[26] Victor White, *Soul, and Psyche: An Enquiry into the Relationship of Psychotherapy and Religion* (London: Collins and Harwell Press, 1960), 13.

[27]Erik Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit: The Intangible Spirit's Tangible Presence in the Life of the Christian* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), 160–61.

[28] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 20132), 22–23.

[29] The role of the Holy Spirit and the nature of the divine-human operation in the process of sanctification has long been debated in Christianity. Is the process of sanctification one completed wholly as an act of God empowered by the Holy Spirit, or is it a synergistic effort or largely an act of human will? Paul speaks clearly that sanctification is a progressive process in which God increases holiness by engaging our minds, wills, emotions, and actions through the Holy Spirit.

earthly walk under the direction and control of the Holy Spirit."[30] The Spirit is of essential importance. The Holy Spirit is the power of re-creation in the individual, and Paul reminds us of this statement in Philippians 2:13. It is the desire of God, who is doing through His good and perfect will what He desires for his body in the goal of sanctification. Gordon Fee notes that Paul perceived "the Spirit as an experienced and living reality. . . the absolutely crucial matter for the Christian life, from beginning to end."[31] The Christian life must be demonstrable and seen in the life of the believer and, as Konsmo adds, is a "tangible perceptible presence in the life of the Christian."[32]

Theologically, the model draws heavily from Paul's epistles. Paul's encounter and experience with the risen Christ formed the foundation for his call, his passion for a commitment to a proper understanding of Christ's person and work, and His role in the life of the elect. Paul speaks clearly that sanctification is a progressive process in which God increases holiness by engaging our minds, wills, emotions, and actions through the Holy Spirit.[33] Paul's theology, as it pertains to a proper understanding of Christ and a call to commit to Christ and Him alone, is the basis for the *praxis* of the model and its utility for enhancing ministry practice.

While there are spiritual formation models that combine aspects of Pauline theology and

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[30] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 517.

[31] Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul (*Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 1.

[32] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 26.

[33] For example, See Romans 8:1-17, 2 Corinthians 3:18, and Galatians 5. Sinclair B. Ferguson, "The Reformed View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. By Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 47. Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit, Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996). David Peterson*, Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness, New Studies in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995). Anthony A. Hoekema, "The Reformed Perspective," in Stanley N. Gundry, ed., *Five Views on Sanctification, Counterpoints* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

psychology, many of which have contributed to the scholarship on the psychology of Paul and are visible as well in works on metaphors in Paul, and those who have begun to investigate the importance of neuroscience in appeals such as 1 Corinthians 2:16; there still exists a void in the literature for an integrated model. Spiritual formation is an active process facilitated by the Holy Spirit, requiring collaborative participation and mindful intentionality formed from psychological and neurological processes.[34] As a result, the model leans heavily into a choice to walk in the Spirit instead of the flesh (Gal 5:16-18) and emphasizes the need for individual submission and surrender to the will and way of God as facilitated by the Spirit.

The Spirit is of essential importance in the model, reflecting Paul's emphasis on the Spirit, as illustrated through metaphor in his epistles, as a living, transformative reality in the life of the regenerate. For example, Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:13 that the Holy Spirit is the power of re-creation in the individual. It is the desire of God, who is doing what He desires through His good and perfect will for His body in the progressive process of sanctification. [35]Believers, therefore, are to mortify, yield, or put on the Spirit and not walk in the flesh (Gal 5:16-18). Lewis Sperry Chafer describes believers as having "the human responsibility toward

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[34] Many are exploring the integration of Christian spiritual disciples and practices within a mindfulness frame. See, for example, E. Garzon, A. Benitez-DeVilbiss, V. Turbessi, Y.T. Offer Darko, N. Berberena, A. Jens, K. Wray, E. Bourne, J. Keay, J. Jenks, C. Noble, and C. Artis, C. Christian Accommodative Mindfulness: Definition, Current Research, and Group Protocol. *Religions*, 13, no 1, (2022): 63–75. R.C. Trammel and J. T. Trent, *A Counselor's Guide to Christian Mindfulness: Engaging the Mind, Body & Soul in Biblical Practices and Therapies*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021). T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*, 3rd edition (Westminster: Penguin Books, 2015). According to Trammel and Lee, "Mindfulness as a secular practice contains an embodied element, whereby one can use the breath to coincide with observation and notice one's cognitions to elicit a mindfulness state." R.C. Trammel and S. Lee. "Insights from Pastors on Christian Mindfulness: What Social Workers Can Learn about Spiritual Integration in Mindfulness," *Social Work and Christianity,* 50, no. 2 (2023): 164–190.

[35] Even though the New Testament speaks about a definite beginning to sanctification, it also sees it as a process that continues throughout our Christian lives. Although Paul says that his readers have been set free from sin (Rom 6:18) and that they are "dead to sin and alive to God" (Rom 6:11), he nonetheless recognizes that sin remains in their lives, so he tells them not to let it reign and not to yield to it (Rom 6:12–13). Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 926.

that deliverance which God has provided through the death of His Son and proposes now to accomplish by the Spirit."[36] The author of this dissertation notes that while spiritual formation is not explicit in Paul's writings, it is replete within and implicit in many of his ideas about maturity in spiritual growth.[37]

It is important to note that the author is aware that Paul's belief that salvation, as he uses the term contextually and theologically, at times, means what the author refers to as sanctification, and this may be contrary to some developmental models, including James Fowler's Stages of Faith.[38] First, it is important to note that the role of the Holy Spirit and the nature of the divine-human operation in sanctification has long been debated in Christianity. Is the process of sanctification completed wholly as an act of God empowered by the Holy Spirit, or is it a synergistic effort or largely an act of human will? Paul speaks clearly that sanctification is a progressive process in which God increases holiness by engaging our minds, wills, emotions, and actions through the Holy Spirit. For example, Gerhard O. Ford comments that sanctification is "the art of getting used to justification."[39] Augustine represented the earliest view of what was adopted by the Reformed tradition; "It is he who makes use will what is good; …it is he who makes us act by supplying efficacious power to our will."[40] Chafer comments on walking in the Spirit: "It is one of the supreme glories of this age that the child of God and citizen of heaven may live a superhuman life, in harmony with his heavenly

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[36] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1918), 131.

[37] See, For example, Philippians 3:12ff, esp. v. 15.

[38] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1995).

[39] Donald L Alexander., ed. *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 16.

[40] Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, 17.32.

calling, by an unbroken walk in the Spirit.[41]

For example, Galatians carries a consistent message – only a life empowered by the Spirit, one in which the Christ-follower chooses to "walk by the Spirit," can the desires of the flesh be overcome and a victory wrought. The flesh which conflicts with the desires of the Spirit, as seen in Galatians 5:18 and its parallel verse in Romans 8:14, both speak to a "leading by the Spirit, [which] is used in both verses to describe a life not just walking in the Spirit but rather one where the Spirit is to lead/guide morally or spiritually.[42] Believers, therefore, are to "mortify" or "yield" or "put on" the Spirit and are described by Chafer as having "the human *responsibility* toward that deliverance which God has provided through the death of His Son and proposes now to accomplish by the Spirit."[43] We can summarize Romans 8:1–17 and Galatians 5 as those who live in the flesh always think about the things of the flesh, while those who live in the Spirit of God are to think about and act in a manner that the Spirit desires. While the flesh brings death to the person in the flesh, the Spirit brings the fruit of life lived in Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells a Christ-follower, and in such, there is an ability not to be controlled by the desires of the flesh but controlled by the Spirit through a life walked in the Spirit. On walking with the Spirit, Chafer wrote:

> It is the unhindered manifestations of the indwelling Spirit. There are, in all, seven of these manifestations. These blessed realities are all provided for in the presence and power of the Spirit and will be normally produced by the Spirit in the Christian who is not grieving the Spirit but has confessed every known sin *who is not quenching the Spirit but is yielded to God; and who is walking in the Spirit by an attitude of dependence upon His power* done- Such a person is spiritual because He is Spirit-filled The Spirit is free to fulfill in him all the purpose and desire of God for him. There is nothing in daily life and service to be desired beyond this. "But thanks be unto God, which gave us the victory

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[41] Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual,* 53.

[42] William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* Third Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 17.

[43] Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual*, 131.

through Lord Jesus Christ.[44]

Paul urges Christ-followers to be transformed by a conscious act of radical consecration and sanctification in verses such as Romans 6:12–13. John Calvin wrote, "For although the Law is written and engraven on their hearts by the finger of God, that is, although they are so influenced and actuated by the Spirit, that they desire to obey God…. For it is the best instrument for enabling them daily to learn with greater truth and certainty what that will of the Lord is which they aspire to follow."[45] Fee comments that "for Paul…the Spirit is the essential player in the believers experiencing and living out the salvation that God brought about in Christ; the Spirit both forms the Church into God's new people and conforms them into Christ's image."[46]

The message is not simply to bring the new creation into being by faith but to recognize that those who have placed their faith in Christ are already new creations and are responsible for acting and living in submission to the working of the Holy Spirit. This truth is not an anthropocentric belief that mistakenly places sanctification in the hands of humanity or an individual's achievement of holiness but rather an understanding of Christ's accomplished work on the cross. In response to the question, "Is the process of sanctification one completed wholly as an act of God empowered by the Holy Spirit or is it a synergistic effort or is it an act of human will," it could be answered by summarizing Calvin as emphasizing it is the Christ-followers duty to desire to obey God and obedience is best produced by allowing the Spirit to the instrument of sanctification equipping believers to follow the will of the Lord and actively

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[44] Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual*, 141.

[45] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* Chapter 7 (Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 10th ed., 1997).

[46] Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1996), 7.

participate with the Holy Spirit in the process of conformity to the image of Christ.[47]

Second, it is important to note that the model is not developmental, as James W. Fowler's premise on Erickson would label it, but is progressive as aligned with the theology of progressive sanctification in the model's specific context of spiritual formation., as discussed briefly above.[48] Fowler developed a six-stage theory of faith development which identifies the following stages: Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith, Stage 2: Mythic Literal Faith, Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith, Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith, Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith, and Stage 6: Universalizing Faith.[49] Fowler's model is derived from developmental psychologists Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, Smith, Tillich, and Niebuhr, who contributed to Fowler's thinking on a developmental approach to human faith.[50] In Fowler's model, the stages connect to age ranges. They are attributed to influencers in a person's life, such as significant adults in Stage 1, religious authorities in Stages 2 and 3 with more appropriated individuation in Stage 3, questioning in Stage 4 based on assumptions within faith-based communities, reflective activities and a greater openness to others in Stage 5, and placement of faith in action in Stage 6.

Fowler suggests, "Belief, in the modern period, has come increasingly to mean the giving of intellectual assent to propositional statements that codify the doctrines or ideological claims of

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[47] Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion.*

[48] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith; The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper, 1981).

[49] Fowler, *Stages of Faith.*

[50] E. H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950). J. Piaget, *Origins of Intelligence in the Child,* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1936). L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978). L. Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984). M. D. S. Ainsworth, "Object Relations, Dependency, and Attachment: A Theoretical Review of the Infant-Mother Relationship," *Child Development* 40, (1968): 969–1025.

a particular tradition or group."[51] For Fowler, a person's relationship to doctrine will continually

develop, particularly in stages 3, 4, and 5. While continual growth and development are

emphasized in the model's view of progressive sanctification, it is not based on constructed

periods of what Fowler would term developmental stages. The model's view is more fluid and

based on one's developing intimacy with Christ as Lord and the Spirit as Guide and Helper.

Another point of distinction is that Fowler suggests that "to be 'in' a given stage of faith means

to have a characteristic way of finding and giving meaning to everyday life." The model

advocates life in Christ as a Lifestyle, and faith through connection to Christ provides meaning at

all stages of development and everyday life. As a final example of a difference, as a comparative

discussion of how the model differs from Fowler's work is not the subject of this dissertation,

Fowler states:

> Few of us ever make fundamental changes in the shape of our character or in the deep
> patterns of our personalities by elective choice alone. The need or imperative for deep-
> going change in our lives usually comes in response to some experience of shipwreck, of
> failure in love or work, or of spiritual struggle or illumination.[52]

While the model differentiates between externalities, those circumstances, and

experiences outside of ourselves, it emphasizes the importance of choice and intrinsic motivation

as the driver for developmental change and continuous growth, maturity, and transformation

through the work of the Spirit in the Christ-follower. In the model, the work is centered on a

foundational premise that identity, one's sense of self, is essentially a psychological construct

which by necessity is not merely developmental, as Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky, Kohlberg,

Ainsworth advocate, or ontological, as Anslem (1078, although primarily Christ-centric) through

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[51] James W. Fowler, *Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 55.

[52] James Fowler, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 103.

Hegel and others propose, or even social, cultural, etc.; but for the Christ-follower is regenerative as a realized work of the Holy Spirit through a psychologically-constructed coming to identify and know self. For example, as Horney suggests, the self as a set of "intrinsic potentialities."[53]

For the Christ-follower, those potentialities are intrinsic to not "I" but Christ. In the cognitive sciences, explorations of the concept of 'self' include the Socratic imperative of self-awareness (know thyself), the pragmatics and semantics of "I," and cognitive constructs of self-organization. How does the Christ-follower psychologically and perhaps phenomenologically (Heidegger and others) conceptualize "I" when it is not "I" who lives but Christ? How do the metacognitive and executive function domains illuminate one's sense of self? Horney points out that "the patient must acquire the capacity to assume responsibility for himself, in the sense of feeling himself the active, responsible force in his life, capable of making decisions and of taking consequences . . . of achieving an inner independence . . . establishing a hierarchy of values and to apply it to his actual living."[54] This sense of agency is essential to self-organization. It is depicted in the model through the lens of 'working out one's salvation (continual and progressive sanctification) through the power of the Holy Spirit and the participatory nature of a Christ-follower's life in Christ.

Further, most contributors to spiritual formation are theologians, pastoral or Christian counselors, or academics in numerous fields, such as philosophy, psychology, and religion. Still, few are psychologists and practical theologians, as is this author. This author intends to roll out the model for integration into spiritual formation programs and expand its reach through the training of others to grow Christians forward in a practical, meaningful, day-to-day walk with

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[53] Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 17.

[54] Karen Horney, *Our Inner Conflicts,* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1945), 241.

Christ. Another intent is to teach the model as a course in spiritual formation, biblical counseling, and ministry training programs through college, university, church, and parachurch partners seeking an academic way to disciple people in their faith from a practical theology perspective. The author hopes the dissertation's hypotheses will be established through the literature review and assessment vetting method and that the model can enter the dialogues in spiritual formation, soul care, chaplaincy, counseling, and discipleship. The author advocates there is a place within the larger areas of practical and applied theology for the model to exemplify the spiritual development of the Christ-follower in a practical and meaningful way, in but not of the world,

Statement of the Thesis

This inquiry contends that a novel progressive module-based integrative model of spiritual formation derived from psychological science, neuroscience, and Pauline theology will facilitate the growth of the Christ-follower by equipping him or her with a spiritual toolbox designed to provide a lifestyle for living Christ in but not of the world in the here and now. The two-part focus of the dissertation guides the delimiters by limiting the literature review to areas relevant to explaining and supporting the author's model and then assessing its fit through the 4-Axis model.[55]

Research Methodology, Questions, and Hypotheses

The primary research method is evidence-based, employing a biblical-theological methodology grounded in the scholarship, with a logical and analytical approach used to demonstrate the scholarly enhancement of ministry practice. The research design is two-fold.

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[55] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation."

The first is a literature review to establish the scholarship from primary source research and identify gaps that would allow for this research to inform and influence the dialogue about goodness of fit within this field.[56] The second is to assess the model's fit within Gruenberg and Asumang's 4-axis model.[57] The flow of the argument will be logical, progressive, and practical. The approach to the biblical text will be synchronic and synthetic.

This study will focus only on select theoretical psychological orientations, relevant areas from the psychological sciences, neuroscience, and medical areas, and a limited array of themes and concepts related to the Pauline theology and metaphors used in the model. The focus of the dissertation, therefore, has two primary purposes. The first purpose is to survey the relevant literature to identify gaps and a need for a model like this for its contribution to spiritual formation as a practical theological model. The appeal of this model would address areas like personal transformation, spiritual maturity and growth, discipleship, soul care, and other related areas focused on *praxis.* The research questions implicit in this first part are:

1. Is there a gap in the literature indicating a need for the model?

2. Do the gaps in the literature indicate usefulness for a model with goodness of fit?

As previously identified, the second part is focused on assessing the fit of the author's model within Gruenberg and Asumang's 4-Axis model. Gruenberg and Asumang state:

> The utility of the proposed model is illustrated by critically engaging an account of spiritual formation given by N.T. Wright. By breaking down a theory of spiritual formation into four axes, that theory's strengths and weaknesses are more readily addressed, and further, comparisons between theories may be made in a more consistently comparable manner.[58]

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[56] These will include commentaries for contextual and expositional accuracy, the primary source for non-biblical texts from authors known in the field of spiritual formation and faith development, such as James Fowler, Richard Foster, Gene Peterson, and Dallas Willard, among others, journal articles, and dissertations.

[57] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 212– 231.

[58] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 212.

According to Gruenberg and Asumang, the 4-Axis model includes, first, "the goal of a theory is its articulated *telos* of Christian spiritual formation. Any theory of spiritual formation will need to articulate the "end state" toward which spiritual formation is thus aimed."[59] Secondly, "The paradigmatic concept of a theory is the overarching metaphor, analogy, image, or model which guides both the elaboration and reception of the theory."[60] According to Gruenberg and Asumang:

> The paradigmatic concept of a theory is the element which gives the theory its overall coherence and character. Often, theories rely on metaphors, analogies, images, or concepts which take on an overarching role in characterizing the nature of spiritual formation. For example, metaphors of growth or spatial metaphors, such as path, way, or walk, may be employed as the all-encompassing concept which describes the nature of spiritual formation. The paradigmatic concept guides both the conveyance and reception of the theory in a definitional image. A strong spiritual formation paradigm will encapsulate the associated theory and maintain coherence among the other three axes of spiritual formation.[61]

Then, thirdly, "the theology which provides the underpinnings of the theory. This axis may draw on interdisciplinary theological principles or other relevant nontheological disciplines. Still, it must ultimately reflect sound Christian theology."[62] Gruenberg and Asumang further explain, "In other words, this axis answers the "why" questions behind any theory. While this axis is described by the term "theology," theories of spiritual formation may draw from many disciplines, including biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, general religious studies, philosophy, psychology, and educational theory."[63]

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[59] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

[60] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation." 216.

[61] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 220.

[62] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

[63] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 223.

Finally, the model's "activities form the arms and legs of the theory. That is, the activities express directly how a theory is practically enacted."[64] As Gruenberg and Asumang explain further:

> The formational activities propounded by a theory include all actions taken by the believer in the movement toward spiritual growth. Assessment along this axis will first describe the methods by which spiritual maturity is pursued. After doing so, the activities should be reviewed as they relate to the previous three axes. Activities must be properly aligned toward the goal of spiritual formation. They must also express the descriptive qualities of the paradigmatic concept. Further, activities must put into practice the theology of the theory consistent with the fundamental truths of the gospel.[65]

> The research questions implicit in this second part are:

1. Does the model fit within the established criteria of the 4-Axis model, and if so, how specifically?

2. Based on its fit assessment, can the model find a place within the field of spiritual formation, and if so, how specifically?

Purpose and Objectives of This Study

This study proposes to take a different approach from past and present inquiries and address the existing scholarly gap thematically and critically by (a) assessing how the literature informs the development of the model and (b) comparing the model to the 4-Axis as described in Gruenberg and Asumang's 4-Axis model.[66] The objectives of this effort are to (1) Demonstrate the applicability of the model within the literature, (2) describe the model, (3) Assess the model's fit within the 4-axis model, and (4) Suggest an integrative holistic approach to spiritual formation and the provision of soul care within the body of Christ

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[64] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

[65] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 225.

[66] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 225.

through the Lifestyle Who is Christ.

An Orientation to the Flow of the Argument

The dissertation begins with a literature review consisting of four primary parts. The first part focuses on definitions and historical perspectives of soul care and spiritual formation, as there is some overlap. For the author of this dissertation, spiritual formation inherently includes concepts of spiritual maturity and transformation. Richard Hays writes, "The gospel that Paul preaches deals not merely with forgiveness but with transformation. This notion of effective transformation through union with Christ is fundamental to Paul's theological ethics."[67] As noted above, the Spirit is essential in spiritual formation, and the inner transforming work which manifests outwardly in choices and actions cannot exist apart from the active work of the Spirit. Willard notes, "Spiritual formation is a Spirit-driven process which is not passive. It is conformity to Christ that arises out of an inner transformation accomplished through purposeful interaction."[68]

The author of this dissertation advocates that spiritual formation and soul care are distinctive but overlap, and both emphasize transformation, spiritual growth, and maturity, the working of the Holy Spirit in the Christ-follower. According to B. W. McRay et al., "Soul care is also an important partner in spiritual formation. Its origin reaches back to the early church when Christians spoke of the cure of souls and often used the metaphor of "physician" of the soul to describe the role of a pastor or shepherd."[69] Jeffrey P. Greenman defines Christian spiritual

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[67] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 38.

[68] Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 22–23.

[69] B. W. McRay et al., "Spiritual Formation and Soul Care in the Department of Christian Formation and Ministry at Wheaton College," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, 11, no. 2, (2018): 271–295. The

formation as "our continuing response to the reality of God's grace shaping us into the likeness

of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the

world."[70] Evan Howard defines it as a "Spirit- and human-led process by which individuals and

communities mature in relationship with the Christian God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and are

changed into ever-greater likeness to the life and gospel of this God."[71] McRay, et al. state:

> Of deep concern to us is our society's segregation of the spiritual from the idea of
> psychological care. The predominant culture has accepted the idea that the psychological
> and spiritual are unrelated and fully separable. . . For example, the apostle Paul identifies
> the power and work of the Holy Spirit in the transformation of each disciple toward the
> image of Christ and the centrality of mutual soul care to the "law of Christ.[72]

Clebsch and Jaekle offer this definition: "The ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care,

consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing,

sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of

ultimate meanings and concerns."[73] McRay et al. state:

> The ministry of soul care acknowledges that life is difficult and due to the fallen nature of
> humanity, many people endure great suffering or even inflict great pain on others and
> themselves. Soul care is possible because God demonstrates compassion to us so that we
> might, in turn, reflect this care to others (2 Cor 1:3–7; 7:6).[74]

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author of this dissertation states that the terms can be used interchangeably for purposes of the model in that, as a
psychologist and Shepherd, the author cares for souls spiritually, analogous to a physician medically. The author
cares for souls through spiritual formation as a mentor and disciple.

[70] Jeffrey P. Greenman, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective: Classic Issues, Contemporary
Challenges," in Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, eds., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in
Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010), 24.

[71] Evan B. Howard, *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation: How scripture, Spirit, Community, and
Mission Shape Our Souls* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 18.

[72] McRay et al., *Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, 275, 280. See also 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 and Galatians
6:1-2.

[73] William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs,
NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 4.

[74] McRay et al.*, Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, 274.

The author of this dissertation uses both soul care and spiritual formation to indicate a focus on the spiritual care and development of those who belong to Christ.

According to Porter, "the topic of spiritual formation within evangelicalism is simply the Protestant doctrine of sanctification in a new key. The Protestant theological category of "sanctification" has traditionally referred to the process of the believer being made holy, which is "to be conformed to the image of Christ."[75] For many scholars, including Barton, Hardin, and others, the author of this dissertation concurs that spiritual formation or soul care requires preeminently the work of the Spirit and one's dependency on Christ. The Holy Spirit transforms, conforms, and reforms us in the process of spiritual formation for the glory of God and His service.

Howard defines "spiritual formation as the human responsibilities in the pursuit of transformation in Christ with a desire to understand not just how people are 'transformed' in Christ, but how we might facilitate that 'formation' in ourselves and others."[76] As such, there is a need to recognize self-insufficiency, a deep internalization of connection to Christ, and dependence on the Spirit with progressive eschatological significance. As Gruenberg and Asumang profess, "Any theory of spiritual formation will need to articulate the "end state" toward which spiritual formation is thus aimed. . . Christian existence is always described as a stage toward a final form of existence."[77]

Secondly, scholarly contributions from psychological science will lay a foundation for the reader. The author believes it is necessary to begin with the sciences (psychology and

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[75] Steven L. Porter, "Sanctification in a New Key: Relieving Evangelical Anxieties over Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 1, no. 2 (2008), 129.

[76] Evan B. Howard, "Advancing the Discussion, 12.

[77] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 217–218.

neuroscience, as stated below) to allow the reader to understand the connections the author will highlight within identified themes from Pauline theology. It is essential to note that the model connects the importance of psychological science's contributions to developing the spiritual tools to battle the flesh and walk in the Spirit. These include principles from the cognitive-behavioral theory, acceptance commitment theory, mindfulness, interpersonal neurobiology, social psychology, the decision sciences, choice theory, and motivational science. Third, scholarly contributions from neuroscience will continue to lay a foundation for the reader. These include the function of the limbic system, the prefrontal cortex, the endocrine system, primarily the HPA-Axis, and the cardio-metabolic system. For example, the model uses the inner workings of neuroscience to demonstrate how one can learn to regulate and shift into the prefrontal cortex to walk in the Spirit in compliance with Paul's exhortation in Galatians 5:16.

The fourth and theologically most significant is the focus on Pauline theology. The primary contributing epistles to the model are Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. While numerous verses from these epistles, and a few from Paul's other epistles, will be utilized to provide the theological foundation for the model, they constitute the epistles from which the major theological themes undergirding the foundation of the model are drawn, such as freedom (Gal 5:1, 13); Spirit v. the flesh (Gal 5:16-18); put on and put off (Eph 4:24, Col 3:12–17) old self and the new self (Col 3:9 Rom. 6:6, 2 Cor.5:17), in Christ (2 Cor 5:17, Gal 3:26), and those verses emphasizing the importance of the Holy Spirit as the facilitator, power, and guide for progressive sanctification. Paul's metaphors, key phrases, and undergirding of exhortation, warnings, and encouragement to pursue and follow Christ and Him alone are at the core of the model's foundation and structure.

In summary, the literature review will likely have an integrative orientation focused on

the historical, academic, theological, and practical. It is presented consistently in the four

sections to highlight gaps, establish support, and provide evidence to solidify the need for the

model's practical theological purposes. The literature review will pave the way for assessing the

model's fit within Gruenberg and Asumang's 4-axis model criteria.[78] The author intends to

establish the need for the model, explain it, demonstrate its theological usefulness grounded in

scholarship, and then discuss its praxis by demonstrating its scholarly enhancement of ministry

for those who grow Christians forward in and out of the church.

Introductory Orientations

Introductory orientations have been identified to clarify the author's epistemological,

ontological, and theological views as they pertain to the development of the model. The intent is

not to validate, justify, or warrant the beliefs but to unveil them to clarify perspective and

framing for the development of the model. According to Graham:

> Because of its vital formative function, theology can establish and clarify the framework
> within which the spiritual maturing process occurs. Theology helps anchor the spiritual
> development of believers and the larger picture of God's redemptive plan. Theology
> reminds us that spiritual formation is not about prowess but about participation.[79]

Therefore, the author of this dissertation offers a few that are not intended to identify all or cover

all confessed theological beliefs that drive the formation of the model.

Knowing God: Confessed Beliefs

Biblical theology would assert an epistemology advocating that 'knowing' is centered on

knowing God, which presupposes a relationship with God, brought about solely through Christ's

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[78] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 217–218.

[79] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 187.

death and resurrection, thereby reconciling one to God. In the model, knowing God flows from

the inerrancy and Spirit-inspired authorship of His Word, the Bible. According to Kevin J.

Vanhoozer, "It is God's voice speaking from the Bible that requests the reader to reinterpret and

understand the biblical message and to respond to it."[80] The theological importance and

significance for the regenerate is the centrality of the authority of God's voice as the highest

authority. Porter states, "The first way of understanding this doctrine is that it emphasizes

scripture as our highest authority for all matters of faith and practice. scripture is God's word,

and if we are confident in what God's word has to say about a matter, this should take

precedence over and against any other putative source of information."[81] The supremacy of God

(Col 1:15–23) and the authority of His Word (1 Thess 2:13) are at the core of Pauline theology

and the model. George reminds us that:

> the Bible is not a dead document to be once for all mastered and deposited in the
> reservoir of achievement. The Word of God is alive and powerful, and it must be owned
> and studied reverently and faithfully in every generation. Theology is a discipline of
> faith."[82]

Justification and Sanctification: Confessed Beliefs

The model is derived from a reformed theological perspective on justification and a view

of the "already but not yet" progressive nature of sanctification in the regenerate, who is

identified as a Christ-follower in the model. The focus of the dissertation is on sanctification

which follows justification. The author's place in Protestant reformed theology is predominantly

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[80] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 80.

[81] Porter, "Sanctification in a New Key," 139.

[82] Timothy George, *Galatians: Vol 30* (Nashville, Broadman & Holman, 1994), 73.

fueled by, as Sinclair B. Ferguson (in Alexander) notes, the "special emphasis on the subject of sanctification."[83] The two prevailing features are Jesus Christ alone as our justification. It is through our relationship with Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit that we, in the here and now, in but not of the world, exist as humans, in the realm of progressive sanctification, and "because of our fellowship (union) with Him we come to share His resources."[84] The author also aligns with Ferguson in our life in Christ is produced from our death to sin and resonates with Paul's emphasis on 'dead to sin,' or in this author's vernacular, which will be expanded below, dead to self, as represented by Paul's reference to the flesh. Further, we belong to Christ by grace and faith and become partakers in His righteousness and holiness.

In Christ, we are a new creation undergoing a continuous and progressive work of transformation and spiritual growth through the sanctification process in a participatory and joint union and effort with the Holy Spirit. According to Ferguson, "Sanctification is, therefore, the consistent, practical outworking of what it means to belong to the new creation in Christ." We must choose, as one who has been justified, "to live by the Spirit's power in a way that conforms with Christ, our Lord."[85] Finally, in line with Ridderbos, "not only justification from the guilt of sin but also deliverance from the power of sin, renewal, sanctification, faith, are for Paul above all 'eschatological' realities, which demand to be understood as a revelation of the new eon that has appeared with Christ's advent and work."[86] As Herman N. Ridderbos notes, there is an

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[83] Sinclair B. Ferguson, "The Reformed View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. By Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 47.

[84] Ferguson, "The Reformed View," 50.

[85] Ferguson, "The Reformed View," 60.

[86] Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 205.

"indissoluble bond between the Spirit and Christ."[87]

The Work of the Holy Spirit: Confessed Beliefs

The Holy Spirit is a person. He is one person of the triune God, the Trinity. He, Himself, is God. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth (John 16:13-25). The Holy Spirit is our advocate (John 14:15-21). The Holy Spirit is our Comforter (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit is our Helper (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit is our Counselor (John 14:26-28). A. W. Tozer reminds us to "cultivate the Holy Spirit by honoring the Lord Jesus Christ."[88] The apostle Paul notes that we honor the Lord Jesus by choosing 'to walk' in His truth, righteousness, and holiness. The scriptures indicate that through the sanctification process, the Christ-follower grows in heart-knowledge through the power of the Bible, which the Spirit illuminates by "bringing to our remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).

According to Konsmo, "In Pauline thought, the progression of the Spirit in the Christian life is described as sanctification. . .From Paul's perspective, one of the tasks of the Spirit is Sanctifier, or as one who makes Holy."[89] The author also subscribes to Konsmo's view that "the Spirit-metaphor of 'walk' is structured as life is a journey (Gal 5)."[90] It is also important to an understanding of the model that as Konsmo reminds us "the ontological aspects of Spirit-walk fit under the structural sub-category of 'setting goals and motivating actions.'"[91] It is also an

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[87] Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 231.

[88] A. W. Tozer, *Life in the Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 34.

[89] Erik Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit: The Intangible Spirit's Tangible Presence in the Life of the Christian* (New York: Lang, 2010), 99-100.

[90] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 107.

[91] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 107.

ontological metaphor as the fruit or "blessings of the Spirit are presented within a container. . . the fruit is the container object and the Spirit is the container substance."[92] Further, it is also important to identify that the author views Paul's use of the nature of the connection with Christ, exemplified by 'in Christ' and 'with Christ,' as not only evidence of union but also of, as articulated by Ridderbos, "an abiding reality determinative for the whole of the Christian life, to which appeal can be made at all times, in all sorts of connections."[93]

The Spirit serves many roles and functions, the discussion of which exceeds the scope of this dissertation; however, it is noteworthy for purposes of Paul's adamant advocacy for reliance and dependence on the Spirt for all in Christ to note with Porter that in "many other places the Pauline corpus it is quite clear that the Spirit who is with and in the believer is a strengthening, testifying, loving, and energizing presence," which this author emphasizes with Porter is experiential and manifests in guidance, direction, advocacy, intercession, and a host of other activities which are not only essential for the life in Christ but meaningful for personal internalization for growth in spiritual maturity. [94] It is also necessary to recognize that the Spirit does not force His will upon the regenerate. According to Pauline vocabulary, it is an interactive, collaborative, participatory process birthed from surrender and dependence and a Christ-centric desire to live differently, after the Spirit and not after the flesh. As Ladd states, "The power of the indwelling Spirit is not a spontaneous, all-possessing power; it requires human response. Walking in the Spirit means to live moment by moment and to make decisions under the guidance of the indwelling Spirit. . . The old self is ever present; only by constantly walling after

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[92] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 113.
[93] Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology,* 59.

[94] Porter, *Sanctification in a New Key,* 145.

the Spirit can the dominance of the flesh be broken."[95]

One final note pertains to the author of this dissertation's emphasis on the cognitive component in the Christ-follower in the sanctified life. While this dissertation is not a review of those who have produced works on Paul's theology, for those whom this author has cited in relevant and meaningful ways, it is also necessary for full and fair disclosure to note where a view that pertains to the model, is inconsistent with that of the author. Although Ridderbos states, "being in the Spirit, is not a subjective state of consciousness, but an objective mode of being," the model advocates that humans, including Christ-followers, have a very active awareness of our attitudes and choices, which reflect a subjective consciousness of being in the Spirit, as well as an objective of being in the Spirit, as the Spirit lives in us. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20). [96]

Spirituality and Spiritual Formation: Confessed Beliefs

Before shifting into a brief explanation of the author's confessed beliefs on spirituality and formation, as they pertain to context for the meaning-making of the model, it is important to define the construct, spiritual. According to Fee's phrasing about the construct of 'spiritual,' "It denotes more than inner vitality, but specifically an outlook fashioned by the Spirit of God."[97] Spirituality can be conceived as an attitude in the model, and spirituality is produced by the Spirit and visible as action. McGrath defines spirituality as "the outworking in real life of a person's religious faith – what a person does with what they believe."[98] The emphasis on

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[95] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*.

[96] Ridderbos, *Paul an Outline of His Theology,* 221.

[97] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence,* 24–26.

[98] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 1999), 2.

experience producing Spirit-facilitated action is crucial in the importance of transformation. As McGrath also states, "Spirituality is generally understood to mean the experiencing of God and the transformation of lives as outcomes of that experience. Spirituality thus refers to a lived experience of God and the life of prayer and action that results from this."[99] According to numerous scholars, spiritual formation is a collaborative effort between human will and the transformative work of the Spirit. A transformation that "originates in God (not us) and is, in almost every way imaginable, foreign, and alien to our normal, natural human development. It is not merely one step in the process of human development."[100] Accordingly, it is the essence of progressive sanctification wrought by surrender to the work of the Spirit.

As stated previously, this dissertation is placed within the field of practical or applied theology. Fredi P. Kruger states, "Practical theology begins with episodes, situations, or contexts that call for interpretation. Therefore, practical theology invites scholars/students to interpret the texts of contemporary lives and practice."[101] The experiential aspect is relevant to spiritual formation as seen in numerous areas, such as pastoral and practical theology. According to McGrath:

> pastoral theology emphasizes how a theological foundation provides both a framework and a resource for pastoral care. It tries to answer the question of what we should do in the face of problems and challenges to faithful action. At its heart, practical theology is thus a critical reflection upon the actions of the church in the light of the gospel and the Christian tradition.[102]

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[99] McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 109.

[100] Robert W. Stacy provided this insight in comments to a paper submitted by the author of this dissertation for one of her doctoral program courses.

[101] Fredi P. Kruger, "Preliminary Thoughts on the Relevance of the Research Field of Cognition for Practical Theology," *Verbum et Ecclesia 37*, no. 1 (2016), 2.

[102] McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 108.

Another closing note stems from the fatherly and pastoral cry of Paul in Galatians 4:19–20, which is representative of his commitment to spiritual growth and progress. Graham reminds us of the importance of doctrinal check-ups for those committed to caring for and developing others for spiritual purposes, as Paul evidenced in these verses. Graham writes, "Doctrinal differences, left unchecked, would wreak havoc on their whole understanding of Christian faith and practice."[103] A Pauline-influenced and derived model emphasizes a biblical and practical theology grounded in Christology and Pneumatology. Graham identifies Paul as a pastoral theologian, emphasizing his passion flowing from theology and experience.

The interpretative context for the epistemological system developed and explored in this dissertation is the struggle of the Christ-follower to make choices and decisions that align with Christ-centric ways of being and doing. Believers in Christ are brought into a personal relationship with God with an experiential dimension, as discussed in the confessed beliefs in the Holy Spirit. Hardin notes, "The tension between experience and praxis must be reckoned with in any discussion of the spirituality of Paul."[104] For this author, it is represented in Paul's emphasis on sanctification or living Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is foundational to the model that the reader views living Christ as a lifestyle, "it is not just about beliefs and values; it is about real life, in which those ideas and values are expressed and embodied in a definite way of living," and for purposes of this dissertation as espoused by Paul, through the selected verses connected to the model.[105] As a praxis, spirituality is a practical collaborative, participatory, interactive partnering between the Christ-follower and the Holy Spirit, as well as connection with and

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[103] Graham, *Systematic Theology and Spiritual Formation,* 189–190.

[104] L. T. Hardin, "Is a Pauline Spirituality Still Viable?" *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 82, (2015), 134.

[105] McGrath, *Christian Spirituality,* 3.

participation as members of one another in community.

In addition, the words of Jesus that the Spirit guides into all truth is one preeminent act for the regenerate in recognizing the essential role of the Spirit in spiritual formation. The Word of God, the truth of God, cannot be understated, as the Shepherd must always be pointing the regenerate towards the inspired, inerrant truth of God's Word, as Paul regularly reminds his listeners and readers. (Col 1:3-8, Eph 4:21). Finally, Tozer notes that "the Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste, and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts."[106]

Literary Criticism and Metaphor: Confessed Beliefs

The model proposes that the literary techniques of narrative and dialogue are used in Paul's epistles. The author has not adopted a particular method of textual criticism nor is identifying with a particular view or model. It is necessary, however, to clarify that elements of literary criticism apply to the development of the model. This is supported by Robert W. Stacy, who notes:

> Literary critics are interested primarily in the text as "literature" but, to varying degrees, may also take seriously the historicity of the text. An example of literary criticism is reader-response criticism which is interested in listening to the original author and trying to hear the "signals" they believe he has set up and sent to his readers, believing that there is an ongoing communication between writer and reader (who share a perspective that differs from that of any character in the story) that must be mastered if we are going to "hear" the text as it was meant to be heard. . . [107]

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[106] A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God: The Human Thirst for the Divine* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1993), 9.

[107] Robert W. Stacy, "Following Jesus in the Kingdom of God: Leadership in the Synoptic Gospels." *Faculty Publications and Presentations*, 48 (2017): 4, n. 6.

The author also acknowledges that this work requires additional investigation and discussion that is not within the intent of this dissertation. The reader should note the confines of the exploration and development of this topic and assent to step into the author's frame to consider the importance of this model for praxis in the Christ-centric life. The importance of metaphor in Paul's theology aligns with many of Konsmo's views, particularly his statement that "metaphor has the power to define reality and convey truth."[108] There are many views and theories of metaphor beyond the scope of this dissertation, which identifies metaphor as useful for "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."[109] It is useful for the reader to note the position that metaphor is useful for painting a picture in illustrative language, creating a different perspective or way of seeing, viewing, and making meaning, producing a new way of knowing, as well as a way to communicate truth (in this case Biblical truth by the Apostle Paul) or "as some critics call this the cognitive function of metaphor." [110] Finally, the author's cognitive emphasis on meaning-making as inherent in the model requires an understanding aligned with Gruenberg and Asumang's statement "that analogies and metaphors are effective vehicles in the conveyance and exploration of spiritual concepts. . . [and] metaphors constitute a fundamental and indispensable means of meaning-making."[111]

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[108] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy* Spirit, 48.

[109] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980), 5.

[110] It is necessary to clarify, at the onset, as Johnson, that this dissertation uses the word "knowing rather than knowledge because the aim of epistemology is not acquired knowledge. Rather, the goal homes in on creating a kind of person and people who have the skill set to see what is being shown to them." John M. DePoe and Tyler Dalton McNabb, eds. *Debating Christian Religious Epistemology: An Introduction to Five Views on the Knowledge of God* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 69. This emphasizes application, as they, in the words of the Apostle Paul, walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 61.

[111] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation, 221.

Delimitations

The dissertation focuses on a limited number of themes and concepts from the psychological sciences, neuroscience, and Pauline theology relevant to understanding the model and its application in *praxis.* The literature reviewed is important for this research. Still, it is not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive in the selected fields if not relevant to the development and application of the model. The intent is to present another way to view spiritual formation and demonstrate its relevance and application as exemplary and supplemental in the ongoing developments within psychology and Christianity, and now integrating neuroscience to encourage further research in integrative models within spiritual formation and soul care.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review has three primary sections: soul care and spiritual formation, psychological science, and neuroscience. The literature review intends to identify whether gaps in the three main areas that contribute to the development of the model indicate a need for a novel integrated spiritual formation model derived from Pauline theology, psychological science, and neuroscience/medical science. The first section focuses on soul care and spiritual formation, recognizing that spiritual formation is the model's primary function, with its secondary purpose as an approach to soul care. The second section focuses on the key contributing theoretical psychological orientations implemented within the frame and application of the model's therapeutic toolbox. The third section, focused on contributions from neuroscience/medical science, explores the key functions of human systems necessary to understand many of the model's metaphors and functions with the life of the Christ-follower.

Soul Care and Spiritual Formation

Before we can explore the development of soul care, it is relevant to identify a few thoughts on the philosophical etiology and conceptualization of the soul.[1] Scholars have

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[1] "In Hebrew, the concept of the soul is mainly expressed by the noun נֶפֶשׁ (*nepeš*, "soul"). It is the basic term for a living being's vital life-force that interacts with its surroundings and needs to be satisfied for life to be sustained. It usually refers to humans (Gen 2:7), but occasionally is used for animals (Gen 9:5). There is a related verb, נָפַשׁ (*nāpaš*, "to be refreshed"), from the same root (Exod 23:12). Often, the word *nepeš* refers to the individual; thus, it is used for the whole human being. In Greek, the soul is expressed by the noun ψυχή (*psyche*, "soul"), which has a similar semantic range as *nepeš* and usually translates it in the Septuagint. In the NT, *psychē* refers to the inner self, life, and the person, and often has a holistic sense to it (e.g., Matt 6:25), as does *nepeš*. There is a related adjective, ψυχικός (*psychikos*, "natural") that describes unspiritual and natural humanity as opposed to spiritual humanity (1 Cor 2:14). It is clear in both Hebrew and Greek that the relevant terms refer to the life-force, and often to the living being itself. It is the natural life-force that sustains a person and is the center of emotion, will, and desire. In the biblical usage of these terms, context indicates whether the writer refers to the life-force of a living being or to the essence of a person that continues after physical death. The soul is an object of both the judgment of God and God's saving work in both the OT and NT (e.g., Ps 62:1; Mic 6:7; Matt 10:28)" Joel T. Hamme, "Soul," ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series, (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

numerous opinions on the use of the soul from an Old Testament perspective, an exploration of which is beyond the scope of this brief exploration. Suffice it to note that. Shedd, commenting on the creation of man, notes that the body has a different nature and substance from the soul.[2] Shedd writes, "The Creator first enlivens inorganic matter into a body and then creates a rational spirit which he infuses into it."[3] In the Old Testament, the human is regarded as a unity, but it does not emphasize unity to the point where the person ceases to exist after death; in other words, the soul does live on.[4] Shedd notes, "The distinction between the soul of life" uniquely breathed into men is confirmed when we contrast Genesis 1:26," make man in our image" with the creation accounts in Genesis 1:20 and 1:24, "bring forth creatures." The soul of life" is inbreathed by the creator and made in his image and as a result," it is said in Ecclesiastes 3:21 that "the spirit (*rûaḥ*) of man goes upward," and "the spirit (*rûaḥ*) of the beast goes downward to the earth."[5]

The notion of "soul" traces back to the early first centuries, and for those familiar with its philosophical roots, it is not surprising that Plato and Aristotle had differing views on the soul. Plato considered the soul as the form of the body, not a distinct substance that inhabited the body. Aristotle believed that the soul did not exist apart from the body. While scholars may

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[2] "God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (*nepeš ḥayyâ*), a breath or soul of life (Gen 2:7). According to this statement, man is composed of a material part resulting from the vivification of the dust of the ground by creative energy and of an immaterial part resulting from the spiration or inbreathing of God." William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*. Edited by Alan W. Gomes. 3rd ed., (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2003), 430.

[3] Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 430.

[4] Old Testament scripture confirms that our soul continues to live on after our body dies. An example of this is found in Genesis 35:18: "And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name…" further support for the difference between body and soul is taught in Eccl 12:7, where the "dust" returns to the earth and the "spirit" returns to God.

[5] Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology,* 430.

disagree on interpretative views, there is "widespread agreement exists that he equated life with soul and soul with life" and further that Plato had an influence on Augustine and Aristotle had an influence on Aquinas."[6]

Augustine believed that the soul, which was unique and created by God, was united to the body but distinct from it. Further, according to Augustine, the soul's purpose is to govern the body, or in Augustine's vernacular, rule it, aligning with Plato by assigning it a higher importance. According to James R. Beck, Augustine "did not adopt the tripartite model of human constitution as taught by the Platonists of his day."[7] As M. C. Preus points out, it is also noteworthy that "soul for Augustine was a larger term than spirit; the spirit was the soul's power of thought."[8] Thomas Aquinas emphasized the unity of the body and soul. While both Aquinas and Aristotle highlighted a close link, Aquinas departs from Aristotle by affirming that the soul survives death.[9] Augustine also understands his complete depravity as he states, "The house of my soul is too narrow for thee to come into me; let thee enlarge it. It is in ruins; do thou restore it? But who will cleanse it? Or to whom shall I cry to but thee?"[10] For Augustine, the battleground was within the soul and presented an initial construct for current thinking that soul care is at the heart of spiritual formation.

In the 1400s, Thomas à Kempis also identified the soul as a battleground in spiritual formation. He also recognized the importance of the heart. emphasizing the Scriptural need for

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[6] James R. Beck, "Self and Soul: Exploring the Boundary between Psychotherapy and Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31, no. 1 (2003), 27.

[7] Beck, "Self and Soul," 29.

[8] M. C. Preus, *Eloquence and Ignorance in Augustine's on the Nature and Origin of the Soul* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 85.

[9] Beck, *Self and* Soul, 29.

[10] St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, ed. Albert Cook Outler (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 8.

the new heart received when one embraces Jesus Christ (Ezek 36:26). Kempis, in highlighting

the role of heart and soul, reflected on the need to imitate Christ, a theme evident in Paul's

writings and his cry in 1 Corinthians 11:1, as Thomas à Kempis writes, "Our outward and inward

lives must be closely watched and well ordered, for both are important to perfection."[11] The

construct of the soul is used functionally to denote "any faculty within a human being which has

to do with relationship to the divine."[12] As Karl Barth states, "the human person is bodily soul, as

he is also besouled body."[13] Finally, the importance of the soul, as a construct, is its

representation of a person's relationship with his Creator and the need for care for and of the

relationship, divinely imparted through the quickening of the Spirit who makes us alive in Christ,

by grace and through faith (Eph 2:5, 8–10), evidenced by Paul's concern "with human beings in

the reality of their existence."[14] F. LeRon Shults and Steven J. Sandage write:

> how can we think about the relation between the agency of the human spirit and the Holy
> Spirit so as to make sense of their unity but not obliterate the distinction between creature
> and Creator? It is important to recognize first that all personal agency is already
> dialectical. As the agency of a small child develops an 'ethical self' is formed and
> mediated through the child's relation to others, who act intentionally toward the child. . .
> The agency of the child is both gift and task. Ego functions are forged within the child's
> relations to others, but precisely because his relation to others involves an invitation to
> reciprocal intentionality. . .The agency of the Creator Spirit is truly infinite,
> encompassing, and empowering all creaturely agency. This means that human agency is
> already and always upheld by the gracious reality of God, for "in him we live and move
> and have our being" (Acts 17:28).[15]

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[11] Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*. Translated by Aloysius Croft and Harold Bolton (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 19.

[12] Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity: Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 81.

[13] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, *The Doctrine of Creation*, Part 2, ed. Thomas F. Torrance and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Harold Knight and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 350.

[14] Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity*, 217.

[15] F. LeRon Shults and Steven J. Sandage, *Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 109–10.

As such, soul care focuses beyond the material and the physical. According to E. W. Marter, in the Old Testament:

> The soul that a man is simply the living being a man is. The soul that a man has is simply his life, in any manifestation of that life. In the Hebrew concept the soul a man is and the soul a man has are one and the same; namely, the life that constitutes a man a living being and the living being so constituted. . . It comprehends man in all his powers of mind and body, manifesting life, not in one aspect of being, but in the total self, whether appetite or emotion, reason or purpose, consciousness or conscience. It is life as it appears in man, or it is the man himself as long as he has life.[16]

In the New Testament, the soul is thought to be composed of body (*soma*), soul (*psyche*), and spirit (*pneuma*) with functioning parts including mind and heart, among others, identified and discussed later to highlight the importance of what the model labels as personhood. Soul care, therefore, emphasizes the spiritual well-being of the whole person.

Shifting gears and intentionally skimming the philosophical roots in the development of soul care, it is meaningful to note that terminology shifted, and practices related to spiritual formation were often associated with Catholicism. Porter notes that historically, all initial theology is rooted in the pre-Reformation Catholic church, including concepts related to spiritual formation. There is little debate that Protestantism disagrees with post-Reformation Roman Catholicism on many theological points related to orthodoxy.[17] Many of the perceptions about spiritual formation were initially linked to spiritual practices or exercises. James M. Houston notes, for example, that "Ignatius denoted a way of examining one's conscience, of meditating,

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[16] E. W. Marter, "The Hebrew Concept of "Soul" in Pre-Exilic Writings, (Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1964), 107–108. Peacock notes, "The Hebrew word that is usually translated "soul" in literal translations is found more than 750 times in the Old Testament. However, only in a few of these places is the translation "soul" an adequate translation of what the Hebrew text means. Much more frequently, the word means such things as "throat," "neck," "desire," "inner being," "life," and "person," and it is sometimes used much in the same way as we would use a personal pronoun." Heber F. Peacock, "Translating the Word for Soul in the Old Testament," *The Bible Translator* 27, no. 2 (1976), 216.

[17] Porter, "Sanctification in a New Key," 132-133.

praying, and contemplating, all to get rid of "disordered affections" before God."[18] Aquinas, who

was considered in the Contrition camp, and Scotus, in the Attrition camp, created moral

theologies that divided the Catholic church, as "the Nominalists who favored the exercise of

"attrition" affected by the fears of hell and sin, and the more juridical and Scholastic exercise of

"contrition" in determining the depth to which confession and repentance."[19] Spiritual direction

was still deemphasized in Protestant theology, as most spiritual directors were Jesuits, even

though Ignatius, Luther, and Calvin's pastoral letters were in the "genre a great instrument of

'soul care' and direction, diffused, and suggestive of shepherding."[20]

Leaping forward, soul care, and/or spiritual formation became more trans-

denominational. Post-World War II, a more holistic view of spirituality, spiritual formation, and

soul care emerged, and theologies formed more around one's emotional health and identity in

Christ. Other focus areas were addressed by some, such as Frank Lake, who introduced "clinical

theology" into the Anglican pastoral ministry, as well as Howard Clinebell and other American

therapists."[21] The shift to the discovery of self, released inquiries into areas such as authenticity

and investigations into what is best for the individual, prompts the question asked by Jeffrey

Boyd, "What will "soul care" mean in such a culture? Boyd has advocated recovering the

traditional Christian view of "the soul." [22] More significant than a paradigm shift, as this work

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[18] James M. Houston, "Seeking Historical Perspectives for Spiritual Direction and Soul Care Today," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, 1, no. 1 (2008), 92.

[19] Houston, "Seeking Historical Perspectives for Spiritual Direction and Soul Care Today," 92.

[20] Houston, "Seeking Historical Perspectives for Spiritual Direction and Soul Care Today," 94.

[21] Houston, "Seeking Historical Perspectives for Spiritual Direction and Soul Care Today," 91.

[22] Jeffrey Boyd, *Reclaiming the Soul: The Search for Meaning in a Self-Centered Culture* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1996).

suggests, is the "need to recover transcendence as a more radical counter-cultural requirement today."[23]

In the Reformed tradition, the view is theocratic, and the message is conformity to the image of Christ, which is a journey dependent on a willingness to surrender and participate in and with the work of the Holy Spirit. As the model advocates, it is in and through and by the work of the Spirit in us that we can and hope to step into and sustain His work of perfection for His glory.[24] Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner emphasize that in the "already-but-not yet dialectic, there is a persistent tension that fuels our yearning for greater conformity to God's intention [while] also liberating us from the guilt of not being perfect."[25] The model begins in Module 1, Detoxication, with the cultivation of an awareness of self to highlight the depravity of self, the completeness and sinfulness of our human nature, and the need to find peace in our messy sheepness, a phrase used in the model's language, so that we can reconcile and accept our imperfection while submitting to the Spirit's perfecting process.

Willard defines the soul as "that aspect of your whole being that correlates, integrates, and enlivens everything going on in the various dimensions of the self. It is the life center of the human being."[26] Willard then defines spiritual formation as "the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes

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[23] Houston, "Seeking Historical Perspectives, 97.

[24] It is worth noting the both/and discussion raised by Pettit, who states, "We should embrace the reality that both the Spirit of God is at work in our lives, and we cooperate with that work (Phil 2:12-13; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Pet 1:3-8). Just as the individual must respond in faith to be justified, so too must the individual respond in faith during the process of sanctification." Paul Pettit, ed., *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 47.

[25] Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, *Spiritual Direction and Care of Souls* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 101.

[26] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012), 189.

like the inner being of Christ himself."[27] Barton noted that spiritual formation requires

integrating mind, body, and one's will cultivated by a "deep, intimate connection with God

and others."[28] The experience of God's Word in all aspects of oneself is Biblical according

to White, who looks to the "psalms to propose that the construct of the soul is the subject

of more than prayer, praise, and thanksgiving but also reflective of a range of feelings,

emotions, and experiences which could not be denied to psychology without denying it

to any legitimate subject-matter at all."[29] Willard describes a holistic process for the

transformative action of spiritual formation when he states:

> Our actions always arise out of the interplay of universal factors in human life: spirit, mind, body, social context, and soul. Action never comes from the movement of the will alone. Often—perhaps usually—what we do is not an outcome of deliberate choices and a mere act of the will but is more of a relenting to pressure on the will from one or more of the dimensions of the self. The understanding of this is necessary for the understanding and practice of spiritual formation, which is bound to fail if it focuses on the will alone. The inadequacy of good intentions alone to ensure proper action is marked by Jesus' words, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." If the six dimensions are properly aligned with God and what is good—and therefore with each other—that "mere relenting" will be good, and our actions will simply be good fruit of the good tree. If they are not so aligned, they will be the inevitable bad fruit of the bad tree. We must clearly understand that there is a rigorous consistency in the human self and its actions. This is one of the things we are most inclined to deceive ourselves about. If I do evil, I am the kind of person who does evil; if I do good, I am the kind of person who does good (1 John 3:3-10). Actions are not impositions on who we are but are expressions of who we are. They come out of our heart and the inner realities it supervises and interacts with.[30]

C. S. Lewis also professed a holistic approach when he wrote, "And taking your life as a whole,

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[27] Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 22.

[28] Ruth Haley Barton et al., "Spiritual Formation in the Church," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 7, no. 2 (2014), 299.

[29] Victor White, *Soul and Psyche: An Enquiry into the Relationship of Psychotherapy and Religion* (London: Collins and Harwell Press, 1960), 13.

[30] Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 39.

with all the innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature; either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow creatures, and with itself."[31] Moon and Benner suggest that "humans have the capacity to attend to events and stimuli in the material world and the intuition and inspiration that erupts from their inner world. God reveals the divine self through both."[32]

Soul Care, Spiritual Formation, or Two in One?

The answer to this question is unclear and a function of who responds to the question. Smith suggests that "soul care involves relationships, personal spiritual growth, inner healing and change, rest, rejuvenation, and living with heaven in mind."[33] Smith's definition seems to encompass spiritual formation. Moon and Benner suggest that the Latin phrase, *cura animarum*, from which we derive the construct of soul care, includes both an emphasis on care referring to "actions designed to support the well-being of something or someone . . . and cure referring to actions designed to restore well-being that has been lost."[34] The author advocates that the terms can be used interchangeably to emphasize transformation and spiritual growth, the working of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate, and the need to nurture and grow through the care of one's spiritual well-being. [35] The focus is holistic, encompassing the development and sustaining as

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[31] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 28th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1978), 86.

[32] Moon and Benner, *Spiritual Direction and Care of Souls*, 103.

[33] Stephen W. Smith, *Embracing Soul Care: Making Space for What Matters Most* (Grand Rapids: Kregel 2006), 51.

[34] Moon and Benner, *Spiritual Direction and Care of Souls*, 11.

[35] For this work, the author aligns with Mood and Benner, who state that transformation "is the process of undergoing radical change of mind and heart, a dying to the false self and a continually assenting t one's true self,

reflective in Pauline theology exemplified by Paul's concern for growth (Eph 4:15, Phil 1:6) and perseverance (1 Cor 9:24, Phil 3:13-14, Gal 5:7). Undergirding spiritual formation and soul care is the transformative presence and work of the Holy Spirit. To care for the soul is to strengthen one spiritually, and to strengthen one spiritually is to encourage transformation into the image, conformance into the image, and a renewal that comes from a "renewal in knowledge after the image of the Creator" (Col 3:10).[36]

According to Porter, "the topic of spiritual formation within evangelicalism is simply the Protestant doctrine of sanctification in a new key. The Protestant theological category of "sanctification" has traditionally referred to the process of the believer being made holy, which is "to be conformed to the image of Christ.[37]" For many scholars, including Barton, Hardin, and others, this author concurs that spiritual formation or soul care requires preeminently the work of the Spirit and one's dependency on Christ. Spiritual formation transforms, conforms, and reforms us for the glory of God for His service. As advocated throughout, the message is one of personal commitment and transformation cojoined and coexistent with connection to community as members of His body. As Thomas Merton states, "the individual member of the community was formed or guided by his participation in the life of the community," facilitated in a cooperative and participatory union with the Holy Spirit. [38] It is also interesting to note that the term spiritual direction is often used in this conversation but is not the focus of this

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which reflects the image and likeness of God," *Spiritual Direction and Care of Souls*, 179. It is important to note that the author uses the term Authentic Self rather than true self in the model.

[36] See also 2 Corinthians 318, Romans 12:2, Galatians 2:20, and Ephesians 4:24.

[37] Porter, "Sanctification in a New Key," 129.

[38] Thomas Merton, *Spiritual Direction and Meditation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1960), 12.

developmental section. [39]

Select Views and Issues on Soul Care/Spiritual Formation in the Modern Church

Once again, the question, soul care, spiritual formation – two or one, is a loaded question with a purposeful lack of focused clarity to prompt a reader's investigation of soul care or spiritual formation, if one prefers, in the reader's realm of influence. For this section, answers to this question are presented in summary form. They are selected from views espoused by Ruth Haley Barton, Diane J. Chandler, Siang-Yang Tan, Judy TenElshof, and James C. Wilhoit from Alexander's book, *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification.*[40] TenElshof advocates that the church's role is to lovingly support the family of God with an emphasis on growth. Tan believes that spiritual formation needs to be at the forefront of the role of the local church and emphasizes Ephesians 4:12–13, highlighting growth into maturity and conformity with Christ. Whilhot emphasizes the communal nature of the process toward growth in relationship with God and conformity, which flows from the work of the Holy Spirit. Barton acknowledges that spiritual formation presents in many different expressions depending on church tradition and culture and equates it in some contexts with the process of discipleship, focused on transformation and fruit production (Gal 5:22–23).

In the view of the author of this dissertation, as previously stated, the church has become distracted with issues related to culture, politics, and economics, among others, which are critical

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[39] Theresa Tisdale as quoted in by Moon and Benner defines "spiritual direction as the interaction between one person, trained to listen for the movement of God, and another who desires to develop and cultivate an intimate, personal relationship with God. This process requires commitment to openness and honesty." Moon and Benner, *Spiritual Direction and Care of Souls*, 221.

[40] Donald L. Alexander, *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

in many ways; however, not necessarily the local church's mission. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote that 60 years ago, "the result is that we are living in a society which is much more immoral than it was fifty years ago, in which vice and lawbreaking and lawlessness are rampant."[41] Unsurprisingly, this concern continues to exist today, in 2024. The church wrestles with the same issues. The distracted focus of the local church's mission is paramount, and the list of distractions is long. Howard emphasizes that numerous complex forces create disenchantment and disengagement, which intensifies the need for spiritual direction and soul care as never before."[42] Gary W. Moon writes:

> Early evangelicals were known for their "experience" of God. But over time, as so often happens, molten souls aflame with real Presence can begin to congeal. The apostle Paul's number one teaching them e, the experience of "union with Christ" which was at the heart of the message proclaim ed by both Calvin and Luther, began to be replaced with other, less demanding options. By the mid to late twentieth century, evangelicalism came to define itself in terms of correct belief alone and holding correct doctrine was Standardly presented as the condition of forgiveness of sins, ft is not uncommon throughout church history for nominal Christianity to become norm al Christianity."[43]

Lewis reminds us, "the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time."[44]

One of the reasons for the model is the continual transformation in the fields of soul care and spiritual formation. The intent is not to negate those who have paved paths forward in an

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[41] D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 136.

[42] Houston, *Seeking Historical Perspectives,* 96.

[43] Gary W. Moon, "Spiritual Formation and Soul Care: A Response to 'An Old Call in Need of New Voices.'" *Journal of spiritual formation and soul care.* 7, no. 2 (2014), 288, citing Dallas Willard, "Discipleship," *Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology,* ed. Gerald McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[44] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 199.

ever-emerging field, But God, as we say in the model, to continue to expand the dialogue.

Everett L. Worthington, while acknowledging the impact of Willard's definition of spiritual

formation, states:

> While we all appreciate brief, cogent definitions, I would suggest a more comprehensive
> one. I am defining *Christian spiritual formation* is being transformed by being conformed
> within relationship to Christ—in love of and knowing of the Father, in motivation and
> emotional response, in morality, in understanding, and in holy desires both conscious and
> unconscious. In short, spiritual formation is a Holy Spirit-led transformation toward the
> spiritual soul-body that will reside with Christ, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit and
> the saints throughout eternity. Its process is a joint relational venture.[45]

We then must follow Vanhoozer when he asserts, "To put on the new self, then, is not to pretend

to be something that we are not; rather, it is to participate in the new humanity that is – in

Christ."[46] We must be willing to ask questions, such as, how then are we, the community of

Christ, representing Christ as salt and light and sharpening one another as iron sharpens iron

(Prov 27:17)? How are we, the community of Christ, concerned about proper theological

doctrine among the regenerate, as Paul to the community of believers over whom he had

influence? How are we authentically, transparently, with vulnerability coming alongside those in

the body of Christ to encourage, exhort, and appropriately admonish with purposeful intent for

growth in intimacy with Christ and obedience to His Word for purposes of His glory? How is the

community of Christ shepherding others toward spiritual health and maturity in Christ? Although

there are no easy answers to these questions, Worthington suggests a collaborative way:

> It is a collaborative work that draws on the leading of the Holy Spirit, the theological
> interpretation of scripture, the application of theology (through practical theology that
> incorporates the wisdom of life in the church and within the Christian community over
> the ages), the findings and theories of psychology, the thoughtful guidance of people in
> the humanities and arts over the ages, and the interaction, advice, support, and

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[45] Everett L. Worthington, "An Interventionist and Psychometrician Considers Assessing Changes in Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, 14, no. 2 (2021), 179.

[46] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Putting on Christ: Spiritual Formation and the Drama of Discipleship," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 8, no 2 (2015), 162.

encouragement of Christians in one's local and extended communities.[47]

As such, the model provides a way for continual spiritual growth and development that is aligned with the church's mission, as reflected in Vanhoozer and Worthington, among others. Barton also reminds us that the church's role is to facilitate nearness to God through "personal devotion through grace-infused practices and engaging in intentional community."[48] Grace N. Nkenke adds:

> authentic growth in a relationship with God is most manifested in an ever-deepening ability to love and care for others. This challenge to grow in loving and caring for others is rooted in an individual's understanding of the God they meet in Christ and the nature of God's kingdom. Christ, God who became human, lived this love and taught what He lived. The language of the kingdom of God is self-sacrificing love. Thus, participation in this kingdom necessitates sharing with others the same type of compassion, love, and mercy received from God.[49]

The model inherently asserts that one can glean from the general revelation of God and propose a view that integrates psychological science, neuroscience, and medical science from a theocentric perspective with the Holy Spirit as the change agent and the human mind, will, and heart as a willing submissive participant and vessel in the process. The goal is transformative growth through a progressive process of refining and renewing as one chooses to put on (Eph 4:24, Rom 13:14) and stay in the will and way of Christ who supplies all in all times (Phil 4:19). Moon and Benner state that according to Calvin "Spiritual maturity develops out of a dialectical relationship with God and self. . . driven by the knowledge of God."[50]

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[47] Worthington, *An Interventionist and a Psychometrician*, 179.

[48] Barton, *Spiritual Formation in the* Church, 295.

[49] Grace N. Nkenke, "The Effect of Theological Education on the Spiritual Formation of Women in a Local Church," (master's thesis, Liberty University, 2023), 36, citing Trevor Hudson, "Relationships: Discipleship that Promotes Another Kind of Life," Christian Education Journal 16, no. 1, (2019), 113.

[50] Moon and Benner, *Spiritual Direction and Care of Souls*, 107.

Applications from Psychological Science

The model integrates select aspects of psychological science that are most predominant within the Modules and most relevant to the model's praxis. Within these selected theoretical orientations and techniques are myriad perspectives, approaches, theorists, and clinicians. The intent of this section is not to provide a historical or developmental review of the selected theory/technique but rather to highlight those aspects that pertain to the model and its usefulness in the Modules as described in Chapter 3.

Cognitive-Behavioral Theoretical Orientation and Techniques

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a popular and well-known therapeutic intervention developed by Beck. It emphasizes helping clients/patients change their thought processes through empirically based techniques to produce lasting change in their cognitions, actions, and behaviors. CBT asserts that one's cognitions and perceptions significantly influence emotions and behaviors, highlighting that the cognitive model is central to CBT. While CBT is often thought of as a short-term, solution-focused, and goal-directive therapy, it has a process side. It is useful for more in-depth work on the roots driving thoughts and perceptions and how systemic change within the individual can be facilitated through CBT's basic structure.

According to the Beck Institute, CBT is "a time-sensitive, structured, present-oriented psychotherapy directed toward solving current problems and teaching clients skills to modify dysfunctional thinking and behavior."[51] The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) says

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[51] The Beck Institute, "Understanding CBT," accessed June 3, 2024, https://beckinstitute.org/about/understanding-cbt/#:~:text=About%20Beck%20Institute&text=CBT%20is%20based%20on%20the,particularly%20when%20they%20are%20distressed.

that "Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) focuses on exploring relationships among a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. By addressing these patterns, the person and therapist can work together to develop constructive ways of thinking that will produce healthier behaviors and beliefs."[52]

One of the core foundational tenets of CBT is based on awareness, which is required to identify beliefs, usually those that are false or negative, and then test, restructure, or re-frame them into what the model refers to as Truth Statements. Some of the key principles in CBT are connected to deficient or unproductive thinking, which produces learned patterns of unproductive behavior. In other words, where we place our thoughts matters (Phil 4:8–9). Distorted thoughts and cognitions have a devasting impact on attitudes, actions, and choices. Not dwelling on thoughts of the past (Isa 43:18) has a positive impact on forward movement (Phil 3:13–14). The model advocates that CBT provides a path for recognizing distorted thinking, developing a deeper understanding of behaviors, attitudes, actions, and motivation, and cultivating a deeper sense of efficacy of oneself in Christ and confidence based on one's functional position in Christ. CBT focuses on changing thoughts (cognitions) and behavioral patterns by facing, or as the model proposes, moving through in Christ rather than falling prey to the human tendency of avoidance.

At the heart of CBT is change, modification, and restructuring. At the heart of spiritual formation is transformative spiritual growth. Spiritual growth implies development, and biblically, towards maturity in Christ – conformity to His image. The construct of maturity is

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[52] National Alliance on Mental Illness, "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy," accessed June 3, 2024, https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-llness/Treatments/Psychotherapy#:~:text=Cognitive%20behavioral%20therapy%20(CBT)%20focuses,self%2Ddestructive%20behaviors%20and%20beliefs.

vividly apparent in Pauline theology (Col 1:28, Eph 4:13-14), and maturity requires a developmental progression often based on stages.[53] As with all theories, the view is often tightly connected to one's worldview, and for developmental psychological theorists, the view is fastened to the view of human nature. Inherent in a CBT orientation is the view that humans have the capacity for growth and change and the potential for rational (healthy) or irrational (unhealthy) cognition. This orientation attracts the model to the integrative view of CBT as a meaningful psychological pillar.

One of the foundational cognitive structures in CBT is the schema. Aaron T. Beck defined schema as "a structure for screening, coding, and evaluating stimuli that impinge on the organism."[54] Beck also proposed that negative thoughts were underpinned by schemas representative of a person's past learning experiences.[55] For many, schemas can be deeply rooted, unknown to the conscious, dormant for lengthy periods, and activated with triggering events. For example, "schemas are sometimes viewed as unconditional beliefs ('I am incompetent'), conditional beliefs ('If I make a mistake, people will lose respect for me') or rules of behavior ('I must always do something perfectly')."[56] Schemas can be conditional and unconditional and are often considered core beliefs.

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[53] It is beyond the scope of this section to delve into a discussion of theories of developmental psychology. Needless to say, the well-known views of Piaget, Freud, Erikson, Kohlberg, and Vygotsky present divergent approaches, each with a significant contribution to psychological science. Other stage models of development often build upon a constructive-developmental foundation but often expand further to include emotional and relational components. Significant contributors identified with psychological models of developmental maturity include Liebert (Life Pattern), Loevinger (Ego Development), Kegan (Orders of Consciousness), Fowler (Faith Development), and Streib (Religious Styles), among others.

[54] Aaron T. Beck, *Depression: Clinical, Experimental, and Theoretical Aspects* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), 283.

[55] Judith S. Beck, *Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Basics and Beyond* (New York: Guilford Press, 2011).

[56] I. A. James, L. Southam, and I. M. Blackburn, "Schemas Revisited," *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy* 11, (2004), 372.

Central to CBT are three levels of thoughts identified as automatic thoughts, assumptions, and core beliefs. A goal of cognitive therapy is to change dysfunctional cognitive structures (i.e., schemata) that result in biased information processing (i.e., cognitive distortions) through a process known as cognitive restructuring.[57] Neuroimaging research "suggests that cognitive reframing/reappraisal represents an effortful but also an emotional process, which appeals to voluntary cognitive, rather than body-based or more automatic emotion regulation capabilities."[58]

Cognitive restructuring first requires identification of cognitions known as automatic thoughts. Automatic thoughts often relate to one's view of self and often hinder an accurate assessment of self, which the model refers to as intrinsic (within), or to one's situations, which the model refers to as extrinsic (externalities around or involving self) and often reinforce and reproduce negative cognitions and externalized behaviors. Automatic thoughts, as the word automatic suggests, are often non-volitional or stream-of-consciousness cognitions.[59] Automatic thoughts often manifest as descriptions, inferences, or situation-specific evaluations and are often related to emotions.[60] Further, automatic thoughts are often inaccurate and, if pursued, can lead to flesh-based choices for purposes of the model.

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[57] "Cognitive Distortions, Cognitive Biases, or 'Unhelpful Thinking Styles' are the Characteristic Ways our Thoughts Become Biased." A. T. Beck, "Thinking and Depression: I. Idiosyncratic Content and Cognitive Distortions," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 9 (1963), 327.

[58] Steven C. Hayes and Stefan G. Hofmann, *Process Based CBT* (Oakland: Harbinger, 2018), 154.

[59] A. T. Beck, *Cognitive Therapy and The Emotional Disorders* (New York: Plume, 1979).

[60] Beck, *Cognitive Therapy and The Emotional Disorders*. I. A. Cristea, G. H., Montgomery, S. Szamoskozi, and D. David, "Key constructs in ''Classical'' and ''New Wave'' Cognitive Behavioral Psychotherapies: Relationships among each other and with Emotional Distress," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 69, no. 6, (2013): 584–599.

The second step in cognitive restructuring is a deeper level of identification targeted at the cognitive distortions in automatic thoughts. Distortions are inherently dysfunctional and may include dichotomous thinking, overgeneralizing, selective abstraction, mind reading, catastrophizing, minimization, and should statements. The third and fourth steps are grounded in learning to use Socratic dialogue to present a rational rebuttal to distorted cognitions, aka automatic thoughts.[61]

Assumptions are considered an intermediate stage of cognition between core beliefs and automatic thoughts. Assumptions are usually derived from core beliefs. As previously discussed, automatic thoughts are often non-volitional and, in such cases, seen as shallow or less entrenched than core beliefs. Core beliefs are often conceptualized as concrete, absolute and frequently generalized to aspects of one's self, others, the world, and/or future.[62] Hayes and Hoffman suggest that "core beliefs are the verbal representations of the central elements of schemas, sometimes called central assumptions. Once a schema is activated, selective attentional processes allow much of the available information to remain unprocessed . . . a schema steers information processing so that information incompatible with the schema is overlooked, distorted or seen as irrelevant."[63] According to Hayes and Hofmann, modifying core beliefs "involves activations and modifications of neural mechanisms of self-representation."[64] Therapeutically, core beliefs are seen as dysfunctional because they drive assumptions that produce assumptions and lead to

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[61] The Socratic method is not based on indoctrination through persuasive rhetoric (a Sophist position) but rather requires an exchange, a dialogue where the teacher and student examine information based on questions that challenge the premises and assumptions of the targeted information (a Socratic tradition). Katherine Pang, "Sophist or Socratic Teaching Methods in Fostering Learning in US Graduate Education," *The International Journal of Learning* 15, no.6 (2008), 198.

[62] J. S. Beck, *Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Basics and Beyond* (New York: Guilford Press, 2011).

[63] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 340.

[64] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 168.

distortions. Distorted core beliefs are often inaccurate, unhelpful, judgmental, and unrealistic. Beck proposed that dysfunctional attitudes and beliefs create vulnerability to dysfunctional consequences.[65]

Although the term is often associated with Acceptance Commitment Therapy, discussed below, cognitive diffusion has implications in CBT. According to Hayes and Hofmann, "cognitive diffusion refers to the process of reducing the automatic emotional and behavioral function of thoughts by increasing awareness of the process of thinking over and above the content or literal meaning of thought."[66] Cognitive diffusion is also closely connected to metacognitive awareness. In American psychology's transition from behaviorism to cognitivism, early researchers such as W. Köhler and E. Tolman, B. Ritchie, and D. Kalish investigated constructs that became the forerunners for the current conceptions of metacognition.[67] For example, Kohler investigated how humans and animals see and solve problems. In contrast, Tolman emphasized the need to understand purposive behavior, including an animal's motives, expectations, and insight. These constructs of seeing and insight emerged into what the early cognitive theorists termed metacognition.[68] S. G. Paris and P. W. Winograd, along with G. Schraw and R. Dennison, attributed the term's first use to J. H. Flavell, who emphasized the dual aspects of the knowledge of and the regulation of one's own thinking process. Brown focused on

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[65] Beck, *Cognitive Behavior Therapy*.

[66] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 351.

[67] W. Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927). E. Tolman, B. Ritchie, and D. Kalish, "Studies in Spatial Learning: Response Learning vs. Place Learning by the Non-correction Method," *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 37*, (1947): 285–92.

[68] A.L. Brown, "Knowing When, Where and How to Remember: A problem of Metacognition," in R. Glaser (Ed.), *Advances in Instructional Psychology* (Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1978). J. H. Flavell, "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A New Area of Cognitive-developmental Inquiry," *American Psychologist, 34*, (1979): 906–11.

metacognition as the understanding of knowledge, which can be reflected in either the effective use or overt description of the knowledge in question.[69]

H. Wellman defined metacognition as "thinking about thinking or as a person's cognition about cognition;" R. T. Kellogg perceived metacognitive theory as dealing with cognitive self-knowledge: what a person knows about his or her own thinking; H. L. Swanson understood metacognition as an awareness of, and ability to monitor, regulate, and control one's own cognitive actions concerning learning; J. Metcalfe and A.P. Shimamura used the term to refer to a learner's knowledge about his or her own processes of cognition and the ability to control and monitor those processes as a function of the feedback the learner receives via learning outcomes; and J. Wilson viewed metacognition as the knowledge and awareness of one's thinking processes and strategies along with the ability to evaluate and regulate those processes.[70]

J. Baird, in describing metacognition, identified three main components: (a) metacognitive knowledge, (b) metacognitive awareness, and (c) metacognitive control.[71] Metacognitive knowledge stems from Flavell's and Brown's description, which generally refers to a learner's domain understanding combined with judgments regarding the allocation of cognitive resources.[72] Metacognitive control refers to the tactics and strategies to achieve

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[69] **S.** G. Paris, and P. W. Winograd, How Metacognition can Promote Academic Learning and Instruction. In B. Jones & L. Idol (Eds.), *Dimensions of Thinking and Cognitive Instruction* (pp. 15-51). (Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1990)**.** G. Schraw and R. Dennison, Assessing Metacognitive Awareness, *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 19, (1994): 460–75.

[70] H. Wellman, *The Child's Theory of Mind: The Development of Conscious Cognition,* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1985). 34. R. T. Kellogg, *The Psychology of Writing* (New York: Oxford, 1994). H. L. Swanson, Influence of Metacognitive Knowledge and Aptitude on Problem Solving, *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 82, no. 2, (1990): 306-667. J. Metcalfe, and A.P. Shimamura, (Eds.), *Metacognition: Knowing about Knowing.* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994). J. Wilson., "Assessing Metacognition: Legitimizing Metacognition as a Teaching Goal," *Reflect,* 4, no. 1, (1998): 14-20.

[71] J. Baird, *Self-Regulated Teaching for Self-regulated Learning.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Eighth European Conference for Research on Learning and Instruction, Goteborg, Sweden, (1999).

[72] Brown, "Knowing When, Where and How to Remember." Flavell, "Metacognition and Cognitive

specific goals, including monitoring and modification.[73] This type of control includes planning, comprehension monitoring, and evaluation, often called self-regulation. Metacognitive control allows for regulation, adjustment, amendment, or sharpening of the focus of a component to increase the emphasis on a course of action or abandon an unproductive activity. Schraw found that metacognitive control, which encompasses knowledge of attentional resources, existing cognitive strategies, and task progress, results from developed metacognitive skills and knowledge.[74]

In further attempts to understand metacognitive control, Schraw and Dennison suggested three facets: (a) planning, which includes strategy selection and allocation of cognitive resources; (b) monitoring, which encompasses an awareness of understanding; and (c) evaluation, which measures performance.[75] According to K. R. Muis, metacognitive monitoring also provides opportunities to shift or change tactics to meet the continually evolving demands. The combined effect of these processes illuminates the perspective that metacognition is multifaceted and, as such, is comprised of many variables.[76] As a result of cognitive diffusion, a person can reduce the impact of negative or problematic thoughts through increased cognitive flexibility and attentional resources. Finally, as Hayes and Hoffman state, "Both diffusion strategies and traditional cognitive restructuring rest on the assumption that thoughts can serve as barriers to

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Monitoring."

[73] C.E. Weinstein and D.K. Meyer, "Cognitive Learning Strategies and College Teaching," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 45, (1991): 15–26.

[74] Schraw and Dennison, "Assessing Metacognitive Awareness."

[75] Schraw and Dennison, "Assessing Metacognitive Awareness."

[76] K. R. Muis, "Epistemic Profiles and Self-regulated Learning: Examining Relations in the Context of Mathematics Problem-Solving," *Contemporary Educational Psychology 33, No.* 2, (2007): 177–208.

effective action and lead to potentially problematic emotional reactions; hence the need for 2

Corinthians 10:5, among others.[77]

Acceptance Commitment Theoretical Orientation and Techniques

With a basis in theory and philosophy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

uses acceptance, mindfulness, commitment, and behavior change strategies to heighten one's

self-awareness and cognitive flexibility (i.e., being fully present in the moment) and seeks to

change or continue the behaviors chosen to reflect one's values. According to Lance M.

McCracken and Kevin E. Vowles:

> ACT adopts a pragmatic approach to knowledge, as opposed to one that relies on correspondence with reality. Here, pragmatic means successfully reaching the goals of the analyses. The approach to psychological events in ACT is specifically functional and contextual, placing the emphasis on whether these events can be observed to have a relationship of influence with a particular behavior pattern and whether they are potentially manipulable by psychological methods.[78]

ACT is based on Relational Frame Theory (RFT), which focuses on using language in

self-dialogues. In a solution-focused approach guided by metaphor, paradox, and practical

exercises, a person can healthily acknowledge cognitive and physiological sensations to reframe

and accept them.[79] According to Amy C. Gross and Eric J. Fox, "RFT is a behavior-analytic

account of human language and cognition. It is fundamentally similar to Skinner's account and is

distinct from most cognitive and linguistic approaches to language in that it approaches verbal

events as activities, not products. It fundamentally differs from Skinner's account in how it

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[77] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process-Based CBT*, 352.

[78] Lance M. McCracken and Kevin E. Vowles, "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness for Chronic Pain: model, Process, and Progress," *American Psychologist*, 69, no. 2 (2014), 181.

[79] Association for Contextual Behavioral Science, https://contextualscience.org/act

defines and accounts for those verbal events and activities."[80] Although ACT and RFT are

derived from behavior analysis, according to McCracken and Vowles, ACT is a type of CBT that

can be applied to many psychological issues.[81]

As noted, ACT merges acceptance, mindfulness, activation, and behavioral change

methods and emphasizes cognitive and emotional experiences like CBT.[82] ACT's combination of

philosophy and scientific strategies differentiates it from other CBT approaches. ACT uses a

pragmatic avenue to knowledge. ACT's approach to psychological events focuses on function

and context, emphasizing whether events are influenced by particular dysfunctional behavioral

patterns and determining if those patterns can be psychologically modified or restructured. In this

way, these new practices help improve functioning by minimizing these patterns.

ACT is an integrative treatment process that emphasizes psychological flexibility. It

cultivates the ability to adapt to or change behavior based on one's goals by combining cognitive

and noncognitive influences. ACT is premised on the notion that cognitive influences (i.e.,

thinking, judging, analyzing, information processing, etc.) and non-cognitive influences are

derived from experiences and outside stimuli and guide behavior.[83] According to McCracken

"Psychological inflexibility, then, is based in this particular quality of behavior being dominated

by cognitively based influences and being insulated from other sources of influence. . .

Psychological flexibility includes a set of subprocesses—acceptance, cognitive diffusion,

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[80] Amy C. Gross and Eric J. Fox, "Relational Frame Theory: An Overview of the Controversy," *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior*, 25 (2009), 88.

[81] McCracken and Vowles, "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness for Chronic Pain," 183.

[82] S. C. Hayes, K. D. Strosahl, and K. G. Wilson, K. G. *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Behavior Change* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999).

[83] McCracken and Vowles, "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness for Chronic Pain," 180.

flexible attention to the present, self-as-observer, values-based action, and committed action."[84]

Because it involves mindfulness and values work in a specific context, ACT is also considered

more flexible than CBT. According to Hayes and Hoffman, "Acceptance is an executive strategy

that affects a wide range of cortical and subcortical functions."[85] According to S. G. Hoffman

and G. J. G. Asmundson, "the general goals of ACT are to foster acceptance of unwanted

thoughts and feelings, and to stimulate action tendencies that contribute to an improvement in

circumstances of living."[86]

It is important to note that the model differentiates between acceptance and resignation.

Acceptance is viewed as a choice that can guide cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors. It requires a

shift, a change in perspective. According to John P. Forsyth and Timothy R. Ritzert,

"psychological acceptance is the voluntary adoption of an intentionally open, receptive, flexible

and non-judgmental posture with respect to moment-to-moment experience."[87] As discussed in

the next section on mindfulness, the non-judgmental aspect is important in the model not to

diminish the power of the flesh nor the impact of sin but to cultivate the ability to view one's

cognitions, feelings, emotions, physiological sensations from an on objective perspective, guided

by the Spirit for the purpose of acceptance and change. Finally, a non-judgmental view of

oneself and learning how to cultivate awareness is necessary from a neuroscience perspective in

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[84] McCracken and Vowles, "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness for Chronic Pain," 181.

[85] R. Lappalainen et al., "The Impact of CBT and ACT models Using Psychology Trainee Therapists: A Preliminary Controlled Effectiveness Trial," *Behavior Modification,* 31, (2007): 489-490. Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 170.

[86] S. G. Hofmann and G. J. G Asmundson, "Acceptance and Mindfulness-based Therapy: New Wave or Old Hat?" *Clinical Psychology Review* 28, (2008), 5.

[87] John P. Forsyth and Timothy R. Ritzert, "Cultivating Psychological Acceptance," in Hayes and Hofmann, *process-Based CBT,* 363.

that "neuroscience teaches us that human beings are historical – our nervous systems are additive, not subtractive. What goes in stays in short of brain insult or injury" paving the way for the model's emphasis on neuroplasticity – the ability to develop new neural pathways and change the narrative, as is further discussed in the section of narrative therapy.[88]

Finally, one of the most significant challenges for humans is the need to know and control. A postulated reason is that it is hard for the Christ-follower to stay in a surrendered, vessel-like mindset before the Lord is controlled. In other words, the battle for Lordship – control of one's life, direction, and path. Forsyth and Ritzert point out that "an important precursor to acceptance work is helping people recognize which aspects of experience they cannot control, and to open up to doing something new."[89] While a Christ-follower theologically understands God's sovereignty and the many verses on God directing steps (Ps 32:8, Prov 16:9, and Isa 30:21, among others), the struggle lies within the acceptance of what the model refers to as externalities, events, and circumstances beyond the making of the individual, such as natural disasters and in some instances, medical issues.[90] The model cultivates awareness of the externalities beyond one's control and those originating and influenced by one's choices to produce abilities to accept the realities of one's relationships and environments. As such, anchoring-in, a term used extensively in the model, is a critical component of acceptance and is referred to as Truth Anchors. A Truth anchor, for the Christ-follower, is derived from the Word

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[88] Forsyth and Ritzert, "Cultivating Psychological Acceptance," 364.

[89] Forsyth and Ritzert, "Cultivating Psychological Acceptance," 365.

[90] Medical issues are stated conditionally in that some medical conditions are not a function of individual lifestyle choices (genetic disease, for example), and some are, such as hypertension. However, it is important to note that in certain instances, there is a genetic aspect to some lifestyle-oriented conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, which are not exacerbated by individual lifestyle choices. A further discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

of God and aligns with a chosen value. Aligned with values and choice, as further discussed in the section on choice theory, value is defined as "freely chosen, verbally constructed consequences of ongoing, dynamic, evolving patterns of activity, which establish predominant reinforcers for that activity that are intrinsic in engagement in the valued behavioral pattern itself."[91] In other words, for the Christ-follower, a chosen belief that the trait, characteristic, or value identified in the Word is vertically aligned relationally with Christ and horizontally with others, intrinsically attributed to one's authentic self as one identified in Christ.

Mindfulness Orientation and Techniques

Although mindfulness has been defined in many different ways and is pervasive in numerous contexts, to be consistent with much of the research, it is defined as "Mindfulness is a form of self-awareness in which attention is focused on the present moment and the individual actively engages in present experiences. This attentive awareness applies to the entire experience at a given moment, including the perception of internal and external stimuli and of one's own words and actions."[92] As such, mindfulness is a state of mind, not an attribute. While it might be stimulated by specific activities (e.g., meditation), it is not comparable to these types of activities. As such, it has immense applicability for cultivating awareness, a foundational premise of the first module in the model.

According to R. A. Baer, "the most frequently cited method of mindfulness training is the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program with instruction and practice in

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[91] Tobias Lundgren and Andreas Larsson, "Values Choice and Clarification," in Hayes and Hofmann, *Process-Based CBT, 375.*

[92] Michael Prazak, Joseph Critelli, Luci Martin, Vanessa Miranda, Michael Purdum, and Catherine Powers, "Mindfulness and its Role in Physical and Psychological Health," *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being* 4, no. 1 (2012), 91.

mindfulness meditation skills, together with discussion of stress, coping, and homework assignments."[93] Although many different activities can improve mindfulness (e.g., yoga, tai chi, qigong, spiritual practices), most research has studied mindfulness as advanced by mindfulness meditation, which targets guiding attention and awareness to better voluntarily control mental processes which, in turn, improves mental well-being, development, and/or other physical and mental capabilities (e.g., calmness, clarity, and concentration).[94] Researchers argue that mindfulness meditation helps to develop metacognitive understanding, minimize fixation on specific topics, and strengthen one's ability to focus by improving working memory.[95] These cognitive benefits further advance one's ability to regulate emotions.[96] In mindfulness, there is an emphasis on developing a non-judgmental perspective towards one's thoughts. Hayes and Hofman suggest that "mindfulness interventions appear to recruit brain networks consistent with often-described increases in attentional control and focus on internal body sensations."[97] This is

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[93] R. A. Baer, "Mindfulness Training as a Clinical Intervention: A Conceptual and Empirical Review," *Clinical Psychology Science and Practice* 10, no. 2 (2003), 126.

[94] Roger Walsh and Shauna L. Shapiro, "The Meeting of Meditative Disciplines and Western Psychology: A Mutually Enriching Dialogue," *American Psychologist* 61, no.3, (2006): 227–39.

[95] To be present requires a stillness. To be present requires a full in-the-moment awareness, which requires an intentional choice to be fully conscious of the moment and not distracted by externalities and one's internal dialogue. Being present in the moment requires a here-and-now attitude. It is so easy for many to be drawn forward or backward. For many thoughts about what is happening later, what needs to be accomplished down the road, worry about the future (which can be as short as the next hour), fears of what could happen if (what the model refers to as "what if's) lead to rumination, fixation, obsessive thinking which can be debilitating for many. For many thoughts about the past, mistakes, shame, embarrassment, what could have or should have been (what the model refers to as 'should of, would of, could of) can lead to shame spirals, self-deprecation, and so many other unhealthy ways of thinking perpetuating the cycle of negative thoughts and self-defeating, set-up behaviors and attitudes. Learning how to cultivate the skill to be present, as with the cultivation of all skills, requires a choice, clarity of intent, a mindset of change and growth, non-negotiables, and an action plan.

[96] Catherine J. Norris, Daniel Creem, Reuben Handler, and Hedy Kober, "Brief Mindfulness Meditation Improves Attention in Novices: Evidence From ERPs and Moderation by Neuroticism." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 12 (2018): 315–35.

[97] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 171.

particularly important in the model in that the emphasis is not on judging but on cultivating awareness for parsing and categorization to become increasingly fluent in identifying aspects of self and flesh versus Spirit-lead and Christ-centered.

Narrative Therapy

Narrative therapy is generally goal-directed and constructivist, emphasizing a person's inherent ability to direct change through shifting perspectives, cognitions, and behavior. According to D. W. Kissane and M. Doolittle, "Narrative therapy seeks to help patients arrive at a methodical understanding of their life philosophies, values, and accomplishments," and it is constructive or, in many cases, re-constructing narrative.[98] According to Robert H. Rice

> Dominant narratives or stories in NT are made up of events linked by a theme and occurring over time and according to a plot. A story emerges as certain events are privileged and selected over other events as more important or true. As dominant stories take shape, they invite the teller to further select only certain information while other events become neglected, and thus, the same story is continually told. These self-fulfilling prophecies become a template for how clients understand themselves.[99]

The importance of narrative therapy as a constructive technique for the model is its emphasis on framing a new narrative, grounded in the Christ-follower's identity in Christ while recognizing tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities, as the model frames those aspects of one's self that provoke the flesh, to avoid self-fulfilling prophecies and root out beliefs based on past acts which biblically have been forgiven by the Savior in the life of the confessed and repentant Christ-follower.[100]

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[98] D. W. Kissane and M. Doolittle, "Clinical Counseling and Applied Psychotherapy in Supportive Oncology," in M. Davis, P. Feyer, P. Ortner, & C. Zimmermann (Eds.), *Supportive Oncology* (2011), 560.

[99] Robert H. Rice, "Narrative Therapy," *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Theory in Counseling and Psychology* 2, (2015), 697.

[100] For purposes of the model, A **tendency** is a likelihood of behaving in a particular way or going in a particular direction, a tending toward. For purposes of the model, fully described in the next chapter, a tendency is

In narrative therapy, the emphasis on separating oneself from one's thoughts or behaviors is important for distinguishing that one is not defined by one's challenges, circumstances, conduct, or cognitions but can, for purposes of the model, see them as a function. As with narrative therapy, a goal within the model is to cultivate an ability to see more clearly while re-framing for change. Narrative therapy is the use of developing alternative narratives or re-authoring. As Rice describes, "Alternative stories are examples of clients behaving outside of the problematic context. This process has been referred to as reauthoring in previous literature and is described metaphorically as "shining a light on moments of competence."[101] The analogy of light and seeing past problematic contexts is at the heart of the model, which paves the way for a Christ-follower to get out of the darkness and into the light of Christ.[102]

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less severe than a propensity. It is important to learn to catch our tendencies before they become propensities. If they already have propensities, it is necessary to be particularly aware and step out of the flesh and into the Spirit. A tendency is a potential way of being, acting, and thinking but does not necessarily manifest externally. Tendencies may be more distressful internally than externally. For example, a tendency may be impatient or frustrated with the words or actions of self or others, but this may not manifest as easily as a propensity. A **propensity encompasses** a **tendency**, a preference, or an attraction. The model asks the Christ-follower to think of tendencies as potential propensities. Tendencies are still internal, in the thought or feeling stage, while propensities (although they can still be internal) are more likely to appear externally in word or deed. For example, does impatience lead one to behave, act, or speak angrily? Does your frustration lead you to sigh, roll your eyes, or turn away? A **Susceptibilities** is harder to resist. It is a more sensitive and intense form of a tendency or propensity. It is harder to overcome a susceptibility without stepping into the **Holy Spirit Ziplock**, another of the metaphors used in the model. The Holy Spirit Ziplock is protective gear akin to the armor of God. One steps into the fullness of the Holy Spirit by visualizing sealing oneself into a Ziplock bag which has been sprayed with Rain-X so that no matter the environment, the metaphoric weather, the circumstances, people, events, we are fully covered and protected (as the Spirit has sealed us (See, Eph 1:13) and all that comes at us, like rain on a windshield covered with Rain-X, slides off. We do not react – we do not fall prey to our susceptibilities. We stand fast in the Spirit in Christ, "[being] kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph 4:32).

[101] Rice, "Narrative Therapy, 697.

[102] The model teaches that Negative thoughts, distorted thinking, conditioned beliefs, unspoken expectations, hurt, pain, self-condemnation, and all other forms of self are naturally attracted to the dark. The flesh thrives in the darkness. The deception of the darkness demands hiddenness and secrecy. Our flesh cries do not expose me. The physiology of our flesh triggers discomfort at the thought that what we feel or think may come into the light and be revealed to others and the Truth of Christ. The flesh wants to stay in control, stay covered, and keep one captive. But God, as the model states, We have been called out of darkness through Christ's saving act of grace on the Cross. We have been redeemed and bought for a price (1 Cor 6:20). We have been identified as more than conquerors (Rom 8:37) and declared victorious in Christ (1 Cor 15:57). Living after Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, requires that we live/walk in the light. "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). If we are tempted to move into the darkness, it is exactly that – temptation and temptation is never from God. "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being

Narrative therapy also emphasizes deconstructive questions. Rice states, "Deconstructive questions help narrative therapists learn about a problem's influence and its effects on clients and their community, cultural and other supports, and tactics and strategies. They can also help narrative therapists learn about clients' preferences or opinions about a problem's influence, effects, tactics, and supports."[103] Module 1 in the model, described in Chapter Four, uses the phrase, deconstruct to reconstruct, which involves the use of deconstructive questions for detoxification.[104] In narrative therapy, a person learns to see implications through exploration and reauthoring questions, which "clarify client preferences and values, develop alternative stories in realms of action and meaning, examine new possibilities from alternative stories, and develop support for the enactment of new stories."[105] Learning how to acknowledge the influence of the implicit impact of experiences on one's values provides the person with a more accurate understanding and the ability to accurately re-author a narrative.

G. Combs and J. Freedman state, "Narrative therapists prefer to speak of practices rather than interventions and techniques."[106] This is seen in the model, where the Christ-follower is provided with a spiritual and therapeutic toolbox equipping him or her to implement Spirit-based practices in his or her life. Those who use narrative therapy often are drawn to meaning rather

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tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one" (Jas 1:13).

[103] Rice, "Narrative Therapy, 698.

[104] As explained further in the next Chapter, Detoxification is the first module in the model. Detoxification focuses on spiritual cleansing. The process involves learning how to identify and release areas of struggle, sin, and strongholds, such as frustrations, bitterness, unforgiveness, and other barriers of the flesh and self (Gal. 5:24). Many areas, issues, struggles, etc., clog our ability to see making it challenging to 'see' (spiritually) and to discern accurately. We need to unclog and cleanse (detoxification), so the Holy Spirit can move freely in and through us to allow us to see and discern.

[105] Rice, "Narrative Therapy, 698.

[106] G. Combs. and J. Freedman, "Narrative, Poststructuralism, and Social Justice: Current Practices in Narrative Therapy," *The Counseling Psychologist 40*, (2012):1033–60.

than specific events, facts, or symptoms. In narrative therapy, the focus is on discourse, which is

both personal and societal. In the model, the Christ-follower develops a new vocabulary based on

words categorized according to self and flesh versus the Spirit. The meaning of words and

learning to parse words is an important aspect of developing a Spirit-centered vocabulary.[107]

Interpersonal Neurobiology

Daniel J. Siegel is credited with developing a theoretical and working model grounded in

human development focused on the relationship between mind, body, and relationships.

Interpersonal neurobiology is also synonymous with relational neuroscience or social

neurobiology.[108] Neurobiology is foundational in the model and, as further discussed in the

section on neuroscience, important because of the neurophysiological mechanisms of the brain

and body in our cognitive, emotive, and relational experiences. According to

> The world and our lives in it are filled with uncertainty. The human brain can be
> considered an anticipation machine with its innate drive to detect patterns and predict
> outcomes to prepare for what is happening next to increase our chances of survival.
> When that same anticipatory brain uses language to describe the world, the nouns it
> forms in linguistic representations reinforce a concept that there are entities in life, things
> one can hold, for example, that have defining features. . . If we can construct an identity
> as an entity, we achieve an illusion of certainty. Information construction as a narrative
> self, the aspects of our identity that tell the story of "who we are" to ourselves and other
> selves, may come to believe what culture has been telling it, what parents may have been
> saying, what school has told it: that self is a noun-like entity. This view of a separate self

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[107] This is further discussed in Chapter 3; however, as an example, the model uses words such as breaking and surrender. Andrew Murray's *Absolute Surrender* is one of our required readings at the Christian Life Institute. Murray writes "that believers should be occupied with God in the matter of surrender. I pray you be occupied with God." He continues to remind us that surrender is by the grace of God, the power of God – the power of the Holy Spirit. We use the words cultivating Holy Spirit-inspired awareness to promote the ability to see – to perceive our thoughts, feelings, and interactions clearly and accurately with and around us. We use words, such as filtering, to mean that we cannot see clearly when we are in our flesh (which we use synonymously to mean our 'self'). We cannot discern accurately when we cannot see clearly. Our flesh and not the Spirit drive our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Living Christ in this fallen, challenging world requires Holy Spirit-wrought surrender, the ability to see, and the desire to serve. Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2017), 73.

[108] Daniel J. Siegel, *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015).

lends a sense of certainty to our minds, but it may be not only a limited part of a larger story, it actually might also be a lethal lie. So, what this brings up is that life can be perceived as nouns and as verbs. And in modern culture, we start to think of the self as a noun, as a fixed entity. And yet there's a whole other realm where we can experience life as a verb-like unfolding.[109]

A message relevant from this quote for purposes of the model is that we as humans use linguistic representations, and as such, words matter. How we construct information builds a narrative based on messages processed and stored in neural pathways that then direct thoughts and actions. Suppose we view life as a verb-like unfolding. In that case, we can see, from a Christ-centric perspective, the progressive nature of sanctification and the narrative we build as yielded vessels, desirous of the Spirit conforming us to the image of Christ.

According to Siegel and Chloe Drulis:

The way one uses the mind can change the brain in four ways: Change the synapses called synaptogenesis that connect neurons in certain areas; Grow new neurons with neurogenesis; Lay down an important sheath, myelin, that makes the neurons connect with each other more effectively and time their firing in a more coordinated way; and change the molecules that alter how we respond to experience—our epigenetic regulation. When more integration is cultivated in the brain, nine functions that are associated with an integrative aspect of a particular region, the prefrontal cortex, are enhanced: (1) the ability to regulate bodily state; (2) Attuned communication, which means focus your attention on the inner experience of another human being and even in refection with yourself; (3) To balance emotions, to be fully aware of them and embrace them; (4) To modulate fear; (5) To learn to respond flexibly to a stimulus that comes to you and not just be automatic: to pause before automatically reacting; (6) Insight, to have what's called autonoetic consciousness, a self-knowing awareness which is what insight is, connecting the past, present and future; (7) Empathy, to feel another person's feelings, morality and intuition; (8) Compassion—to feel another's suffering, reflect on what actions to take, and then to take those actions on behalf of reducing suffering; and (9) Morality—to act on behalf of the greater good and to honor integration at the heart of moral living. These nine correlates of neural integration are also the heart of what is sometimes called "being mindful.[110]

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[109] Daniel J. Siegel and Chloe Drulis, "An Interpersonal Neurobiology Perspective on the Mind and Mental Health: Personal, Publica, and Planetary Well-Bring, *Annals of General Psychiatry* 22, no. 5 (2023), 15.

[110] Siegel and Drulis, "An Interpersonal Neurobiology Perspective on the Mind and Mental Health," 16.

In other words, the neuroplasticity of our brains allows us to develop abilities through changed pathways to mindfully cultivate ways of being that allow for an integration that promotes optimal well-being. Through the Holy Spirit, the catalyst for change in the Christ-follower, one can, as an initiator of action and an agent of change, cultivate the ability to develop new neural pathways, regulate one's automated reactions, and change one's inner landscape, re-wiring autoplastic adaptations to enhance the nine functions articulate above, or as a Christ-follower may frame it, produce fruit of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22–24).

At a foundational level, the "sense of self is rooted in the direct experience of the brain as it interacts with its environment: the external world, the body proper, and the mind itself (the neural flow of energy and information within the brain)."[111] As such, the externalities, as the model refers to them, combined with one's developmental sense of self, provide a foundation for the narrative of identity, which must be deconstructed with one's encounter with Christ and then reconstructed in one's progressive sanctification, in, though, and by Christ.[112] The choice for

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[111] Daniel J. Siegel, "Toward an Interpersonal Neurobiology of the Developing Mind: Attachment Relationships, "Mindsight," and Neural Integration," *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 22 no. 1 (2001), 76.

[112] In the Protestant Reformed tradition, sanctification is considered progressive work as evidenced by Hebrews 10:14. The idea communicated is that the work of Christ, while complete in our justification, results in an ongoing work in the life and ultimately a manifesting and out-working of Christ in the Christ-follower. In 1 Peter 14-16 and 1 Peter 1:12, believers are to pursue holiness, and his language leaves little room for doubt about the need for believers to be dead to who they were and live in their new righteousness. The Westminster Catechism Q.35 says, "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." In *Five Views of Sanctification,* Ferguson comments, "Sanctification is by no means a mystical experience in which holiness is our effortlessly. God gives us an increase in holiness by engaging our minds, wills, emotions, and actions. We are involved in the process." Calvin wrote, *"*For although the Law is written and engraved on their hearts by the finger of God, that is, although they are so influenced and actuated by the Spirit, that they desire to obey God…. For it is the best instrument for enabling them daily to learn with greater truth and certainty what that will of the Lord is which they aspire to follow." Grudem writes, "Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives." Berkhof comments, "It [sanctification] consists fundamentally and primarily in a divine operation in the soul, whereby the holy disposition born in regeneration is strengthened, and its holy exercises are increased." Packer writes, "Sanctification is an ongoing transformation within a maintained consecration, and it engenders real righteousness within the frame of relational holiness." Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan, 2004), 746. Lewis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938), 532. J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2001).

change and a mindful focus on one's significance in the Savior allows the Christ-follower to take one's eyes off those outside and one's voice within, look into the eyes of Christ, choose solely to listen to His voice of Truth, and reflect the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

The model also draws from interpersonal neurobiology to highlight the importance of downregulating, shifting from the sympathetic to the parasympathetic nervous system, and living in the prefrontal cortex rather than the limbic system, as will be explained further in the discussion of the application of neuroscience to the model. A person can learn to use neuroception through polyvagal theory.[113] Throughout the modules in the model, a person uses intentional mindfulness and awareness to identify and discern, neurobiologically determine, and accurate neuroception to activate new neural pathways to avoid what the model refers to as entrenched conditions ways of being and doing, and in such avoiding maladaptive physiological reactions stepping out of the flesh and into the Spirit.

Interpersonal neurobiology uses a metaphor, the triangle of well-being, to denote the relationship between the mind, brain, and relationships.[114] According to Siegel, the model needs

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[113] Neuroception "refers to how neural circuits distinguish between safe and dangerous environments without conscious awareness. It also emphasizes how the autonomic nervous system regulates social engagement through the action of the myelinated vagus nerve originating from the nucleus ambiguous (ventral vagus), critical for social communication, including facial expression and vocalization." Davide Donelli et al., "Silence and its Effects on the Autonomic Nervous System: A Systematic Review," *Progress in Brain Research* 280 (2023), 107. Neuroception is inherent in Polyvagal theory, which "describes an autonomic nervous system that is influenced by the central nervous system, sensitive to afferent influences, characterized by an adaptive reactivity dependent on the phylogeny of the neural circuits, and interactive with source nuclei in the brainstem regulating the striated muscles of the face and head." Stephen W. Porges, "The Polyvagal Theory: New Insights into Adaptive Reactions of the Autonomic Nervous System," *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* 76, no. 2 (2009), 86.

[114] Siegel defines the mind as relating "to our inner subjective experience and the process of being conscious and aware. In addition, the mind can also be defined as a process that regulates the flow of energy and information within our bodies and within our relationships. This emergent and self-organizing process gives rise to our mental activities, such as emotion, thinking, and memory. Subjective experience, awareness, and an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information are fundamental and interdependent facets of the mind." 1-1. Siegel also notes that the "mind is much more than our intellect and logical thinking. In this larger view, the mind is not something that is to be contrasted to feelings or "the heart." Instead, we consider the life of the mind to be filled with our emotions and memories, to be shaped by what we believe, to be colored by our attitudes, to be molded by our "frame of mind." We see our mind as controlling our behavior, driven by our motivations and intentions." 36-1. According to Siegel, "relationships involve the sharing of energy and information flow. When we

to recognize that "the life of the mind to be filled with our emotions and our memories, to be

shaped by what we believe, to be colored by our attitudes, to be molded by our "frame of mind."

We see our mind as controlling our behavior as it is driven by our motivations and intentions."[115]

It is the interdependence and interconnectivity of these three concepts that the model illustrates

in equipping the Christ-follower not to be ruled by the flesh (Rom 8:6-11) by learning how to

shift, re-frame, and use other spiritually-therapeutic tools from the different psychological

theoretical orientations integrated into the model combined with neuroscience to implement

commands exemplified in Galatians 5:24, Romans 12:2, among others so that we may live

Galatians 5:16.

The plane of possibility provides perspective in the model by, as Siegel describes,

offering:

> a way to see how sometimes our subjective lives are driven along by brain firing
> patterns, at times shaped by the past in memory, sometimes merely responding in
> large part to here-and-now sensory incoming experience. We can call this automatic
> pilot when we are taken over by elements of the past, a kind of top-down process
> dominated by how past encoded experiences entrain our present perceptual filtering
> of ongoing sensation. . . . A passive passenger along for the ride.[116]

The model's emphasis on Christ Who is a Lifestyle that cultivates active, not passive,

involvement in the sanctification process through the cultivation of choices to walk in the Spirit

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communicate with one another, we are exchanging energy in the form of various signals that often contain informational value." 2-1. For example, the meaning of a smile may depend on the "meaning of the term meaning,. . . . We send out communication to another person through the energy of our words and by way of our nonverbal expression." The other person creates informational meaning, which may be accurate, inaccurate, and lead to feelings of connectedness or disconnectedness. 2-1, 2-2. Siegel defines brain as a "term that is usually used to refer to a part of the body that rests in the skull and contains billions of cells clustered in various groupings. The skull-based cluster of cells, the top of the central nervous system we commonly call the brain, is inextricably interconnected with the whole body through the peripheral nervous system and all the signals from the body's physiological processes." 3-1. Daniel J. Siegel, *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*: *An Integrative Handbook of the Brain* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012): 4–1.

[115] Daniel J. Siegel, *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, 36–1.

[116] Daniel J. Siegel, *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, 29–4.

and not be controlled by the desires of the flesh through the active engagement of the prefrontal cortex and not living on or in autopilot but rather through mindful and intentional direction driving neural firing through the activity of the mind. "In the plane, we see this as altering the probability of mental activity or a neural firing profile."[117]

Interpersonal neurobiology also uses the construct of narrative, defined "as the linear telling of a sequence of events."[118] The narrative is connected to the creation and sharing of stories in a way that allows us to "make sense of our internal and external worlds," making meaning and sense.[119] As an integrative process, narratives provide clarity and connection, combining memory with present sensory input to create meaning and a sense of self and others. Narrative also involves "an observing, narrating aspect of mind – an observing self that narrates what an experiencing self has experienced in the past – it is possible that this observing self functions to actively retrieve and then remold the meaning of recalled events."[120] In the model, the purpose is not to distort, rationalize, justify, or defend past aspects that have been internalized within the self but rather to identify sin accurately, acknowledge, accept, and confess for purposes of living for the freedom that was brought by Christ (Gal 5:1).

Social Psychology

In social psychology, as in other cognates, distinctions are necessary to frame the dialogue and develop meaningful discourse. It is well-accepted that personal identities are

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[117] Siegel, *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, 29–6.

[118] Siegel, *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, 31–1.

[119] Siegel, *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, "Making sense can be seen as an integrative process linking past, present, and potential future in a way that enables these elements of thought, feeling, memory, and imagination to situate us in a social world of experience." 31–1.

[120] Siegel, *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, 31–4.

different from social identities.[121] How an individual conceptualizes oneself is often derived

from how one views oneself in a social context. A social identity depersonalizes the self-concept

and emphasizes inclusivity within a social context and exclusivity within symbolic boundaries.[122]

In social identity theory, identities are defined relationally, usually by defining boundaries that

are either inclusive or exclusive so that one's identity is defined by who he or she is, not based on

contextually understood beliefs, values, and other cultural artifacts. As a result, social identities

are highly dependent upon group precepts, such as vocabulary, symbols, and other salient and

valuable attitudinal and behavioral mandates.

The attachment one places to social identity is often related to his or her definition of self

as it relates to the group and how one makes sense of oneself through normative attitudes and

behaviors. The stronger the attachment, the more likely one will experience dissonance and

conflict as one is re-defined or re-shaped from a self-perspective. If group affiliation is

intrinsically intertwined with internalized notions of self, then dissonance may be increased as

one struggles with the role of his or her social (group) identity in the context of his or her new

understanding of self-identity. Struggles with hypocrisy in one's social identity framework also

surface in dissonance diffusion and require investigation when examining identity shifts, the

construction of new paradigms of self-understanding, and the construction of new social identity

support structures.[123]

The notion of cognitive dissonance surfaced in the 1950s in the field of psychology when

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[121] Timothy J. Owens, "Self and Identity," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (Boston: Springer, 2003): 205–32.

[122] M. B. Brewer, "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17 (1991): 475-82.

[123] J. C. Turner et al., *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

Festinger proposed that if a person experienced two psychologically inconsistent cognitions, the person would experience dissonance, and the dissonance would move the person to find a resolution to remove or reduce the disturbance; in other words, to find a sense of equilibrium.[124] The human drive to restore cognitive balance would, in essence, produce sufficient intrinsic motivation to restore consistency to previously established mental representations of accepted realities. Festinger hypothesized that people would find a way to resolve their cognitive inconsistencies. Although cognitive dissonance was not embraced in psychology until the 1950s, Francis Bacon in 1620 stated:

> Once a man's understanding has settled on something (either because it is an accepted belief or because it pleases him), it draws everything else also to support and agree with it. And if it encounters a larger number of more powerful countervailing examples, it either fails to notice them, disregards them, or makes fine distinctions to dismiss and reject them, and all this with much dangerous prejudice, to preserve the authority of its first conceptions. [125]

Christopher J. Carpenter states, "Cognitive dissonance is produced when any aspect of the self-concept is threatened."[126] Eddie Harmon-Jones and Cindy Harmon-Jones point out that "the self-perception process is concerned more with the formation or construction of perceptions, attitudes, or beliefs."[127] The formation or construction derives from cognitions, known as chunks of knowledge, behavior, attitude, belief, or observation about oneself or his or her contextual environment, which coexist in our mind. When there is consistency and compatibility, psychological comfort is produced, and when there is inconsistency and incompatibility,

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[124] Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

[125] Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1620/2000).

[126] Christopher J. Carpenter, "Cognitive Dissonance, Ego-involvement, and Motivated Reasoning," *Annals of the International Communication Association* 43, no. 1 (2019), 14.

[127] Eddie Harmon-Jones and Cindy Harmon-Jones, "Cognitive Dissonance Processes Serve and Action Adaptive Function," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 43 (2020), 1.

psychological discomfort arises, which must be reduced or negated to find equilibrium. It is, therefore, the perceived magnitude of the discrepant cognitions and the arousal triggers that initiate the tensions and stimulate the drive toward reduction and resolution. While it appears to be a simple premise that we change an attitude or behavior to reconcile the triggered discrepancies between cognitions, the human need for stability and conformity drives resistance to change. According to Leon Festinger, normative, transforming, and neutralizing motives compel actions that reduce or minimize cognitive dissonance. [128]

In exploring the complexities of identity formation, social categorization, and ecological contexts, we find that social and group influencers impact dissonance enhancement or reduction. For example, in many scholarly investigations of social identity and its relation to dissonance theory, findings indicated that one's attempt at dissonance reduction was greatly enhanced when cognitive inconsistencies were reduced by displaying similar attitudes and behaviors by contextually relevant social identity and group characteristics. [129] If one's counter-attitudinal or behavior posturing was not at odds with social identity constructs because of shifts within the group, then dissonance was largely alleviated and not problematic. However, if salient in-group traits were dissonant with changing cognitions of self, dissonance factors were enhanced, increasing cognitive inconsistencies for the shifting self.

In many ways, the theory of cognitive dissonance is not only a sub-field within the discipline of social and cognitive psychology but also a way to make meaning and sense of ourselves within our contextual environment. As human beings, we strive to find identity and often engage in internal identity negotiation produced by various interpersonal dilemmas. Since

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[128] Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

[129] B. M. McKimmie, et al., "I'm a Hypocrite, but so is Everyone Else: Group Support and the Reduction of Cognitive Dissonance," in *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* 7 (2003): 214–24.

cognitive dissonance theory espouses that inconsistent cognitions trigger internal tensions, producing an affective reaction to incongruent attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors, the goal becomes discomfort reduction, which usually results from some form of internally negotiated change. In other words, if I need to make sense of my dissimilar beliefs, how do I adapt them to place them within the cognitive reality of my schematic maps? Since our belief systems are highly evolved and psychologically complex, we sort and store information in schematic representations, usually packed in episodic memory. These beliefs may have been formed and constructed at various developmental stages and may be difficult to release without the triggered tensions caused by dissonant factors. Since sorting and storing information, as representations in semantic memory, tend to be schematic, they are usually formed on the data points' congruence.

In semantic memory, the general knowledge about information, known as schemas, is formed from experiences. However, although there is overlap, the incidents or events are often the result of episodic memory events that store autobiographical data. Semantic memory is generally considered the repository for general world knowledge and information on cognate subjects or acquired data. According to Tulving, semantic memory is highly organized and usually dissociated with its contextual acquisition. [130] Episodic memory, on the other hand, is the memory system for the details of a past story and the memory storage bin for personally experienced life events. As a result, the need to resolve or reconcile self-related issues, such as cognitively dissonant constructs, would be extracted from the information stored in episodic memory, which contains personal experiences and events. Tulving suggested that the lack of organizational structure in the episodic memory system, which is typically loose and

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[130] Endel Tulving, "Episodic and Semantic Memory," in *Organization and Memory*, ed. Endel Tulving and W. Donaldson (New York: Academic Press, 1972): 381–403.

spatially/temporally organized, may negatively impact the inferential ability of the self to resolve important personal dilemmas. [131] As such, there may be memory impairment functions that hinder the dissonance reconciliation process. According to Mariam Chammat, "cognitive dissonance on conscious episodic memory."[132] In addition, affective components may impede or hinder the retrieval of experience data necessary to resolve cognitive conflict.[133]

Schema theory and its relationship to memory storage, recall, and retrieval provide a heuristic for analyzing how information is assimilated in cognition and perception. Attention schema theory "proposes that three different phenomena, the control of attention, some aspects of social cognition, and the claim of subjective consciousness, are linked by one mechanism."[134] Theories, scripts, frames, schemas, and prototypes are mental structures that construct representations of our contextual environment and aid in interpreting and understanding ourselves. These self-schemata are useful in understanding how we "confront and process new information about political and social phenomena," which relates to adaptation and dissonance reduction. [135] Since schema provides a self-designed interpretative template by which we assimilate new information. In that case, questions regarding meaning-making, phenomenology, and social construction must be part of the dialogue in parsing dissonance-producing, attitude-discrepant acts and beliefs.

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[131] Endel Tulving, "Episodic and Semantic Memory."

[132] Mariam Chammat et al., "Cognitive Dissonance Depends on Episodic Memory," *Scientific Reports* 7, (2017), 2.

[133] G. H. Bower, "Mood and Memory," *American Psychologist 36* (1981): 129–48.

[134] Andrew I. Wilterson et al., "Attention Control and the Attention of Schema Theory of Consciousness," *Progress in Neurobiology* 195 (2020), 5.

[135] Hazel Markus, Marie Crane, Stan Bernstein, and Michael Siladi, "Self-schemas and Gender," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 42*, no. 1 (1982): 38-50. Richard C. Anderson and David P. Pearson, "A Schema-Theoretic View of Basic Processes in Reading Comprehension," *Technical Report 306,* (1988): 2–91.

Since cognitions are organized according to commonalities and processed in schemas based on cognitively mapped connections, newly introduced information must not only align but should relate to and be relevant to the pre-existing schematic structure.[136] How, therefore, does someone integrate new experiences and beliefs, such as Saul on his journey to becoming Paul, into a self-designed and socially constructed interpretative frame to construct new developing schemas based on discordant experiences? From a phenomenological frame, the inquiry is, what are the structures of Saul's experiences have contributed to the social construction of his attitudes and beliefs that form his identity as evidenced by his normative and personal standards? Cooper, in conducting empirical studies related to dissonance arousal, found that the salience level of both normative and personal standards would influence the level of arousal.[137] When the accord of socially accepted norms and personal epistemologies diverges, there may be heightened arousal, leading to dissonance triggers. However, if personal standards for behavior are non-divergent from normative beliefs and perspectives, then there may be less of a dissonant effect.

Notions of self-identity, self-concept, and self-constructed attitudes and behaviors, while fundamental to examining arousal triggers in dissonance discourse, cannot be completely isolated from a more globally structured social and cultural context or cognizance of the contribution of other psychological constructs. One of the continued themes explored throughout the model is how psychological constructs, such as self-worth, self-affirmation, hypocrisy, induced compliance, free choice, and effort justification interweave in a discourse on identity, dissonance, and action. There is general agreement among social psychology scholars that

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[136] Marvin W. Berkowitz and Patricia E Simmons, "Integrating Science Education and Character Education," in *The Role of Moral Reasoning on Socioscientific Issues and Discourse in Science Education,* ed, D. L. Zeidler, Science and Technology Education Library, 19 (New York: Springer, 2003): 117–38.

[137] Joel Cooper, "Dissonance Theory: History and Progress," in *Motivation and Emotion in Social Contexts: Jack Brehm's Influence on Contemporary Psychological Thought,* ed. R. A. Wright, Jeff Greenberg, and Sharon S. Brehm (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2004), 19–38.

implications for self-identity are, in part, constructed from salient characteristics of self-understood alignments with one's relevance in a particular group.[138] In many ways, one's social identity relevancy is a constant cognition in one's self-identity. According to Turner, "it is instinctual to categorize oneself in terms of the structure and context of one's social environment and create meaning for oneself based on one's self-categorization within the group.[139]

Since dissonance can be triggered by discomforting arousal, an aversive consequence, or another type of disconcerting disconnect, it can erupt from both intrinsic (self) and extrinsic (group) stimuli. This notion of the importance of self in relation to the arousal trigger is supported by the work of many scholars who proposed that violations of the self-concept will result in dissonance arousal and attempts at dissonance reduction.[140] This view was expanded by Jeff Stone and Joel Cooper, who identified standards based on one's knowledge of self and certain normative information. If there is a conflict between the two, then there is an arousal that triggers dissonance, which subsequently demands reconciliation.[141] In the model, dissonance theory is relevant to distinguishing between the Idealized Self and the Authentic Self. The Christ-follower learns reconciliation, not through flesh-based needs for relief, But God through spiritual disciplines of Spirt-based practices guided by a desire for a Christ-centric life derived

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[138] Michael A Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988); H Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict, in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,* ed. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole, 1979): 33–47.

[139] J. C. Turner et al., *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

[140] Such as, Elliot Aronson, "The Return of the Repressed: Dissonance Theory Makes a Comeback," *Psychological Inquiry 3,* (1992): 303-311; Ruth Thibodeau and Elliot Aronson, "Taking a Closer Look: Reasserting the Role of Self-Concept in Dissonance Theory," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 18*, no. 5 (1992): 591–602.

[141] Jeff Stone and Joel Cooper, "A Self-Standards model of Cognitive Dissonance," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* 37, no. 3 (2001): 228–43.

from love for the Savior and a desire to fulfill scriptures such as John 14:15, 1 John 5:3, and 1

Peter 1:14.

Decision Sciences

While decision sciences is a vast arena with numerous theoretical orientations, for

purposes of the model, there will be a cursory extraction of relevant concepts and techniques that

are meaningful to the later discussion and application of the model. According to Yingxu Wang

and Guenther Ruhe, "Decision-making is one of the basic cognitive processes of human

behaviors by which a preferred option or a course of actions is chosen from among a set of

alternatives based on certain criteria."[142] W. Zachary, R. Wherry, F. Glenn, and J. Hopson

"perceived that there are three constituents in decision making known as the decision situation,

the decision maker, and the decision process."[143] For the model, the decision situation is the

choice of walking in the flesh or the Spirit. The decision maker is the Christ-follower, and the

decision process uses the spiritually-derived therapeutic toolbox utilizing the various

psychological, neuroscience, and medical orientations integrated into the model.

Since decision-making inherently depends on the selected strategies, any possible

outcomes can occur. Therefore, for the model, the decision-making process must be shaped by

an intrinsically motivated desire to be constrained by the Holy Spirit. The intuitive, consisting of

" arbitrary and preference choices based on personal propensity, hobby, tendency, expectation

and/or common senses," referred to in decision sciences for purposes of the model, is the

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[142] Yingxu Wang and Guenther Ruhe, "The Cognitive Process of Decision Making," *International Journal of Cognitive Informatics and Natural Intelligence*, 1 no. 2 (2007), 73.

[143] W. Zachary, R. Wherry, F. Glenn, and J. Hopson, "Decision Situations, Decision Processes, and Decision Functions: Towards a Theory-based Framework for Decision-aid Design," *In Proceedings of the 1982 Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems,* (1982): 355–58.

connection to the Spirit provided through the gift of salvation.[144] It is important to note that

according to Wang and Ruhe:

> Most existing decision-making strategies are static because the changes of environments of decision makers are independent of the decision makers' activities. Also, different decision strategies may be selected in the same situation or environment based on the decision makers' values and attitudes towards risk and their prediction on future outcomes. When the environment of a decision maker is interactive with his or her decisions or the environment changes according to the decision makers' activities and the decision strategies and rules are predetermined, this category of decision-making needs are classified into the category of dynamic decisions.[145]

It is also noteworthy that dynamic decision-making often involves decision trees.[146] The model

uses decision trees based on Biblical theology.[147] As Michael Lawrence states, "[H]e [H]imself

proved this not only by acting in history but also by condescending to use human language to

explain and interpret his own actions authoritatively." Lawrence further reminds us, "We come

to know and understand him by encountering him in the stories of the exodus and the exile,

stories that allow us to experience his power, faithfulness, love, and terrible wrath."[148] We

construct narratives and use a heuristic derived from our engagement with and interaction with

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[144] Yingxu Wang and Guenther Ruhe, "The Cognitive Process of Decision Making," *International Journal of Cognitive Informatics and Natural Intelligence*, 1 no. 2 (2007), 75. It is important to note that they define arbitrary as "based on the most easy or familiar choice," preference as "based on propensity, hobby, tendency, expectation," and common senses as "based on axioms and judgment." Wang and Ruhe, "The Cognitive Process of Decision Making," 76.

[145] Wang and Ruhe, "The Cognitive Process of Decision Making," 77.

[146] W. Edwards and B. Fasolo, "Decision Technology," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52 (2001): 581–606.

[147] Witherington presents a frame through which he develops biblical theology. His frame is the premise of this essay, which asserts that the "Grand Story" is "the Bible is a book of the progressive revelation of the character and work of God" (Ben Witherington, III, *Biblical Theology: The Convergence of the Canon* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019], 5). It is important from the onset to understand, as James Mead states in Witherington, that the Bible is about God, God's relationship to all creation, and in particular, His creature and His creature's relationship with Him. As Lawrence states, "This single story has God as its author, its primary actor, and its center, and the climax of this story is the glory of God in salvation through judgment." Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 72.

[148] Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 73, 92.

the living Word of God (Heb 4:12), which, through the guiding of the Spirit, allows us to make

Christ-centric decisions.

Further, decision-making inherently involves perceived choice situations that are viewed

as rewarding or punishing, categorized as value representations, concerns with prioritization,

such as self, others, normative cultural values or social principles, frames of references,

motivations, encoding of previous experiences, and the strength of functional connectivity within

neural pathways. Studies have shown that "a neural 'anticipated value' changes decision-value

computations and, therefore, choice."[149] The model emphasizes awareness of anticipatory

thinking, which produces an active awareness connected to intentionality.[150] Prior learned

experiences impact trust, and trust is foundational in any assessment of reward and punishment.

According to David Jelenc, Ramón Hermoso, Jordi Sabater-Mir, and Denis Trček:

> Trust models are mechanisms that enable parties to build trust; a concept usually
> understood as a degree to which one party has confidence in another within the context of
> a given purpose or decision. . . Trust models compute trust on behalf of their users by
> using various information, such as opinions from other participants, their users' own
> experiences, social-network information, and others. Trust models predict the quality of
> interactions by estimating the future behavior of potential interaction partners.[151]

Trust is a complex concept, and its analysis is beyond the scope of this review. The

impact of trust, for purposes of the model, is directly tied to the development of faith. scripture is

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[149] Christian C. Ruff and Ernst Fehr, "The Neurobiology of Rewards and Values in Social Decision Making," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 15, no. 8 (2105), 552.

[150] As further discussed in the Chapter on the model and its modules, active awareness is grounded in perception. Active awareness can be defined as choosing to actively (participating as a surrendered vessel in His sanctifying work), intentionally cultivating the ability to identify what you are feeling, believing, seeing (not just visually but through understanding), and thinking about the externalities around oneself as well as oneself. As a construct, which will be expanded further in the chapter on the model and its modules, intentionality has many different definitions depending on the frame, such as philosophical, psychological, etc. For the model's purposes, intentionality is the art of acting with intent – with purpose – with clarity, insight, and wisdom.

[151] David Jelenc, Ramón Hermoso, Jordi Sabater-Mir, and Denis Trček, "Decision Making Matters: A Better Way to Evaluate Trust models," *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 52 (2013), 147.

clear when the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith (Luke 17:5). Michael Pace states,

"Having faith in X to /, arguably, involves trusting X to /, and so the discussion below is also

relevant to a growing recent literature on the nature of trust."[152] Further, normative assessments

of one's view of the strength of one's faith and its connection to trust impact decision-making

and social and relational practices. Pace concludes, "A strong desire or positive evaluative

attitude toward *p* results in strong faith only if these attitudes causally strengthen some aspect of

one's cognitive stance toward *p*."[153] Further, the complexity of strength of faith and its

connection to trust in decision-making is compounded by what is known as the degree of

confidence, what the model refers to as God's attribute of trustworthiness. Pace states, "By one's

degree of confidence that *p*, I mean the likelihood from the subject's perspective that *p* is true. So

construed, degree of confidence is a natural way that a positive cognitive attitude can be stronger

or weaker."[154]

 The model begins in Module 1, focusing on certain attributes of God that it proposes are

essential to choices connected to surrender and obedience. The decision-making discussion

within the model's context includes attributes such as God's sovereignty, faithfulness,

trustworthiness, love, and approachability. In Module 1, significant time and attention are

oriented toward exploring the Christ-follower's belief that these attributes are true and applicable

to him or her. Cognitive distortions, past experiences, and entrenched and conditioned ways of

being and doing often block the Christ-follower from what the model calls "*ginōskō*

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[152] Michael Pace, "The Strength of Faith and Trust," *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion,* 81 (2107), 136.

[153] Pace, "The Strength of Faith and Trust," 139.

[154] Pace, "The Strength of Faith and Trust," 140.

knowing."[155] Anchoring firmly into the inspired, inerrant truth of who God declares Himself to

be in the Word of God is an essential element of the choice to make decisions based on faith

through trust in the consistency and changelessness of His attributes.[156]

Motivation Science

Another broad topic is motivation science, which includes numerous forms and systems,

processes, functions, and applications. This section's discussion is limited to a few aspects

integral to the model. Hayes and Hofmann suggest that "motivational features are associated

with the activation of the reward network, particularly the basal ganglia," which will be

described and discussed in the Applications from Neuroscience section.[157] They continue to state

that "motivational strategies capitalize on the brain's ability to conceive of otherwise difficult

actions as being rewarding."[158] This view connects to previous components of therapeutic

orientations and decision sciences. Prioritization is inherent in a discussion of motivation,

particularly in light of its connection to decision-making. According to Ballard et al. "People

often pursue multiple, competing goals, striving to achieve desired outcomes while avoiding

undesired outcomes. Because individuals have limited time and resources, they often have to

choose which goal to prioritize at any given moment."[159] Priority management is essential in

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[155] To "know" (absolutely) in many applications and with many implications; to be resolved in one's knowing. *Strong's* "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Nelson, 1990), 1097.

[156] See Hebrews 11:1, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, Hebrews 7:24, and Hebrews 13:8.

[157] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 173.

[158] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 173.

[159] Timothy Ballard et al., "An Integral Formal model of Motivation and Decision Making: The MGPM," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 101, no. 9 (2016), 1243.

goal pursuit as "many goals are under pursuit simultaneously, but only one can have top priority

at a given moment. . . only the one with the highest priority has full access to consciousness."[160]

Motivation is an active agent in choice prioritization as non-focal goals that enter

awareness may automatically trigger shifting priorities and result in reprioritization. For the

Christ-follower, the result is the flesh-based need or reaction may trigger an automated

reprioritization, shifting one out of the Spirit and into the flesh. Living a life of faithful

perseverance requires motivation and prioritization to be on guard both in the here and now and

from an eschatological frame, as Jesus exhorts in Luke 21:34-36. Motivation is prominent in

behavioral choices and is connected to motivational drives. It is often considered a basic drive

connected to the pursuit of satisfaction or reward, a perceived benefit originating with the

decision-maker with all of his or her personality, physical, and psychological makeup. D. J.

Kavanagh, J. Andrade, and J. May define "desire as an affectively charged cognitive event in

which an object or activity associated with pleasure or relief of discomfort is in focal attention.[161]

As Wilhem Hofmann, George Förster, Roy F. Baumeister, and Kathleen D. Vohs state, "Desire

means wanting to have or do something. We assume that desires emerge from the interplay of

triggering conditions in the environment and need states residing within the person."[162] For the

Christ-follower, the call is clear: cry out as the Psalmist in Psalm 73:25. For the Christ-follower,

the desire to seek, to pursue Christ is a choice quickened by the Spirit to be Holy and blameless

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[160] Charles S. Carver and Michael F. Scheier, "Feedback Processes in the Simultaneous Regulation of Action and Affect," in *Handbook of Motivation Science,* eds. James Y. Shah and Wendi L. Gardner (New York: The Guilford Press, 2008), 316.

[161] D. J. Kavanagh, J. Andrade, and J. May., "Imaginary Relish and Exquisite Torture: The Elaborated Intrusion Theory of Desire," *Psychological Review* 112 (2005), 447.

[162] Wilhelm Hofmann, Georg Förster, Roy F. Baumeister, and Kathleen D. Vohs, "Everyday Temptations: An Experience Sampling Study of Desire, Conflict, and Self-Control," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102 no. 6 (2012), 1319.

(Eph 1:4–5) to be conformed to His image (Rom 8:28–30) to give thanks (2 Thess 2:13) and to be motivated to fulfill (Col 3:23 and 1 Cor 15:58).

Carol S. Dweck and Heidi Grant propose that at the core of motivation is a driver known as a goal.[163] Their proposed theory is grounded in the relationship between one's view of self, self-theory, and goals. A person's orientation about their attributes is attached to beliefs about oneself and one's understanding of experience. According to Dweck and Grant, "self-theories and goals together create a system of meaning that shapes interpretations of self-relevant stimuli and events, influencing how people understand their own experience, and guiding their affect, cognition, and behavior."[164] In other words, one's view and perception of self-aligned with goals is driven through motivators to produce outcomes. For the model, one's view of self is derived from one's connection to Christ and viewed through the lens of Christ-follower, the pursuit of Christ-likeness, and a lifestyle formed by the Spirit through progressive sanctification.

Motivations have levels and orientations. "Orientation of motivation concerns the underlying attitudes and goals that give rise to action – that is, it concerns the why of actions."[165] For the Christ-follower, the model declares the goal as the chosen desire to pursue and cooperate with the sanctifying work of the Spirit in conforming one to the image of Christ. The why is based on a Biblical theology belief system that frames the construction of one's being and doing in all aspects of life in Christ. The level of motivation is a function of quantity, how much, and for the Christ-follower, it is an all proposition. Inherent in the discussion are the constructs of

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[163] Carol S. Dweck and Heidi Grant, "Self-Theories, Goals, and Meaning" in *Handbook of Motivation Science,* eds. James Y. Shah and Wendi L. Gardner (New York: The Guilford Press, 2008), 405.

[164] Dweck and Grant, "Self-Theories, Goals, and Meaning," 405.

[165] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions," *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25 (2000), 54.

intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Ryan and Deci, the most basic distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is that "intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome."[166]

In the model, the emphasis is placed on intrinsic motivation where the choice is the pursuit of Christ-likeness for inherent reasons driven by a Spirit-led desire to be more like Christ. The importance of intrinsic motivation is that it is not dependent upon what the model refers to as the externalities. The choice is not a function of outcome or consequence but rather what is often referred to as the "free choice measure."[167] In other words, when left to choose in an environment with distractors, the free choice is to stay on task based on the intrinsic motivator.[168] For many, daily life consists of choices made by others, duties, obligations, and requirements, requiring extrinsic motivation, such as a paycheck, a thank you, a grade, and the instrumental value of the outcome. Therefore, humans who are inherently flesh-driven through our sinful nature struggle with cultivating intrinsic motivation. The perceived internal locus of control must flow from the choice to walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh (Gal 5:16), and derived from the intimacy of relationship with the Savior that allows the Lord to have His way in the Christ-follower. The model reminds the Christ-follower that the creation story is a story of significance,

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[166] Ryan and Deci, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions," 55.

[167] Ryan and Deci, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions," 57.

[168] The model teaches that we are tested with choices every day. Many choices are between the Lord's important things and the world's distractions. Distractions are more tempting, and we are more susceptible when we are discontent, which provokes our flesh and causes us to find something to distract us, which draws us away from the Lord because we desire to fill a need, provide momentary relief, change the feelings, the environment – the externalities. The challenge with seeking a distraction is that, as Tozer writes, "we become so immersed in our difficulties that we see nothing else;" we forget our direction and then become lost in the distraction. This is where intrinsic motivation steps in to steer us on course so that we do not become lost in the distraction. A. W. Tozer, *The Crucified Life* (Cincinnati: Bethany House Publishers, 2011), 47.

the significance of God's creation and His desire for relationship. This is at the heart of the call for an intrinsic motivator: He desires, we desire; He delights, we delight; and "we are heirs of God's glory" (Rom 8:17).

Choice Theory

Choice theory is closely connected to decision-making; psychologically, it is often associated with reality therapy. "Reality Therapy is also based on Choice Theory, the principle that humans choose to behave in certain ways and that these choices can help or hamper one's ability to satisfy essential needs and reach individual goals."[169] Similar to reality therapy, choice theory emphasizes one's ability to make choices to change behavior. Choice theory is often closely associated with rational choice and the belief that someone acting on reason makes choices and decisions. Human beliefs, values, and desires will make choices and decisions following those beliefs, values, and decisions. "Standard rational choice theory focuses exclusively on the rational pursuit of an agent's preferences and is silent on how these preferences are formed and how they may be revised, for instance, by deliberating about and responding to various reasons."[170] As one would imagine, discussing choice and decision without considering motivation is challenging. As Franz Dietrich and Christian List remind us, "An agent's preferences over the relevant fundamental objects (possible worlds, states, outcomes) depend on the reasons that motivate him or her and may vary with changes in them."[171]

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[169] Lauren M. Joyce, Hunter DiGiangi, and Shannon Norman, "Trauma Treatment from a Choice Theory/Reality Therapy Perspective," *International Journal of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy* 40, no. 2 (Spring, 2021), 16.

[170] Franz Dietrich and Christian List, "A Reason-based Theory of Rational Choice" Noûs, 47, no. 1 (2013), 105.

[171] Dietrich and List, "A Reason-based Theory of Rational Choice," 109.

Choice is inherent in numerous motivational theoretical frames. In the expectancy-value

model of achievement motivation, A. Wigfield and J. Eccles suggest that "people's choices are

influenced by perceived positive and negative task characteristics, and these are associated with

benefits and costs, respectively. The cost associated with choice is thought to stem from the fact

that when a choice is made, often other options are eliminated."[172] In the model, the choice is

centered on a chosen desire to pursue Christ. Hayes and Hofmann remind us that the

"clarification of values involves an iterative process of belief refinement on the . . . realizing that

something you thought was incorrect and thus changing thinking . . . an iterative refinement of

what one views as rewarding and punishing, and how rewarding and punishing it is, with respect

to self."[173] The reward is the pursuit of Christ and growth in intimacy with the Savior, a Lifestyle

Who is Christ. The cost is the cost of surrender and sacrificial obedience for the chosen purpose

of living in a way that honors the Lord, driven intrinsically through a pursuit of the way of

Christ.[174]

Edna Ulmann-Margalit and Sidney Morgenbesser emphasize that "choosing involves an

opportunity for meaningful realization of the individual's desires or preferences."[175] The

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[172] A. Wigfield and J. Eccles, "Expectancy-value Theory of Achievement Motivation," *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, (2000), 70.

[173] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 171.

[174] The challenge for Christ-followers is to deeply digest and appropriate the Christ-centric truth that life in Christ is not to be of our making, as there is One Waymaker, and His name is Jesus. Control is an automatic answer for many. We, as humans, want control. We want to plan our course, make our way, and know what is in the front, behind, and the sides of us. We generally do not like the unknown, and for many, we do not like the thought of not being in control! Therefore, it is often challenging to cry out 'Your Will, Your Way,' as it requires trust and faith, and many are low on trust and faith. As a Christ-follower, one chooses (keyword) to desire to be a surrendered vessel of the Lord. That does not mean it is easy or we always live in the moment as a surrendered vessel of the Lord; it is the desire, and one chooses attitudes and actions to align with the choice.

[175] Edna Ullmann-Margalit and Sidney Morgenbesser, "Picking and Choosing," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 44, no 4. (1977), 763.

emphasis on free will and free choice cannot be overemphasized, implicating the need for

autonomy and even control. A discussion of free will is beyond the scope of this Dissertation.

However, when we ask whether we have "free will," it is important to be clear what the phrase

means. scripture nowhere says that we are "free" in the sense of being outside God's control or

able to make decisions that are not caused by anything. Nor does it say we are "free" in the sense

of being able to do right on our own, apart from God's power. Our ability to make willing

choices reflects God's will and his ability to make willing choices. However, if we were to be

totally free in our choices, we would be equal to God in our will, and that is something we may

never expect either in this life or in the one to come. [176]

Calvin speaks in some sense of man's "free" acts and choices. However, Calvin explains

that the term is so subject to misunderstanding that he tries to avoid using it. This is because

"free will is not sufficient to enable man to do good works unless he is helped by grace" and

"Man will then be spoken of as having this sort of free decision, not because he has free choice

equally of good and evil, but because he acts wickedly by will, not by compulsion. Well put,

indeed, but what purpose is served by labeling with a proud name such a slight thing?"[177] Carson

argues that the following two propositions are both taught in the Bible: (1) God is absolutely

sovereign, but his sovereignty never functions in scripture to reduce human responsibility, and

(2) Human beings are responsible creatures—that is, they choose, they believe, they disobey,

they respond, and there is moral significance in their choices; but human responsibility never

functions in scripture to diminish God's sovereignty or to make God absolutely contingent.

Carson says, "We tend to use one to diminish the other; we tend to emphasize one at the expense

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[176] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 438.

[177] John, Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* 1:262, 2.2.6.

of the other. But a responsible reading of the scripture prohibits such reductionism"[178]

How, then, does this manifest for the Christ-follower? The Christ-follower does not relinquish control and becomes a puppet controlled by a puppet master. The Christ-follower has agency, autonomy, and capacity. The choice, for the Christ-follower, is an intentional subjection of one's capacities to align with those of his Creator, to be, through the conforming and transforming work of the Holy Spirit, conformed more and more into the image of God. J. Baron suggests that "more thoughtfully reflective decision-makers should be more effective agents and should make better quality decisions."[179] We understand that thoughtfulness and reflection flow through one's strengthened connection to Christ and infusion (Module 2) of His Word guiding one, through the Spirit, into decisions that reflect the desires of Christ, which inherently are for the Christ follower of a perfect quality (Matt 5:48, 2 Cor 5:21).

Applications from Neuroscience/Medical Science

The model is replete with terms from neuroscience and medical science. Neuroscience is the scientific study of the nervous system and the brain. The nervous system comprises the central nervous system (CNS) and the peripheral nervous system (PNS). The CNS includes the spinal cord and the brain. The PNS is made up of nerves and ganglia that are outside of the spinal cord and brain. The ganglia is a cluster of nerve cells located in the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS is responsible for the function of internal organs (such as the liver and kidneys) and is a part of the PNS. The PNS connects the CNS to our body parts (such as limbs) and organs and passes communication between our body parts and organs to our spinal cord and

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[178] D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 896
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[179] J. Baron, *Thinking and Deciding*, 4th ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 104.

brain. The PNS includes the somatic nervous system (SNS) and the ANS. The somatic nervous system includes spinal and cranial nerves and controls body movements through voluntary skeletal muscle. Spinal nerves carry sensory information into the spinal cord and motor commands out. Cranial nerves carry information into and out of the brain stem. The CNS can be divided into the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches. The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for the 'fight-flight' response and is activating. The parasympathetic nervous system is down-regulating and producing more of a homeostasis.

For purposes of the model, it is necessary to note the structure of the forebrain which can be divided into the diencephalon, which includes, among many others, the thalamus, hypothalamus (which includes the limbic system and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal [HPA] axis), and pituitary gland; the telencephalon, which includes white matter, the hippocampus, amygdala, basal ganglia, and basal forebrain, among others; and the rhinencephalon, which includes the olfactory bulb, the cerebral cortex (which consists of four lobes), and the cingulate cortex. It is important to know the four lobes of the brain (the frontal, parietal, occipital, and temporal lobes) that make up the cerebral cortex and their functions. The frontal lobe involves speech (Broca's area), personality, intelligence, planning, and emotions. The parietal lobes interpret sensory and visual signals, touch, pain, and temperature, and understand language and spatial and visual perception. The occipital lobe is mainly for vision, and the temporal lobe is involved in understanding language (Wernicke's area), memory, and organization.

Other important areas of the brain include the hypothalamus, which connects the nervous system to the endocrine system (which is responsible for secreting hormones) through the pituitary gland (controls hormone secretion that fights disease, responds to stress, develops bone and muscle, and sexual development). The hypothalamus is part of the limbic system and is

responsible for certain metabolic processes and activities of the autonomic nervous system. The

thalamus sends motor and sensory signals to the cerebral cortex, regulating sleep, alertness, and

consciousness. The cerebral cortex is the brain's (cerebrum's) outer layer, which involves

memory, thought, language, perception, awareness, language, and consciousness. It is classified

based on its four lobes. According to Jennings, the Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC) is

where we reason, strategize, and plan.[180] Further, it is the orbital frontal cortex (OFC) and ventral

medial prefrontal cortex (VMPFC) "where we experience the conviction of guilt and recognize

socially inappropriate behavior, and from these regions, the brain sends instructions to correct

improper behavior. The DLPFC, in combination with the OFC and VMPFC (conscience) for the

ability known as judgment."[181]

Johnson states that:

the brain is born with predispositions to seek out certain kinds of signs and respond in predetermined communicative ways. Then through experience patterns of neuronal firings from neural networks circuits and substrates that come to represent information and unique neurological codes. And these processes function according to physical chemical and biological laws. All this structure is evidence of an embedded semi-discursiveness a manifestation of the words of the word of God.[182]

Timoth R. Jennings suggests that "when our consciences are clear, we can reason and

think more efficiently."[183] Further, Jennings continues, "This amazing balance between reason

(DLPFC) and conscience (VMPFC and OFC) was designed by God to enable finite beings to

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[180] Timothy R Jennings, *The God-shaped Brain: How Changing your View of God Transforms your Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017), 38.

[181] Jennings, *The God-shaped Brain,* 38.

[182] Eric L. Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2014), 316.

[183] Jennings, *The God-shaped Brain*, 39.

make healthy choices."[184] As discussed in the psychological section on choices and decision-

making, God's design of our brain equips us to make choices that glorify Him as we pursue God

(Matt 6:33, Jer 29:11, 1 Tim 6:11). The model advocates that it is through our new heart that we

have been made alive in Christ, through our spiritually awakening from death to life in the

moment of redemption, that allows us to make Christ-centric choices and decisions, guided by

the Spirit.[185] Jennings proposes that "neurologically speaking, the heart is the Anterior Cingular

Cortex (ACC), the part of the brain right between your eyes and slightly back from your

forehead. It is the brain region where we experience empathy, compassion, love, and where we

choose right from wrong."[186]

It is not surprising that as fear, worry, anxiety, and other powerful emotions and feelings

emerge, our Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) is hijacked by our limbic system, and wise decision-making

decreases as we are thrust into our sympathetic nervous system and the HPA-Axis is triggered

releasing cortisol and other hormones and neurotransmitters into our brain. According to

Jennings:

> Fear, which comes in many sizes and shapes, is an intruder and unnatural invader, like a
> flesh-eating bacteria – ravaging and deforming all creation. . . The sympathetic nervous
> system activates the release of stress hormones (glucocorticoids and adrenaline) and
> inflammatory factors (cytokines). If we don't actively stop firing unhealthy neural

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[184] Jennings, *The God-shaped Brain*, 39.

[185] The mechanism for effectual calling is a work of the Holy Spirit that always brings a response of saving faith. In the Synods of Dort, we read, "Moreover, when God carries out this good pleasure <u>in the elect</u>, or works true conversion in them, God not only sees to it that the gospel is proclaimed to them outwardly, and enlightens their minds powerfully by the Holy Spirit so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God, but, by the effective operation of the same regenerating Spirit, God also penetrates into the inmost being, opens the closed heart, softens the hard heart, and circumcises the uncircumcised heart. God infuses new qualities into the will, making the dead will alive, the evil one good, the unwilling one willing, and the stubborn one compliant."[185] According to Sproul, "What is regenerated is the person's nature. The heart of the Sinner is truly changed. Once in bondage to sin, the Sinner is liberated unto life's newness. The fruit of obedience is both inevitable and necessary; it is immediate." Synods of Dort: Article 11. R. C. Sproul, *What Is Reformed Theology, Understanding The Basics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 193.

[186] Jennings, *The God-shaped Brain*, 38.

circuits, those unhealthy patterns will not degrade, and our characters will not be transformed into Christ-likeness. Why must we demolish every lie about God? Because when the ACC accepts such lies, unhealthy neural circuits get fired and grow stronger, the PFC is damaged, love is impaired, and fear is inflamed.[187]

Therefore, as the model proposes, the Christ-follower must create new neural pathways. Change processes are associated with neural changes."[188] It is the brain's neuroplasticity that allows this process.[189] As we learn different ways of being and doing, we create new neural pathways, forming new ways of growing and changing that allow us to create a new self in Christ (Eph 4:22–24). In creating these new neural pathways in pursuit of Christ, the model advocates living primarily in the PFC and learning how to downregulate when triggered or activated by the externalities of life to remain in the Spirit and not allow the flesh, ruled by the limbic system, to dysregulate and derail choices and decision, attitudes, and actions. Therefore, the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are critically important in understanding how one feels and what happens physiologically when each system is activated.

The sympathetic nervous system (SNS), commonly called the fight or flight response, is often activated when faced with a trigger. A trigger can be any perception identifying a type of danger, ranging from a worry or an anxious thought to more extreme externalities. These triggers activate physiological symptoms and activate the sympathetic-adrenal response, which causes the release of neurotransmitters such as acetylcholine (ACh), which activates epinephrine (adrenaline) and norepinephrine (noradrenaline). The parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) is

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[187] Jennings, *The God-shaped Brain*, 45–6, 65.

[188] Hayes and Hofmann, *Process Based CBT*, 154.

[189] "Neuroplasticity can be defined as the ability of the nervous system to respond to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli by reorganizing its structure, function, and connections. Major advances in the understanding of neuroplasticity have to date yielded few established interventions." Steven C. Cramer et al., "Harnessing neuroplasticity for clinical applications," *Brain* 134, No. 6 (2011): 1591–1609.

the opposite of the sympathetic nervous system and produces homeostasis. In the model, when one is activated, it becomes increasingly challenging to remain balanced and centered in Christ, creating greater susceptibilities to step into the flesh and out of the Spirit's guiding and controlling influence.

Neurotransmitters

While a discussion of psychopharmacology and the function of neurotransmitters is outside the scope of the model's focus, it is necessary to note that there are major groups of neurotransmitters, including the norepinephrine system, the dopamine system, the serotonin system, and the cholinergic system, among others. In the model, metaphors involve the function of certain neurotransmitters. For example, Glutamate (Glu) is an excitatory neurotransmitter abundant in the nervous system.[190] It is involved in cognitive functions such as memory and learning. Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) is an inhibitory neurotransmitter that regulates muscle tone and is seen in many sedatives since GABA calms the brain.[191] Acetylcholine (ACh) can excite or inhibit the autonomic nervous system and is involved in learning and memory.[192] Dopamine (DA) regulates motor behavior, motivation, and emotional arousal and is dominant in the reward/pleasure system.[193] Serotonin (5-HT) regulates many areas, including appetite, sleep, memory, learning, temperature, mood, behavior, muscle contraction, and function of the

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[190] Institute of Medicine (US) Forum on Neuroscience and Nervous System Disorders. Glutamate-Related Biomarkers in Drug Development for Disorders of the Nervous System: Workshop Summary. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2011. 2, Overview of the Glutamatergic System.

[191] Institute of Medicine (US) Forum on Neuroscience and Nervous System Disorders, 2.

[192] D. Purves et al., eds, *Neuroscience*. 2nd edition, (Sunderland: Sinauer Associates, 2001), "Acetylcholine," accessed June 3, 2024, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK11143/.

[193] Hugo Juárez Olguín et al., "The Role of Dopamine and Its Dysfunction as a Consequence of Oxidative Stress," *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity* (2016), 1.

cardiovascular and endocrine systems. It is involved with many mood disorders, such as depression and anxiety.[194] Norepinephrine (NE) is a stress hormone that affects alertness and arousal.[195] It affects a person's mood and concentration. Epinephrine (Epi) found in the adrenal glands impacts sleep, alertness, and the fight or flight response.[196]

The Endocrine System and HPA-Axis

The endocrine and neuroendocrine systems are often used in metaphors within the model. These systems regulate our bodies by releasing hormones. A hormone is a chemical regulatory substance produced and secreted by specialized cells. For purposes of the model, it is important to mention cortisol, a steroid hormone produced in the adrenal glands. It is released in response to stress and impacts blood-glucose levels. When triggers activate one, or what may be commonly referred to as stressors, the SNS is activated, and the adrenal gland releases cortisol as part of the fight or flight response. When stress is reduced, the sympathetic system and cortisol levels are lowered, and the body returns to homeostasis. When one does not downregulate or remains in states of activation and hypervigilance, cortisol levels remain high and sabotage the body, producing immune, emotional, and physical distress.[197] The HPA axis is also referenced frequently in the model. The HPA axis involves three endocrine glands: the hypothalamus, the

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[194] Simon N. Young, "How to Increase Serotonin in the Human Brain without Drugs." *Journal of Psychiatry and* Neuroscience 32, no. 6 (2007), 394.

[195] D. B. Bylund and K.C. Bylund, *Norepinephrine,* in *Encyclopedia of the Neurological Sciences,* Second Ed., Eds. Michael J. Aminoff and Robert B. Darof, 614-616 (Cambridge: MA: Academic Press, 2014).

[196] National Center for Biotechnology Information. "PubChem Compound Summary for CID 5816, Epinephrine," PubChem, https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/Epinephrine, accessed April 21, 2024.

[197] L. Thau, J. Gandhi, and S. Sharma, "Physiology, Cortisol," updated August 28, 2023, in *StatPearls* (Treasure Island, FL: StatPearls Publishing, January 2024-), available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK538239/, accessed April 21, 2024.

pituitary gland, and the adrenal glands. The HPA axis is a neuroendocrine system that regulates

many body processes, including the immune system, and with repeated exposure to triggers and

continued activation, for the Christ-follower, living in intentional sin and disobedience to the

desires of Christ, the continued activation of the HPA axis and its related neurotransmitters and

hormones, can damage mind, body, and spirit.[198]

It is also important to note that mood improvements often result from increased blood

circulation to the brain, impacting the HPA axis and regulating physiological reactions to

triggers. This physiological response likely also increases mediated by the communication

between the HPA axis and several regions of the brain (e.g., the limbic system, which controls

motivation and mood; the amygdala, which produces the stress-related fear response; and the

hippocampus, which facilitates the creation of memories, mood, and motivation).[199]

Cognitive Neuroscience and Executive Function

Although cognitive neuroscience studies many topic areas, one area relevant to the model

is executive function (EF). R. Elliott states:

> The term executive function is an umbrella for various complex cognitive processes and
> sub-processes. Most attempts to define executive function resort to a list of examples
> (such as task-switching, planning, or other useful umbrella term 'working memory'),
> reflecting that executive function is no longer a unitary concept.[200]

EFs are any cognitive processes in the cerebral cortex (prefrontal cortex, PFC) and involve goal-

related or prediction behaviors, motor attention, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and

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[198] Julietta A. Sheng, et al., "The Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis: Development, Programming Actions of Hormones, and Maternal-Fetal Interactions," *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience* 14 (2021), 1.

[199] A. Sharma, V. Madaan, and F. D. Petty, "Exercise for Mental Health," *Primary Care Companion to The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry 8* no. 2 (2006), 108.

[200] R. Elliott, "Executive Functions and their Disorders," *British Medical Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (2003), 49.

planning.[201] Funahashi summarized executive function as:

> a product of the coordinated operation of various processes to accomplish a particular goal in a flexible manner. This flexible co-ordination of sub-processes to achieve a specific goal is the responsibility of executive control systems. These functions are found in the frontal lobe and, more specifically, the PFC.[202]

The PFC is known as the brain's chief executive officer.

For example, EF includes the ability to determine the good, bad, same, and different consequences of current actions, work toward a goal, predict outcomes, and exercise social control (in other words, act in ways that are acceptable to those in the social circle or society in general).[203] The parts of the brain involved with executive functioning include the prefrontal cortex, basal ganglia, and the thalamus. The frontal lobes are responsible for many functions, including insight, judgment, cognitive flexibility, planning, etc. According to P. Yuan and N. Raz, "neuropsychologists view executive functions as capacities that enable a person to engage successfully in independent, purposive, self-serving behavior *and* a variety of loosely related higher-order cognitive processes including initiation, planning, hypothesis generation, cognitive flexibility, decision making, regulation, judgment, feedback utilization, and self-perception that are necessary for effective and contextually appropriate behavior."[204]

Executive function skills are important in the model, predominantly in Module 1, focused

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[201] John R. Best and Patricia H Miller, "A Developmental Perspective on Executive Function." *Child Development* 81, no. 6 (2010), 1650.

[202] S. Funahashi, Neuronal Mechanisms of Executive Control by the Prefrontal Cortex. *Neuroscience Research* 39 (2001), 150.

[203] A. Diamond, "Executive Functions," *Annual Review of Psychology* 64 (2013), 142.

[204] P. Yuan and N. Raz, "Prefrontal Cortex and Executive Functions in Healthy Adults: A Meta-Analysis of Structural Neuroimaging Studies," *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 0 (2014), 185. See also, M. D. Lezak, (1995), *Neuropsychological Assessment*. 3rd ed, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), and O. Spreen and E. Strauss E, *A Compendium of Neuropsychological Tests*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

on identifying, cultivating, and regulating awareness of self. In Module 1, significant emphasis is placed on learning to identify intent and motive to build mindfulness and awareness of when the limbic system hijacks the PFC. In Module 1, in particular, there is a focus on cultivating Spirit-centric awareness of intent and motive in choices and decisions. Learning to live life intentionally requires activation of EF skills that are aligned with the wisdom from above (Jas 1:5– 8, Prov 4:7), understanding and guidance through the Spirit (Luke 24:45, John 16:13), and discernment of the Spirit (Rom 12:12) to avoid the traps of willful, intentional sin. EFs facilitate our centering in the PFC, allowing us to grow and learn from Christ rather than our limbic system reactions, often leading us into the flesh and willful disobedience toward the Savior. Tozer writes, "God can take your mistakes and polish those mistakes. God never gets astonished, astounded, or surprised because He already knows."[205]

Digestive System/Gut Health and the Immune System

Module 3 of the model emphasizes absorption and digestion. In Module 2, the focus is on the digestion of God's Word through Infusion, which promotes growth and flourishment as we deeply internalize God's Word for living application, living Christ to His glory in this messy world. Many of the metaphors used in Module 3 draw from medical constructs in digestive, gut health, and immune systems. Balance is central in discussing the digestive and immune systems, as it is also in the discussion of centeredness in Christ. The gut, as the second brain, the enteric system, is also an important construct in this discussion. According to Lelsie E. Korn, the gut controls the digestive system through nerves and chemicals communicating with the CNS, including "Feeling and sensation[which] are part of its function, and is linked to our emotional

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[205] A.W. Tozer, *The Attributes of God*: *Deeper into the Father's Heart*, vol 2 (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 117.

lives and intuition."[206] Healthy digestion is a function of the parasympathetic nervous system. According to Korn, "Under normal circumstances, the parasympathetic mode of the ANS is the autopilot that "automatically" drives the overall function of the digestive system, from the release of digestive enzymes and juices to peristalsis and elimination."[207] When one is triggered and the sympathetic nervous system is activated, significant gastrointestinal symptoms can manifest, wreaking havoc on the digestive system and gut health, as "poor digestion affects the neurochemicals that influence mood and well-being."[208]

J. M. Pickard, M. Y. Zeng, R. Caruso, and G. Nunez reinforce that "we know now that microbes that inhabit the gastrointestinal tract have a profound influence on host physiology, including digestion and absorption of food, biosynthesis of micronutrients, and protection against pathogen colonization."[209] Gut microbiota are essential to the healthy development of the immune system. As Benjamin P. Willing, Navkiran Gill, and Brett Finlay remind us, "In return for a hospitable environment and provision of nutrients, the gastrointestinal microbiota provides the host with many major advantages."[210] Further, they continue, "Over the past decade, imbalances and changes in the composition of the gastrointestinal microbiota have been linked to numerous diseases including allergy, cancer, diabetes, obesity, inflammatory bowel diseases, and enteric infection."[211] These microbiota are essential for the development of a healthy immune

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[206] Leslie E. Korn, "The Second Brain: Trust Your Gut," *The Neuropsychotherapist* 4, no. 12 (2016), 31.

[207] Korn, "The Second Brain," 33.

[208] Korn, "The Second Brain," 33.

[209] J. M. Pickard, M. Y. Zeng, R. Caruso, and G. Núñez, "Gut Microbiota: Role in Pathogen Colonization, Immune Responses, and Inflammatory Disease, *Immunology Revised* 279, no. 1 (2017), 74.

[210] Benjamin P. Willing, Navkiran Gill, and Brett Finlay. "The Role of the Immune System in Regulating the Microbiota," *Gut Microbes* 1, no. 4 (2010), 213.

[211] Willing, Gill, and Finlay. "The Role of the Immune System in Regulating the Microbiota," 213.

system.

For the model, digestion is moving from a head knowledge of Christ into a personalized and internalized one, as the model refers to *ginōskō*-knowing of the person of Jesus Christ relationally. Therefore, what we take in matters, as evidenced by medical science and the importance of healthy nutrients, to foster balance within our internal systems. Immune cells interact with the microbiome in the gut, and most of the immune system is located within the gut, creating a significant interdependence among systems. Our nutritional intake affects the bacterial composition in the gut and, as a result, our immune cells and health. The analogy is clear. The Word is our spiritual nutrition (John 6:50-71, Matt 4:4). Its proper digestion allows for absorption into our whole self – our being, which strengthens us in Christ (Eph 3:16), allowing us to develop strength and maturity in Christ fostered and protected by the Holy Spirit, who is referred to as our immune system, as further depicted in Module 6 in the model.

According to McComb et al., "The cells of the immune system have been classified into two general groups; these are innate or adaptive immunity. Innate immune cells react quickly, whereas adaptive immune cells have a delayed response that can take days to fully develop but go on to form immunological memory."[212] In the model, the Holy Spirit is both innate and adaptive. He is innate in that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), and the Spirit dwells in the Christ-follower (Rom 8:9). He is also the One who allows us to adapt through surrender and submission to the work of the Spirit within the Christ-follower as a surrendered vessel (John 14:17, Rom 8:26).

Further, according to McComb et al:

In humans, the skin and mucosal membranes comprise the first line of defense barriers

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[212] Scott McComb et al., "Chapter 1: Introduction to the immune system," in *Immunoproteomics: Methods and Protocols,* eds. Kelly M. Fulton and Susan M. Twine, Methods in Molecular Biology, 1062, 5.

against a pathogen. When disrupted by infection or lesion, the innate immune mechanisms in the skin begin to activate almost immediately. One of the fastest acting mechanisms of the immune system is the complement reaction. When blood-resident inactive complement proteins encounter a pathogen, they will rapidly bind to it, either through direct interaction or in cooperation with a pathogen-specific antibody. Upon binding to pathogen, a series of proteolytic cleavages will activate the complement proteins; this causes the formation of large multimeric complexes that in turn disrupt bacterial membranes, killing an invading pathogen directly."[213]

In the model, our defense system against the flesh is the Spirit. Our defense system against principalities and rulers is the armor of God (Eph 6:10-18), which is composed of the Truth, a *ginōskō* knowledge of God, through the truth of His Word, His imputed righteousness, his gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God in an attitude of continual prayer.[214] The pathogens of this world, our flesh, and Satan are protected by the Christ-follower's spiritual immune system, which he is responsible for nurturing and caring for by feeding oneself with nutritional choices that promote spiritual gut and digestive health. If not, the results are analogous to a compromised immune system, and the Christ-follower becomes not only susceptible but prone to spiritual complacency, lukewarmness, and even legalistic ritualism and opens oneself to spiritual diseases, such as hardness of heart and even the possibility of Jesus' words in Matthew 7:21– 23.

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[213] McComb et al., "Introduction to the Immune System," 13.

[214] It is necessary to note that the focus of this section in Ephesians is plural in language and concept. Arnold writes, "Paul uses an extensive set of military metaphors throughout this section to convey the idea of spiritual power . . . [to the community of believers] as he "explains how believers are to gain strength and spiritual power from the Lord. . . Believers need God's empowerment because they will face a variety of well-planned attacks by a supernatural opponent." Clinton E. Arnold (ed.), *Ephesians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 436, 443–44.

The Cardio-Metabolic System

Module 4 of the model is titled Monitor – Heart Check. It focuses on spiritual health and spiritual tools that equip the Christ-follower to detect and avoid what the model refers to as hardness of the heart. The Cardio-metabolic system provides an important metaphor for the model that analogizes the hardness of the heart to cardio-metabolic disease (CMS).[215] CMS is a combination of metabolic dysfunctions mainly characterized by insulin resistance, impaired glucose tolerance, dyslipidemia (increasing the risk of heart disease or a heart attack), hypertension (high blood pressure), and central adiposity (a condition of severe overweight or obesity). Various factors can increase the risk of developing impaired glucose tolerance, including severe overweight challenges and obesity, a family history of diabetes, lack of or low physical activity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, among others.

"Today, moving from infection and malnutrition to overnutrition and cardio-metabolic diseases, the scientific attention has shifted to the effects that hyperlipidemias, such as hypercholesterolemia and hypertriglyceridemia, have on tissue inflammation and chronic cardio-metabolic diseases."[216] Cholesterol, as a lip, correlates to the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and atherosclerosis, an inflammatory disease.[217] According to Heval M. Kelli, Ibrahim Kassas, and Omar M. Lattouf, "With the rise of obesity around the world, CMS has become a

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[215] "The cardiometabolic syndrome represents a constellation of metabolic abnormalities that are risk factors for cardiovascular disease. The risk of coronary heart disease, myocardial infarction, and stroke is much higher in persons who have the cardiometabolic syndrome than in those without the syndrome." Erik P. Kirk and Samuel Klein, "Pathogenesis and Pathophysiology of the Cardiometabolic Syndrome," *Journal of Clinical Hypertension* 11, no 12 (2009), 761.

[216] Stella Bernardi, et al., "The Complex Interplay between Lipids, Immune System and Interleukins in Cardio-metabolic Diseases," *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* 19, no. 12 (2018), 4062.

[217] R. Ross, "Atherosclerosis—An Inflammatory Disease," *New England Journal of Medicine* 340 (1999): 115–26.

global pandemic 5 with estimates of more than 1.1 billion adults being overweight and 312 million being obese."[218] Cardio-metabolic diseases are collectively responsible for more than "4.8 million deaths among the U.S. Working ages (25-64) between 1990 and 2017," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.[219]

The model discusses clogged arteries, represented by choices and decisions that block connection to Christ and impair functioning, leading to spiritual diseases. The analogy is that while there is much focus and attention on life-threatening medical conditions, there is little focus on the spiritual-life-threatening condition of hardness of heart.[220] While hardness of heart is a life-threatening spiritual illness, it is completely reversible and curable through the

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[218] Heval M. Kelli, Ibrahim Kassas, and Omar M. Lattouf. "Cardio Metabolic Syndrome: A Global Epidemic." *Journal of Diabetes Metabolism* 6, no. 3 (2015), 1.

[219] Deaths due to cardiometabolic diseases include the following cause-of-death categories: endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic (ENM) diseases (e.g., thyroid conditions, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, obesity); hypertensive heart disease (e.g., heart disease caused by prolonged exposure to high blood pressure); and ischemic heart disease and other diseases of the circulatory system (e.g., reduced blood supply to the heart, including atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke, and other cardiovascular conditions). CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). CDC WONDER Online Database, National Center for Health Statistics. 2020b. Underlying cause of death 1999-2018. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2018, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html, accessed June 4, 2024.

[220] Hardness of heart reveals itself as early as Genesis 6:5, "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This is followed by Exodus 4:21, "And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart so he will not let the people go." The Psalmists, Solomon in Proverbs, the prophets, Jesus, Himself, and Paul all reference either the wickedness of the heart, the need for a renewed and clean heart, and the devastation of what we call hardness of heart. Yet, we often ignore its effects and impact on our spiritual condition. Jesus states it clearly in Mark 8:17 when he says, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Paul could not be plainer in Romans 2:5 when he rebukes his listeners, "but because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." It is important to note that Jesus was speaking to His own disciples when he said, "for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened" (Mark 6:52), and when he spoke to them in Mark 8:17. These were Christ's disciples, as we are His disciples. Hardness of heart begins to occur when we step into our flesh. Hardness of heart sets in when we do not seek, when we disobey, and turn from God's voice, His Way, His Word, and His conviction. Hardness of heart begins in very subtle ways, much like cholesterol. You can eat cholesterol-rich foods and not hear or see your arteries begin to harden. You can turn from God, go your own way, do your own will, and not hear your heart harden. The issue with hardness of heart, much akin to hardening arteries, is that we often do not notice it until we have distressing or disturbing symptoms or receive a warning from a professional.

forgiveness and spiritual healing power of Christ.[221] For the Christ-follower, in the model, there

is the gifted opportunity to walk with Jesus, to live (Matt 16:24– 25), and to pursue Christ. The

Christ-follower is promised the ability to live victoriously (1 John 5:4). In Christ, He can

eradicate what the model refers to as Hardness of Heart Syndrome (HHS) by living at what the

model refers to as the Grain of Sand Level, in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. It means if

the Christ-follower is willing, and chooses to live a preventative lifestyle in Christ, then he or she

can overcome the power of the flesh, as promised in Romans 8:37, more often than not.

Although the Christ-follower, will as the model refers to it, at times falls prey to the flesh, as

Paul states in Romans 7:15– 20, there is a hope that comes from developing healthy, preventative

lifestyle choices in Christ to equip the Christ-follower to truly walk in His victory as overcomers

even through the stumbles.

Summary

One of the reasons for the model is the continual transformation in the fields of soul care

and spiritual formation. The intent is not to negate those who have paved paths forward in an

ever-emerging field, But God, as we say in the model, to continue to expand the dialogue. The

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[221] Sin loves the darkness. Sin wants to stay tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the flesh. Sin does not want exposure, lest the light of Christ destroy it. The flesh is sin (Rom 8:7, 8:13, and Eph 2:1– 22, among many others), and it does not want to be uncovered. When Adam and Eve "heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid" (Genesis 3:8-10). Our flesh heritage has a long lineage of hiding, disobeying, justifying, and ignoring God. Yet, God knows our hearts and our sinful ways. David, despite his sins of adultery, murder, and disobedience in conducting a census (See 2 Sam 11, 1 Chr 21), was called a man after God's own heart (See 1 Samuel 13:14). The story of the Prodigal Son (See, Luke 5:11– 32) is another testimony of God's grace and forgiveness. Then there is the truth of 1 John 1:9, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The good news is, in Christ, you can be forgiven and healed of your sin, every moment of every day. The spiritual discipline is that you must desire to walk in the light of His way and be willing to allow Him to expose the sin within you and desire to see the truth of your daily practices. Do I have hardness of heart?

model inherently asserts that one can glean from the general revelation of God and propose a view that integrates psychological science, neuroscience, and medical science from a theocentric perspective with the Holy Spirit as the change agent and the human mind, will, and heart as a willing submissive participant and vessel in the process.

A literature review indicates that the model can have a voice in spiritual formation and soul care. The model is aligned with the focus of the scholarship in these fields and adds depth in integrating important constructs from the psychological sciences, neurosciences, and medical sciences. The applicable integration of the model is evident as it draws from well-established theoretical orientations, tools, and techniques evident in the sciences, providing a meaningful therapeutic toolbox for the Christ-follower.

CHAPTER 3: PAULINE THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

APPLICABLE TO THE MODEL

The theological pillars of the model are derived primarily from Paul's epistles. The primary contributing epistles to the model are Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. While numerous verses from these epistles, and a few from Paul's other epistles, will be utilized to provide the theological foundation for the model, they constitute the epistles from which the major theological themes undergirding the foundation of the model are drawn, such as freedom in Christ (Gal 5:1, 13); the relationship between the Spirit and the flesh (Gal 5:16–18); the command to put on and put off (Eph 4:24, Col 3:12–17), the relationship between the old self and the new self (Col 3:9, Rom 6:6, 2 Cor 5:17), the believer's position in Christ (2 Cor 5:17, Gal 3:26), and the importance of the Holy Spirit as the facilitator, power, and guide for progressive sanctification. Paul's metaphors, key phrases, and undergirding of exhortation, admonitions, and encouragement to pursue and follow Christ and Him alone are also at the core of the model's foundation and structure.

Many of Paul's epistles share similar themes. Since Galatians is used in the model as a central focus, there is a more in-depth analysis. Where there is overlap with Paul's other epistles, it is noted in the ensuing discussion for the epistle. The intent in discussing the epistles contributing to the model is not to produce a traditional commentary structural approach but rather to highlight areas that provide necessary background and context, particularly applicable from the epistles' theological contributions to the model. Therefore, Pauline authorship is assumed, and structure, setting, and purpose are only addressed if relevant to a theological

understanding of the epistles' contributions to the model.[1] Before selected epistles, books, and

other sources are discussed for their relevance and application to the model, it is meaningful to

note some of the more significant themes that transverse the model's novel, integrative approach

to spiritual formation. This exploration aims not to produce a comprehensive review of Pauline

theology, as hundreds of books have been written on this topic, but to highlight a few of those

that dominate the model's approach from Paul's perspective.

Theological Pillar: Anthropology

The model's emphasis on the distinction between flesh and Spirit is replete and

foundational to how we live in the messy world in Christ, with the simplistic answer proposed by

walking/living in the Spirit. The model's use of the body also reflects Paul's anthropology,

specifically as it refers to the human body, or this body of sin or death (Rom 6:6, 7:24). The

antitheses are numerous in Paul's theology as Galatians 5:16-18 emphasizes and is apparent in

Paul's thrusting the flesh as a sinful force against the Spirit which is a Christ-like force. Paul's

anthropology is relational. While the model is focused on extracting Paul's themes and

metaphors for individual growth and development in Christ, it is within the broader context of

community and connection as members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12–27). Paul's

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[1] It is important to note that the authorship of Ephesians has been a hotly debated issue in the scholarship of the letter. While few evangelical scholars doubt the authenticity of the letter, there are a few notable exceptions including J. D. G Dunn, A. T. Lincoln, and R. P. Martin. Arnold also notes that the vast majority of prominent evangelical scholars are convinced of Pauline authorship, including but not limited to, "such scholars as Harold Hohner, William W. Klein, Leon Morris, Peter T. O'Brien, Klyne Snodgrass, John R. W. Stott, Ben Witherington III, and N. T. Wright." Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 46. Moo, Commenting on the authorship of the letter to the Colossians notes "the belief that Colossians is a pseudepigraphal work, a letter written by a follower of Paul's in his name after his death, is widely held in the scholarly community. Raymond brown estimates that 60% of current scholars think that Paul did not write Colossians. Yet this view of the authorship of the letter is relatively recent. No early Christian doubted Paul's authorship." Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 29.

anthropology is inextricably connected to his soteriology, as our ability to live as Christ, walk in the Spirit, obediently pursue, and serve Christ are a direct function of our connection to Christ as God's children (Gal 3:26, Rom 8:16) adopted sons and daughters (Rom 8:15), a status received by grace and through faith, a gift of God (Eph 2:8-9). Paul's anthropology, as depicted in the model, reflects these themes.[2]

Our understanding of our humanness in the light of God's divinity is foundational to our recognition of our need for Christ. This recognition motivates us to desire a connection and relationship to God (salvation) while then, as the model's focus is, propelling us through the love of His saving grace. Tozer writes:

> In every Christian's heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross. If he refuses the cross he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today. We want to be saved but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within the little kingdom of Mansoul and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar, but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility.[3]

James D. G. Dunn writes, "In Pauline perspective, human beings are as they are by virtue of their relationship to God and his world. His gospel is of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself."[4]

Paul's soteriology, a discussion that is beyond the scope of this introduction, drives his anthropology through the use of two predominant terms, as stated above: body (*soma*) and flesh

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[2] While it is outside the scope of this work, it is important to acknowledge that "engagement with Greek philosophical traditions in the study of Pauline anthropology has proved unavoidable because the letters contain specific terms and metaphors widely used in philosophical writings. One common strategy for treating this use of philosophical language has been to insist that the terms and metaphors constitute secondary borrowings from opponents that Paul refashions into something dramatically new and different." Emma Wasserman, "Paul among the Philosophers: The Case of Sin in Romans 6-8," *JSNT* 30, no. 4 (2008), 389.

[3] A.W. Tozer, *The Radical Cross: Living the Passion of Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 74.

[4] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 53.

(*sarx*).[5] Dunn's view that Paul primarily uses *soma* to refer to "the human body of everyday existence" is the one adopted by the model.[6] Further, the model acknowledges with Dunn that for Paul, *soma* has "a spectrum of meaning," meaning the physical human body on one end and embodiment of the person at the other (Rom 12:1). As Dunn explains, "in this sense, soma is a relational concept. It denotes the person embodied in a particular environment."[7] For the model, the environment is this fallen, messy world. *Sarx*, the other predominant term, is more controversial because it is used in a broader range: "from the innocuous sense of the physical material of the body to the sense of flesh as a force hostile to God."[8]

The model heavily leans on Paul's distinctive use of in the flesh (*en sarki*) and according to the flesh (*kata sarka*).[9] Dunn writes, "The former the notes simply life on earth; the latter denotes "the conscious spiritual orientation of life on the earthly level."[10] While the discussion of this topic is immeasurably complex, a predominant point as emphasized in the model is as Dunn states "the problem with flesh is not that it is sinful *per se* but that it is vulnerable to the enticements of sin-flesh, [what] we might say as, 'the desiring I.' It is the all to human/fleshly

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[5] An exploration of these terms has also filled volumes and is beyond the scope of this work. According to Dunn, it is important to note that "soma is one of the two most important Pauline terms in his talk of humankind. It occurs more than 50 times in the undisputed Paulines in what we may call the normal usage, that is in reference to the human body of everyday existence." Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 52. Dunn continues that *sarx* "occurs 91 times in Pauline letters and 26 times in Romans alone," Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 62.

[6] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 55.

[7] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 56.

[8] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 62. Once again, discussing the scholarship and differing views is beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to say that Dunn's exposition provides great insight for the reader who is seeking to know more about this topic.

[9] Schweizer notes that "Sarx functions as a norm by which a man directs his life, and [it] is a power that shapes him." Eduard Schweizer σάρξ, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 7.132.

[10] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 56. See, Schweizer, *TDNT, 7*.132.

need to satisfy appetites which leaves the individual exposed to the wiles of sin."[11] The model

uses flesh to represent man in one's sinful state and its juxtaposition to the Spirit – a

representation as Dunn refers to it as a characterization of the "weakness of humanity constituted

as flesh and always vulnerable to the manipulation of its desires and needs as flesh."[12] Thomas

R. Schreiner also emphasizes that there is a dichotomy and polarization between the flesh and the

Spirit. Schreiner argues that "submitting to the flesh is to subjugate oneself to the present evil

age."[13] It is necessary to note that the model uses flesh as representative of sinful desire and the

body as neutral as it is individually capable of transformation and resurrection through the power

of God.

Paul's anthropology also leans into the terms "mind" (*nous*) and "heart" (*kardia*).[14]

"Mind" is used extensively throughout the model and is the focal point for developing new

neural pathways in the brain and the exhortation to live in the PFC in the higher plane of

cognition and executive function, as opposed to the limbic system, the more primitive plane.

Paul's emphasis on the renewing of the "mind" (Rom 12:12), thinking, which is a function of the

mind (Phil 4:8), taking thoughts captive, a function of the "mind" (2 Cor 10:3-6), and guarding

and setting the "mind" (Phil 4:7, Col 3:2) as examples of the choice of man to set one's "mind"

and use human rationality and brain functions to participate in the progressive process of

sanctification. Dunn writes, "The renewal of the mind in Romans 12:2 means not a new capacity

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[11] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 67.

[12] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 70.

[13] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology*, Second edition, (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020), 150–51.

[14] Dunn states that "*nous* occurs 21 times in the Pauline letters, most in Romans and 1 Corinthians. In the NT, *nous* is almost exclusively a Pauline concept." Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 73.

to discern God's will by rational means but the integration of rationality within the total transformation of the person the recovery of the mind's proper function from its disqualified state."[15]

Paul's use of the word *kardia* also has depth and dimension, an exploration of which is beyond the scope of this work. It is meaningful to note that "heart" and "strength" are two constructs reflected in the model's use of the term physical body, which is a part of our Personhood. Foundationally, the heart is deceitfully wicked and cannot be known, as expressed in Jeremiah 17:9–10 and as reflected in Romans 3:10–18. Paul urges the church in Rome and other hearers of the Epistle to the Romans to know and understand that faith, love, and obedience must flow from the heart (Rom 6:17, 10:9–10). While the "heart" has many dichotomous theological definitions, for the model, the construct of the "heart" is viewed as "an organ of decision-making," as the model would state the heart is aligned with the PFC (the "mind").[16] Dunn explains it as:

> Alongside *nous*, denoting 'the thinking I,' we may say that *kardia* denotes the 'experiencing, motivating I.' It was important for Paul that the experience of God's grace penetrated to the innermost depths of a person and that the corresponding faith was an expression of deeply felt commitment.[17]

It is also necessary to briefly explore the use of "soul" (*psyche*) and "human spirit" (*pneuma*) in Paul's anthropology. Dunn states that "Paul's usage clearly echoes the typical Hebraic mindset" by denoting the person and also focusing on "human vitality."[18] In the model,

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[15] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 74.

[16] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 75.

[17] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 75.

[18] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 76, citing Romans 2:9, 13:1, 16:4, 1 Corinthians 15:45, 2 Corinthians 1:23, 12:15, and 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

the person's spirit is the connective juncture for regeneration through connection to Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit. Dunn writes, "The spirit is evidently the dimension of the human person by means of which the person most relates directly to God."[19] In the model's holistic approach and representative of the integration and symbiotic nature of Paul's anthropological terms, the connection flows to and from the spirit of man to the spirit of God through Man's use of mind and body (heart and strength). It is also relevant to the model's frame to note Dunn's statement that:

> Paul, once again in line with his Jewish heritage, also speaks of the human spirit, a still deeper depth or higher reality of the person. Moreover, he both implies and teaches that it is only by functioning at that level and by opening the human spirit to the divine spirit that the human being can be whole.[20]

Theological Pillar: Hamartiology

The model depicts the flesh as synonymous with self, which implies the flesh of sin (Rom 8:3) and the inherent indwelling of sin due to man's fallen nature.[21] A foundational premise stemming from the model's view of man, in his flesh, as working against the desires of God and the necessity of surrender to the work of the Spirit in both a forensic and participatory frame.[22]

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[19] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 77. See Romans 1:9, 8:6, and 1 Corinthians 6:17.

[20] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 78.

[21] Chafer writes, "One individual, the first of the human creation, committed one sin and that sin being apparently so innocuous men are prone to ridicule the thought that God would notice it at all; yet that one sin is, according to divine estimation, sufficiently evil to cause the degeneracy and depravity of the unfallen person who committed the sin, and to cause uncounted millions of his posterity to suffer in the flesh and die, and the vast majority of them to spend eternity in the realms of woe." Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* vol. II (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1953), 252.

[22] Willmington writes, "The flesh is that principle of sin within all of us. Some equate the sin nature and flesh. The flesh produces works (Gal 5:19), is characterized by lusts and passions (Gal 5:24; 1 John 2:16), and it can enslave the believer (Rom 7:25). In it is nothing good (Rom 7:18), for the presence of the new life in Christ makes all that is associated with the flesh old and useless. This includes blatantly evil things as well as amoral things and sometimes things that might be good in themselves, but which bring no pleasure to God because they are works of the flesh." Harold Willmington, "The Doctrine of Sin," *Scholars Crossing* (2018), 11.

Eastman describes sin as "an acting subject that deceives, kills, works death, accomplishes and practices evil, even as it inhabits and overtakes the one who wants to do the good."[23] Susan G. Eastman expands the meaning of the phrase "the flesh of sin" beyond a personal working, "a power conscripting human bodies," into a communal meaning of "uses for lethal purpose in a multitude of ways."[24] Sin is the power that holds the human hostage, from which stems the need for eschatological freedom brought through the work of Christ, salvifically, on the Cross (2 Cor 5:21) and presently to turn from slaves to the flesh and sin to slaves to God (Rom 6:6, 22). As discussed in the Pneumatology section below, Paul emphasizes the Spirit as the agent, or some suggest the force, "that unites believers in a participatory matrix of 'life in Christ.'"[25]

Grudem defines sin as "any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. Sin includes not only individual acts . . . but also attitudes that are contrary to the attitudes God requires of us."[26] Sin refers to an internal state of being, an internal character, and specific acts, conduct, and behaviors. Sin infiltrates the desires of the heart and is a controlling force in attitude and action, which, according to Paul, is overcome through the desires and power of the Spirit (Gal 5:20). Sin controls us in our natural man, as Paul depicts in Galatians 5:16-18, and is opposed to God in all ways, working at all times to control, condemn, and conquer; However, in and through our connection to Christ we can please God and overcome the power of sin. Grudem reminds us:

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[23] Susan G. Eastman, "Oneself in Another," in Michael, J. Thate, Kevin. J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, eds., *"In Christ" in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 108.

[24] Eastman, "*In Christ" in Paul,"*107.

[25] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 109.

[26] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 619.

> God wants Christians to progress upward on a path of ever-increasing righteousness in life. If our goal is to grow in increasing fullness of life until the day we die and pass into the presence of God in heaven, to sin is to do an about-face and *begin to walk downhill away from the goal of likeness to God*; it is to go in a direction that "leads to death" (Rom 6:16) [27]

The model emphasizes that living in a way that displeases God is a choice influenced and impacted by the chosen controlling force and factors to which the Christ-follower is allowing oneself to pursue. Specifically, choices and decisions made by the Christ-follower in his flesh rather than under the constraining and guiding influence of the Holy Spirit. This does not diminish the power of the flesh, nor the battle as depicted in Romans 7, But God, there is a force Who is greater, One who has overcome sin's eschatological significance, and the same One who freely gave a way for life through faith by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). As Paul depicts in Galatians 5:16, the Christ-follower can walk in the power of the Spirit and not the power of the flesh.

Theological Pillar: Christology

As with all the selected areas of theological influence in the development of the model, The constructs of "Christ crucified," particularly as the term pertains to reconciliation, and 'in Christ,' as representative of union and position, "not I, but Christ who lives in me'"(Gal 2:20), "new creation in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17),' and "belong to Christ," (Cor 3:23) are a few of the terms that are replete throughout the Modules of the model.

The crucified Christ is at the core of Paul's Christology. Christ's death and resurrection are at the heart of faith (1 Cor 15:17). Christ's atoning sacrifice paved the way for the crucifixion of the old nature (Rom 8:3, 2 Cor 5:14). As Dunn reminds us, there is an emphasis on "sharing," or "participation," when he writes "Christ's sharing their death makes it possible for them to

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[27] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 636.

share his death."[28] The emphasis is on a "continuing identification with Christ in, through and beyond his death . . . which is fundamental to Paul's soteriology."[29] The notion of reconciliation, particularly as expressed in 2 Corinthians 5:18–20, is relevant to the model's message that we have been reconciled for a purpose in addition to obedience to God for His glory and the ministry of reconciliation. Christ is the agent of reconciliation, a work that flows from God, the Father, to fulfill God's redemptive plan. As Barnett writes, "Nothing could be clearer than that Christ crucified and risen is the locus and means of fulfilling God's purposes for history, humanity, and the world and creation."[30] Paul Barnett continues:

> Reconciliation with God, however, implies reconciliation among God's people (Eph 2:16), something Paul later calls "your mending" or restoration (2 Cor 13:9, 11). There is a close connection between new creation and reconciliation; both are cosmic and end-time blessings, and both impact humans, to be accepted and given expression, "now."[31]

For Paul, the ministry of reconciliation has an eschatological undercurrent, a personal perspective, and a more universal symbolism of a new covenant (2 Cor 3:6) and a ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:8, 9).[32]

Another key topic for Paul, as it pertains to our relationship to Christ, is the fact and the truth that we belong to Christ (1 Cor 3:23, Rom 14:8). The fruit of belonging to Christ is free (through the work of Christ on the cross), precious, life-giving, and life-sustaining. Belonging to Christ assures us that we have reconciliation to and with Christ. The Christ-follower in this position has forgiveness of sins (2 Cor 1:20). All of God's promises are "yes" in Him who loves

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[28] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 223.

[29] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 223.

[30] Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, TNICNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 302.

[31] Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 304.

[32] Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 305.

those who belong to Him the gift of fellowship with Him today and forever in eternity.

Belonging to Jesus provides us with a sense of safety and security in the sovereignty of our

Heavenly Father. Belonging to Christ is not only the concept that we are His possessed by Him,

safe in Him, secure in Him, but as those who belong to Christ, who acknowledge Him as Lord,

are His servants, there is a position of submission, surrender, and yielding which equips us to

stand in Christ (Rom 1:1, 1 Cor 4:1-2, Eph 6:5–8). Our connection to and relationship with

Christ assures His children that He will sustain His chosen ones until the end (1 Cor 1:8).

The phrase "in Christ," although predominant in Paul's writings, can be counted with

phases, such as "with Christ" and "through Christ."[33] The model emphasizes the prepositions

"in," "through," "by," and "with" in discussions pertaining to Christ and the Work of the Holy

Spirit in the Christ-follower.[34] As the model emphasizes, the phrase is relational, signifying a

work done through connection to the one who transforms. As Vanhoozer reminds us, "The

phrase always seems to concern the relationship formed in/by/through Jesus Christ between God

and God's people."[35] As Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe note:

> Every Christian's connection with the person and work of Christ, illustrated in the

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[33] It is also noteworthy that "In Christ" is used 73 times in Paul's writings. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "From 'Blessed in Christ,' to 'Being in Christ,'" in Michael, J. Thate, Kevin. J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell (eds), *"In Christ" in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 13. Lowe and Lowe state Brendan McGrath offers a helpful analysis of Paul's use of the syn-compounds and remarks that Paul "possesses the ability to take a quite ordinary word, and, understanding it in the most strictly literal sense, cram into it more meaning and a deeper significance than Plato could have dreamed possible." Paul packs deep theological meaning into these distinctively hybrid words regarding the intimate bond created between the Christian and Christ at the moment of conception—at our spiritual rebirth. Although sprinkled throughout the epistles traditionally ascribed to Paul, the syn-compounds cluster in Romans and Ephesians. Paul's use of the syn-compound in Romans focuses primarily but not exclusively on the vertical union between Christians and Christ. Conversely, Paul's use of the syn-compound in Ephesians focuses primarily but not exclusively on the horizontal relationship between Christians—especially the Jew-Gentile relationship." Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth through Online Education* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2018), 142–43.

[34] Vanhoozer states, "When we add "with" and "through" the number of Pauline instances more than doubles to 164." Vanhoozer, "From 'Blessed in Christ,' to 'Being in Christ,'" 14.

[35] Vanhoozer, "From 'Blessed in Christ,' to 'Being in Christ,'" 14.

vertical syn-compounds and grounded in our syn Christō relationship, forms an indissoluble organic bond that forms the cornerstone of a spiritual ecology from which we grow together toward full maturity (Eph 2:19–21; Gal 6:6–10).[36]

The preposition ἐν (in) reflects a Hebraic understanding of "social solidarity."[37] In the model, as in Paul, the focus is on representation and integration or incorporation into Messiah, "participation in the narrative of salvation."[38] As Vanhoozer notes, Paul's use of in Christ not only reflects a prepositional purpose but reflects his use of metaphor with the phrase signifying, most relevant to the model, our incorporation into Christ, as His body (Col 1:8), His temple (Eph 2:21-22), as well as in our position as adopted into His family (Gal 2:26).

Another relevant and meaningful application extracted from the extensive discussion of "union," "participation," and "in Christ" evident in the development of the model is a dynamic communion.[39] Vanhoozer defines "*commune* as a felicitous term that embraces both the 'doing' of participation and the 'being' of union. To commune (verb) is to communicate intimately with another person."[40] The model's approach is to cultivate 'being' in and through and by Christ to then effectively "do" for Christ and His body and community. As Vanhoozer notes, "to be in Christ is to commune with Christ and other communicants in the commune that is Christ

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[36] Lowe and Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age,* 146.

[37] Vanhoozer, "From 'Blessed in Christ,' to 'Being in Christ,'" 15.

[38] Grant Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 126.

[39] Campbell suggests that "*Union* gathers up faith union with Christ, mutual end dwelling, trinitarian, and nuptial notions. *Participation* conveys partaking in the events of Christ's narrative. *Identification* refers to believers' location in Christ's realm and allegiance to his lordship. *Incorporation* encapsulates the corporate dimensions of membership in Christ's body. Together these four terms function as umbrella concepts covering the full spectrum of Pauline language, ideas, and themes that are bound up in the metatheme of union with Christ." Constantine R. Campbell, Paul *and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 413.

[40] Vanhoozer, "From 'Blessed in Christ,' to 'Being in Christ,'" 28.

Jesus."[41]

The mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16, Phil 2:5, Rom 12:2) is another significant phrase in the cognitive development of the Christ-follower and the model's emphasis on the cultivation of new neural pathways through neuroplasticity, to re-frame and shift into the mind of Christ.[42] The Holy Spirit, the agent of change, renews the mind (Rom 12:2), creating the ability to cultivate belief (Eph 1:17), implying that participation includes a cognitive and even affective dimension.[43] Romans 8:24–25 and 2 Corinthians 5:7 evidence that "the believing mind includes

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[41] Vanhoozer, "From 'Blessed in Christ,' to 'Being in Christ,'" 28.

[42] The debate about the order of salvation (*ordo salutis*) has raged throughout the history of the church. Two major positions are the Reformed and Arminian positions. In the Reformed tradition the *ordo salutis* has election followed by evangelism, regeneration and finally conversion followed by justification. The Arminian position views the order of salvation as evangelism followed by faith, repentance, regeneration and then justification. The primary distinction between the two is based on the effect of election. In the Reformed tradition faith is viewed as an effect of election because the Holy Spirit has moved to regenerate the heart of the elect individual. In the Arminian tradition faith is viewed as the cause of election, "prevenient grace" has been given to all individuals allowing even fallen man to have the faith required to accept the grace of God. Effectual calling and regeneration in the reformed Protestant tradition as codified in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) 10.2, states "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace." And 10.2 "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."

[43] According to Connors and Halligan, "Beliefs are convictions about what we accept as true. They provide the fundamental framework to understand and engage meaningfully with the world. They also serve important social functions, such as in identity, relationships, and group coordination. Beliefs exist within broader networks of related beliefs, making discrete beliefs difficult to study in isolation. Beliefs also interact with many lower-level cognitive processes, such as attention, perception, and memory. Given such close inter-relationships with automatic cognitive processes . . . beliefs are likely to arise in response to a precursor, a distal trigger for the belief's content . . . The second stage is a search for meaning to interpret and explain the precursor. This draws heavily upon pre-existing beliefs and other relevant contextual information . . . The third stage involves evaluating the proto-beliefs. This is likely based on at least two key criteria, namely observational adequacy (the degree to which the belief explains the precursor) and doxastic conservatism (consistency with pre-existing beliefs . . . The fourth stage is the activation of the new belief. . . The final stage is the belief's impact on lower-level cognitive processes and broader subjective experience. In everyday life, beliefs are experienced as lived and typically not subject to decomposition, questioning, or reflection at the time. As representations of one's phenomenal world, beliefs strongly influence attributions and the deployment of lower-order processes, such as attention, perception, and memory, in a top-down manner." Michael Ho. Connors and Peter W. Halligan, "Revealing the Cognitive Neuroscience of Belief," *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience,* 16 (2022), 1-3. This understanding of belief drives the model's emphasis on cultivating

endurance as well as hope," and further that Romans 4:16b–22 "reinforce the suggestion that

Christian believing is oriented toward pivotal but unseen realities. . . [and a] new Christian

mentality of steadfast, rock-like believing in the unseen realities."[44] As the model urges in Christ,

with the mind of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit,[45] the Christ-follower has the gift to

think anew, form new neural pathways, change beliefs, and have a reconstituted mind, "the

loving mind of Christ."

Theological Pillar: Pneumatology

The Holy Spirit is central and foundational in the life of the believer and a primary focus

of growing the believer towards maturity, as depicted in the model. It is the person of the Holy

Spirit who equips, empowers, and serves in numerous capacities in the life of the believer. Fee

comments, "For Paul…the Spirit is the essential player in the believers experiencing and living

out the salvation that God brought about in Christ; the Spirit both forms the Church into God's

new people and conforms them into Christ's image."[46] Eastman states emphatically, "Paul's

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awareness through Mindfulness practices and a strong biblical theology with the development of therapeutic skills to identify and shift while integrating spiritual truths, such as "not I" and "in Christ."

[44] Douglas A. Campbell, "Participation and Faith in Paul," in Thate, Vanhoozer, and Campbell, eds., *"In Christ" in Paul,* 47.

[45] Campbell, "Participation and Faith in Paul," 50.

[46] Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 7. Let us note that The Holy Spirit is a person. He is one person of the triune God, the Trinity. He, Himself, is God. Jesus promises an Advocate, the Spirit of truth (John 14:15−17). A helper (John 14:26) and a Guide (John 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit is the power of re-creation in the individual, and Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:13. In Romans 8:1−17, Paul talks at length about the need for Believers to walk in the Spirit and not walk in the flesh. Natural man walks in accordance with the flesh and cherishes the desire of the flesh (Eph 2:3). Paul makes the same point in Romans 8:13. This is contrasted with those who walk following the Spirit and those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit. Paul uses φρονοῦσιν here and in Romans 8:7 to mean not just "thinking" as relative to a simple intellectual assent or understanding but rather consciously and willfully setting one's mind to a particular position or belief that engages them to act (Phil 2:5) like Christ and in the Spirit. Galatians carries a consistent message – only a life empowered by the Spirit, one in which the Believer chooses to "walk by the Spirit" can the desires of the flesh be fought and victory over that which is conflict with the desires of the Spirit. Believers are not obligated to the flesh but, conversely, are obligated to not live by the flesh. Paul again reminds us that the power to defeat death and resist

language is experiential, and we cannot understand his theology of participation and union with Christ apart from his convictions about the empirical presence and power of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit."[47] In Eastman's essay, which is contextually focused on union and participation, the emphasis is on the mediating role of the Spirit. In the model, the Spirit is the change agent and the mediator, the One, who in Romans 8, for example, "generates and sustains a mutually participatory bond of love between believers and God, as well as between persons in Christ . . . as it generates a new interpersonal mode of cognition and communication through which God is glorified."[48] The Holy Spirit guides, leads, and directs the Christ-follower in the ways of Christ, into obedience, in pursuit of holiness and righteousness (Rom 8:14, Gal 5:18). Dunn writes, "the Spirit is the life of the Christian, that is the life of God in the Christian."[49]

As with all these forays into expansive topics comprising the annals of systematic theology, the excurses are brief. In John 14:26, Jesus declares to his disciples that this Comforter, or Paraclete, is the Holy Spirit and that He would help them with a wide range of functions, such as teaching, recalling, and interpreting His words and ways.[50] Rabens reminds us that the transforming work of the Spirit stirs and develops a more intimate relationship and a depth of knowledge of God that produces a way of living nourishing both to the individual and the

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living κατὰ σάρκα (according to the flesh) is by the Spirit.

[47] Eastman, "Oneself in Another," 104. One may inquire why this discussion should not be included in the theme of Christology, and the reply is that the emphasis is on the work of the Spirit, which requires a separate thematic discussion as it pertains to numerous theological themes and metaphors.

[48] Eastman, "Oneself in Another," 105.

[49] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 423.

[50] George R. Beasley-Murray, *John,* WBC, 2nd ed. Bruce M. Metzger, Ralph P. Martin, and Lynn Allan Losie (Nashville: Nelson, 1999), 36. The Holy Spirit's role as Helper is invaluable in applying the word of God to spiritual formation in a believer's life. Brown offers valuable insight into the workings of the Spirit in the life of the believer: "The gift of the Spirit is only the beginning of a life-long process of being saved, of sanctification, of being conformed to the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18, 2 Thes 2:13, Rom 8:28, 16:16, Eph 3:16). Colin Brown, ed., *TNICNT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 701.

community in Christ.[51] Further, the "Spirit continually transforms and empowers believers for ethical conduct by enlivening and even intensifying these intimate relationships."[52] As Story notes, "We understand the sanctification language as a metaphor that expresses an aspect of the salvation event and experience (past, present, and future), which is the work of the Holy Spirit coupled with the responsible response from humans."[53] It is evident in Pauline theology that "the Spirit is an experienced and living reality . . .[a] crucial matter for Christian life, from beginning to end."[54] The behavioral ethical dimension is vivid in Paul's theology, as the Spirit is the catalyst and agent of transformation, resulting in new attitudes and actions apparent in the new self (Eph 4:24).

It is also necessary to briefly identify what Konsmo calls "the Spirit's role in the progression of the Christian life."[55] While a section later describes some of Paul's more common metaphors integrated into the model, it is meaningful to briefly address them in this section as they are derived from the work of the Spirit within the Christ-follower. Walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 21, 25), where walking figuratively represents the totality of one's conduct on earth" and as representative as a "metaphor for the Christian life."[56] As such, the model's use of Christ,

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[51] Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life,* 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 174.

[52] Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul,*" 173.

[53] J. L. Story, "Pauline Thoughts about the Holy Spirit and Sanctification: Provision, Process, and Consummation," Journal *of Pentecostal Theology*, 18 (2009), 69–70.

[54] Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Henrickson, 1994), 3.

[55] Erik Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit: The Intangible Spirit's Tangible Presence in the Life of the Christian* (New York: Lang, 2010), 99.

[56] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 101, 103. According to Williams, the metaphor is used more than 30 times in Paul's epistles. David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Henrickson, 2000).

Who is a Lifestyle, as representative of living Christ in a way that represents Him according to His biblical presentation is seen in Paul's use of "walk" structures as "life is a journey [and] in the context of Paul's thinking in Galatians 5, can be expressed as Christian life is a journey."[57] Further, as demonstrated in the model's application of executive function skills, such as motivation and goal-setting, Konsmo states that "the ontological aspects of Spirit-walk fit under the substructural sub-category of "setting goals and motivating actions." Those who walk in accordance to the Spirit step closer to the goal of Christ-like spirituality." In Romans 8:16, as an example, Paul uses the present form of the Greek word to indicate a "continual, habitual action" of "walking," combined with πνεύματι (Spirit) which means, making the point that the Spirit is means by which this walking is accomplished.[58]

"Temple" is also relevant in Paul's theology and use of metaphor (1 Cor 6:19-20). Believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit, representative of the house of God, and as the Tabernacle and the Temple before, cannot contain impurity and idolatry. God's presence dwells within the believer (Rom 8:9, 1 Cor 3:16), and, as such, is God's divine sanctuary not to be polluted with behaviors that dishonor God (Eph 4:31-32, Col 3:8). As Konsmo notes "the Spirit-temple is ontological as a 'container' metaphor . . . in which God's presence dwells."[59] Aligned with the metaphor of "temple" is the construct of "filled." Köstenberger advances that filled means with something, in this case, the Spirit.[60] As Köstenberger points out, while the message

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[57] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 107.

[58] Cleon L. Rogers, Jr and Cleon L. Rogers, III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 431 and Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 162–65.

[59] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 123.

[60] Andreas Köstenberger, "What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? A Biblical Investigation," *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 40, no.2 (1997), 231. See also Ephesians 5:8. Köstenberger states further, "The Spirit, of course, already indwells believers. God desires for the Christian community and individual believers to manifest the Spirit's presence in ever-increasing fullness (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:16, 25)," 232.

is predominantly directed at community the emphasis is on spiritual maturity. He notes, "At the

same time it should be acknowledged that churches are Spirit-led when their members are. Thus,

it would be wrong to erect an absolute dichotomy between being "˜led with the Spirit"

individually and corporately."[61]

Fruit (*karpos*) is another metaphor Paul often uses to contrast the works of the flesh with

those of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Konsmo states, "Fruit results from the indwelling presence of

the Spirit in the life of the Christian rather than a variety of results that believers develop on their

own."[62] In other words, it is only through the work of the Spirit that one can produce fruit and

glorify God, as flesh-produced works, in opposition to the Spirit, only glorify self. Konsmo

continues, "Spiritually healthy Christians ought to grow tangible fruit so that they can be

identified as having the Spirit dwell within them or nourishing them."[63] As a final reminder,

Dunn writes:

> The Christian needs to be led by the Spirit. Conduct as well as *charism* needs to be a
> manifestation of the Spirit. But unless it is also a manifestation of love, it is not the Spirit
> of Christ behind it. At the same time, without the Spirit of discernment of what really
> matters it is not possible. And without love even the most self-sacrificial, spiritual, and
> even faithful acts can be who nothing (1 Cor 13:1-3).[64]

Theological Pillar: Ecclesiology

The discussion of ecclesiology is limited to acknowledging that Paul's epistles are written

to communities and specific churches, with the knowledge that letters would be circulated within

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[61] Kostenberger, "What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit," 235.

[62] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 110.

[63] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 111.

[64] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 669.

a region.[65] The metaphor of the church as the body of Christ (Eph 1:23) and members of one

another (Rom 12:3-5) reflects the unity and diversity of the community, the church in Christ, and

reflects Paul's emphasis on the common good (1 Cor 12:4-11). While "in Christ," as used in the

model, is directed at the individual's position and connectedness for belonging (1 Cor 6:16–17),

it is also used to denote that one 'in Christ' is part of the body of Christ reflective of Paul's

ecclesiology. N. K. Gupta notes that identity is individual as well as communal, and as the

individual submits, the power of Christ is manifest in the body of Christ.[66] Susann Liubinskas

states:

> Accordingly, as a sign of Christ's lordship, the church as the body of Christ underlies all
> of Paul's ethical exhortations regarding the Christian life, both individually and
> collectively. The apostle's ability to hold the individual and corporate dimensions of the
> body together is evidenced in the texts which speak of the essential unity of the body and
> the diverse spiritual gifts among its members.[67]

Steven J. Kraftchick reiterates Paul's dual focus on individual and communal life in

Christ by stating, "Paul made use of the letter to provide the Philippians with a communal

'constitution' by which they can guide themselves in both their internal life and in their

relationships to those outside their communion."[68] This duality is also visible in Romans 12:4–6

where, according to Dunn, "the *charism* is a function of the member of the body . . . the

contribution which the individual member makes to the whole, its function within the body as a

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[65] Dunn states, "*Ekklesia*' is the single most frequent term used by Paul to refer to the groups of those who meet in the name of Christ . . . with 62 occurrences in the Pauline corpus (most frequent in 1 Corinthians)." Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 537.

[66] N. K. Gupta, "Which Body is a Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)? Paul Beyond the Individual/Communal Divide, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72 (2010): 518–36.

[67] Susann Liubinskas, "The Body of Christ in Mission" Paul's Ecclesiology and the Role of the Church in Mission," *Missiology: An International Review* 41, no. 4 (2013), 406.

[68] Steven J. Kraftchick, "Self-Presentation and Community Construction in Philippians," in *scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay* (eds. Patrick Gray and Gail R. O'Day; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 245.

whole" as a function of *praxis*, through an empowering presence. [69] The emphasis on the Spirit in the Christ-follower's individual life (Rom 8:3) and the community of Christ is emphasized in one body, one Spirit (1 Cor 12:13), and the unity produced by the Spirit (Eph 4:3-4). As Dunn reflects, "Paul's theology was a living theology, a practical theology through and through . . . motivated by ethical concerns."[70] Throughout Pauline theology, the individual's role and responsibility in relationship to Christ and life in Christ are embedded in the model, as is reflected in the inherent tension of Paul's soteriology and eschatology.

On a final note, it is necessary to state that while the model primarily focuses on personal growth in Christ, it is in the context of the Christ-follower's connection to the community. The model extracts from Paul many of his corporate exhortations, admonitions, and encouragements across a systematic theological perspective of Paul and proposes them for a personal *praxis.* This is not to diminish the recognition that Paul emphasized corporate interdependence and a need for one another in the facilitation of growth in Christ and the implementation of Paul's ethical *ethos.* The model proposes that Christ's work on the cross flows to the believer in 'the new creation' (2 Cor 5:16-17), and the indwelling Spirit facilitates and guides the believer in 'newness of life' (Rom 6:4), which flows into a walk, a new way of living which is seen in its fruit (Gal 5:22-23) and a model of good works (Titus 2:7) which is manifest in relationship to others in *Ecclesia.* The Spirit is teaching, guiding, and facilitating living in obedience to God first, in relation to Christ, and secondly, in relation to one another, as evidenced by learning to love one another (1 Thess 4:9).

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[69] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 554. See Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 161.

[70] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 627.

Eschatology

Although 1 Thessalonians is an excellent example of Paul's eschatological focus girding his exhortations and admonitions, this concern with believers' preparedness for the Parousia is thematically evident throughout his epistles.[71] This section intends to acknowledge the eschatological view inherent in the Pauline epistles and Paul's focus on the here and now in *praxis* and futuristically on the coming day of the Lord. Another example of Paul's eschatological focus is seen in 1 Corinthians in its inaugurated eschatological frame.[72] 2 Corinthians 5:1–10 highlights eschatological concerns connected to the relationship to the Parousia, receipt of spiritual bodies, and state/location of those who have died in Christ. Romans 5:12–21 presents another example of Paul's eschatology, viewed as emanating from a Jewish apocalyptic frame.[73]

Geerhardus Vos notes that Paul's eschatology is antithetical, represented by both the antithetical nature of the first Adam and the second Adam and the nature of the present age versus the coming eschaton.[74] Characteristic of the *prótos* Adam contrasted with the ἔσχατος/eschatos Adam ("the vast and altogether decisive dissimilarity between Christ and

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[71] Longenecker comments on 1 Thessalonians that Paul is "concerned about perseverance and purity, he is also committed to impressing on his converts the importance of moral preparedness for the Lord's Parousia." Longenecker then emphasizes, "Paul's letter is about more than perseverance, purity, and preparedness until the Parousia." Bruce w. Longenecker and Todd D. Still. *Thinking Through Paul: An Introduction to His Life, Letters, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 64.

[72] See, for example, Christopher L. Carter, *The Great Sermon Tradition as Fiscal Framework in 1 Corinthians: Toward a Pauline Theology of Material Possessions*, LNTS 403 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010), 129; N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God, Christian Origins, and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003): 578–83.

[73] Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

[74] Vos, commenting on the antithetical nature of Paul's eschatology, notes that it" places the end under the control of one principle with the sway of which an opposite principle of equally comprehensive rule and of primordial origin is contrasted, to make the two when taken together, yield a bisection of universal history." Geerhardus Vos. *Pauline Eschatology* (Phillipsburg; P & R Publishing, 1995), 10.

Adam), the first Adam was a "type of the one who was to come" (Rom 5:14), as backward-

looking the first Adam as contrasted with the last and final Adam who was to come.[75] According

to *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* this *týpos:*

> Adam is for Paul a *týpos* through which God intimates the future Adam (Christ) in his
> work of salvation. Christ corresponds antithetically to Adam and also emulates him. The
> *týpos* here is the advanced presentation but with a suggestion of the hollow form, which
> makes an opposite impression. The "shadow of what is to come" in Colossians 2:17
> stands in close analogy.[76]

C. E. B. Cranfield notes that it refers to "a person or thing pertaining to the time of

eschatological fulfillment." [77] Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 15:47, Paul contrasts the first Adam as

coming from dirt and the second from the heavenly places. Because of the disobedience of the

first earthly Adam, all men were made sinners, so sin reigned in death, but the second Adam

from heaven brought "righteousness that leads to eternal life" (Rom 5:21).

Paul spends more time on the antithetical nature of this present age and the coming

eschaton. In Ephesians 1:21, Paul explicitly states the antithetical nature of the ages or worlds

"far above," "above every name," "in this age," and "the one to come." "This age" is frequently

associated with darkness and evil (2 Cor 4:4 refers to Satan as "the God of this world"). Jesus is

said to "deliver us from this evil age" (Gal 1:4), and we are warned to "not be conformed to this

[present] world" (Rom 12:2). Paul's thoughts on soteriology are tightly woven with that of his

eschatology. Christians are saved based on the hope of what is to come, which finds its out-

working in the supreme goal of salvation. His letters to the Thessalonians tell them to "turn to

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[75] C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 295.

[76] Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 1194.

[77] Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 283.

God from idols to serve a living and true God and to await his Son from heaven who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:9–10). 1 Corinthians 15:9 speaks to the centrality of the eschatological hope of believers. On this, Vos comments:

> Hope without corresponding reality or at least a principle of realization, is the most futile and ill-fated frustration of life purpose," and "the Pagan who lives without God without hope in the world has at least the enjoyment of the earthly and transitory; The Christian whose hope puts them to shame is not even less he has lost what he had and received nothing in return.[78]

Paul's exhortations and admonitions towards ethical living and obedience to the truth of Christ in conformity with His nature are also driven by the eschatological dimensions of Paul's tone of urgency (Rom 13:11–14). According to J. Murray, "Paul argued that in light of the certainty of the end, and the possibility that it could be soon, that believers should always be morally ready."[79] As noted previously, from a Pauline perspective, the frame is either Adam (old man/nature) or Christ (new man/nature). The eschatological view does not diminish the need for continuous action in "putting on" and "walking" in newness, as the here and now demands Christ-centric attitudes and action.

Pauline Epistles Applicable to the model

This section focuses on identifying and exploring the relevance of the selected Pauline epistles to the development of the model. The main areas of focus below are presented in a scaffolded order, which will later be integrated into an analysis of selected verses that contribute to the model's development and exemplify its purpose in spiritual formation. These areas are also

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[78] Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 32-33.

[79] J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes, vol. 2: Chapters 9-16*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 167–68.

visible in varying degrees in Paul's other epistles and are not further discussed under each

epistle. The scriptures reviewed at the end of the discussion of each epistle are chosen for their

connection to the model. The identification and discussion of the scriptures is not intended to

present an in-depth exegetical or expository analysis of the verses but rather to emphasize the

connection to the model's components.

Galatians

The selection of Galatians as the footing for the model is not to exclude the relevance of

similar messages in Paul's other epistles but rather to draw from Galatians two heavily

emphasized points necessary for the support of the model: the emphasis on the dichotomy

between the flesh and the spirit and the plea for a Spirit-guided lifestyle for continued conformity

and fidelity to Christ, and Him alone.

Paul's vulnerability, transparency, and authenticity: Paul reveals in Galatians that he

proclaimed his message to them while experiencing a bodily illness (Gal 4:13). As deSilva

orients us, "Paul offers an example here of a truly positive Spirit-led response to the frustrations

of being hindered in one's plans, seeking out God's purposes amid otherwise inopportune

circumstances."[80] In addition, Paul analogized a deep personal connection with parenting,

childbirth, and childrearing metaphors, evidencing not only birthing but also relational nurturing

in growing others toward spiritual maturity.

Christ Crucified: The emphasis on Christ crucified, again thematic and pervasive in

Pauline theology overall, is central to the import of the power of the Holy Spirit, the gift received

at salvation. The focus on Christ crucified with Christ and the message of Galatians 2:20 is

paramount to the change in relationship with God and the inner transformative change wrought

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[80] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians,* 3.

by the Holy Spirit in the ongoing process of sanctification.

Holy Spirit: Another reason stems from the emphasis on the Holy Spirit. It is not that this premise excludes the Holy Spirit from significance and primary import in Paul's other epistles; it is to acknowledge, as will be further exegeted and exposited later in the section, constructs and concepts relevant to soul care, "how they experienced the reality of God's presence and power through the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in their midst, a power invading their own lives as well, in conjunction with Paul's preaching (Gal 3:1-5)."[81]

Connection: Another relevant theme, as deSilva identifies it, is "giving oneself or pouring oneself out," representing complete obedience, which Paul models and expounds in many ways throughout his emphasis on living Christ and walking in the Spirit. [82] The connection to Christ and through His salvific work, the Holy Spirit, is "a way to share in the benefits of the Messiah's self-giving death and resurrected life by faith."[83] Connection is critical to Paul's theology and is visible in his exhortations and admonitions in Galatians.

Faith and Loyalty: Paul's emphasis on faith in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit is central to his message. For Paul, faith denotes implicit trustworthiness in the object of faith, in this case, Christ, and included in this faith is uncompromising loyalty to Jesus and obedience to Him."[84] The objective genitive case used in Galatians 2:16 highlights the object of faith, faith in Christ. As George points out, the emphasis is on the free gift of grace as contrasted with the works of human efforts.[85] Faith is a gift whose outworking, through the Spirit, is loyalty, which

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[81] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians,* 3.

[82] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians,* 5.

[83] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians,* 5-6.

[84] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians,* 6.

[85] George, Galatians, 195.

prompts obedience to the One who is Faithful.

Transformed Life: Paul's emphasis on the antithetical nature of the flesh and the Spirit is crucial to the model developed and presented in this paper for soul care. It is more than what deSilva labels a moral message; for this paper, it is a way of being, a Lifestyle Who is Christ, in Christ, and instigated and sustained by the transformative, inward working of the Holy Spirit in the Christ-pursuer. Paul's warnings of the power of the flesh, the unceasing tension common to man, and Paul's anthropology that sin abounds, and only the Spirit-constrained and controlled life produces a dynamic, purpose-driven transformative life in Christ.

Agitators, Troublemakers, Disturbers: As with several of Paul's epistles, there is a concern that there are those who are disturbing, agitating, and advancing beliefs contrary to the gospel of Christ and drawing them into previous and current cultural and religious practices about broad topics, such as idolatry, and Torah-prescribed practices. The anti-idolatry, anti-Torah, and anti-Jewish practices polemics evident in Galatians and centered on significant areas of concern, particularly circumcision, as diluting and polluting the salvific work of Christ on the cross, is inextricably interconnected with faith, loyalty, and the transformed life lived in the Spirit.

The ultimate exhortation is a plea to reject without hesitation and to guard against agitators, troublemakers, disturbers, false teachers – anyone proclaiming a message of "Torah observance as a necessary part of responding to God's favor offered in Jesus Christ."[86] To further understand Paul's pointed intensity towards the agitators, Bruce W. Longenecker provides some insights into the motivations of the "circumcision group" (Gal 2:12), as not "necessarily

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[86] deSilva, *The Letter to the* Galatians, 10.

legalistic but covenantal.[87] Furthermore, Longenecker notes the motivation was not to encourage "Gentile Jesus-followers to earn salvation by their works per se but to preserve the purity of Jewish Jesus-followers, by having Gentile Jesus-followers adopt practices of mainstream Judaism."[88]

In utilizing mirror-reading, as advocated by several authors of well-known commentaries on Galatians, such as Schreiner, Fung, and F. F. Bruce, we can uncover the context and key concerns that prompted the epistle to the Galatians. Galatians is a bitter defense of the 'true' gospel of faith against opponents who wanted to assert a 'false' gospel of works on those of faith, the community of believers in Galatia. Judaizers argued that Paul's version of the gospel was deficient, asserting that according to the Jewish scriptures, the promises of God belonged solely to the children of Abraham, the one who received the promise to bring blessing to all nations. Paul, absent from those he had spiritually birthed and brought to a level of spiritual formation, learned of the agitators and prepared a letter of passion and persuasion, a polemic in many ways to re-focus those in Galatia on the truth of the Gospel, which he had delivered and nurtured in them.

As described above, a key concern in Galatia was the trouble-makers, agitators, and disputers attacking Paul's apostolic position and credibility, and who were persuading those Paul had spiritually birthed and raised to accept a different form of teaching, one which attacked the very core of the truth of the Gospel – Christ and Christ alone. Paul's concern was not whether one chose circumcision but rather that circumcision was positioned as a requirement for

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[87] Longenecker notes, "The covenantalism that motivated the agitators was unmasked by Paul to be little other than a form of human self-interestedness." Bruce W. Longenecker and Todd D. Still. *Thinking through Paul: A Survey of His Life, Letters, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 333.

[88] Longenecker and Still, *Thinking through Paul,* 330.

salvation and membership in the community of God. In other words, the Judiazers and others were adding to the message of the Cross of Christ and diluting His complete and perfect work afforded to them by God's grace and faith as the means of appropriation. The same was true in the compulsion to observe sacred occasions, elements of the world, and other requirements emanating from a legal obligation, adding works to the Cross of Christ. As such, Galatians is one of the most intense of Paul's letters; reading it in a way that appreciates this intensity is important. Also, the letter presents a tightly woven argument supporting a central thesis about the nature of the Gospel, one of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

As Coe states, "Paul's concern with the Galatian believers is not that they are embracing a legalism of turning back to works to be saved. Rather, they are pursuing legalism as a way to grow spiritually, as a way to perfect themselves in the covenant."[89] Implicitly, faith then takes a back seat to works-based perfection by the flesh (Gal 3:3). The dire concern is not only the view that the agitators are adding to Christ's work on the cross and what is necessary for salvation but also that "observance of the works of Torah not as a way to be saved but as a way to go on in growth and please God."[90]

As a result, the focus was dichotomous, deadly, and antithetical: doing works according to the Torah or being through belief, faith through grace in the truth of the Gospel. Paul lays out two options for the Galatians. It is either a matter of doing something, or it is a matter of hearing something. In Galatians 2:16, he asserts from his own experience that one is justified not by "doing the works of the law" but "by faith in Christ." In Galatians 3:2-5, he expands this by inviting the Galatians to confirm by their own experience that life in the Spirit is not a matter of

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[89] Coe, *Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation*, 58.

[90] Coe, *Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation*, 59.

"doing the works of the law" but "believing what you heard." As Schreiner notes in his excurses into Hardin's analysis of the role of the empire in Galatians, "Paul clearly argues that believers are no longer under the Sinai covenant and OT law."[91]

As many before proclaimed in writings from decades past, such as Murray, Tozer, and Lloyd Jones, who writes, "The result is that we are living in a society which is much more immoral than it was fifty years ago, in which vice and lawbreaking and lawlessness are rampant. Is it not clear that you cannot do these things except in a biblical way." [92] The connection, even correlation, between the Galatians and the mindset of the regenerate today is similar. The natural, fleshly way of being and doing, even living, is antithetical to Christ. It is easy, and not unexpected, that we, as the regenerate, fall prey to the proclamations, assertions, and rhetoric of the culture around us, pulling us away from theological truths; hence, the need for shepherds who emphasize soul care and who do so in a way which is patterned after Christ, and for purposes of this paper, Paul who unabashedly exhorts and commands "imitate me, as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1-2).

A few key theological constructs and concepts are visible in the Epistle to the Galatians and relevant to the model. *Christology* is predominant and front-facing, as is *The Trinity,* evidenced by the work of God in Christ and the work of the Spirit in us (Gal. 4:6). Justification as Grace and Faith is a key theological theme. Ladd writes, "Justification is one way of describing the objective work of Christ for us. Life in Christ is the subjective or experiential side of this redemptive work, and both are essentially eschatological blessings."[93] Ladd emphasizes

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[91] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 37.

[92] This quote is from a passage in which Lloyd Jones expounds on Christians as the salt of the earth, and things refer to living sufficiently as salt. Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 136.

[93] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 480.

that in Pauline theology, justification is an eschatological doctrine. It is forensic as a declaration by a righteous and holy God as to one's righteousness brought forth by one's justification in and through Christ. For Paul, "the future eschatological justification has already taken place. . . Justification, which primarily means acquittal at the final judgment, has already occurred in the present."[94] In sum, righteousness is the result of salvation. It is a matter of relationship with God and not a matter of works of the law. Further, as Barclay points out, "the horizon of Paul's theology is defined by his understanding of salvation history with its specific background in Jewish apocalyptic thought. . . Paul's encounter with the risen Christ led him to modify radically his understanding of salvation history in light of the traditional apocalyptic expectations."[95]

The model describes 'doing' for the Christ-follower as flowing from 'being' in Christ through Christ not doing work for Christ, which Paul repeatedly reminds the Galatians when he turns to scripture for proof that justification comes through the hearing of the promise by faith and not by the doing of the law. Such is a message of Radical Reorientation. A reconstitution of the old self and putting on the transformed new self. As messaged by Barclay, "The reconstruction of identity fashions in the believer a self that is both one's own self and, at the same time, the expression of the person of Christ."[96] This radical reorientation and sanctifying work of the Spirit is grounded in the teaching of Jesus, the message of the Gospel. Paul's theological emphasis is placed on the preeminence of Christ, justification by faith, and a distinction between the world, the present age, elemental powers, and the transforming power of the Spirit, which is significant. Paul's theological stance is that believers have been crucified to

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[94] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 483.

[95] George, *Galatians,* 34.

[96] Barclay, *Paul's Story: Theology as Testimony,* 143.

the world, its powers, and, as evidenced later in Galatians, to the flesh through the overcoming power of the Spirit. It is a message of Identity. Identity as children of the promise, in line with Isaac (Gal 4:28). According to D. A. Carson, Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris, "Galatians is a constant reminder of how important it is to understand what the Christian faith implies for Christian living. . . no letter makes as clear the importance of living out all the implications of salvation through the cross."[97]

Paul's anthropology is prominent in his emphasis on faith and the fruit of faith in the life of the regenerate, reflecting his soteriology. Paul's spiritual concerns are, first and foremost, a correct theological understanding of the work of Christ, the Galatians' relationship to Christ, and their position in Christ. The model prioritizes a proper theological understanding of doctrine if the intent and purpose of care are to equip the Christ-follower to stay faithful to the truth of Christ. After hearing that the Galatians were falling prey to prior ways, Coe points out that Paul passionately placed faith front and center to reorient his recipients to the Way and exhort them away from flesh-based works. Coe notes the universalism of this pattern when he writes, "Paul's words have just as much benefit for us today."[98] The pulls and tensions of the flesh are compelling, and Paul's focus on the antithetical nature of the flesh and Spirit is central to his message of living in a way that reflects Christ. George notes, "The Christian is caught in the tension between the old aeon that is passing away and the new aeon of salvation, a new creation that has already begun and will be consummated by the Parousia."[99]

Finally, in his exploration of Paul's dialogue with the Romans, Benjamin K. Forrest

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[97] D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New* Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 301.

[98] Coe, *Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation*, 59.

[99] George, *Galatians,* 37.

emphasizes a point transferable to Paul's other epistles and equally applicable in our exploration of Galatians: Paul asks questions and responds to them as though he were in dialogue with his recipients. "He anticipates objections, problems, and questions from his "pupils" and immediately clarifies his main point.[100] Longenecker states, "Galatians is dialogical, but its dialogue is with the Galatian Christians and not directly with the opponents."[101] This highlights the need for dialogue in a spiritual formation model. As a shepherd, Paul focuses on the sheep, not the wolves. The emphasis is on the care of the sheep. Longenecker presents a model, seen as a dialogical model, which begins with understanding how the opponents understood the issues, how the Galatians Christians understood them, and how Paul understood them. The interpretative understanding of the participants, or meaning-making as this author labels it, is necessary for a dialogue focused on a proper theological understanding and a practical theological response for transformative change.

The model presents a way to conceive and delineate this way of life in Christ as espoused by Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians. J. K. Hwang notes, "Above all, Paul uses stories to form Christian identity among Christ believers in Philippi, a Roman colony. This may be indicated by the languages of identity formation Paul uses in some of the stories and/or in their immediate contexts."[102] Identity formation is at the model's core, and Paul uses the language of identity formation throughout his epistles, including Galatians. Relevant to the model is Paul's continuing care and concern for the brethren, particularly, as in Galatians, those with whom he

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[100] Benjamin K. Forrest, "Modeling Spiritual Formation form a Distance: Paul's Formation Transactions with the Romans Christians," *Christian Education Journal* 10, no.1 (2013), 117.

[101] Longenecker, *Thinking Through Paul*, lxxxix.

[102] J. K. Hwang, "Storytelling and Spiritual Formation According to the Apostle Paul," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care 9* no. 1 (2016), 46.

had a personal relationship. According to Forrest, even though Paul would plant a church and move on to the next, he "continued to feel responsible for the spiritual well-being of those he left behind [and] his ongoing pastoral responsibility [revealed itself in] his exhortatory letters. . . functioning as proxies for his presence."[103]

The model emphasizes the need for intrapersonal development as well as interpersonal responsibility. Paul evangelized, even lived among, and served as a spiritually-developing influence, assuming responsibility for his continued spiritual development and the responsibilities inherent in spiritual formation, discipleship, and mentorship. Hardin reminds us that he did not leave his young believers to find their way. He felt a continual call and pull to help them grow in the faith. When Paul could not be present, he "sent proxies to shepherd believers in his stead and wrote letters imbued with his presence and thought."[104] As Lowe and Lowe write, "He wants Christians to see the interconnected and interdependent relationship of individual body parts to the whole body."[105] They further state that "The more connected we are to one another through reciprocal interactions, the greater the likelihood for continued growth and development of the whole person."[106]

The significant emphasis on the antithetical nature of the flesh and the Spirit, as represented most acutely in Galatians 5:16-17 is foundational to the model. According to Ladd, from an Old Testament perspective, flesh designates the physical body "as a symbol of human frailty in relation to God."[107] Lowe and Lowe note, "In the Genesis description of original

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[103] Forrest, *Modeling Spiritual Formation from a Distance*, 115.

[104] Hardin, *Is a Pauline Spirituality Still* Viable, 143.

[105] Lowe and Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age*, 55.

[106] Lowe and Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age*, 131.

[107] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 500.

humanity, we see physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social aspects constituent of the

whole person created in the image and likeness of God." [108]Paul's emphasis is holistic, and the

intrapersonal and interpersonal pillars of the model portray a need to recognize what is within

and what is at work without. Ladd notes, "Paul is concerned for the welfare of the whole person

and everything life involves, but the emphasis is upon the inner life," and while his statement is

geared towards Philippians, which is not the subject of our examination, nor are Paul's other

epistles, they have relevance to a holistic understanding of Paul. Ladd notes from Philippians

1:27, "To strive for the gospel with one's soul is very close to standing firm in one spirit and

psyche is nearly interchangeable with *pneuma*, to do the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6:6), to

serve God with all of one's being and personality" recognizing "the most important use of

pneuma is a designation for God's Spirit."[109]

Soma is another important word in Pauline theology: "an essential element in human

existence," for Ladd, it is described as an equivalent for "I."[110] Further, from Paul's perspective,

the "body while an integral part of one's being is corruptible and mortal," must be kept in

subjection, as it is capable of sin, which is an instrument of service unto the Lord."[111] In

contextualizing the model's import, It is also necessary to recognize agency and autonomy.

While many view Bultmann as anachronistic, it is still important to note that according to

Bultmann "man is called soma in respect to his being able to control himself and to be the object

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[108] Lowe and Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age*, 20.

[109] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 502–03.

[110] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 507. Yorke writes, "Sōma, with regard to the church, has the human body as its metaphorical referent," and further, "The human *sōma* and not Christ's *sōma* is used consistently as the term of comparison for the church as *sōma*." Gosnell, L. O. R. Yorke, *The Church as the Body of Christ in the Pauline Corpus* (Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1991), xv, 10.

[111] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 508.

of his action . . . and implies that man is a being who has a relationship to himself and that this relationship can be either appropriate or a perverted one" which is imperative to a fuller understanding of man's struggle with his whole person, which is dominated by the flesh and in conflict with the Spirit.[112] Bultmann also distinguishes soma as a mere body or physicality and a mode of existence or way of making himself the object of his own action or experiencing himself as the subject to which something happens.[113] Wright notes, "By looking to the goal, the *telos*, we gain insight as to how to develop and sustain an appropriate Christian anthropology for the present. God, says Paul, will be "all in all"; and for Paul, it is the body, not just the soul, the mind or the spirit, which is the temple of the living God. The body is meant for the Lord, he says, and the Lord for the body."[114] The model proposes a way of being that flows from Christ, through the Spirit, into self. Further, the model uses self to denote – flesh and living in the Limbic system, in the Pauline sense of not walking according to the flesh, to place the self-flesh in juxtaposition to Spirit and the exhortation to walk in the Spirit, which the model uses to emphasize the importance of the PFC.

Flesh is the last in this list of important theological constructs related to a psychological

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[112] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 196–97. Scholars such as Gill have established that ancients did not share such conceptions of the self, especially the robust inner life that modernity attributes to it. Christopher Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[113] Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* 195.

[114] N. T. Wright, "Mind, Spirit, Soul, and Body: All for One and One for All Reflections on Paul's Anthropology in his Complex Contexts," Society of Christian Philosophers: Regional Meeting, Fordham University, March 2011. Wright further notes, "I therefore read Paul's various summary statements, not least the famous tripartite one in 1 Thessalonians 5.13, not as a trichotomous analysis, but as a multi-faceted description of the whole. His language there is, in any case, wholistic: may the God of peace sanctify you wholly, *holoteleis*, and may your spirit, soul, and body be preserved whole and entire unto the royal appearing of our Lord Jesus the Messiah. If Paul had wanted to say that he saw these three aspects of humanity as separable, or, particularly, as to be ranked in importance over one another, he's gone about it in a very strange way. It seems to me, then, taken all together that when Paul thinks of human beings, he sees every angle of vision as contributing to the whole, and the whole from every angle of vision." Wright, "Mind, Spirit, Soul, and Body," xiv.

understanding of Paul's theology, and for purposes of this paper focuses on his use of the word

predominantly as representative of the sinful nature and its self-centered, self-seeking, self-

fulfilling propensies which place it in conflict with the Spirit, within the regenerate (Gal 5:16-

17). It is also used synonymously with sin, as Ridderbos expresses a similar point: flesh "is the

pregnant and very description of man in his sin, and the coinciding of being human and being a

sinner is expressed in it."[115] Another way of expressing this same construct of the flesh as sinful

is analogous and its "synonymous [connection] with life in the old aeon of sin, bondage, and

death."[116] It is also considered an anthropological term, and for Bultmann, "evil is perverse

intent, a perverse pursuit, specifically a pursuit which misses what is good, i.e., misses what man

at heart is after, and it is evil."[117] Paul's use of dead to the flesh is representative of his and the

regenerate's position in Christ; it is a positional theological statement that represents an

eschatological fact: "The person in Christ, or in the Spirit, is a new creature for whom the old life

of bondage to sin and death has passed away and the new life of freedom and righteousness has

come."[118]

The model assumes a choice to walk in the Spirit instead of the flesh. As Ladd states,

"Walking in the Spirit means to live each moment under the control of the Holy Spirit. Walking

involves living a step at a time, moment by moment, and to walk in the Spirit means to take each

step of my earthly walk under the direction and control of the Holy Spirit."[119] The Spirit is of

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[115] Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His* Theology, 93.

[116] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 525.

[117] Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* 232.

[118] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 527

[119] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 517.

essential importance for this model. It is central to Paul's theology,[120] and Paul's emphasis on the

Spirit is often described and illustrated through metaphor. Konsmo claims, "Metaphors, like all

concepts, must be understood as a series of points on a line to represent the gradient continuum

of meaning. . .The Apostle Paul recognized the inherent intangibility of the Spirit. Yet, for him,

the reality of the Spirit was foundational for the Christian life."[121] Fee also recognizes the

importance of Paul's metaphors as they pertain to the illustrative reality of the Spirit and notes

that Paul perceived "the Spirit as an experienced and living reality. . . the absolutely crucial

matter for the Christian life, from beginning to end"[122] which Konsmo adds is also a "tangible

perceptible presence in the life of the Christian."[123]

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from Galatians

In Chapters One and Two of Galatians, the following themes are evident: "deliverance

from the present evil age" (Gal 1:3), "recognizing agitators and pulls away from the true Gospel

to a different gospel" (Gal 1:6), "the antithesis between pleasing man and God" (Gal 1:10),

"man's word and God's Word" (Gal 1:11), "autobiographical narrative and testimony which

highlights transparency and authenticity" (Gal 1:13–24). In Chapter Two, themes of "works of

the Law as slavery" (Gal 2:3–4), "a call to obedience to the Gospel" (Gal 2:5), and

"admonishment due to the dire consequence of leading others astray into disobedience and

requiring accountability" (Gal 2:11–14) are visible. In Chapter Three, identifiable themes are

"warning and admonishment" (Gal 3:1), "dependence on the Spirit and the antithesis between

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[120] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 23.

[121] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 25.

[122] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 1.

[123] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 26.

faith and works" (Gal 3:2), "exhortation and dependence on the Spirit" (Gal 3:3), "unity and accountability," (Gal 3:26, 28), "dependence on Christ and the Spirit" (Gal 3:27).

In Chapters 4 and 5, the following themes are evident: "placement in Christ and dependence on Christ" (Gal 4:1-7), "antithesis between the slavery of the flesh and freedom of the Spirit" (Gal 4:8), "come to know God and be known by God" (Gal 4:9-10). In Chapter 5, various themes are visible, such as "freedom in Christ" (Gal 5:1, 13), "not submitting to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1), "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6), "running well and hindrance" (Gal 5:7), "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (Gal 5:9), "confidence in the Lord" (Gal 5:10), "do not use freedom as an opportunity for the flesh" (Gal 5:13), "love and service," (Gal 5:13), "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16), "flesh against Spirit" (Gal 5:16-18), "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-23), "belong to Christ" (Gal 5:24), "crucified the flesh" (Gal 5:24), "live by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25), and "keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal 5:25).

Ephesians

The epistle to the Ephesians, thematically, emphasizes Christ's redemptive work, the unity found in the body of Christ, and the need to live anew in Christ. The epistle has two main parts: Chapters 1-3 represent doctrinal and theological truths, and Chapters 4-6 pertain to life requirements, ethics, and application. The notion of walking (*peripatetic),* a word used to denote how we should practically live – applying the doctrinal and theological truths of God's Word is prominent in this epistle. Theological topics in this epistle include Trinitarianism, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, and Ecclesiology. The theological importance of God the Father and the doctrine of reconciliation are also emphasized in this epistle. Thematically, love and the Holy Spirit are emphasized repeatedly in this letter, as are the church, Christ's body, and unity. The model draws illustrations from Ephesians in its exhortations to set aside the old or former

manner of life and be renewed in the new man (Eph 4:22–24). While the church and unity play

an important role in the theological themes of Ephesians, the model draws from the continued

role of the Spirit in the new life (Eph 1:13–14).

The importance of the "former" as it is connected to the "old self" versus the renewing

process operating in the new man through the "spirit of the mind" (Eph 4:23).[124] Markus Barth

summarizes, "Since spirit and mind exert a dominating and steering function, a renewed' spirit

and mind' mean no less than a total change of the total man."[125] It is also worth noting that while

the focus is on Gentile believers and their morality before their reconciliation to Christ, the

theme of identity and living a life worthy of the calling (Eph. 4:1) emphasizes a "resocialization

process fraught with sometimes confounding and always demanding challenges . . in ways to

please the Lord" (Eph. 4:10).[126] The theme of new identity is foremost in the model.[127]

Ephesians' soteriology is visible in expressions, such as "made alive" (Eph 2:5) and

"raised up" (Eph 2:6), which are instrumental in the Christ-followers' awareness of spiritual re-

birth and renewal, which is a gift from God through faith, expressed in his kindness (Eph 2:7)

leading to belonging and unity with Christ and community. This belonging manifests in the walk

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[124] Edwards notes, "Therefore if anyone has heard and learned Christ, he would not be living 'in the futility of his mind' nor 'being darkened in understanding' nor being 'alienated from the life of God.' He would already have practical knowledge since his ignorance would have been dispelled, his darkness illuminated, and every blindness lifted from the eyes of his heart." Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on the scriptures of the New Testament, vol. 8 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 163.

[125] Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6, AB*, vol. 34a (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 509.

[126] Bruce W. Longenecker and Todd D. Still, *Thinking through Paul: A Survey of His Life, Letters, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 247.

[127] Phrases and questions, such as, 'Who Am I,' 'It is not I who live but Christ in me,' 'how a believer's (or as this research shall frame, the believer as Christ-follower) identity is shaped 'in Christ' in the evangelical space, recently as participatory, union, and representative concepts, which have been previously studied through a soteriological lens necessitate a further applied theological exploratory extension through cognitive and affective dimensions through the 'new self' and 'new mind' metaphors of Paul: a changed and reconstituted cognition – a transformative gift of the Holy Spirit. The result, as emphasized in the model, is a psychologically constructed ontological pneumatology prompting a Christ-follower review of his/her personal sanctification theology.

of the Christ-follower, individually and corporately, as members of Christ's body, the church, as

each has been taught a new way of life (Eph 4:20-21). Inherent in the exhortation to put on the

new man is the theme of imitation (Eph 5:1). Our unity, connection, and participation in and with

Christ leads to a walk facilitated by submission to the working of the Spirit, exemplifying Christ

(Eph 5:2). The theme of imitation, living in a way that exemplifies the Lord Jesus in all aspects

of one's life is central to the model.

The model emphasizes the notion that it is through regeneration first and the continual

renewing in progressive sanctification that there is a change in one's framing of identity, shifting

from self to Christ, from old to new, as the Christ-followers' referential point is now Christ and

Him alone. Athanasius states:

> As, then, the creatures whom He had created reasonable, like the Word, were in fact
> perishing, and such noble works were on the road to ruin, what then was God, being
> Good, to do? Was He to let corruption and death have their way with them? . . . It was
> impossible, therefore, that God should leave man to be carried off by corruption, because
> it would be unfitting and unworthy of Himself . . . He saw too how unthinkable it would
> be for the law to be repealed before it was fulfilled. He saw how unseemly it was that the
> very things of which He Himself was the Artificer should be disappearing. . . . All this He
> saw and, pitying our race, moved with compassion for our limitation, unable to endure
> that His creatures should perish and the work of His Father for us men come to nought,
> He took to Himself a body, a human body even as our own.[128]

This progressive growth flows from a progressive renewal flowing from the imputed attributes of

the new creation and his identity in Christ. Hoehner notes in commenting on Ephesians 4:22-24,

"The new person has been identified as one who is characterized by a righteousness that has its

source in truth. The new person is directly opposite the old person whose desires and lifestyle

have their source in deception."[129] The new creation is patterned after the image of God and

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[128] St. Athanasius, *St. Athanasius on the Incarnation: The Treatise De Incarnatione Verbi Dei, Rev. ed.* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1993), Section 6–8, 32–34.

[129] Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 613.

reflective of Christ in the life of the Christ-follower for reflection of His glory through chosen obedience derived from love and fueled by the Spirit.[130]

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from Ephesians

In Chapters One and Two, visible themes include those of "predestination" (Eph 1:5–6), "redemption" (Eph 1:7), "making known the mystery of His will" (Eph 1:8-10), "inheritance in Christ" (Eph 1:11), "hearing the word of truth and sealed with the Holy Spirit" (Eph 1:13), "spirit of wisdom" (Eph 1:17), and "His working power" (Eph 1:18-23). In Chapter Two, there are themes of "dead in sins and trespasses" (Eph 2:1-4), "alive in Christ" (Eph 2:5-6), "His workmanship" (Eph 2:10), and "built together by the Spirt" (Eph 2:22).

In Chapters Three and Four, themes relevant to the model include "access to God" (Eph 3:11–12), "strengthened with power through His Spirit, rooted and grounded in love, knowing the love of Christ" (Eph 3:14–19), and "His ability to do far more abundantly" (Eph 3:20). In Chapter 4, there are themes of "walking in a manner worthy" (Eph 4:1-2), "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3), "to each was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph 4:7), "equipping the saints" (Eph 4:13), "not tossed to and fro and growing up" (Eph 14–16), "put off the old self and put on the new self" (Eph 4:20-24), "speaking truth" (Eph 4:25), "putting aside anger" (Eph 4:26), "not giving an opportunity to the devil" (Eph 4:27), "avoiding corrupt talk" (Eph 4:29), "not grieving the Holy Spirit" (Eph 4:30), "forgiving one another" (Eph 4:32).

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[130] It is necessary to note the similarity of Ephesians 4:22–24 to Colossians 3:9–10 and 2 Corinthians 3:18, where "Christ both shares and expresses God's nature." Murray Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 331.

In Chapters 5 and 6, visible themes include those of "imitation" (Eph 5:1), "walking in love" (Eph 5:2), "walking as children of light" (Eph 5:8b), "discerning what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph 5:10), "taking no part in unfruitful deeds of darkness" (Eph 5:11), "looking carefully at one's walk" (Eph 5:15-16), "not being foolish and understanding the will of God" (Eph 5:17), "giving thanks always" (Eph 5:20), "submission to one another" (Eph 5:21), "members of His body" (Eph 5:30). In Chapter 6, there are themes of "bondservants, not people-pleasers" (Eph 6:5–8), "no partiality" (Eph 6:9b), "strong in the Lord" (Eph 6:10), and "the armor of God" (Eph 6:11–18).

Philippians

Paul's Christology is prominent in Philippians and reflective of Paul's emphasis on unity and his call to Christ-likeness, as evidenced in the call for the church to imitate Christ. Tyler R. Wittman states:

> Paul's Christological appeal acquires its moral relevance from its ontological depths, as we see when he grounds his exhortations with reference to Christ's deity and the economy of his reconciling acts in the servant form of human flesh. Additionally, the Christology suggests something about the makeup of the church's being 'in Christ'. Indeed, both elements—the ontological depths of Christ and the Christian in Christ—are bound up with one another. Insofar as Christ himself embodies at once God and God's will, then he embodies the truth of human nature and its corresponding vocation.[131]

There is an ethical orientation that flows from belonging to Christ, a people who are "his own" (Phil 3:12), and a Pauline call to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5), which allows Christ-followers to utilize cognitive practices such as discernment and engage wisdom that comes from

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[131] Tyler R. Wittman, "Belonging to Another, Christ, Moral Nature, and the Shape of Humility," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 33, no. 3 (2020), 394.

God in its fullness, as further explained in James 3:17.[132] In Christ's emptying, He stepped into a role and position of servanthood (Phil 2:7), modeling a way for conformity to His death and activation of His servant nature.

The model emphasizes a "being" before a "doing," an emptying and surrender, an emptying and laying down while learning how to reflect and live Christ, and a participatory union with Christ through the Spirit that produces action demonstrated in character and convention. Wittman notes:

> when we are exhorted to 'press on toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus', to appropriate that being and activity that is ours in him, we should understand that the Christian's vocation answers to the living, reigning, and present Lord (Phil 3:14; Col 3:1-4). Obedience to this summons occurs as Christ agitates his followers by his Spirit (Phil 1:6; 2:12; 3:15; 4:13).[133]

This being and doing are reflected both in imitation themes in Philippians and perfecting, an ongoing aspect of progressive sanctification, a transformation, and spiritual growth flowing into the new self from the likeness of conformity to Christ. The motif of progressive perfection is seen in Philippians 3:11, 12, 14, 18-19, and 20–21 in the already-not-yet motif apparent in Pauline theology.

The model also accentuates the need for living Christ in a worthy manner that reflects God's imputed attributes, the commands of His Word, and His Son. This theme is apparent in verses such as those in Romans 16:2, Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, and 1 Thessalonians 2:12. Wittman reminds us:

> To walk in a manner worthy of Christ's Gospel means to behave in accordance with the example of Christ, which Paul will soon describe in Philippians 2:6-9, but also in accordance with the privileges He achieved for us through His life, death, and

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[132] Discernment is the "ability to make proper moral decisions amid a vast array of differing and difficult choices" Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III. *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 449.

[133] Wittman, "Belonging to Another, Christ, Moral Nature, and the Shape of Humility," 28.

resurrection (Phil 3:10; cf. Gal 2:19-20). Paul stresses our unity with Christ in His sufferings while "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 1:27). They are also united with Paul in the same "conflict" (Phil 1:30). We should notice that Paul is able, in the same Epistle, to encourage believers to fight for the gospel, while also exhorting them to be humble (Phil 2:3) and lovely (Phil 4:8).[134]

The emphasis on combatting the doctrine of false teaching, particularly concerning a right understanding of the person of Christ, is evident in many of Paul's epistles and Philippians. While the subject of the identity of the opponents or agitators (as seen in Galatians) is not within the purview of this discussion, suffice it to say that a continual concern weighing heavily on Paul and seen throughout his writings is his exhortative emphasis and advancing admonitions to 'pay attention,' and to 'be aware' of pernicious false doctrine and teachers (Phil 3). The call to faithfulness to the truth of the Gospel, the person of Christ, and the ways of the Word is evident throughout Pauline theology. The thematic undercurrents of perseverance (Phil 3:13-14), standing fast (Phil. 4:1), and holding fast to the word of life (Phil 2:15-16) are paramount and are echoed throughout the model.[135]

Another area of emphasis woven into the model is in Paul's points on courage in continuing a 'conduct worthy' (Phil 1:27-30), unifying exhortations and examples to community (Phil 2:1–4), and examples of Christ-likeness, such as attitude (Phil 2:5) and humility (Phil 2:6–8). Paul's emphasis on behavior is reflective of *praxis.* In Philippians 1:27, Paul highlights an exhortative admonition that encompasses a continual concern with sustained behavior. The model draws heavily from numerous places in Paul's epistles to highlight the need to exemplify Christ in attitude, action, or behavior, as seen in this verse. Implicit within "let your manner of

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[134] Wittman, "Belonging to Another, Christ, Moral Nature, and the Shape of Humility," 29.

[135] Moises Silva, *Philippians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

life" are the behavior activation words of "live," "conduct," and "walk."[136] There is an implied

responsibility as a citizen of heaven (Phil 3:20–21) to live as a representative or, as we read in 2

Corinthians 5:20, as an ambassador for Christ.

The community is emphasized as Paul's use of walking worthily is replete with

undertones of harmonious unity flowing from love for Christ and one another.[137] Paul's

exhortative stance to sustaining oneness and unity in Christ for faithfulness, perseverance, and

representation of the truth of the Gospel is demonstrative of purpose. The model emphasizes that

individual purpose flows from love for the Savior, which drives a desire to model Christ in

obedience to the Father. The further communal purpose is driven by a love for one another and a

unity that flows solely from a conformed understanding of God's Word flowing from Christ to

one another. "I' and 'we' represent Christ as His children, and our union in Christ unifies us to

one another through "a partnership and fellowship which can only derive and flow from the

active work of the Holy Spirit in the Christ-follower.[138]

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from Philippians

In Chapters One and Two, there are themes of "the sustaining work of God" (Phil 1:6),

"knowledge and discernment" (Phil 1:10), "the fruit of righteousness" (Phil 1:11), "life is Christ"

(Phil 1:21), "a manner of life worthy of the Gospel" (Phil 1:27), "unity" (Phil 1:27, 2:1–8),

"emptying and servanthood" (Phil 2:7), "working out salvation" (Phil 2:12b–13), and "holding

fast to the word of life" (Phil 2:16). In Chapters Three and Four, visible themes relevant to the

model include those of "gain and loss" (Phil 3:7–11), "pressing on" (Phil 3:12–14), "mature

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[136] See Romans 13:13, Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, and 1 Thessalonians 2:12.

[137] William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Philippians*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980).

[138] William Barclay, *Great Themes of the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

thinking" (Phil 3:15–16), "imitation" (Phil 3:17, 4:9), "standing firm" (Phil 4:1), "lacking

anxiety" (Phil 4:6–7), "placing thoughts on" (Phil 4:8), "contentment" (Phil 4:11–13), "sharing

trouble" (Phil 4:14), and "supplying need" (Phil 4:19).

Colossians

Paul is writing this letter from prison, and although Paul was not the church's founder at

Colossae, Paul's heart for the brethren and for the Truth to remain steadfast among the early

church is evident in his writing.[139] Paul's desperate desire, more often described in the

commentaries, as his urgency for all believers to stand fast in the truth of Christ, is continually

made known to them through Paul's pleas to hold fast to the truth of Christ, as the church in

Colossae was under bombardment with heresies, false doctrines, and cultural compromises.[140]

Longenecker and Still note that "the knowledge Paul covets for the Colossians is decidedly

practical and ethical. . . leading lives worthy of and pleasing God would result in bearing fruit,

growing in knowledge, being strengthened, and giving joyful thanks."[141] Paul urges the

Colossians to pursue Christ wholeheartedly, through an attitude of surrender, desperately

dependent on the Spirit to equip them in victorious living for Christ. It is also noteworthy that

Colossians depicts a high Christology emphasizing Christ's preeminence, reconciliation,

Headship, and model for life as a believer. As Moo points out, "few texts in the New Testament

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[139] Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

[140] In the region near Colossae, people were compromising their relationship with Christ and choosing to fall into complacency and stagnancy. As the model advocates, lukewarm compromise does not feed our souls; it weakens us spiritually and diminishes our ability to grow in Christ Jesus. Paul was passionate about helping people mature in their walk with Christ.

[141] Longenecker and Still, *Thinking through Paul,* 227.

make the case so clearly that Christian living must be rooted in Christ."[142]

The model draws heavily from phrases used in Chapters Two and Three, as more specifically identified below. Colossians Chapter Two for its emphasis on new life in Christ flowing from death to life (Col 2:5), also seen in Romans 6:13, into the construct of "you were raised with Christ" (Col 3:1). As exemplified in Colossians 3:10, the transforming work of grace, God's work, produces a new creation. As Bruce remarks, "they are the good works which reflect the character and action of God himself. . . His new creation 'in Christ Jesus' is brought into being by the agency of the Spirit . . . and the promise of the new covenant is realized when men and women are found "doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph 6:6)."[143]

The model's concern for inward spiritual strength is seen in Paul's prayer of intercession in Colossians 3:14-19, specifically in 3:16, as Paul connects inward spiritual strength to the resources of God: His glory, wisdom, power, strength, and love.[144] Spiritual eyesight and insight are important to the model's emphasis on cultivating Holy Spirit-directed awareness. Paul's concern with the inward is seen in his desire for growth perpetuated by the inward Spirit. Bruce writes, "The 'inner being' may be viewed as the locus of the indwelling Spirit. But the ministry of the Spirit is devoted to making the presence and power of the risen Christ real to those whom he indwells: hence the experience of the indwelling Spirit and of the indwelling Christ is the same experience."[145] In other words, "that Christ takes up residence in your hearts. . . to be rooted and built up in Christ is to be rooted and well-founded in love."[146]

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[142] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 69.

[143] Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, To Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 290.

[144] Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, To Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 325, n. 82.

[145] Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, To Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 326.

[146] Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, To Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 327.

The model also draws heavily on the theme of surrender to Christ, which requires a heavenly perspective. Moo notes, "In Colossians 3:1-4, Paul has called on us to take a heavenly perspective on all of life, a perspective that emerges naturally from our new identity as those who have died with Christ and been raised with Him."[147] Our death, which brings new life, must be lived with an attitude and a lifestyle that the model refers to as absolute surrender and desperate dependance.[148] Paul expressed his passion for surrender to Christ in Colossians and other epistles. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul could state with conviction, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil 3:8).

The model also draws heavily from Colossians 3:1-10, as believers are encouraged and exhorted to "put aside" the characteristics of this "old man" because the "old man" itself has been "put aside" (Col 3:8-9). As the model states, there is both a new way of being and a new way of doing, which moves from darkness of understanding (Eph 2:3), futility of the mind (Rom 12:1), hardness of heart (Eph 4:19), to a renewal in the spirit and mind (Eph 4:23), which comes from putting off a former manner of life – the "old man"- with his corrupt ways of being and doing (Eph 4:22).[149] As Bruce writes, "If the old ways are to be abandoned, renewal is called for, and this must be inward renewal. . . This inward renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit, progressively transforming believers into the image of Christ."[150]

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[147] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 273.

[148] The phrase is coined from Andrew Murray's *Absolute Surrender*, the required first non-Bible book participants read in Module 1. Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017).

[149] Hardness of heart is briefly worthy of note in that the model analogizes spiritual hardness of heart to cardio-metabolic disease. Hardness of heart is a spiritual condition that warrants significant attention in the model's progressive sanctification. While Paul used the term in his soteriology, it is relevant to our Lifestyle, Who is Christ.

[150] Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, To Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 358. The model would articulate it as Paul's message to the church at Colossae and the Christ-follower, which is applicable not only in times of external challenges but also in all times as children of God. As imitators of Christ and as His beloved children, we know the Spirit in us guides us into all Truth (John 16:13) yet note that Paul exhorts us to "put on." The

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from Colossians

In Chapters One and Two, there are themes of "bearing fruit" (Col 1:6), "filled with" and "increasing" (Col 1:6, 9–12, 2:10), "delivered from darkness to light" (Col 1:13–14), "continuing in faith" (Col 1:23), "maturity in Christ" (Col 1:28), "wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ" (Col 2:3), "firmness of faith" (Col 2:5), "rooted and built up" (Col 2:7), "let no one takes you captive" (Col 2:8), "putting off" (Col 2:11), "alive in Christ" (Col 2:13), "holding fast" (Col 2:19), and "died to the world" (Col 2:20). In Chapters Three and Four, visible themes include those of "seeking things above" (Col 3:1), "set your mind" (Col 3:2), "hidden in Christ" (Col 3:3), "put to death" (Col 3:5), "put away," (Col 3:7–9), "new self" (Col 3:10), "Christ is all in all" (Col 3:11), "put on" (Col 3:12, 14), "bearing and forgiving" (Col 3:13), "dwell in you" (Col 3:16), "whatever you do" (Col 3:23–24), "steadfast in prayer" (Col 4:2), "watchful" (Col 4:2), "walk-in" (Col 4:5), "seasoned with salt," (Col 4:6), and "fulfill the ministry" (Col. 4:17).

Romans

Although Romans is perhaps Paul's most significant work on justification, the model leans heavily into Romans 6–8 and 12–16, with constructs such as "the old man crucified" as central to the representative themes of "old nature" versus "new nature," "not I but Christ" (Gal 2:20), and "put off" and "put on" (Eph 4:22-24). In the integrative view of the model, the Christ-follower has cognitive control of choice and the Spirit-guided ability to implement the metaphors of 'putting on and putting off,' reflective of Dunn, "the old man may have been crucified but is not totally destroyed."[151] The model posits that life in Christ, for the Christ-follower, requires

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Spirit does not force Himself on us – we have a moment-by-moment choice. We can choose in these times to be discouraged, anxious, unsettled, worried, fearful, and on and on the list goes, or we can choose to put on.

[151] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 471.

choices and decisions, decisive actions driven by decisive attitudes formulated within the *praxis*

of a disciplined life surrendered to Christ in the light of Galatians 2:20 so that they can remain in

mindfulness of life in the new nature having crucified the old (Rom 6:6). As Paul depicts in

Romans 7 and Galatians 5, the battle is real and the power of the flesh, as the model emphasizes,

is never to be underestimated or discounted. In exegeting Romans 6–8, Dunn writes:

> While it may appear that this death to sin would result in a sin-free life, the exhortations in the following verses indicate that the believer can still choose to obey the "old man" even though he is a slave to him no longer (Rom. 6:12–23). Why is it that believers choose to use their freedom to sin? Thomas Schreiner indicates that the full inheritance of the resurrection with Christ lies in the future. The power of Christ's resurrection has invaded the present, enabling believers to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). However, just because believers are set free from slavery to sin does not mean that it is impossible for them to sin. "The indicative does not eliminate the need for the imperative, for believers must consciously resist desires for sin that arise within them .... Evil desires do not shrivel up and depart after conversion.[152]

The model's belief that the Christ-follower can, more often than not, remain crucified is

evident in the science of neuroplasticity. The cultivation of new neural pathways guided by the

Holy Spirit and pursued by the attitudes and actions of the Christ-follower carves a path of

continuous crucifixion that allows one to shift from the old nature in its fallen depravity and step

into the new nature with its renewed holiness and righteousness—a nature that hungers and

thirsts in its pursuit of Christ. Calvin notes:

> You see that our righteousness is not in us but in Christ . . . sin has been condemned in Christ's flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:3–4). The only fulfillment he alludes to is that which we obtain through imputation. . . . To declare that by him alone we are accounted righteous, what else is this but to lodge our righteousness in Christ's obedience, the obedience of Christ is reckoned to us as if it were our own?[153]

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[152] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 258–59.

[153] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC 20–21 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 753.

Throughout Romans, and particularly in Romans 6-8, which is distinctive in its narrative of sin and salvation in bodily terms, contrasts between the passions and appetites, lusts of the flesh, and the enslavement of the mind and body – the rule of sin (Rom 6:12–14, 7:7–25) are contrasted with the freedom that has been brought through Christ and empowered by the working of the Spirit (Rom 8:1-13) that has 'put to death' the "workings of the body."[154] The hostility of the powers of the body, as described in terms of flesh, is antithetical to the freedom attributed to the work of Christ on the cross and the Spirit indwelling the believer. The model emphasizes this most specifically from Galatians 5:16-18 but also leans into God's interventionary work through Christ, as depicted in Romans 8:1-13. The model would describe one aspect of the Spirit's work as healing and restorative to "bring the mind of Christ" and restore the capacity for "captivating thoughts" 2 Cor 2:5). This change in condition and the reality of it in the life of the Christ-follower is foundational in the model. There is an ontological transformation inwardly of the condition of man. For Grundmann, this "includes a transformation of the being of man."[155]

The model leans heavily into themes from Romans, depicting the believer as a new creature, a new creation, and its relevance to the ability to live/walk differently because of the empowering work of the Spirit.[156] Peter Dubbelman notes:

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[154] Although an exploration of the influence of Platonic philosophy and other philosophers influential in Paul's theology is beyond the scope of this work, it is noteworthy that Wasserman states: Once we understand the divide in Platonic terms as between sin, flesh, members, body (negatively) and passions, which are opposed to reason (the inner person), and law, these different statements cohere as elaborations of the same moral-psychological premises. But [Romans] 8 introduces something new to the picture developed in [Romans] 6–7: the pneuma (spirit) of God. This has important implications for God's intervention with Christ in 8.1-13, as it suggests that Paul envisions a special type of pneuma that dwells inside the mind and restores its capacity for reason and self-control." Emma Wasserman, "Paul among the Philosophers: The Case of Sin in Romans 6-8," *JSNT* 30, no. 4 (2008), 409.

[155] Walter Grundmann, "Compounds in Σύν- Which Develop the Σύν Χριστῷ," TDNT 7:786–94.

[156] It is interesting to note Augustine, who states, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10). What is the purport of his saying, "Not of works, lest any man should boast," while commending the grace of God? And then why does he afterward, when giving a reason for using such words, say, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works"? Why, therefore, does it run, "Not of works, lest any man should boast"? Now, hear and

The Spirit's very ontology (love, wind) reinforces this movement that births the singular but multifaceted fruit of love (Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 5:22). God's unconditional love and freedom create the changed "human condition" that loves God and neighbor, which is to declare by word and deed that "Jesus is Lord![157]

Within this theme of freedom (Gal 5:1) is also a theme of deliverance with a rich psychological and theological impact. Paul's continuous desire for freedom, conformity with Christ, and deliverance from 'bondage and entanglements' (Rom 8:31–37, Gal 5:1) develops inwardly by the work of the Spirit and flows outwardly towards one another.

Themes of freedom flow directly into themes of forgiveness, as there is no condemnation in Christ (Rom 8:1). The model depicts that the triune God never condemns but rather convicts, and there is a significant difference both theologically and psychologically. The freedom that flows from union with and participation in Christ stems from soteriological forgiveness and the continued availability of forgiveness in the progressive process of sanctification. Dubbelman notes, "Christ's victory over sin provides forgiveness and begins an ontological change of the Christian's "inner being" toward the image of the Son. This change is sustained by an "exit and return" structure of "God, the one who declares righteous."[158]

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understand. "Not of works" is spoken of the works which you suppose have their origin in yourself alone; but you have to think of works for which God has moulded (that is, has formed and created) you. For of these he says, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Now he does not here speak of that creation which made us human beings, but of that in reference to which one said who was already in full manhood, "Create in me a clean heart, O God;" (Ps 51:12) concerning which also the apostle says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, *he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God" (2 Cor 5:17-18). We are framed, therefore, that is, formed and created, "in the good works which" we have not ourselves prepared, but "God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." It follows, then, dearly beloved, beyond all doubt, that as your good life is nothing else than God's grace, so also the eternal life, which is the recompense of a good life, is the grace of God; moreover, it is given gratuitously, even as that is given gratuitously to which it is given. But that to which it is given is solely and simply grace; this, therefore, is also that which is given to it, because it is its reward; —grace is for grace, as if remuneration for righteousness; so that it may be true, because it is true, that God "shall reward every man according to his works." Augustine of Hippo, "A Treatise on Grace and Free Will," in *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Peter Holmes, vol. 5, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 451–52.

[157] Peter Dubbelman, "God's New Creation in Romans 8:4," *STR* 9, no. 1 (2018), 70.

[158] Dubbelman, "God's New Creation in Romans 8:4, 75.

From freedom and forgiveness flow trust for transformation and surrender, a presentation of oneself as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). The impact of deliverance combined with the reality of the battle described in Romans 7 creates an enigma, first for the ability to present oneself and secondly in the context of the power of the flesh and the forces which fiercely work to maintain control. The key is found not within the power of the flesh but in the power of the Spirit, which has initiated the ability to present oneself as an instrument of and to God rather than to the domain of darkness and death. The emphasis in Romans 12:1–8 is on the renewing power that paves the way for trust, faith, and obedience to conformity through transformation and renewal. The model's grounding in neuroscience and cognitive psychology attests to the reality of belief change and renewal, which in Christ is the work of the Spirit within the physical realities of our created being.[159]

Orientation toward God, God-inwardness, pursuit, and devotion to God are richly visible in Romans 12:1-2 and reflective of a response, a PFC term in the model, and not a reaction, a Limbic System term derived circumstantially but grounded in a deep, personal, knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ and a two-way, symbiotic love relationship that points towards informed by right thinking (Rom 12:3) informing what pleases the Lord (Eph 5:10). It is God's resurrection power and the empowering of the Holy Spirit that allow the believer to be transformed into a Christ-follower.[160]

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[159] Recent accounts have highlighted potential neurophysiological processes involved in believing. See R. J. Seitz, R.F. Paloutzian, and H. F. Angel, "From Believing to Belief: A General Theoretical model," *Journal of. Cognitive Neuroscience* 30, (2018): 1254–64.

[160] The model uses Christ-follower, as noted in the definitions, to signify the person who is choosing to pursue Christ and willingly surrender to the conforming and transforming work of the Spirit in contrast to the person who has professed Christ, the believer, but is not actively seeking growth in Christ— perhaps known as the complacent, carnal, or causal Christian.

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from Romans

In Chapters One and Two, there are themes of "belonging to Christ" (Rom 1:6), "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5), "circumcision of the heart" (Rom 2:29), and "teach yourself" (Rom 2:21). In Chapters Six and Seven, visible themes include those of "instruments for righteousness" (Rom 6:14), "brought from death to life" (Rom 6:13), "set free" (Rom 6:17–18), "slaves of righteousness" (Rom 6:18–19), "slaves of God" (Rom 6:22), "walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4), "old self crucified" (Rom 6:6), "set free" (Rom 6:7), "live with Christ" (Rom 6:8, 11), "nothing good dwells within" (Rom 7:18), "do not do what know to do" (Rom. 7:18–20), "waging war" (Rom. 7:22–23), "bearing fruit" (Rom 7:4), and "serve in a new way" (Rom 7:6).

In Chapter Eight, themes relevant to the model include those of "children of God" (Rom 8:1–16), "heirs of God" (Rom 8:17), "led by the Spirit" (Rom 8:14), "spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15), "set free" (Rom 8:2), "no condemnation" (Rom 8:1), the "Spirit helps in our weakness" (Rom 8:26–27), the "Spirit intercedes" (Rom 8:26), "God is for us" (Rom 8:31), "Jesus' intercession" (Rom 8:34), "God's love" (Rom 8:35), "inseparability" (Rom 8:38-39), "walk not according to the flesh" (Rom 8:4), "set mind" (Rom 8:5–7).

In Chapters Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, and Sixteen, important themes for the model include those of "living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1), "conformity" (Rom 12:2), "do not think highly of yourself" (Rom 12:3), "one body" (Rom 12:4), "individually members of one another" (Rom 12: 5), "let love be genuine" (Rom 12:9), "abhor what is evil" (Rom12:9), "love one another" (Rom 12:10, 15:30), "unity and harmony" (Rom 12:14–21, 15:5–7), "cast off the works of darkness" (Rom 13:12), "armor of light" (Rom 13:12), "walk properly" (Rom 13:13), "put on" (Rom 13:14), "live to the Lord" (Rom 14:7–8), "do not judge nor hinder" (Rom 14:13), "instruct one another" (Rom 15:14b), "do not please self" (Rom 15:1-3a), and "be wise" (Rom

16:19).

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians is riddled with exhortations and admonitions regarding morality and ethical

conduct. While the behavior of the Corinthians is, no doubt, problematic, the model does not

draw on the specifics of the challenges facing those in Corinth; rather, it extracts from the

Corinthians' confusion with self-perception and identity and the need for conformity with Christ.

As with many of Paul's epistles, his focus is Christ-centric. He reminds the Corinthians that he

came knowing nothing, not in human wisdom and ability, but solely in knowing "Jesus Christ

and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2), deeply displaying the implicit and explicit awareness that "it

involves a radical redefinition of life and a sweeping reconfiguration of lifestyle."[161] Paul's

inaugurated eschatology emanates as he emphasizes the importance of a chosen current lifestyle

for the specific choices of the Corinthians and the Christ-follower today. The issues of

complicity, complacency, and casualness toward the ethical demands of a Christ-centric lifestyle

are vivid throughout this epistle. As Fee reminds us in his commentary on 1 Corinthians:

> Paul is doing what he does best, bringing the gospel to bear in the marketplace. For him
> the truth of the gospel is finally tested in its ability to work its way out in the exigencies
> of everyday life in some of the most ticklish situations.[162]

The emphasis on the Spirit, as depicted in 1 Corinthians 2:11, vividly reminds the

Corinthians and readers today that the Spirit searches all and knows all. Averbeck writes, "The

Holy Spirit knows the very depths of God [and 1 Cor 2:12] brings this divine Holy Spirit into

intimate relation with the human spirit of one who is in Christ: "We have not received the spirit

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[161] Longenecker and Still, *Thinking through Paul*, 116.

[162] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 17.

of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.[163] It is also noteworthy that Paul pairs the Spirit with power both in his soteriology (making known the cross) and in the sanctifying, revealing work of the Spirit that makes known and reveals what is in the heart of God (1 Cor 2:8–11). The Spirit is portrayed as a revealer (1 Cor 2:10–11) and an instructor, a guide, a teacher (1 Cor 2:12–13), and most importantly, as one (1 Cor 12:13, c.f., Eph 4:4–9). Longenecker and Still reminds us:

> That the corporate and individual lives of the Jesus-followers are subject to the transformation that results whenever God is encountered "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 6:11) by means of the Spirit [who] searches all things, even the deep things of God" (1 Cor 2:10).[164]

Fee notes that the eschatological frame vivid throughout the Pauline epistles is evident in Paul's Christology and pneumatology. Paul's belief that the future is certain in the *Parousia* (1 Cor 11:26, 15:23) motivates him to remind his recipients that the present age is passing (1 Cor 1:26, 28; 7:31) and "believers must exercise internal judgments in the present (1 Cor 5:12–13) . . .and cleanse out the old leaven so that it may be a new (1 Cor 5:7–8)."[165] As such, believers are expected to live in conformity with the truth of the Gospel in obedience to the commands of God (1 Cor 7:19), and the dogma is clear: old ways – the leaven of the past is incompatible with life in Christ. Fee notes, "The pattern for all behavior is Christ Himself . . .all is of grace, but grace brings the Spirit who enables the imitation of Christ." [166]

The temple metaphor (1 Cor 3:16), discussed more fully in subsequent sections, is seen in

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[163] Richard E. Averback, "Spirit, Community, and Mission: A Biblical Theology for Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care,* 1, no. 1 (2008), 32.

[164] Longenecker and Still, *Thinking through Paul*, 135.

[165] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 18. The model would refer to internal judgment as exercising intrinsic motivation to produce wise choices in Christ.

[166] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 19.

Paul's discussions of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:17, 11:29, 12:12–26) and its visibility by the Spirit among them. Consistent with the temple metaphor, Paul illustrates that the Corinthians, as all believers, are the "sanctuary of the living God," have a common experience of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13), need one another as members of one another (1 Cor 12:14, 26), and the body demands unity and conformity to Christ. Paul's imagery reflects the Old Testament Tabernacle language and current pagan cultic practices, symbolizing holiness and representing the Spirit's presence. As Fee comments, "The presence of the Spirit, and that alone, marks them off as God's new people, God's temple when assembled in Christ's name in Corinth."[167] The people are called to holiness, the church is deemed holy, as Christ is holy, and as such, believers are to present themselves as holy (Rom 12:1) and live in a manner that is dedicated to service in ethical holiness (Eph 1:4). Ridderbos refers to this as a "moral renewal" most vividly seen in 1 Corinthians 1:30.[168]

The model's emphasis on spiritual transformation is effectively an ethical renewing, an ongoing inward working of the Spirit for personal enrichment, sustaining, and corporate growth and unity. A call to recognize that in Christ, the Christ-follower is not his own; we represent Him, and He dwells within us as we are the temple of the living God (2 Cor 6:16) not to be dominated by anything and living in a manner worthy of the living Christ.[169] As Christ-followers, the urgency to live as the "new lump," "not dominated by anything" except Christ, and "running the race" in "imitation" of Him is all for His glory. Matera comments, "The church is a sanctified community not because of anything it has done . . consequently, their

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[167] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 160.

[168] Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 263.

[169] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 18.

sanctification is not their own but comes from Jesus Christ . . .who has consecrated them and set them apart for service to God."[170]

The model also leans into phrases such as the crucified life, attributed to Tozer, the sanctified life, and the narrow road, exemplifying the importance of surrender, attributed to Murray, and servanthood as new lumps and imitators in service through life and empowered by the Spirit.[171] While Paul's references to leaven and lump (1 Cor 5:6–8) are contextually different for the Corinthians, who are struggling with boasting and allowing one man's sin to infect the community, the use in the model, the intent is similar – remove infection personally for the healthy function of the individual and the community. As Fee notes. "in the NT, a good thing like leaven became symbolic of the process by which evil spreads insidiously in a community until the whole body is infected by it."[172] Medical metaphors are rampant throughout the model, and Module 1: Detoxification is designed to cultivate awareness to identify, through the eyes of Christ (Heb 12:12) and the power of the Spirit, infection within for extraction and eradication.

On a final note, the model emphasizes endurance, framing the life of the Christ-follower as living a Lifestyle, Who is Christ. The lifestyle demands perseverance, resiliency, commitment, dedication, focus, and intentionality, which can be described as character constructs derived from many of Paul's metaphors, such as running the race.[173] Fee states it as "Paul is urging the

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[170] Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 125.

[171] See the Section on other Devotional, Practical, and Ministry Theological Contributors to the model.

[172] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 237.

[173] Unlike principles from positive psychology, the character constructs do not indicate one's ability to foster what is best within oneself, as Biblical theology would remind us that nothing good dwells within (Rom 7:18), and man is incapable of regenerating himself apart from the work of the Spirit. Parallels may be seen with positive psychology in identifying internal attributes and strengths. Still, the model does not suggest that "individuals can lead a life with meaning and fulfillment through promoting and fostering what is best within themselves." Vasiliki Georgoulas-Sherry, "Understanding the Distinctions of Positive Constructs Resilience, Grit, and Hardness," *American Journal of Medical and Clinical Sciences* 7, no. 2, (2022), 1.

Corinthians to "run" the Christian life in such a way, in this case by exercising proper self-control as to obtain the eschatological reward."[174] Paul's exhortation and warning are wrapped in a desire to impart that there is a proper way to run, a way that is derived from obedience to Christ and one that requires the exercise of discipline, constraint, and choice, recognizing that not all things are helpful and that the ability to run requires training. The model's scaffolded progression from module to module reflects the continual need for the Christ-follower commitment to moment-by-moment training to remain set apart, free from idolatry, and anchored in imitation of the Savior.

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from 1 Corinthians

In Chapters One, Two, and Three, themes relevant to the model include those of "enrichment" (1 Cor 1:5), "sustaining" (1 Cor 1:8), "unity" (1 Cor 1:10), "the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:25, 30), "Christ-crucified" (1 Cor 2:2), "power of God" (1 Cor 2:4-5), "Spirit searches all" (1 Cor 2:10b–13), "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16), "of the flesh" (1 Cor 3:1, 3), "God gives the growth" (1 Cor 3:6-7), "God's fellow workers" (1 Cor 3:9), "God's field" (1 Cor 3:9), "God's building" (1 Cor 3:9), "Jesus, the Foundation" (1 Cor 3: 11), "God's temple" (1 Cor 3:16), and "you are Christ's and Christ is God's" (1 Cor 3:23).

In Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven, there are relevant themes of "servants of Christ" (1 Cor 4;1), "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor 5:6), "new lump" (1 Cor 5:7), "not dominated by anything" (1 Cor 6:12), "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19), "not your own" (1 Cor 6:20), "bought with a price" (1 Cor 6:20, 7:23). In Chapters Nine, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve, themes connected to the model include those of "run the race" (1 Cor 9:24), "self-

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[174] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 237.

control in all things" (1 Cor 9:25), "discipline the body" (1 Cor 9:27), "not tempted beyond

ability" (1 Cor 10:13), "flee idolatry" (1 Cor 10:14), "not all things are helpful" (1 Cor 10:23),

"all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31), "imitators" (1 Cor 11:1), "one body" (1 Cor 12:12),

"members of the body" (1 Cor 12:14, 26),and "love" (1 Cor 13:3–7, 13, 14:1a).

2 Corinthians

As previously noted, Paul is communal-oriented. His exhortations, admonitions, and

warnings are often directed toward the church, the body of Christ.[175] This orientation does not

diminish the need for an individual way of living Christ, and many of the phrases gleaned from

the scriptures highlighted below apply to the individual. The model emphasizes personal spiritual

transformation and growth, recognizing that the individual is relational and lives in a relational

community.[176] In Christ, the community is critical, as we are warned in Hebrews 10:25. In the

model's vernacular, this growth process requires examining the self, our ick, the subtleties of our

flesh, our pre-conditioned ways, and entrenched paradigms. We are called to "examine

yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about

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[175] It is necessary to state that 2 Corinthians 'reads' very differently than Paul's other epistles. It comes across as an apologetic and an apology for actions and behaviors on his part that are personal to the church at Corinth. His posture is almost one of garnering their favor and pleasure, people-pleasing (2 Cor 5:12), which is somewhat uncharacteristic of his fearless and bold statements, such as "you foolish Galatians" (Gal 3:1), and confronting Peter's hypocrisy in Galatians 2:11-14. Witherington notes that Paul's approach is a milder form of persuasion and "not wishing to control his audience in their faith," which is rather atypical of Paul. Ben Witherington, III., *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 431.

[176] It is necessary to note that the model emphasizes a plan for personalized spiritual formation but does not exclude the journey together, as individuals form a cohort to journey through the modules. The model also recognizes that we are designed for and called into community. A participant's 'individual' spiritual formation is to develop oneself for the reflection of Christ and to the glory of God living in this messy world. It is also to influence, model, disciple, mentor, and guide others in their growth journey in Christ. Lowe and Lowe note, "As recipients of a new covenant relationship in Christ, New Testament believers come under similar reciprocal behavioral expectations." Lowe and Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age*, 179.

yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (2 Cor 13:5)[177]

The model's emphasis on new creation is interwoven throughout its call to Christ, Who is a Lifestyle. The epistemological shift from the old self to the new one parallels Paul's personal journey, as depicted in his epistles and 2 Corinthians 5:16-17. The shift is immediately as individual as it is corporate in Pauline theology. The new creation is a current reality in the individual's life as he or she lives relationally in community (2 Cor 3:1–18, 5:17). The believer's transformation is an ongoing process that requires a participatory choice. Garland captures it well when he states:

> Many Christians have lost or never learned a sound doctrine of regeneration. . . They assume that a past decision for Christ . . .determines their standing with God. Having made that decision, they make no effort to allow the Spirit to renew them. . . The Spirit is not imposed on us, and Christians must engage in spiritual disciplines that make the Spirit's work possible in changing our lives at the fundamental level.[178]

In this epistle and as evident in all Paul's writings, the Spirit is the agent of transformation. In speaking of Paul, Garland writes, "God has made him sufficient by giving him a Spirit-endowed, Spirit-empowered ministry to those who are Spirit-equipped."[179] The model advocates the same is true for each believer who chooses to step into the sanctified life to become a Christ-follower.

In Module Two of the model, the emphasis is on the infusion of God's Word. While the Christ-follower has started the journey in Module 1 with a Christ-centric focus and a grounded

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[177] The model intentionally moves the self-word to the end of phrases to de-emphasize its importance. For example, self-awareness is re-phrased as awareness of self, or self-control is re-phrased as Spirit-led control of self. 'Ick' is a word used as a bucket categorization for all things 'fleshy.' One of the model's foundational features is its new vocabulary development, as neuroscience proves that inner talk and self-dialogue reinforce beliefs and impact our overall social cognition system. Words and phrasing have power, and the model advocates that participants must be careful if they want to re-wire their brains and create new neural pathways centered on Christ rather than the flesh.

[178] David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians, vol. 29*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, B& H Publishing Group, 1990), 201–02.

[179] Garland, *2 Corinthians,* 202.

Biblical theology with the mantra, 'Do you believe God is who He says He is according to the truth of His Word,' Paul, too, proclaims the truth of Christ, as one who has it (2 Cor 11:10), speaks the truth of Christ at all cost (2 Cor 12:6) and will not compromise the truth, no matter the cost (2 Cor 13:8, 1 Cor 2:12-13). Paul's passion for a right understanding of the person of Christ and His work on the cross is depicted throughout his epistles and often forms the basis for his defense against Agitators. Garland notes:

> Christ's death on the cross most clearly reveals God's love and power, but it befuddles or repels many as complete foolishness since they see no glory radiating from such shame and dishonor. They cannot see how weakness and humiliation go with power and glory (See 2 Cor 13:4).[180]

The believer today has a similar struggle. Until there is a Spirit-directed awareness combined with a personal desire to believe the paradoxical nature of life in Christ and the antithetical nature of the flesh and the Spirit, it is challenging to believe that surrender produces power and weakness produces strength. Transformation only comes by Christ through the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). Paul B. Duff points out:

> Paul reminds the Corinthians that they have perceived the glory of the Lord (i.e., the life-giving power of God as it has been manifested in the resurrection of Christ) and that they have perceived it in their own lived experience, specifically through their experience of the Spirit.[181]

The most profound verse in this epistle in the context of the model is 2 Corinthians 5:17. The themes of 'in Christ' and 'new creation' are dominant drivers in the model's core belief that we can be different in Christ holistically. Christ changes the person and perspective—one's way of viewing, making meaning, constructing narrative, and encountering the world. The new

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[180] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 213.

[181] Paul B. Duff, "Transformed from Glory to Glory: Paul's Appeal to the Experience of His Readers in 2 Corinthians 3:18," *JBL* 127, no. 4 (2008), 771.

creation in Christ is presented as radically different from the old self and is, through the power of the Spirit, equipped to live differently in, but not of, the world. Garland states it well when he writes:

> In Christ can mean several things that are not mutually exclusive: that one belongs to Christ, that one lives in the sphere of Christ's power, that one is united with Christ, or that one is part of the body of Christ, the believing community. Paul's assumption is that being in Christ should bring about a radical change in the person's life.[182]

The model's message is radical change. Neuroplasticity supports this reality. Empirical evidence from psychological science supports his belief. Most importantly, the inerrant, inspired message of God's-breathed Word, as seen in the attributes and nature of Paul's teaching, supports the model's message.

The call for examination (2 Cor 13:5) is a cry echoed in the model. Module 1 is focused on cultivating awareness, a process that involves learning how to identify and release areas of struggle, sin, and strongholds, such as frustrations, bitterness, unforgiveness, and other barriers of the flesh and self (Gal 5:24). This process stems from an examination of self and then detoxification, a cleansing aligned with the exhortation in 2 Corinthians 7:1. As Betz states "self-examination meant a scrutinizing of one's own conduct of life exclusively . . . not a comparison with others."[183] To stand firm in the faith requires holding onto it, and holding onto it requires a willingness, as the model states, to examine one's ick. In model terminology, the process starts with examination of self to identify places that need the exposure of a Truth Light for detoxification purposes. Many human emotions, resentments, and pains of the past clog one's ability to 'see' (spiritually) and to discern accurately. The detoxification process provides a way

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[182] Garland, *2 Corinthians,* 286.

[183] H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 302.

to unclog and cleanse so the Holy Spirit can move freely in and through to allow one to see spiritually and discern wisely. Garland notes that examination or testing of oneself "should lead them to recognize that they belong to Christ as does Paul."[184]

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from 2 Corinthians

In Chapters One, Two, and Three, themes relevant to the model include those of "comfort" (2 Cor 1:3, 5–7, 7:6), "behaved in a way" (2 Cor 1:12), "not making plans according to the flesh" (2 Cor 1:17–18), "God establishes" (2 Cor 1:21), "seal and Spirit" (2 Cor 1:22), "stand firm" (2 Cor 1:24), "obedient in everything" (2 Cor 2:9), "forgiveness" (2 Cor 2:10-11), "fragrance" (2 Cor 2:14, 16), "aroma of Christ" (Cor 2:15), "not sufficient in self" (2 Cor 3:5), "sufficiency in Christ" (2 Cor 3:6), "Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6). "freedom" (2 Cor 3:17), and "transformed" (2 Cor 3:18).

In Chapters Four and Five, relevant themes include those of "do not lose heart" (2 Cor 4:1), "not tampering with God's word" (2 Cor 4:2a), "proclaim not ourselves" (2 Cor 4:5), "light of the knowledge" (2 Cor 4:6), "treasures in jars of clay" (2 Cor 4:7), "surpassing power" (2 Cor 4:7), "afflicted in every way, not crushed" (2 Cor 4:8–9), "do not lose heart" (2 Cor 4:16), "inner man renewed" (2 Cor 4:16), "light momentary affliction" (2 Cor 4:17), "look at the things not seen" (2 Cor 4:18), "a building from God" (2 Cor 5:1), "the Spirit as a guarantee" (2 Cor 5:5), "good courage" (2 Cor 5:8), "love of Christ controls us" (2 Cor 5:14), "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17), "old passed away" (2 Cor 5:17), "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18-19), "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:21), and "the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:22).

In Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight, the themes important to the model include those of

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[184] Garland, *2 Corinthians,* 547.

"working together in Him" (2 Cor 6:1), "no obstacle in anyone's way" (2 Cor 6:3), "servants of

God" (2 Cor 6:4), "do not be unequally yoked" (2 Cor 6:14), "cleanse ourselves" (2 Cor 7:1),

"godly grief" (2 Cor 7:9-10), "excel in everything" (2 Cor 8:7), "readiness and completion" (2

Cor 8:11), and "honorable in the sight of the Lord and man" (2 Cor 8:21). Chapters Nine, Ten,

Twelve, and Thirteen, include relevant themes of "cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7), "He who supplies

will supply" (2 Cor 9:10), "enriched in every way" (2 Cor 9:11), "submission and confession" (2

Cor 9: 13), "not waging war according to the flesh" (2 Cor 10:3), "take every thought captive" (2

Cor 10:5), "boast in the Lord" (2 Cor 10:17), "my grace is sufficient" (2 Cor 12:9), "power

perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9), "for when I am weak then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10), "live

by the power of God" (2 Cor 13:4), "examine yourselves" (2 Cor 13:5), "test yourselves" (2 Cor

13:5), "cannot do anything against the truth" (2 Cor 13:8).

1 and 2 Thessalonians

Paul's Christ-centeredness is foundational in understanding his pastoral theology. His

focus on Christ allows him to model Christ to the Thessalonians. Paul continually places the

emphasis and focus on the importance of obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thess 1:8). He

reminds the Thessalonians of the tools they have in Christ and refers them to His authority (1

Thess 5:8). His foundation, which is built on the rock of Christ, is also composed of prayer and

thanksgiving to God. In his epistles to the Thessalonians, Paul presents a model, through his life,

for pastoral ministry reflective of concern for spiritual formation. Paul took a leading role in this

process by defining reality, embodying identity, and articulating the goal of the emerging

community:" to imitate Christ. [185] According to James W. Thompson, "rather than a correction of

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[185] Truls Akerlund, "'To Live Lives Worthy of God:' Leadership and Spiritual Formation in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 9, no. 1 (2016), 21.

any doctrinal or behavioral error, 1 Thessalonians is a hortatory letter of friendship with the goal

of guiding the readers in the development of Christian character."[186]

One of Paul's primary purposes was to reinforce the changes in belief and loyalties and

strengthen the faith of the Thessalonians with exhortations toward ethical obedience while

distinguishing himself from "popular philosophers of the day."[187] Lone Fatum states, "It is

impossible to separate Paul's personal example from his teachings because he presents his own

ministry among them as a demonstration of his parenetic purpose."[188] Witherington suggests that

Paul's view of the gospel in 1 Thessalonians is a narrative of persevering for the goal of

Christlikeness.[189] Paul sets forth a focus and a goal for them to be united to Christ, servants for

Christ, and representatives of Christ. Paul is intent and insistent that they imitate him as he imitates

Christ (1 Thess. 1:6) and that they strive to be an example (1 Thess 1:7). Paul impresses upon his

readers the importance of obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thess 1:8) and the obligation to

glorify the name of the Lord Jesus Christ within them (2 Thess 1:12) by continually pointing away

from himself and pointing towards God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:6).

Paul's dedication to service is also vividly apparent in his focus on discipleship and

modeling for the Thessalonians Christ's character in and through his life. Throughout the epistles to

the Thessalonians, Paul serves as a model. The emphasis on character is profound as he reminds the

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[186] James W. Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry according to Paul: A Biblical Vision* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 32.

[187] B. W. Winter, "The Entries and Ethics of Orators and Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:1–12)," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44, no. 1 (1993), 62.

[188] Lone Fatum, "Brotherhood in Christ: A Gender Hermeneutical Reading of 1 Thessalonians in Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor, ed. Halvor Moxnes (London: Routledge, 1997), 188.

[189] Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Narrative Thought World. The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 339.

Thessalonians that they knew "what kind of men we proved to be among you" (1 Thess 1:5). In 1

Thessalonians 1:6, Paul states that his goal is to have them imitate him as he imitates Christ. This

creates a chain of discipleship in which they may imitate others who will imitate others as the

community of believers grows and develops in his absence. He beseeches them to be an example (1

Thess 1:7).

Paul's character is thrust in front of them as a continual reminder to strive for Christ-likeness

(1 Thess 2:3, 2:5). Paul displays a call to live devoutly, uprightly, and blamelessly (1 Thess 2:10).

Paul also tries to display his humanity. In representing Christ and modeling Christ-likeness, there

can be an inference of infallibility, perfection, and flawlessness, where others are tempted to place

one on a pedestal and worship the person rather than the true and living God. Paul senses this

tendency, particularly since many of the Thessalonians had worshipped idols and false gods before

their conversion experience. He shares his humanity and his sufferings with them (1 Thess 2:8,

2:14). He is not false in their eyes, but true in his trials and true in his faith (2 Thess 1:10). This is

part of what he is modeling to them, his humanity, and his steadfastness in the Lord. Paul does not

expose them to his sufferings so that they should be disturbed by his afflictions (1 Thess 3:3) but

rather so that they may identify with him in their sufferings.

Paul's emphasis on instruction in Godly living and Christian conduct is in connection with

Paul's modeling of Christ and his identification with the Thessalonians in their struggles to imitate

him as he imitates Christ. Paul is instructing the Thessalonians and equipping them for ministry as

new converts with the purpose of perseverance and resilience. Paul's approach is linked with a type

of parental love and concern for them. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7, he refers to himself as a "nursing

mother." The image is of care and protection, as a nursing mother feeds her "baby at her breast"

(Luke 23:29). A spiritual parent, metaphorically, nurses a child with the word of God, the water and

bread of life who is the Christ. Paul stresses his care and concerns for the Thessalonians by describing his nurturing spirit through a word image of a nursing mother who cherishes her child. As a parent, Paul demonstrates a genuine love and affection for them (1 Thess 2:8). Paul exhorts, encourages, and implores them as a parent towards his child (1 Thess 2:11). He has a tremendous eagerness for them, which is often seen in parent-child relationships where there has been an extended absence from one another. He refers to the Thessalonians as his hope, joy, and "crown of exultation" (1 Thess 2:18–19). His fondness for them is a deep and convicted love often found within a parent's heart.

Illustrations from Selected Excerpts from 1 and 2 Thessalonians

In 1 Thessalonians, there are relevant themes of "imitation" (1 Thess 1:6–7, 2:14a), "turned to God from idols" (1 Thess 1:9), "not to please man but please God" (1 Thess 2:4), "parenting," (1 Thess 2:7, 11–12), "standing fast in the Lord" (1 Thess 3:8), "prayer" (1 Thess 3:10, 5:17), "increase and abound in love" (1 Thess 3:12, 4:9–10), "walk" (1 Thess 4:1, 12), "control of one's body" (1 Thess 4:4), "holiness" (1 Thess 4:7), "children of light" (1 Thess 5:5), "encourage and build up" (1 Thess 5:11), and "seek to do good to one another" (1 Thess 5:15).

In 2 Thessalonians, themes relevant to the model include those of "growth of faith" (2 Thess 1:3), "steadfastness" (2 Thess 1:4, 3:5), "worthy of the calling" (2 Thess 1:11), "sanctification by the Spirit" (2 Thess 2:13), "stand firm" (2 Thess.2:15), "establish" (2 Thess 2:17, 3:3), "imitate" (2 Thess 3:7, 9), and "do not grow weary" (2 Thess 3:13).

Thematic Applications and Metaphors from Paul's Epistles Used in the Model

Identifying all possible themes that emerge from Paul's writings is challenging and beyond the scope of this work. The immensity of the scholarship on Paul and the diversity of voices in the field further complicates the process. This section is devoted to recognizing a few of those themes that are more predominant in their contributory value to the model while acknowledging that Paul's soteriology and his emphasis on justification are central to the presentation of his Christology. The model focuses on Paul's messages on sanctification and their applicability to the Christ-follower. Metaphors are also foundational to the model's vocabulary. Participants learn to speak with metaphors, both general and Pauline-specific. Paul's epistles are filled with metaphors relevant to the historic culture yet understandable by modern readers. They communicate meaningful messages depicted by everyday experiences and relatable ways to connect his statement to his call to *praxis.*

Thematic Applications

Themes of theological accuracy, a rightness as to the person of Christ and His work on the cross, are evident throughout the Pauline epistles. Paul was deeply distressed that the 'foolish Galatians' (Gal 3:1) had lost their way and forsaken Christ's gospel in disobedience to the truth of Christ. The quarrels in 1 Corinthians over Paul, Apollos, and others were evidence that the focus has shifted from the cross of Christ to the works of man. The shift to man's wisdom (1 Cor 2:1–5) rather than that of God deeply disturbed Paul. Pride and boasting usurped God's power and glory, and Schreiner states, "When Paul learns of divisions in the church, he perceives that the church has abandoned its core message: the cross of Christ and the centrality of God in all

things."[190]

Unity and living for Christ is another theme throughout Paul's epistles (Phil 2:1–11). Within this thematic tent are foci, such as walking in a manner worthy (Eph 4:1), glorifying God (Phil 2:11), glorifying Christ (2 Cor 4:4), devotion to Christ (Phil 3:7–11), putting on and putting off (Col 3:9–12, Eph 4:22–24), and the pursuit of the things of Christ (Phil 2:21). Unity and life for and in Christ flows from recognition and acknowledgment of the preeminence of Christ. The model first displays a vertical alignment with the person of Christ. Christ's preeminence is central in the model in that our model is Christ, and vertical alignment through the conforming work of the Spirit allows for the fruit to grow and the unity to stem horizontally in unity to the brethren. Righteous living is implicit in the prioritization of Christ, and as Schreiner notes, "There is no activity of life, no realm of existence that is outside the sphere of God's rule."[191] The model's perspective is that it is "all or nothing." The model refers to Jesus' words to the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:16 to emphasize that 'lukewarm' and 'complacency' are not options for the Christ-follower as they hinder our pursuit of Christ.

Sin and the flesh is another predominant theme encompassing all aspects of old versus new, flesh versus Spirit, putting on and putting off, one's conduct and attitude, and ultimately, obedience or disobedience to God. Sin as power is an important theme in Paul and the model, as the model uses the phrase, 'not giving power to an act of the flesh,' which is used to connote the choice in where to give power, i.e., direct attention, attitude, or action, and who has the power, the flesh or the Spirit. As Romans 5:12-19 reminds us, sin entered the world through Adam and

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[190] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology,* 2nd. Ed. (Downers' Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020), 13.

[191] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 17.

exercises itself over all humanity and produces death (Rom 5:21) or, as the model states, hardness of heart, distancing from God, disobedience to the Creator, and powerlessness over oneself as reflected in Paul depicts in Romans 7:15-20. Paul's use of 'under' in Romans and Galatians describes more than an influence. Sin is a controlling force, and the only way to escape is to be under another influence, the power of the Spirit. Also relevant within this domain of sin and struggle are the influences, Satan, the world, and the flesh (Eph 2:1–3), which the model groups together in the 'opposed' to God category, never allowing the Christ-follower to draw near to Christ and walk in obedience as contrasted with the Spirit who can only move one closer to Christ as His children (Rom 8:16).[192] Schreiner writes "Pleasing God is not automatic since the world system conspires to confirm believers to its pattern (Rom 12:2). Thus, believers must resist capitulating to the forces of this age."[193]

Themes of sacrifice and service are also predominant in the Pauline epistles. The model draws from Romans 12:1-2 as a call to surrender, sacrifice, and service. Every dimension of the whole person belongs to Christ and willingly chooses to surrender in service himself as a sacrifice to live to honor God in the Lifestyle Who is Christ Jesus. Sacrificial choice, a life of absolute surrender and desperate dependance (in the language of the model) is a process that requires recognition of the power previously described and intentionality to "set our minds on things above" (Col 3:2, c.f., 2 Cor. 4:18), be rooted and grounded in Christ (Col 2:7, c.f., Eph 3:14–19), "test what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph 5:10). God has made a way, lights the way,

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[192] Schreiner notes, "Ephesians 2:1-3 is also instructive in that the world, the devil, and the flesh work in concert in the lives of unbelievers." The model, in accordance with Pauline theology, advocates that these concerted forces persist in the believer's life, remaining predominant and problematic in progressive sanctification even though there is a way forward in Christ. See, e.g., Romans 8:8, Galatians 5:16, and Colossians 3:5. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ,* 143.

[193] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ,* 273.

and continues to establish the way as Christ-follower's rest in the realized eschatological freedom in the security of their inheritance while appropriating the present freedom to overcome through the power of the Spirit in Christ. Schreiner writes, "The Spirit who grants new life strengthens believers so that they live in a way that is pleasing to God. Bot the commencement and the continuation of the Christian life are animated by the Spirit."[194]

Finally, faith, love, and hope are central to the model and Pauline theology. Schreiner writes, "One of the marks of authentic faith is perseverance, and faith perseveres because it is sustained by hope. . . Hope is vital for Christian existence since both faith in Christ and love for other believers are grounded in Hope (Col 1:4-5)."[195] The model posits that love must be the primary, if not the sole, intrinsic motivator for one's desire and choice to live in Christ, to draw near, to pursue, to cultivate, to grow near, and to obediently follow no matter what, as the model states the externalities.[196] In the model, the Christ-follower's love for Christ is the decision-driver for all attitudes and actions and the catalyst for internalizing " the hope of their calling" (Eph 1:18), producing endurance and perseverance.

Faith is deeply connected to the Christ-follower's beliefs in the truth and the working reality of the attributes of God, which is a focus during the detoxification and infusion process in Modules 1 and 2 of the model. A grounding in the belief of and in God's faithfulness (Phil 1:6, 1 Cor 1:8, 1 Thess 5:24) is imperative for continual movement towards Christ. Faith is deeply intertwined, practically, with beliefs about trust and impacts the depths of 'believing' that God can, God does, and God will, all in accordance with His will in His perfect time, which produces

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[194] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 285.

[195] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ,* 294-295.

[196] Externalities, as used in the model, refers to all that which is external to us, all events, all actions, all environments – all the stuff of life that so easily grabs our attention, our focus, our thoughts/feelings and actions.

Hope.[197] Tozer reminds us, "faith depends on the character of God," and God's character is consistent, unchanging, and dependable, as God can never buy anyone other than Himself.[198] Schreiner writes, "Assurance of faith is woven in the Pauline gospel."[199]

Paul's confidence in the reality that change is possible, newness is tangible, and prayer and perseverance are intertwined is vivid throughout his epistles. Schreiner writes:

> Paul envisions a new direction, a new obedience, and a new affection in the lives of believers. He knows that sin afflicts us while we are in our mortal bodies (Rom 8:10, 23). He envisions the Christian life as a fierce struggle between competing desires while we are on earth (Gal. 5:16-18). And yet, the very reality of faith and the genuineness of the Spirit's work must be expressed in concrete ways. The new-covenant work of the Spirit Is not abstracted from everyday existence.[200]

The church in Thessalonica exemplifies the need for faith to continue to grow. Schreiner notes in a discussion of 1 Thessalonians 3, "even though their faith is growing and increasing and increasing, room for improvement exists since faith is not a static quality." The model uses a physiological metaphor that faith must be exercised as a muscle.[201] Let us note that even the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith (Luke 17:5).

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[197] The model uses capital 'H' Hope to signify the Hope that flows from Christ rather than lowercase 'h' for the hope derived from our human hope in all things fleshy and worldly.

[198] A.W. Tozer, *The Attributes of God,* vol. 1 (Chicago, WingSpread Publishers, 2007), 19.

[199] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 301.

[200] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 307.

[201] "Current research indicates that three primary mechanisms are involved in exercise-related muscle growth: muscle tension, muscle damage, and metabolic stress. Muscle tension. Tension exerted on muscles during resistance exercise is generally considered the most important factor in muscle development." The analogy is that in Christ, we must allow Him to re-conform us by allowing the Spirit to exert tension in those areas where we are weak so that we may rebuild in and through Him to be strengthened in our inner man (Eph 3:14–16). Brad Schoenfeld, "Trigger Muscle Growth," *Humann Kinetics*, accessed April 19, 2024, https://us.humankinetics.com/blogs/excerpt/triggering-muscle-growth#:~:text=Current%20research%20indicates%20that%20three,important%20factor%20in%20muscle%20development.

Metaphors

Metaphors are prevalent in Paul's epistles, and metaphor allows the speaker or writer to redescribe a reality in a way that demonstrates meaning-making. Douglas A. Campbell writes, "Metaphor is an extraordinary feature of human language."[202] Campell describes, "the key to understanding the power of metaphor. . . is that the speaker or writer can say something *is* something it actually is not, but by doing so certain qualities of the second *something* are attributed to the first." Transference is foundational to metaphor, where the author or speaker transfers meaning through reference to another understood construct. "It is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh."[203] Field notes that metaphorical language intends to preserve literal meaning while attributing an analogous secondary meaning to a metaphoric symbol that communicates truths by creating another way to make meaning and understand the world.[204] Dunn reminds us that Paul's metaphors "reflect the degree of Paul's rootedness in the real world."[205] Asumang writes, "One of the crucial features of Paul's strategies in all of his exhortations was to generate very strong and potent imageries in the minds of his hearers and readers. These images were intended to stimulate and invigorate the spiritual imagination of the people, and so rouse them to put the exhortations into practice."[206] It is also important to note

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[202] Douglas A. Campbell, "Metaphor, Reality, and Union with Christ," in Thate, Vanhoozer, and Campbell (eds), *"In Christ" in Paul,* 62 and J. David Sapir, "The Anatomy of Metaphor," in *The Social Use of Metaphor: Essays on the Anthropology of Rhetoric*, ed. J. David Sapir and J. Christopher Crocker, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 9.

[203] Campbell, "Metaphor, Reality, and Union with Christ," 62.

204 B. Field, "The Discourses Behind the Metaphor "The Church is the Body of Christ" as used by St. Paul and the Post-Paulines *Asia Journal of Theology* 6, no. 1 (1992): 88–107.

[205] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 627.

[206] Annang Asumang, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Put on the Last Adam: The Background of Paul's Ethical Instructions in Romans 13:11-14," Conspectus: *The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 4, no. 9 (2007), 2.

that:

> engagement with Greek philosophical traditions in the study of Pauline anthropology has proved unavoidable because the letters contain specific terms and metaphors that are widely used in philosophical writings. One common strategy for treating this use of philosophical language has been to insist that the terms and metaphors constitute secondary borrowings from opponents that Paul refashions into something dramatically new and different.[207]

It is also important to note that metaphors often have cultural derivations. Paul, no doubt, was influenced by many cultural forces, like all of us, and used relatable and understandable metaphors to his readers of the day. It is beyond the scope of this work to explain the cultural significance of his metaphors. Still, it can be noted that even in a radically different world in 2024, we can contextualize his metaphors and connect to them in meaningful ways for our current life in Christ. Andrew Ortony writes:

> The great pedagogic value of figurative uses of language is to be found in their potential to transfer learning and understanding from what is known to what is less well-known and to do so in a very vivid manner. ... Metaphors are necessary because they allow the transfer of coherent chunks of characteristics—perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and experiential—from a vehicle which is known to a topic which is less so.[208]

While books have been written on the metaphors of Paul, this section intends to briefly identify a few of the more significant metaphors as they are used in the model. It is not the intent to survey and explain all of Paul's metaphors. The approach is to identify a few metaphors, in one particular order, that are seen in some key ways to create a connection for the participant journeying through the model and facilitate meaning-making at a deeper level. As Konsmo notes, a fifth function of metaphor is its ability to convey "truth or by an *explanation* of "the way things are."[209]

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[207] Wasserman, "Paul among the Philosophers," 389.

[208] Andrew Ortony, "Why Metaphors are Necessary and Not Just Nice," *Educational Theory* 25, no. 1 (1975): 45-53.

[209] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 61.

This function is predominant in the model, and some would say it is "a cognitive function of metaphor."[210]

House of God, Temple of God, and Temple of the Holy Spirit

In Timothy 3:15, the church is seen as God's household. In 1 Corinthians 3:5-13, Paul refers to himself and Apollos as workers in God's house, in the church of Jesus Christ. Christ is the foundation (1 Cor–:11). The temple of the Holy Spirit is represented both by the individual believer (1 Cor 6:18–20) and corporately by the body of Christ (1 Cor 3:16–17 and Eph 2:19–22).[211] In Ephesians 2:20–22, the church is portrayed as God's temple. Schreiner writes, "The foundation of the house is God Himself. From Him, the house takes its shape and is utterly dependent on Him for its growth."[212] These metaphors communicate a place where God dwells; the individual believer and the communal community represent the body of Christ, which signifies a dwelling place for the triune God. God, the Father, and Jesus, the Son, build the house (1 Cor 3:7, 11). Konsmo notes that "Paul connects the human body of a Christin and geographical locations where God's presence can dwell. A mysterious integration of the physical and divine exists."[213]

Death

In Pauline sanctification theology, death is often a metaphor for sin (Gal 4:1). Death's power is the power of sin, a stronghold in the flesh. Paul also portrays resistance to God's will as sin and

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[210] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 61.

[211] Hoehner, *Ephesian*s. It is noteworthy that scholars debate whether 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 refers to individual believers or if it is used in a more corporate sense.

[212] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 5.

[213] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 114–15.

death. Death, predominantly for Paul, is a spiritual condition that is overcome initially through

Jesus' work on the cross, but one which is a continual struggle as depicted in Romans 7. Wasserman

writes:

> Taking death and dying in Romans 7:7–13 as metaphors for domination and control
> would mean that the complaints 'I died,' 'sin deceived and killed me', and worked 'death
> in me' would then be equivalent to a statement such as 'the irrational passions
> overpowered my mind.' The rich Platonic tradition of personifying irrational passions as
> malevolent, devious, and deceptive beings that overrun the soul and rise to rule in place
> of its natural master, reason, also fits Paul's text.[214]

From a sanctification perspective, death is seen as evil, unnatural, a power, and spiritual. Paul states

in Ephesians 2:1-6 we "were dead in trespasses and sin." It is clear in Romans 6:23 that "the wages

of sin are death." He references death through sin in Romans 5:12, dead in trespasses in Colossians

2:13, and warns if we "live according to the flesh," we die in Romans 8:13. For purposes of the

model, spiritual death is a genetic, inherited condition that is eradicated in our redemption but one

which can continue to resurrect itself as the Christ-follower, as the model states, 'indulges' the flesh

and chooses ways that are contrary to God. In other words, we walk in the flesh.

Foundation and Building

While the word "foundation" is not a metaphor *per se*, it is used metaphorically to denote

the person of Christ. The use of the concept of foundation, as with many of the metaphors,

originates in the Old Testament, where God says, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a

foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation" (Isa 28:16).

Paul reiterates the key point that the foundation, which is laid, is Jesus the Christ (1 Cor 3:11). Paul

uses the analogy in his message to the Corinthians to impart that he "as a skilled master builder, laid

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[214] Wasserman, "Paul among the Philosophers," 406.

a foundation," (1 Cor 3:10) and others are building upon it as we in Christ are to build upon the foundation, who is Christ spiritually. Christ is the cornerstone (Eph 2:20), and we are to stand firm on it as it is firm.[215]

In 1 Corinthians 3:9, Paul writes, "You are God's field, God's building." We examined above that we are also His temple. In this verse, we are seen as a work of the Lord; He is the builder, yet we, too, are called to build, as Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:11. We are builders building a building in one another, as the Spirit is building us in the likeness of Christ. We see this reflected in other scriptures, such as 1 Peter 2:5, and are exhorted to do our "work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" (Col 3:23).

Adoption

Grudem defines adoption as "an act of God whereby He makes us members of His family."[216] Adoption is often seen in Paul's soteriology (Eph 1:5). In Paul's focus on living Christ, he impresses within us the reality of our adoption. Paul's development is most vividly seen in Romans 8:12-17 where adoption is equivalent to sonship and produces the legal and ethical position of heirs. Konsmo notes, "the primary text [Rom 8:15] that discusses Spirit-adoption as Paul informs his readers that they have not received a spirit of slavery but rather the Spirit of adoption."[217] We are "all sons of God, through faith" (Gal 3:26) and are to live as children of God (Rom 9:8), as we are co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17). Williams writes, "It is our

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[215] Architecturally, the cornerstone is the first stone set in construction and orients a structure in a specific direction. Christ orients us to Himself. He was the first, the Alpha; in Him is all stability and strength. Britannica notes that "cornerstones symbolized "seeds" from which buildings would germinate and rise. Brittanica.com, "Cornerstone," accessed April 24, 2024.

[216] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 913.

[217] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 89.

privilege as children to come without hindrance into the very presence of God and to address God as "*Abba,*" Father, even as Jesus had done."[218]

The model emphasizes the intimacy of adoption, as Paul used it culturally, as adoption is often "a second class" term in our culture today. This intimacy allows His children to refer to Him as *Abba! Father!* (Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6). Grudem writes, "Paul sees clear evidence in the fact that the Holy Spirit bears witness in our hearts that we are God's children."[219] In the model, as His adopted children, we find a new identity in Christ that equips us to live differently and be changed inwardly through the Work of His Spirit, concurrently with the eschatological hope in the future redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23), which Paul views as "the fulfillment of our privileges of adoption."[220]

Clothing

The themes of "putting on" and "putting off" have been discussed previously. Yet, they are inherent in the metaphor of clothing, or, as Paul states, clothing ourselves with Christ (Gal 3:27). David J. Williams states that "the image of dressing (or better, of changing one's clothes) refers to position—our change of status with regard to God."[221] We put off the old man, and as the model uses it, we leave our old self in the closet when we clothe ourselves in the morning and choose to put on the new self. Williams suggests that "Paul may have adopted the figure of putting off old clothes and putting on new ones from Roman and Greek practice."[222] While all metaphors have

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[218] David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 65.

[219] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 913.

[220] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 913.

[221] Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*, 93.

[222] Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*, 94.

cultural nuances, Paul's clothing metaphor's depiction of representation is clear. In our justification, we have "put on Christ" (Rom 13:14), and in such, in our sanctification, we are to make no provision for the flesh, which requires that we clothe ourselves in the character of Christ and produce His fruit through His Spirit.

The salvific act of "putting on" is visible in Galatians 3:27. The renewing of the "new self" is seen in Colossians 3:10 as the believer "is renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator." Paul reminds the church in Ephesus that they 'were taught' to put on the new self and further reminded that the new self, which is representative of Christ, is to reflect us "as God's chosen ones" certain traits, attitudes, and actions (Col 3:12-14). The model uses the clothing metaphor and "putting on" and "putting off" as a reminder to choose metaphorical and even literal clothing that reflects the holiness of Christ.

Ambassador or Representative of Christ

Williams suggests that Paul uses the word ambassador "as a metaphor for ministry."[223] The most vivid example is 2 Corinthians 5:20, where Paul describes ministry and position as "ambassadors for Christ." In a fundamental sense, an ambassador is an emissary, an envoy, or an official representative of a leader or government. Our representation of Christ must have the import of a designated official sent to carry a message and present oneself worthy of the one who sent Him. As William reminds us, "Our role is to be ambassadors for Christ, commending his message as well as we can by our conduct."[224] This is echoed in the model, which emphasizes chosen conduct motivated by a desire to represent our Savior in but not of the world.

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[223] Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*, 151.

[224] Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*, 152.

Sacrifice and Fragrance

The salvific image of sacrifice is the person of Jesus Christ. In the model, the sanctified image of sacrifice is a life consecrated to Christ. Paul's metaphorical language is clear in Ephesians 5:2, yet deeply practical for the Christ-follower. First, we must "be imitators, as beloved children" (Eph 5:1). Second, we must "walk in love" (Eph 5:2). Third, we imitate and walk in love in such a way that demonstrates Christ's sacrificial love, which was considered a fragrant offering. It is outside the scope of our discussion, yet worthy to note, the Old Testament's reference to 'pleasing aroma' as a 'sweet fragrance in connection with the required sacrificial offerings to God (e.g., Gen 8:20-21). We are to be "the pleasing aroma of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15) and cannot fulfill that purpose without recognizing we are to live sacrificially in His sacredness. Williams writes, "[Paul] is counseling his readers how they should live, particularly how they should relate to one another as children of God. . . We should live as He did and love as He did, with a self-giving love."[225] In Williams' words, Paul uses 'fragrant aroma' to depict self-giving love (Phil 4:18). As such, we are to be 'poured out,' as the model and Murray would say, 'emptied of self' (e.g., Phil 2:4) as a sacrifice to God no matter the externalities.

Walking

The words "walk" (*Peripateō*) and "walking" are abundant in Paul and are classified by Konsmo as a metaphor of progression.[226] To note a few of Paul's exhortations, we read 2 Corinthians 5:7, which says, "We walk by faith and not by sight." Galatians 5:16 says, " Walk by the Spirit." Colossians 1:10 says, " Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord," and is similarly seen

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[225] Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*, 248.

[226] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit.*

in Ephesians 4:1, "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling." Ephesians 2:10 says we are to walk in the "good works" as "His workmanship." In Ephesians 4:2, "walk in love." Romans 6:4 says, "walk in newness of life." In Ephesians 5:8, "walk as children of light." The message is clear: we are to walk, "figuratively represent[ing] the totality of one's conduct on earth."[227] Further, Konsmo notes that "Paul uses walking as a metaphor for the Christian life more than 30 times in his letters."[228] Finally, it is noteworthy that the model uses "walk" in a structured way, life as a journey, in the orientation of 'up,' toward God, and in the ontological aspect of "setting goals and motivating actions."[229]

Fruit

A dominant theme in the model is the antithetical nature of the flesh and the Spirit, as seen in Galatians 5:16-18. Paul's continual contrast throughout his epistles of the works of the flesh as opposed to those of the Spirit is predominant in exhorting Christ-followers to live Christ in the Spirit both in walk and in the production of fruit, not only as stated in Galatians 5:22-23 but in all attitudes and action that birth from Christ-likeness and can be viewed metaphorically as fruit. The model draws from the structural notion of the metaphor as "the Christian life is a fruit."[230] Konsmo further states, "Spiritually healthy Christians ought to grow tangible fruit so that they can be identified as having the Spirit dwell within them or nourishing them."[231] A final important aspect of this metaphor is seen in its ontology as "the blessings of the Spirit are

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[227] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 101.

[228] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 103.

[229] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 106. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 27.

[230] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 111.

[231] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 111.

presented as within a container. . . Interpreters of this metaphor understand that the boundaries

presented by fruit do not entail all one needs to know about these spiritual virtues."[232] This is

significant, as we cannot know all there is to know about fruit, such as peace, love, joy, but we

can know we are to produce them and they can flow from how we choose to live our life in the

Spirit in Christ.

Other Devotional, Practical, and Ministry Theological Contributors to the Model

This section identifies authors whose works facilitate the believers' growth toward

maturity as they move through the model's modules. Participants often meet in small groups to

read through the works of these theologians known for their preaching, teaching, evangelism,

and apologetics. Some of these authors and works are mentioned further in the discussion of the

model's modules in Chapter Four, and others are listed at the end of this discussion as a resource

list provided to the participants as they journey through the model.

Andrew Murray: *Absolute Surrender*

Murray's *Absolute Surrender*, the first non-Bible book in Module 1, holds significant

importance in the model, advocating that surrender is a crucial aspect of the Lifestyle Who is

Christ. Previous participants have found the concepts of surrender and 'absolute' Challenging.

Murray's statement that surrender is a work of the Spirit is a key point. The model echoes this,

emphasizing that surrender is not a 'to-do list' and does not require 'perfect surrender.' Instead,

the Spirit will guide the process, as Murray affirms, starting with the prayer, "My God, I am

willing Thou shouldst make me willing."[233]

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[232] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 113.

[233] Murray, *Absolute Surrender*.

The model also emphasizes with Murray that surrender does not mean we lose who God created us to be in Him, with our uniqueness. Murray clarifies that God wants to use our individuality for His glory. (Rom 12:6-8). God purposefully made each of us unique so He can use His creation in accord with His perfect ways and plan (Rom 12:6-8). The model emphasizes, in accordance with Murray, that surrendering is a day-by-day, hour-by-hour, moment-by-moment process. As Paul says to the Galatians, " Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal 3:3). We are His living vessels so that the surpassing power of God may be made manifest in and through us (2 Cor 4:7). Our choice, living in an attitude of surrender influencing our actions is that the Spirit be manifested every hour and every moment in all ways.

Murray's work progresses from what he refers to as 'conditions' for surrender, which include God's expectation of our surrender, God's accomplishing surrender, God's accepting surrender, God's maintaining surrender, and God's blessing surrender. Murray reminds the reader that the Spirit who works the work of surrender is a Spirit of love (Rom 5:5). The model, as with Murray, reinforces that love is an unconditional gift, as He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Our love also displays God's binding power in community (Col 3:14). While the model is focused on individual progressive sanctification, it is always in the context of relational-community. Further, God's working power accomplishes His perfect purposes (Phil 2:13), and His working power accomplishes what we, in our humanity, experience as impossible. Murray writes:

> Your Christian life is to be a continuous proof that God works impossibilities. Your Christian life is to be a series of impossibilities made possible and actual by God's almighty power. That is what the Christian needs. He has an almighty God that he worships, and he must learn to understand that he does not need a little of God's power. But, he needs-with reverence be it said-the whole of God's omnipotence to keep him right, and to live like a Christian.[234]

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[234] Murray, *Absolute Surrender*, Chapter 5.

Another important viewpoint from both Paul and Murray is the wretchedness of man (Rom 7:24). Murray, in Chapter 6, refers to Romans 7 and 8 to reinforce the idea that we are led out of the spirit of bondage into the Spirit of liberty, echoing the model's and Paul's theme of freedom (Gal 5:1). Murray recognized man's impotence to help himself and the desperate dependance on the work of Christ and the Spirit in the believer. The emphasis on the Spirit as the sole agent for providing power for surrender, obedience, and freedom is vivid in Murray's work, echoing, "The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit" (Rom 14:17).

Further, God has called the church to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. We began in the Spirit but then tried to perfect the work that the Spirit had begun in the flesh by our effort. The model, with Paul and Murray, exhorts the Christ-follower to give up everything—surrender all—and wait upon the Lord to see the glory of God revealed in him. The model proposes that the beginning of the true Christian life is receiving the Holy Spirit, and The Christ-follower must live according to His guidance and power. To live a life acceptable and pleasing to God is to live and walk in the power of the Spirit every moment of the day. There is no power when we choose to walk in our power, to walk in the flesh by yielding to the Spirit. We have begun in the Spirit, Chapter 7, and we must not neglect the Spirit, as the power of God keeps us. He keeps our hearts in His holy presence as he fulfills Philippians 2:13.

Finally, the imagery of "we as the branches and He as the Vine" connects us to the cry for desperate dependance advanced by the model. The fruit of the tree, metaphorically in the model, is represented as absolute dependance, the realization that all nourishment flows from the Vine, deep restfulness, as the branch solely needs to remain closely connected; close communion through close connection, deep fellowship with the Vine and the brethren as the branch abides, and absolute surrender in the imitation of Christ as announced in the Message translation" think

of yourselves the way Christ thought of Himself" (Phil 2:5-11, MSG). Murray writes, "Lord, everything in my life has to be in most complete harmony with my position as a branch of Thee, the blessed Vine."[235]

A.W. Tozer*: The Crucified Life and the Attributes of God*

Tozer's *The Crucified Life* is the second non-Bible book participants read in their journey through the model. Tozer defines the crucified life as "the life Christ ransomed on the cross, redeemed from the judgment of sin, and made a worthy acceptable sacrifice unto God."[236] With its profound implications, this definition promises a transformative journey toward spiritual growth and enlightenment.[237] Drawing from Fenelon, Tozer discusses spiritual perfection, a concept Paul describes as following after to apprehend from Philippians 3:12. According to Tozer, this life is one of the "absolute death of ego and resurgence of Christ."[238] Thematically, Tozer identifies areas that the model emphasizes, aligned with Tozer's identification of a few of "the veils that obscure God's Face."[239]

According to Tozer, pride and stubbornness are foremost and powerful because they are directly connected to pride and ego, an inflated view of oneself. The model asserts that the flesh is at the root of our challenges and battles and is often controlled by what is deemed right in one's own sight, usurping the will of God to have its own way, as Paul is quick to remind us in

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[235] Murray, *Absolute Surrender*, Chapter 7.

[236] A.W. Tozer, *The Crucified Life* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2011), 596.

[237] Tozer, *The Crucified Life*, 607.

[238] Tozer, *The Crucified Life*, 7.

[239] Tozer, *The Crucified Life*, Chapter 10.

Romans 7:15–16. As previously noted, throughout, the flesh is antithetical to the Spirit, and self-will is antithetical to the will of God. Pride is inconsistent with humility, and we are called to, in humility, count others as more significant (Phil 2:3), for "if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal 6:3). Further stubbornness is the flesh holding fast to itself as a blockage clogging our arteries and preventing the Christ-follower from pressing forward and pursuing Christ, acting as a veil obscuring the face of God, the One who in all cases provides the solution for all and the way to all. Pride and stubbornness distort the importance of God's authority in our lives and block us from walking in obedience (Rom 6:16).

Self-will is another veil and a frequent topic in all Modules of the model. Self-will is a natural man's way to move, breathe, accomplish, and function in all ways. According to the world's ways, self-will is a badge of honor. In the kingdom of God, self-will is poisonous to the soul and destructive to the mind and body. Self-will always usurps God's will. Self-will distorts the smiling face of God and veils the fact that God will always have our best interest in mind, full stop, in the model's vernacular. Self-will is only concerned with the satisfaction of its desires. The "desires of the flesh" are expressions of the old nature and are continually battling for control through the exertion of self-will.

In the model, self-will is often connected to striving, a word the model categorizes on the flesh side of the ledger. Self-will is also confused with constructs of autonomy and self-determination. By world standards, self-actualization is admirable, and fierce independence and autonomy are admired and worshipped. While the efficacy of self is psychologically necessary for spiritual growth, it highlights the belief that one can control, or as the model states, choose attitudes and actions that shape their decisions. In the model, it is a belief that one can actively participate with the Spirit, as the lead change agent, in their lives to create new neural pathways

and live differently in Christ.[240]

Another veil is fear. In the model, fear is defined as a state of mind, a physiological reaction, an adopted perception, or even predetermination or expectation that something you value is at risk.[241] When one fears, the sympathetic nervous system is activated triggering fight or flight mode, promoting a choice: exit or engage, confront or cower, run or freeze. Satan, the world, the flesh, and even well-intentioned Christian friends can convince the Christ-follower that any fear is warranted, justified, or appropriate. Do not misunderstand as there is a place for real, appropriate fear; yet, usually, most fear circles back to a doubt in oneself and a distortion of the truth of God's ability, His love, plan, care, goodness, and as the model states, fill in the blank a term which means whatever word, or words is best suited to specifically naming the blockage. For example, the Christ-follower must ask with Tozer:

> Do I believe that God has my best in mind? Or is there a bit of fear in my heart obscuring His good intentions? My circumstances are no indication of whether the smiling favor of God is upon me. fear causes me to look around at my circumstances instead of up at the smiling face of God.[242]

Fear is also the enemy of faith. Fear cripples belief and impacts trust. The model grounds participants in the attributes of God that they may anchor, as the model posits, in the truth of the character of God when the externalities block one's view, and the flesh pulls the Christ-follower

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[240] Lowe and Lowe remind us, "The imperatives in Paul's epistles and elsewhere in the New Testament have no meaning if we think of the Christian's role as passive regarding our sanctification or spiritual maturity. While we are recipients of the indicative realities Paul describes, we are activists toward the imperatives that flow from those indicatives. The obedience of faith refers to our initial response to the gospel and our subsequent persistence in gospel living." Lowe and Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age*, 147.

[241] According to Chand and Marwaha, "Fear is an automatic neurophysiological state of alarm characterized by a fight or flight response to a cognitive appraisal of present or imminent danger (real or perceived). Anxiety is linked to fear and manifests as a future-oriented mood state that consists of a complex cognitive, affective, physiological, and behavioral response system associated with preparation for the anticipated events or circumstances perceived as threatening." Suma P. Chand and Raman Marwaha, "Anxiety," in *StatPearls* (Treasure Island: StatPearls Publishing, 2024), 1.

[242] Tozer, *The Crucified Life*, 131.

into its web of perception, which activates disbelief. When fear is in control, there is no joy or

peace (Rom 15:13), and tendencies to withdraw, isolate, control, and usurp the truth of God's

word, which is crowded out (Rom 10:17) by desperate dependance on self rather than God.

Tozer reminds us, "Our God is a jealous God and suffers no rival; whatever rival you construct

becomes an obstruction between you and your God."[243]

As a starting point, it is necessary to acknowledge that it can be hard to look to God and

believe in His attributes, as we seldom see them in a broken and fallen world which is why

Tozer's book, *The Attributes of God*, is important in the journey. The challenge for all these

attributes is to believe the truth of the scripture over experiences with broken people. God is not

a broken person. God is holy, righteous, and true. God is God. The model's discussion of

anchoring (Eph 3:17, Col 2:6-7) focuses on God's character and attributes. As stated previously,

the initial anchoring question, "Do you believe God is Who He says he is according to the Truth

of His Word?" is derived from God's character and attributes. While all of His described

attributes cannot contain His totality, the model draws from a few key attributes that impact

belief, trust, and faith. Tozer writes:

> Faith is of two kinds: nominal and real. The nominal faith that accepts what it is told and
> can quote text after text to prove it. . .But there is another kind of faith: it is faith that
> depends upon the character of God. . . The man of real faith believes the Word, but it has
> been illuminated so that he knows what the Word means. . . The Bible is a whole series
> of highways all leading toward God. And when the text has been illuminated and the
> believer of the text knows that God is the end toward which he is moving, then that man
> has real faith.[244]

Attributes that are instrumental for choices of surrender, dependance, and obedience.

Attributes, some of which are imputed, and some of which are His alone, that, from the model's

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[243] Tozer, *The Crucified Life*, 133.

[244] A.W. Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volumes 1 and 2* (Chicago, Moody Publishers, 2001), 19-21.

perspective, are necessary to "run the race with endurance" (1 Cor 9:24, Heb 12:10). In this

section, a few of the key attributes will be identified and briefly defined as they relate to the

participants use in his journey through the modules in the model. Tozer's *The Attributes of God*

is the third non-Bible book participants read in Module 2 as the participant prepares to infuse

God's Word. [245]

Infinitude and Immensity. All in life is infinite. All in life has an immensity, a

weightiness, as evaluated through human limitations. He is immeasurable. Digesting, as the

model, designates the truth of God's attributes is essential for the spiritual nourishment of faith.

The Bible is clear: Faith can grow, and as we digest the immeasurable enormity and complete

comprehensiveness of God, we grow our faith, which is essential to the journey. Tozer writes,

"Christianity is a gateway into God. And then when you get into God, "with Christ in God," then

you're on a journey into infinity, into infinitude."[246] Tozer speaks of the enormity of the universe

and its impossibility to measure or comprehend and then writes:

> Then there is God. Goad has the attributes of immanence and immensity. God is
> immanent, which means you don't have to go distances to find God. He is in everything.
> He is right here. . . So it is impossible to think of a place where God is not."[247]

Illustrative Pauline scriptures connected with His infinitude and immensity are Colossians 1:17,

3:1–3 and Romans 11:33.

Sovereignty. Embracing and accepting God's sovereignty is critical for surrendering and

relinquishing self-will.[248] Grudem combines power and omnipotence with God's sovereignty. He

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[245] Tozer, *Attributes of God.*

[246] Tozer, *Attributes of God*, 3.

[247] Tozer, *Attributes of God.,* 22–3.

[248] Tozer writes: "The matter of man's free will versus God's sovereignty can be explained in this way:

defines God's omnipotence as "God is able to do all His Holy will."[249] Grudem then defines

sovereignty as "God's exercise of power over His creation." [250] Tozer writes:

> To say God is sovereign is to say that He is supreme over all things, that there is no one
> above Him, that He is absolute Lord over creation. It is to say that His Lordship over
> creation means that there is nothing out of His control, nothing that God has not foreseen
> and planned.[251]

While the footnotes briefly explore sovereignty and free will, it is important to note that "there

are some things that God cannot do. God cannot will or do anything that would deny his own

character."[252] For example, God cannot lie, and God will not tempt. God also never condemns.

These truths are important for the participant in the model, as human experience is filled with

those who lie and tempt, and as humans, we are prone to attributing experienced attributes to our

perception of God rather than seeing Him clearly for who He declares Himself to be in the truth

of His Word. Illustrative Pauline scriptures connected with His sovereignty are Colossians 1:16–

17 and Philippians 2:10.

God's sovereignty means that He is in control of everything, that He planned everything for the beginning. Man's free will means that he can, anytime he wants, make almost any choice he pleases (within his human limitations, of course). Man's free will can apparently defy the purpose of God and will against the will of God." As the model states, indulging the flesh creates a battle of wills, and while God's will ultimately be accomplished, your will may prevail at the moment in disobedient pursuit of the flesh. Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volumes 2*, 159. Grudem notes: "When we ask whether we have "free will," it is important to be clear as to what is meant by the phrase. scripture nowhere says that we are "free" in the sense of being outside of God's control or of being able to make decisions that are not caused by anything. (This is the sense in which many people seem to assume we must be free; see discussion below.) Nor does it say we are "free" in the sense of being able to do right on our own, apart from God's power. Our ability to make willing choices simply reflects God's will and his ability to make willing choices. However, if we were to be totally free in our choices, we would be equal to God in our will, and that is something we may never expect either in this life or in the one to come." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 438. Carson says, "We tend to use one to diminish the other; we tend to emphasize one at the expense of the other. But a responsible reading of the scripture prohibits such reductionism." D.A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Praying with Paul* (Grand Rapids, IL: Baker Academic, 2015), 89.

[249] Grudem, Systematic Theology, 258.

[250] Grudem, Systematic Theology, 258.

[251] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 2*, 154.

[252] Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 258.

Truthfulness and Faithfulness. Simply defined, faithful can mean "loyal, constant, staunch, steadfast, and resolute. It can mean firm in adherence and implies unswerving adherence."[253] God is the sovereign Creator who keeps his promises and is very faithful. Tozer writes, "Faithfulness is that in God which guarantees that He will never be or act inconsistent with Himself. You can put that down as an axiom."[254] God is faithful, dependable, and always true to Himself. He is trustworthy in His faithfulness. Grudem states, " God's truthfulness means that he is the true God, and all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth. . . [this] definition affirms that all of God's knowledge is true and is the final standard of truth."[255] Grudem's definition of faithfulness is aligned with Tozer's as Grudem states, "God's faithfulness means that God will always do what he has said and fulfill what He has promised."[256] It is also important to note that God's trustworthiness is often connected to His faithfulness. The Amplified Bible phrases 1 Corinthians 1:9 as "God is faithful [He is reliable, trustworthy and ever true to His promise—He can be depended on], and through Him you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The model reminds the participant that in a broken world, people will hurt and disappoint, but God does not disappoint, and God *is* trustworthy, as He will faithfully always bring to pass His perfect plan. Illustrative Pauline scriptures connected with His faithfulness and Truthfulness are 1 Thessalonians 5:24, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 10:13, and Titus 1:2.

Merciful, Just, and Good. Tozer dedicates a chapter to each one of these attributes. The

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[253] Miriam Webster Dictionaries, "faithful," accessed April 20, 2024.

[254] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 2*, 177.

[255] Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 234.

[256] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 233.

model combines them to reinforce areas where our experiences with people often differ from the Truth of God. According to the Bible, people are inherently 'not good,' are not very good at showing mercy, and are often unfair, as injustice is a significant area of struggle for many. God shows mercy. People want vindication and retaliation (Rom 12:19). The natural man excels at punishing others for real and perceived harm. God is merciful, while he is just and Holy. Tozer writes in his chapter on God's goodness that "God is kindhearted, gracious, good-natured, and benevolent in intention."[257] Grudem notes that "the goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good and all that God is and does is worthy of approval."[258] As Christ-followers, appropriating the truth of God's goodness is imperative to our apprehension of His goodness in praxis, as we are encouraged in Romans 12:12. We are to reflect and imitate Christ, and in so doing, we are called to do good (Gal 6:10).

Tozer clarifies that "justice is not something that God has. Justice is something that God is," and finds it indistinguishable from his attribute of righteousness.[259] Grudem also states that righteousness and justice "are considered together as speaking of one attribute of God in Hebrew and Greek."[260] This statement applies to all His attributes, as God cannot be other than He is. As Christ-followers pursuing the Lifestyle of Christ, we must remind ourselves that God is who He has declared Himself to be, no matter our experiences or externalities.

Tozer also identifies God's mercy as a part of His being as "not something God has but Something God is . . . for mercy is what God is, and God is eternal. And God is infinite."[261]

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[257] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 1,* 42.

[258] Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 236.

[259] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 1,* 63.

[260] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 243.

[261] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 1,* 77.

Tozer claims that "goodness is the source of mercy." The Christ-follower must digest that God is good, as the world is so wicked, and that His goodness paves the way to His graceful extension of His mercy through His forgiveness in relationship with us through the cross of Christ. Grudem writes, "God's mercy, grace, and patience may be seen as three separate attributes or as specific aspects of God's goodness. . . God's mercy means God's goodness toward those in misery and distress."[262] Illustrative Pauline scriptures connected with His goodness, as seen in the Christ-follower, are Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 5:9, Galatians 6:10, and Romans 12:9. God's justice is seen in Romans 12:9, and His mercy in Ephesians 2:4-5 and Titus 3:5.

Love. According to Tozer, "The love of God is the hardest of His attributes."[263] God's love is very hard for His creation because this world and his children do not reflect His love well. We excel at criticism and judgment but do not excel at love, yet it is the greatest commandment to love God and one another (Matt 22:37). God's love is unconditional in that we cannot be separated from it (Rom 8:38–39). God's love is steadfast and unchanging. God's love comforts us. God's love is revealed to us through Jesus Christ. God's love is poured into us through the Holy Spirit. God's love compels us to love one another. God's love is perfect. Once again, as with many, if not all, the attributes of God, it is hard for us to truly internalize and personalize because we have been failed by and hurt by broken people. Yet, God is perfect in His love for you and me. We are confronted with another opportunity to choose to believe in His love. Tozer reminds us, "God can do nothing except that He does it in love."[264] In the model, we learn to identify His truth, re-frame our percepts, anchor into His truth, and shift into a choice that no

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[262] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 239.

[263] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 2,* 196.

[264] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 2,* 197.

matter the externalities, God's attributes do not change, including His love. Amid horrific externalities, God still loves and cares (1 Pet 5:7).

Grudem defines God's love as " eternally giving of himself to others."[265] This construct and way of being and doing is anathema to the natural man, who is inherently selfish and self-centered. God's love is connected to His selflessness. God is love (1 John 4:8). Grudem continues, "the self-giving that characterizes the Trinity finds clear expression in God's relationship to humanity, and especially to sinful human beings (1 John 4:10)."[266] As Tozer summarizes, "God's love is such that it permeates His essential being and conditions all that He does. Nothing God ever does, or ever did, or ever will do, is done separately from the love of God" and nothing can nor will separate us from the love of God (Rom 8:31-39).[267] Illustrative Pauline scriptures connected with God's love are Romans 5:5, 8, 8:37-39, 13:8, Ephesians 2:4-5, 3:19, Colossians 3:14, and 1 Corinthians 16:14.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Sermon on the Mount

The fourth non-Bible book is Lloyd-Jones' *Sermon on the Mount*.[268] Lloyd-Jones writes that one should not preach/teach unless God has given the message and then wait for God to lead and guide. He felt a compulsion by the Spirit to preach the messages that compose this book because of the condition of the Christian church, which is "its superficiality."[269] He believes

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[265] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 238.

[266] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*.

[267] Tozer, *The Attributes of God, Volume 2,* 198.

[268] D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959-1960).

[269] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 5.

there is a failure to take the Bible seriously and "allow it to speak to us."[270] He believes that merely reading the Bible and reading it mechanically is not sufficient and that we need to be cautious with the rules and regulations of the spiritual life. He believes it is insufficient to be content that we have read according to a plan and then rush off "without thought and meditation."[271] He also believes we should be cautious about predisposition and be wary of approaching the Bible with a theory lest our reading be controlled by the theory.

Lloyd-Jones believes Jesus preached it for the purpose of *praxis*. He believes one of its purposes is "to give an exposition of the kingdom as something spiritual," as something within us (you and I) that "governs and controls the heart and mind and outlook."[272] He exhorts that "Christ died to enable us to live the Sermon on the Mount" and to show us "the absolute need of the new birth" as the Beatitudes should "crush" us and show us our "utter helplessness" [apart from Christ]. He believes the world needs "true Christians"– those who "live the Christian life."[273] Lloyd-Jones warns the [Christ-follower] not to become so "immersed in the mechanics of scripture that we miss its message."[274] He reiterates that the Sermon is for application – to live and practice it. He believes its message is for the believer, and its specific injunctions should not be discussed with non-believers because they cannot live its truth. His methodology is to "take the Sermon as a whole before we come to the details" and to "realize that no part of the Sermon can be understood except in the light of the whole."[275] There is a logical sequence and a spiritual

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[270] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 6.

[271] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*.

[272] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 11.

[273] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 12-13.

[274] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 15.

[275] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 16.

order and sequence. He divides the Sermon into the general and the particular.

The model draws from this pivotal point as articulated by Loyd-Jones:

One of the essential and most obvious things about a Christian is that he is a man who lives always realizing he is in the presence of God. The Christian is a man whose every action should be performed in the light of this intimate relationship to God. He is not a free agent. He is a child of God, so that everything he does, he does from this standpoint of being well-pleasing in His sight." Our attitude is different because "of your relationship to God and because of your utter dependence on Him."[276]

Lloyd-Jones' book is a part of each Christ-followers personal prescription plan in Module 7 as "The Sermon is a description of character and not a code of ethics or morals," and it Christ's character that we are to imitate through conformity by the as we reflect Christ in all for all.[277] The model's emphasis on learning to be in Christ before one can do effectively for Christ is aligned with Lloyd-Jones' statement that "the Christian gospel places all its primary emphasis upon being, rather than doing."[278] In Chapter Eight, Lloyd-Jones refers to the tests of spiritual appetites, which, when applied in the model, challenges Christ-followers to ask whether they see their own false righteousness that places confidence in the flesh (Phil 3) and a deep dependance on Christ, creating a hunger and thirst for His righteousness stemming from an undivided love, living for the glory of God.[279]

A dominant, continual thematic emphasis throughout Lloyd-Jones' work is a life dominated by Christ and an unlikeness to everyone who is not a Christian.[280] The model's vision is to provide a practical and meaningful way for those who profess Christ to become Christ-

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[276] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 20.

[277] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 21.

[278] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 81.

[279] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 95.

[280] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 119.

followers and cultivate a spiritual and therapeutic toolbox to live in, but not of the world. "The Christian is not someone who lives in isolation."[281] He continues, "We are to do these things in such a way as to lead other men to glorify Him, and glory in Him, and give themselves to Him:" This is at the heart of the model.[282]

E. M. Bounds: *The Complete Works on Prayer*

The fifth non-Bible book is Bounds' *The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer*.[283] Participants encounter this book in Module 6 of the model. While prayer is emphasized throughout the modules of the model, Bound's book is used in a facilitated group discussion study to discuss the internalized application of this powerful work for application in the Christ-follower's ways of conceptualizing and practicing prayer. Before this section briefly highlights a few select themes extracted from Bound's comprehensive work, it is useful to remind ourselves that spirituality is generally understood to mean the experiencing of God and the transformation of lives as outcomes of that experience. Spirituality thus refers to a lived experience of God and the life of prayer and action that results from this."[284]

Dependence on prayer is woven throughout Pauline theology. Even in his epistles where the word is not specifically stated, such as in the epistle to the Galatians, Paul models prayer, as in Galatians 6:1-5. Further, there are numerous illustrations of Paul's exhortations for prayer (1 Thess 5:17) and examples of Paul's prayers.[285] According to Hendry, "Prayer is the lifeline of

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[281] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 129.

[282] Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 155.

[283] E. M. Bounds, *The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990).

[284] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*. (London: Blackwell, 1999), 109.

[285] D.A. Carson wrote an excellent book titled *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Praying with Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015).

theology' because it is the en route to knowing God." [286] There is likely little dispute surrounding

the importance of prayer for the Apostle Paul. Hardin reminds us that "the most notable aspects

of Paul's spirituality are his practice of prayer."[287] Fee notes that Paul "was a prayer before he

was a missioner of a thinker."[288] Suffice it to say that the Christ-follower cannot sustain the

Lifestyle Who is Christ without prayer and his dependence upon his connection to God through

the Spirit and prayer. Further, as the Word makes clear in Romans 8:26, the Spirit and prayer are

powerfully interconnected. Finally, it is important to note that according to Van der Merwe,

"Paul's prayers are the prayers of an apostle, a missionary with eschatological urgency in

mind."[289]

One of the phrases used in the model is extracted from Bounds' use of the term

"importunate prayer," which is a mighty movement in the soul toward God. It is a stirring of the

deepest forces of the soul toward the throne of heavenly grace. It is the ability to hold on, press

on, and wait."[290] Bounds highlights that the entryway into a study on prayer is the connection

between prayer and faith. "He must believe where he cannot prove . . . a faith which realizes,

which appropriates which takes. Such faith is a consciousness of the divine, an experienced

communion, a realized certainty.[291] While the model begins with the necessity for prayer in

Module 1 and connects the growth of faith with the infusion of the Word in Module 2, it is as

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[286] G. S. Hendry, "The Lifeline of Theology," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* (1972), 30.

[287] Hardin*, Is a Pauline Spirituality still Viable*, 137.

[288] Gordon, D. Fee, *Paul The Spirit and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 147.

[289] Dirk van der Merwe, "Prayer, the encounter and participation, the experience: A Pauline exhortation towards a spirituality of prayer," *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 39, no. 1 (2018), 4.

[290] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 39.

[291] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 13.

Bounds states that "faith thrives in an atmosphere of prayer." In Module 6, the last collective

module before the personalized plan for continued development in Module, Bounds book is read

and discussed in community, emphasizing shared experience combined with internalized

personal application.[292]

Prayer and trust are also connected in Bounds' work, and God's trustworthiness is an

attribute emphasized in Module 1. If the Christ-follower struggles with trusting God, it is

challenging to believe God, pursue God, and pray to God 'importunately.' Bounds writes, "Trust

is faith become absolute . . . Trust is firm belief . . . Trust sees God doing things here and now. . .

trust grows nowhere so readily and richly as in the prayer chamber."[293] The Module begins with

the attributes of God in Module 1 before moving to infusion of the Word of God in Module 2

because, as Bounds states, "trust in the person of God must precede trust in the Word of God."[294]

Bounds also connects prayer to desire and defines it as "a deep-seated craving, an intense

longing. . . The stronger the sense of need before God, the greater should be the desire."[295] The

model is designed on the belief that the Christ-follower must choose a desire for the person of

God, in intimacy of relationship, and conformity to the character of Christ, in loving obedience

to the will and way of God. Prayer is our way to communicate personally and intimately with the

Creator. Bounds clearly reinforces that "there can be no successful praying without consuming

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[292] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 21.

[293] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 25.

[294] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*.

[295] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 29.

desire."[296] Bounds notes that Paul was a fervent man with a fervent spirit of prayer.[297] Bounds writes that "Prayer must be red hot . . . It is the fervent prayer that is effectual and that availeth."[298]

As the model is for *praxis*, another thematic emphasis from Bounds' work is the connection of prayer to character and conduct. The model uses the term 'being' to reflect character, the character of Christ in the Christ-follower in attitude, and 'doing' to reflect conduct, words, and actions. Bounds defines 'conduct as what we do. Character is what we are. Conduct is the outward life. Character is the life unseen."[299] He further notes that:

> In the study of Paul's epistle, there is one thing that stands out, clearly and unmistakably – the insistence oh holiness of heart and righteousness of life. Paul does not seek, so much, to promote what is termed 'personal work,' nor is the leading theme of his letters deeds of charity. It is the condition of the human heart and the blamelessness of the personal life, which form the burden of the writings of Paul.[300]

This Lifestyle, Who is Christ, demands obedience and vigilance. A commitment to pursue and follow, obey, the will of God. Bounds advocates that "nothing short of implicit obedience will satisfy God . . . [and] 'by every token, man can, through prayer, obtain the ability to do this very thing."[301] He further notes that "implicit and perfect obedience is the state to which the man of prayer is called . . . inward fidelity and love, together with outward cleanness, are put down as

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[296] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 33.

[297] *The Ability of God* is another book in some post-module follow-up groups and is recommended for the Christ-follower as Pink walks through the prayers of the Apostle Paul. Arthur W. Pink, *The Ability of God: Prayers of the Apostle Paul* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000).

[298] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 35.

[299] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 47.

[300] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*.

[301] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 53.

concomitants of acceptable praying."[302] Further, there must be vigilance. The New Century Bible

translates Ephesians 6:18-20 as "Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers, asking

for everything you need. To do this, you must always be ready and never give up. Always pray

for all God's people." Bounds suggests that the life of the Christian is one of warfare; it "entails

effort, wrestling, struggling. It demands the putting forth of the full energy of the Spirit" through

fervent and vigilant prayer.[303]

Many other themes transverse the model's teaching on prayer, as seen in Bounds, such as

prayer involves the entirety of oneself, requires humility and devotion, includes praise and

thanksgiving, emphasizes the Word of God, and reflects the "Divine Teacher of Prayer,"[304]

Paul's model is the model for the model, as Paul had an honest and vibrant relationship with the

Lord, which enabled him to pray passionately for the churches and the people of God. This is

exemplified in one of the most important statements made by Paul regarding prayer in 1

Thessalonians 3:10, "as we night and day keep praying most earnestly." Other examples that

reinforce Paul's commitment to prayer are found in 1 Corinthians 7:5, where he commands the

Corinthians to devote themselves to prayer, and in Romans 12:12, where he commands devotion to

prayer. Ironside comments:

> it is remarkable how often the apostle speaks of bearing up God's people in prayer. He was
> a man of intense activity: preaching, visiting from house to house, often working at tent-
> making for his daily bread; and yet he found time to intercede with God in behalf of all the
> churches which he was used of the Lord to found, as well as remembering in prayer those of
> whom he learned . . .[305]

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[302] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, 55.

[303] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, .61.

[304] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer*, Book Four, Chapter 5.

[305] H. A. Ironside, *Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1947), 12.

Prayer was paramount to Paul, and this is a reminder for Christ-followers that prayer was central to both his life and his ministry, as it is to ours, and for those pursuing intimacy and depth of relationship with Christ, as advanced by the model.

Miscellaneous

Numerous other books are recommended as companions along this journey of Christ Who is a Lifestyle. The purpose of this section is to briefly name a few, as they have been influential to the development of the model and to those who have journeyed therapeutically and spiritually along its way. These include, in no particular order:

- Arthur W. Pink, *The Ability of God* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1967).

- Arthur W. Pink, *The Nature of God* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1975).

- Andrew Murray, *Humility* (Morgantown, Tole Publishing, 2018).

- Andrew Murray, *Waiting on God* (Radaclassic.com, 2018).

- Andrew Murray, *The Secret of the Abiding Presence* (Fort Washington: CLC Publications, 2009).

- Andrew Murray, *The Secret of Spiritual Strength* (New Kensington, Whitaker House, 1984).

- Fenelon, *Let Go* (New Kensington, Whitaker House, 1973).

- Robert J. Edmonson and Hal M. Helms, eds., *The Complete Fenelon* (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2008).

- Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).

- Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing House, 1952).

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

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2008).

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: HarperOne, 1954).

- A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: HarperOne, 1961).

- Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Fort Washington: CLC Publishers, 1957).

- Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961).

- J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973).

- James L. Snyder, ed., *The Essential Tozer Collection* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2009).

Summary

Woven throughout and together, Pauline theology drives the *telos* of the model and highlights its *praxis.* The predominant metaphors are derived from scripture and used reflectively to make meaning for the Christ-follower in the day-to-day call to represent and reflect Christ. The theological contributors echo the truth of scripture through messages written for the churchgoer to emphasize its applicability to all who claim Christ as Savior and Lord and want to grow in their knowledge of Him. As noted throughout the review of Pauline theology, the crucified Christ is at the core of his Christology. Christ's death and resurrection are at the heart of faith (1 Cor 15:17). Christ's atoning sacrifice paved the way for the crucifixion of the old nature (Rom 8:3, 2 Cor 5:14). The Holy Spirit is important as the facilitator, power, and guide for progressive sanctification. Paul's metaphors, key phrases, and undergirding of exhortation, admonitions, and encouragement to pursue and follow Christ and Him alone are at the core of the model's foundation and structure. Paul's soteriology drives his anthropology, reflecting

man's sinful state with its juxtaposition to the Spirit. The model, aligned with Paul, depicts flesh as representative of sinful desire incapable of transformation.

The model emphasizes that living in a way that displeases God is a choice influenced and impacted by the chosen controlling force and factors to which the Christ-follower is allowing oneself to pursue. This does not diminish the power of the flesh, nor the battle as depicted in Romans 7, But God, there is a force Who is greater, One who has overcome sin's eschatological significance, and the same One who freely gave way for life through faith by grace (Eph 2:8-9) to provide a way to walk in the power of the Spirit and not the power of the flesh (Gal 5:16). The model emphasizes outworkings that flow from justification and are revealed in progressive sanctification.

The model emphasizes the need for intrapersonal development as well as interpersonal responsibility. Paul evangelized, even lived among, and served as a spiritually-developing influence, assuming responsibility for his continued spiritual development and the responsibilities inherent in spiritual formation, discipleship, and mentorship. He felt a continual call and pull to help them grow in the faith. The model emphasizes personal spiritual transformation and growth, recognizing that the individual is relational and lives in a relational community, an important concept in 2 Corinthians. In Christ, the community is critical. The model's emphasis on new creation is interwoven throughout its call to Christ, Who is a Lifestyle. The epistemological shift from the old self to the new one parallels Paul's personal journey, as depicted in his epistles and 2 Corinthians 5:16-17.

Discussing metaphors and identifying a few predominant metaphors create a connection for the participant journeying through the model to facilitate deeper meaning-making. Throughout Pauline theology, embedded in the model is the individual's role and responsibility in

relationship to Christ and life in Christ, as is reflected in the inherent tension of Paul's soteriology and eschatology, as reflected in several of his metaphors, such as adoption and death. In the model, as His adopted children, we find a new identity in Christ that equips us to live differently and be changed inwardly through the Work of His Spirit, concurrently with the eschatological hope in the future redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23). 'Putting on' and 'putting off' have been discussed previously. Yet, they are inherent in the metaphor of clothing, or, as Paul states, clothing ourselves with Christ (Gal 3:27). We put off the old man, and as the model uses it, we leave our old self in the closet when we clothe ourselves in the morning and choose to put on the new self. In the model, the sanctified image of sacrifice is a life consecrated to Christ. Paul's metaphorical language is evident in Ephesians 5:2, yet deeply practical for the Christ-follower. Paul uses 'fragrant aroma' to depict self-giving love (Phil 4:18). As such, we are to be 'poured out,' as the model and Murray would say, 'emptied of self' (e.g., Phil 2:4) as a sacrifice to God no matter the externalities. Paul uses the words "walk" and "walking" abundantly. The model uses the structured metaphor to represent the idea of a journey for the Lifestyle of Who is Christ.

Finally, the other devotional, practical, and ministry theological contributors to the model represent many considered significant influencers in Christian ministry. Murray, Tozer, Lloyd-Jones, and Bounds were all ministers and preachers known for an expository approach to scripture emphasizing *praxis*. They are known for their no-sense approach to God and His Word and equipped many with a practical and deeply meaningful way to live Christ. Those who have walked the Lifestyle Who is Christ have found significant conviction in growth in the books that are integrated as reading resources throughout the modules in the model.

CHAPTER 4: THE MODEL AND ITS MODULES

This chapter delves into the crucial theological, psychological, and neuroscience/medical science pillars that underpin the model and its Modules. The model's spiritual formation process, akin to the construction of a house, is a key focus. The journey, as the model terms it, is intricately woven throughout Module 1: The Detoxification Process, inviting one to delve deep into the soil of one's life and assess its condition for the work of the Lord. The framing process, the development pattern, is derived from the 3-main pillars: theological, psychological, and neuroscience/medical science. Within the framing process is the undergirding of God's Word, Module 2: Infusion, to ensure that the detoxified soil is ready for Christ to be the firm Foundation (1 Cor 3:11). The plumbing and electrical work, the systems that make all flow within the structure are installed in Module 3: Absorption-Digestion and Module 4: Monitor-Heart Check. In these Modules, the emphasis is on ensuring that the internal systems are optimally functional for the health of the individual and the body.[1] The interior and exterior finishes are cultivated and designed to establish the Lifestyle Who is Christ in Module 5: Engage – Faith Walk and Module 6: Preserve – Immunity. The final inspection and sign-off is in Module 7: Grow – Personal Prescription for living Christ, in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in but not of the world. The Christ-follower is prepared, equipped, and empowered to live the Lifestyle, Who is Christ, making their active participation crucial in this process.[2]

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[1] Mixed metaphors are frequently used throughout the model. As evidenced in this paragraph, metaphors of house and body have been intermingled and used synonymously.

[2] Becoming a Christ-follower ought (yes, intentionally using the ought word, which is Old English for should) to have been disruptive, But God, and ought to continue to be disruptive in that the whole pattern of life, way of being and doing, thinking, behaving, ought to have been radically changed by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit within. Murray writes, "Fearful one, mistaken one, anxious one, I bring you God's promise; it is for Me, and it is for you. Jesus will do it. As God, He is able, and Jesus is willing and longing as the Crucified One to keep you in perfect peace." how do we stay in perfect peace by abiding in Him - walking/living in the Spirit – allowing Him to be Lord and have his way in all!" Andrew Murray, *The Secret of Spiritual Strength* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997), 89.

It is my experience in women's ministry in the United States over the last thirty years and in my role as a practicing psychologist that has sensitized me to the fact that many who self-identify as "Christian" struggle with internalizing and implementing the exhortations of Paul, such as: "put off the old self and put on the new self" (Eph 4:22-24), be "in Christ" (Gal 2:20), "die to self" ("For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God," Col 3:3). As a practicing psychologist I work with a diversity of patients with many clinical psychopathologies impacting mind, body, and Spirit. Over the years, a common theme has emerged in this work: the question of "who am I?" We (a collaborative, interactive union of patient and psychologist or spiritual formation/woman's ministry/discipler/mentor and believer) discover that function, role, position, title, and other culturally-derived nomenclature often provide an initial but superficial answer to that question. As we probe further, it often emerges that whether accomplished professional or emergent youth, there is an absence of a deeply rooted construct of self, which manifests as an obstacle for the Christ-follower in the construction of self in Christ.

The practical question for the Christ-follower is how to conceptualize the self "when it is not I who live but Christ who lives in me." It is also my experience that many have never explored what it means to be in Christ, practically utilizing the exhortations of Paul, nor have they constructed an integrated, cohesive sense of a psychological self as a foundation for living Christ. In other words, they have not developed a psychologically constructed ontological pneumatology for a personal sanctification theology.

Theological Pillars

Phrases and questions, such as "Who Am I?" and "It is not I who live but Christ in me," are drivers from Paul's theology on how a Christ-follower can shape identity "in Christ" in his spiritual development. These concepts, recently explored in the evangelical space as

participatory, union, and representative, have been previously studied through a soteriological lens. Therefore, it is necessary to note that we are called into community to live Christ, represent Christ, serve Christ, and live life with one another. The concept of partakers in Christ as the connective tissue for intimate, authentic, vulnerable, and accountability with one another is so important that Paul spends a significant amount of time in his epistles not only reinforcing that we are "in Christ" and not our own as His members but that further we have a significant responsibility to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul uses the human body metaphor to depict our God-ordained relationship as co-heirs with Christ, as His children, as sisters and brothers (Rom 12:4-5).

God has reminded us relationally that we are not alone and our relation to one another is not only for our personal growth, it is for the overall health and functioning of the entire body and our freedom (1 Cor 12:26). We are to instruct one another/growing together/building up one another. This is one of the more abundant areas for Pauline exhortations and encouragement. As members of one another, Paul's epistles highlight the call to instruct one another, grow together, and build each other up. Our role as members of one another is active, and we are to use our general and specific gifts wholeheartedly unto the Lord in this capacity. The scriptures exhort us to love, support, encourage, instruct, comfort, and so much more, as well as give, as members of one another (2 Cor 9:6-7). We are to rejoice with another (Phil 4:4), intercede, and pray for one another (Col 1:24). Ignatius of Antioch wrote regarding the unity of the brethren/sistren: "It is therefore profitable that you, being joined together with God in an unblameable unity, should be the followers of the example of Christ, of whom also ye are a member."[3]

However, they necessitate a further applied theological exploratory extension through

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[3] Ignatius of Antioch, *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians*. Retrieved on June 2, 2024, from https://www.orderofstignatius.org/files/Letters/Ignatius_to_Ephesians.pdf.

cognitive and affective psychological dimensions through the "new self" and "new mind" metaphors of Paul: a changed and reconstituted cognition – a transformative gift of the Holy Spirit. The result is a psychologically constructed ontological pneumatology. This concept prompts a Christ-follower review of his/her personal sanctification theology, thus highlighting the relevance of these theological concepts to the model. In the last several decades, there has been significant interest in the concept of "in Christ" in the Pauline corpus. Much of the current literature explores the constructs of soteriology, community (social), redemptive history, formal concepts derived from systematic theology, and grammatical concepts, such as prepositions and metaphors. The meaning of Paul's use of "in Christ" and the related themes broadly referred to as *union with Christ* and the fuller spectrum of meanings such as *union, participation, identification,* and *incorporation* has been the subject of much scholarly discussion.

In the past decade or so, scholars have turned towards the progressive sanctification of living Christ. M. J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and C. R. Campbell write, "Incorporation into Christ is an ongoing building project, with each living stone sealed – cemented – by the Spirit and hence to the rest of the structure."[4] Eastman draws our attention to the Spirit's role in mediating the union experience with Christ.[5] If we are to explore the concept of "being in Christ," then perhaps we must turn our attention to living in Christ and how the concepts of being "in" and "living" in shape the Christ-followers' identity in Christ through the Christ-followers progressive sanctification through the lens of the cognitive sciences and exploration of the constructs of "self," "I," as Paul penned.

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[4] M. J. Thate, K. J. Vanhoozer, and C.R. and Campbell, C. R. "*In Christ" in Paul: Explorations in Paul's theology of union and participation* (Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 2014), 20.

[5] Susan Eastman, *Paul, and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 2017).

Over the last few decades and beyond, there have been publications regarding cognitive science and the New Testament (e.g., Czachesz, 2017), Psychology and the Bible (e.g., Ellens & Rollins, 2004), the Psychology of Paul (e.g., Beck, 2002), psychological aspects of Pauline theology (e.g., Theissen, 1987), and the psychology of the New Testament (e.g., Flectcher, 1923); however none of these have created an integrated model derived from psychology, cognitive science, and neurobiology as a frame through which we can explore how one can construct his/her identity in Christ. These works focus more on psychological and even philosophical concepts to approach the Bible, the New Testament, and, more specifically, Pauline's writings.[6]

A significant concern with the work of I. Czachesz is that his book presents a disjointed basic overview of various topics, such as the human brain, evolution, some anatomy, and certain aspects of the brain, such as memory from a non-neuroscience or psychological perspective.[7] He presents a basic reader written by one not immersed in the workings of this cognitive science and psychologically oriented fields. He then addresses topics such as magic, religious experience, and morality in a very disconnected and general manner. There is little discussion of identity formation and aspects of self-development or focus on Pauline metaphors, as that is not the purpose of his work.

In the current literature, scholars use words and phrases such as: "realizations about themselves," "If one does not think that something is true, one cannot believe it," and Christians

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[6] I. Czachesz, *Cognitive Science & the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); J. H. Ellens and W. G. Rollins, W. G, *Psychology and the Bible* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2014); J. R. Beck, *The Psychology of Paul (*Grand Rapids, IL: Kregel Publications, 2002); G. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987); M. S. Flectcher, *The Psychology of the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923).

[7] Czachesz, *Cognitive Science & the New Testament.*

believing *in toto* in all its affective and ethical dimensions," "a way of experiencing, thinking and living," "putting on Christ is the ongoing ethical requirement," "wearing his/her new person," "for Paul spiritual reality is no less real than material reality;" "an identification of a common source of life," "the identity of Christ establishes the identity of those in Christ."[8] Paul's language is experiential, an inward affirmation or personal awareness of a shift in status, which all exemplify the need for psychological exploration.[9] According to Grant Macaskill, "Paul's emphasis is on [a] transformational reality . . . the Spirit's work of conforming us to Christ."[10] Those writing on Christian identity and formation, such as J. Slater, who exegetes Galatians, and J. B. Tucker, who utilizes 1 Corinthians 1-4, appear to be more focused on social and community aspects of these topics than the focus of the model, which is the construction of individual identity in Christ.[11]

Those, such as Thate, Vanhoozer, Campbell, Eastman, Macaskill, and Smith, who approach topics closer to the core of the model, such as Paul and Person (e.g., Eastman; Smith) and union (e.g., Macaskill; Vanhoozer), do not develop nor draw from a psychologically oriented theological frame for the discussion of the practical theological aspects of the construction of identity.[12] The model emphasizes freedom. Within this theme of freedom in Christ (Gal 5:1) is also a theme of deliverance with a rich psychological and theological impact. Paul's continuous

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[8] C. R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: an Exegetical and Theological Study*, (Grand Rapids, IL: Zondervan, 2012).

[9] Eastman, *Paul and the Person.*

[10] Grant Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 240.

[11] J. Slater, *Christian Identity Characteristics in Paul's Letter to the Members of the Jesus Movement in Galatians*, (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2012). J. B. Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1-4*, (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

[12] Thate, Vanhoozer, and Campbell, *"In Christ."*

desire for freedom, conformity with Christ, and deliverance from 'bondage and entanglements' (Rom 8:31-37, Gal 5:1) develops inwardly by the work of the Spirit and flows outwardly towards one another.

Themes of freedom flow directly into themes of forgiveness, as there is no condemnation in Christ (Rom 8:1).[13] The model depicts that the triune God never condemns but rather convicts, and there is a significant difference both theologically and psychologically. The freedom that flows from union with and participation in Christ stems from soteriological forgiveness and the continued availability of forgiveness in the progressive process of sanctification. Dubbelman notes, "Christ's victory over sin provides forgiveness and begins an ontological change of the Christian's "inner being" toward the image of the Son. This change is sustained by an "exit and return" structure of "God, the one who declares righteous."[14]

Psychological Pillars

The model's frame draws not only from Pauline theology but from empirically-based cognitive science and neuroscience to glean and apply from Paul himself and the Pauline scholars of the last century and propose a personal sanctification theology to effectively live in Christ for all who proclaim, "it is not I who live but Christ in me." The model utilizes established works in the psychological fields of identity formation (e.g., Leary & Tangney), social and emotional developmental psychology (e.g., Rosen), object relations (e.g., Hamilton), attachment theory (e.g., Mikulincer & Shaver), interpersonal neurobiology (e.g., Siegel), and other related

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[13] God has given us an unconditional gift. After Paul reminds us in Romans 3:24-25 that we have "all sinned and fall[en] short of the glory of God, he encourages us by these words: "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith."

[14] Dubbelman, "God's New Creation in Romans," 8:4, 75.

areas to provide a lens through which the inquiry can proceed, through narrative and phenomenological (experiential) methods to equip the Christ follower to conceptualize his identity "in Christ" in terms of "I" and utilize this personal sanctification theology to live in Christ effectively.[15]

As with narrative therapy, a goal within the model is to cultivate an ability to see more clearly while re-framing for change.[16] Module 1 in the model, described later in this chapter, uses the phrase, deconstruct to reconstruct, which involves the use of deconstructive questions for detoxification.[17] In narrative therapy, a person learns to see implications through exploration and reauthoring questions, which "clarify client preferences and values, develop alternative stories in realms of action and meaning, examine new possibilities from alternative stories, and develop support for the enactment of new stories."[18] Interpersonal neurobiology is foundational in the model and neurobiology, as further discussed in the section on neuroscience, is important

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[15] M. R. Leary and J. P. Tangney, J. P., *Handbook of Self, and Identity* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2012). K. S. Rosen, *Social and Emotional Development: Attachment Relationships and the Emerging Self* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2016). N. G. Hamilton, *Self and Others: Object Relations Theory in Practice* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004). M. Mikulincer, and P. R. Shaver, *Attachment in Adulthood* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2016). Daniel J. Siegel, *The Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*.

[16] Framing is also inherent in communication, where one highlights, through selection, certain aspects of meaning. See, e.g., G. T. Fairhurst and R.A. Sarr, *The Art of Framing: Managing the Language of Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996). Framing also connects to how "categories" are linguistically constructed in the mind. See, e.g., Lakoff and Johnson, *The Metaphors We Live By*. From a constructivist perspective, the underlying assumption of "framing is that there are many possible meanings that can be inferred from any situation." Heather Forest, "The Power of Words: Leadership, Metaphor and Story," *Proceedings of 8th Annual International Leadership Association (ILA) Conference*. Leadership at the Crossroads, 2-5 Nov. 2006, Chicago, IL. According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), a good "framer carefully highlights the meaning in a situation that serves their vision best. If we will frame well, our vision must provide a picture into which others can insert themselves." Fairhurst and Sarr, The Art of Framing, 53.

[17] As explained further, Detoxification is the first module in the model. Detoxification focuses on spiritual cleansing. The process involves learning how to identify and release areas of struggle, sin, and strongholds, such as frustrations, bitterness, unforgiveness, and other barriers of the flesh and self (Gal 5:24). Many areas, issues, struggles, etc., clog our ability to see making it challenging to 'see' (spiritually) and to discern accurately. We need to unclog and cleanse (detoxification), so the Holy Spirit can move freely in and through us to allow us to see and discern.

[18] Rice, "Narrative Therapy," 698.

because of the neurophysiological mechanisms of the brain and body in our cognitive, emotive, and relational experiences. The attachment one places to social identity is often related to his or her definition of self as it relates to the group and how one makes sense of himself or herself through normative attitudes and behaviors. The stronger the attachment, the more likely one will experience dissonance and conflict as one is re-defined or re-shaped from a self-perspective.

One of the continued themes explored throughout the model is how psychological constructs, such as self-worth, self-affirmation, hypocrisy, induced compliance, free choice, and effort justification interweave in a discourse on identity, dissonance, and action. There is general agreement among social psychology scholars that implications for self-identity are, in part, constructed from salient characteristics of self-understood alignments with one's relevance in a particular group. [19] In many ways, one's social identity relevancy is a constant cognition in one's self-identity.

While there are many theoretical orientations in psychology and many who advocate for and against these orientations, the field allows scholars and practitioners to draw from various orientations to produce an eclectic, acceptable therapeutic, and scholarly frame for exploration, research, and practice in psychology. As discussed in the literature review, the model draws from a variety of psychological orientations for the development of the Christ-followers' therapeutic toolbox, which, when combined with the spiritual toolbox derived from Paul, provide a comprehensive and meaningful *telos* and *praxis* for Christ Who is the Lifestyle.

The model advocates that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT provides a path for

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[19] Michael A Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988); H Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict, in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,* ed. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole, 1979): 33–47.

recognizing distorted thinking, developing a deeper understanding of behaviors, attitudes,

actions, and motivation, and cultivating a deeper sense of efficacy of oneself in Christ and

confidence based on one's functional position in Christ. CBT focuses on changing thoughts

(cognitions) and behavioral patterns by facing, or as the model proposes, moving through in

Christ rather than falling prey to the human tendency of avoidance. At the heart of CBT is

change, modification, and restructuring. At the heart of spiritual formation is transformative

spiritual growth. Spiritual growth implies development, and biblically, towards maturity in Christ

– conformity to His image. The construct of maturity is vividly apparent in Pauline theology (Col

1:28, Eph 4:13–14).

Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) is important because the model cultivates

awareness of externalities beyond one's control and those originating and influenced by one's

choices to produce the ability to accept the realities of one's relationships and environments. As

such, anchoring-in (Col 2:6-7), a term used extensively in the model, is a critical component of

acceptance and is referred to as Truth Anchors.[20] In other words, for the Christ-follower, a

chosen belief that the trait, characteristic, or value identified in the Word is vertically aligned

relationally with Christ and horizontally with others, intrinsically attributed to one's authentic

self as one identified in Christ. Mindfulness is also particularly important in the model in that the

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[20] The metaphor of anchoring in is derived from Hebrews 6:19-20a. An anchor is used to moor (secure) a vessel. Its effect is stabilization. Its function prevents the vessel from tossing to and fro because of the waves and sea turbulence. In the metaphor, the Christ-follower is the vessel often tossed to and fro by the tumult of life – the stuff of life, the challenges of life, the distractions, upheaval, hurts of life. The Christ-follower can be easily swayed and even knocked off course by our circumstances, the actions, and the words of others – almost anything that surprises us, overwhelms us, hurts us, disappoints us – can destabilize us. When the model refers to spiritually and therapeutically anchoring in the context of daily life as Christ-followers, in but not of the world, it means the primary goal at the moment is stabilization and security. We remind ourselves we are secure in Him. Stability allows the Christ-follower to ride the waves while making prayerfully-led and Spirit-guided decisions and not allowing the waves (the externalities) to carry us into the flesh or dangerous places of darkness. Even in the midst of the deepest loss and grief, in the midst of horrendous pain, we can find the light who is Christ through our spiritual eyes of faith and immersion in the truth of His Word.

emphasis is not on judging but on cultivating awareness for parsing and categorization to become increasingly fluent in identifying aspects of self and flesh versus Spirit-lead and Christ-centered.

For the model, the decision-making process must be shaped by an intrinsically motivated desire to be constrained by the Holy Spirit. For purposes of the model, the intuitive, consisting of " arbitrary and preference choices based on personal propensity, hobby, tendency, expectation and/or common senses," as it is referred to in decision sciences, is the connection to the Spirit provided through the gift of salvation.[21] Choices and decisions are to be guided by thoughtfulness and reflection, which flow through one's strengthened connection to Christ and infusion (Module 2) of His Word guiding one, through the Spirit, into decisions that reflect the desires of Christ, which inherently are for the Christ follower of a perfect quality (Matt 5:48, 2 Cor 5:21).

Neuroscience/Medical Science Pillars

The model is replete with terms from neuroscience and medical science. The model also draws from interpersonal neurobiology to highlight the importance of downregulating, shifting from the sympathetic to the parasympathetic nervous system, and living in the prefrontal cortex rather than the limbic system, as will be explained further in the discussion of the application of neuroscience to the model. The neuroplasticity of our brains allows us to develop abilities through changed pathways to mindfully cultivate ways of being that allow for an integration that promotes optimal well-being. Through the Holy Spirit, the catalyst for change in the Christ-follower, one can, as an initiator of action and an agent of change, cultivate the ability to develop

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[21] Wang and Ruhe, "The Cognitive Process of Decision Making," 75. It is important to note that they define arbitrary as "based on the most easy or familiar choice," preference as "based on propensity, hobby, tendency, expectation," and common senses as "based on axioms and judgment," Wang and Guenther Ruhe, "The Cognitive Process of Decision Making," 76.

new neural pathways, regulate one's automated reactions, and change one's inner landscape, re-wiring autoplastic adaptations to enhance the nine functions articulate above, or as a Christ-follower may frame it, produce fruit of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22-24). Throughout the modules in the model, a person uses intentional mindfulness and awareness to identify and discern, neurobiologically determine, accurate neuroception so as to activate new neural pathways to avoid, what the model refers to as entrenched conditions ways of being and doing, and in such avoiding maladaptive physiological reactions stepping out of the flesh and into the Spirit.

It is the interdependence and interconnectivity of these three concepts that the model illustrates in equipping the Christ-follower not to be ruled by the flesh (Rom 8:6–11) by learning how to shift, re-frame, and use other spiritually-therapeutic tools from the different psychological theoretical orientations integrated into the model combined with neuroscience to implement commands exemplified in Galatians 5:24, Romans 12:2, among others so that we may live Galatians 5:16. The model's emphasis on Christ Who is a Lifestyle that cultivates active, not passive, involvement in the sanctification process through the cultivation of choices to walk in the Spirit and not be controlled by the desires of the flesh through the active engagement of the prefrontal cortex and not living on or in autopilot but rather through mindful and intentional direction driving neural firing through the activity of the mind. Motivation is an active agent in choice prioritization as non-focal goals that enter awareness may automatically trigger shifting priorities and result in reprioritization. For the Christ-follower, the result is the flesh-based need or reaction may trigger an automated reprioritization, shifting one out of the Spirit and into the flesh.

Many metaphors are drawn from both neuroscience and medical science. In the model, when one is activated and shifts into the sympathetic nervous system, it becomes increasingly

challenging to remain balanced and centered in Christ, creating greater susceptibilities to step into the flesh and out of the Spirit's guiding and controlling influence. The endocrine and neuroendocrine systems are often used in metaphors within the model. The HPA axis is also referenced frequently in the model, as with repeated exposure to triggers and continued activation, for the Christ-follower, living in intentional sin and disobedience to the desires of Christ, the continued activation of the HPA axis produces imbalance and dysregulation. Triggers and activation prompts are discovered in Module 1.

In Module 2, the focus is on the digestion of God's Word through Infusion, which promotes growth and flourishment as we deeply internalize God's Word for living application, living Christ to His glory in this messy world. Many of the metaphors used in Module 3 draw from medical constructs in digestive, gut health, and immune systems. Balance is central in discussing the digestive and immune systems, as it is also in the discussion of centeredness in Christ. The gut, as the second brain, the enteric system, is also an important construct in these modules. For the model, digestion (Module 3) is moving from a head knowledge of Christ into a personalized and internalized one, as the model refers to *ginōskō*-knowing of the person of Jesus Christ relationally. Therefore, what we take in matters, as evidenced by medical science and the importance of healthy nutrients, to foster balance within our internal systems. In the model, our defense system (Module 6) against the flesh is the Spirit. Our defense system against principalities and rulers is the armor of God (Eph 6:10-18), which is composed of the Truth, a *ginōskō* knowledge of God, through the truth of His Word, His imputed righteousness, his gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God in an attitude of continual prayer.[22] The Cardio-

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[22] It is necessary to note that the focus of this section in Ephesians is plural in language and concept. Arnold writes, "Paul uses an extensive set of military metaphors throughout this section to convey the idea of spiritual power . . . [to the community of believers] as he "explains how believers are to gain strength and spiritual power from the Lord. . . Believers need God's empowerment because they will face a variety of well-planned attacks by a

metabolic system provides an important metaphor for the model that analogizes the hardness of the heart to CMS.

In the model, the Christ-follower has the gifted opportunity to walk with Jesus, live (Matt 16:24–25), and pursue Christ. In Christ, He can eradicate what the model refers to as HHS by living at the Grain of Sand Level, in Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. This means that if the Christ-follower is willing and chooses to live a preventative lifestyle in Christ, one can overcome the power of the flesh, as promised in Romans 8:37, more often than not.[23] Although the Christ-follower, will as the model refers to it, at times falls prey to the flesh, as Paul states in Romans 7:15–20, there is a hope that comes from developing healthy, preventative lifestyle choices in Christ to equip the Christ-follower to truly walk in His victory as overcomers even through the stumbles.

The Modules

In discussing the Modules that compromise the model, it is necessary to note that a primary emphasis is on cultivating new ways of thinking and creating new neural pathways. This includes developing a new language, not necessarily with new words, but with a new way of thinking about words. The model posits that words matter and that the choice of a word impacts attitudes and actions and move us from head knowledge to heart knowledge.[24] The model

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supernatural opponent." Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Ephesians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 436, 443-4.

[23] Our cognitive capacity allows us to choose out. To look up. To align with the truth of God and His Word and not allow our feelings and our experiences to decide our choices, our thoughts, or our actions. Let us choose today to step out of fear, anxiety, and worry and into the perfected love of Christ, for "we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

[24] "According to dominant accounts of evaluative stimulus-action effects, the pairing of stimuli and actions leads to a co-activation of their corresponding mental representations which automatically creates an association between the two representations." K. Kawakami, C. E. Phills J. R. Steele, and J. F. Dovidio, "Close Distance makes the Heart Grow Fonder: Improving Implicit Racial Evaluations and Interracial Interactions through Approach

categorizes words based on common connections and characteristics associated with the flesh or the Spirit. Participants learn to ascribe meaning to words based on new connections and develop intentionality in using words for "talk to self" and others.[25] Clarity of intent is emphasized in all actions, as the importance of living in Spirit-led intentionality with prompted purpose. The model reinforces Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 10:1-6 that a wandering, undisciplined mind can be a dangerous place, and where one chooses to place one's mind is paramount to alignment with Christ (Col 3:1-4). The model emphasizes the intrinsic component derived from a love from God and a desire to walk in obedience, as the drives for the change in actions and behavior.

An emphasis is also placed on parsing, unraveling, and de-tangling to discover and construct meaning for 'awareness of self' and others.[26] Metaphors frequently facilitate meaning-meaning and present impactful representations to facilitate deep imprinting in new neural pathways.[27] A story is a complex form of metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson point out:

Behaviors," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92 (2007): 957-971). Further, "Once a strong enough association has been established, presentation of the stimulus will result in activation of the stimulus representation, which will then increase activation of the action representation. If the action representation contains evaluative components, this can lead to an evaluative response to the stimulus that is in-line with the valence of the action." Pieter Van Dessel, Sean Hughes, and Jan De Houwer, "How Do Actions Influence Attitudes? An Inferential Account of the Impact of Action Performance on Stimulus Evaluation," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 23, no. 3 (2019), 268.

[25] Note the reversal of word order, as in 'talk to self.' Rather than the common self-talk. In the Mode, self is also in a non-dominant position and never used as the first word to de-emphasize its significance.

[26] The discussion of semantics, psycholinguistics, and other related fields is beyond the scope of this work. Yet, it is relevant to note that many of the techniques are drawn from Chomsky's work and those who have built on it, particularly in the parsing field. See Janet Dean Fodor, "Parsing to Learn," *Journal of Psycholinguistics*, 27, no. 3 (1998): 339-374. Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965). Noam Chomsky, *The Minimalist Program* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995). Noam Chomsky and H. Lasnik, "Filters and Control," *Linguistic Inquiry* 8, (1977): 425-504. Noam Chomsky and G. Miller, "Introduction to the Formal Analysis of Natural Languages," in R. D. Luce, R. R. Bush, & E. Galanter, eds., *Handbook of Mathematical Psychology*, Vol. II, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1963).

[27] Denning, in discussing leadership narrative as part of transformational innovation, notes, "Transformational innovation is disruptive because it introduces products and services that change the business landscape by providing a dramatically different value proposition. And championing transformational innovation involves going to war with all the elements inside an organization that benefits from the status quo." Stephen Denning, "Transformational Innovation: A journey by Narrative," *Strategy and* Leadership 33, no. 3 (2005), 11. The analogy to the model is apparent in the model's focus on transformative innovation with the Christ-follower, the

that "new metaphors have the power to create new reality . . . this can happen when we start to comprehend our experience in terms of metaphor, and it becomes a deeper reality when we begin to act in terms of it . . . If a new metaphor enters the conceptual system that we base our action on, it will alter that conceptual system and the perceptions and actions that the system gives rise to." [28]

The Scholarship in neuroscience, cognition, and linguistics reveals the importance of chosen language and the importance of narrative and metaphor in shaping cognitions and affect, and tools for motivation, inspiration, and change. Lakoff and Johnson state, "Because we reason in terms of metaphor, the metaphors we use determine a great deal about how we live our lives," and further that "Metaphors are among our principal vehicles for understanding and they play a central role in the construction of reality."[29]

Module 1: Prepare - Detoxification

Detoxification focuses on spiritual cleansing. The process involves learning how to identify and release areas of struggle, sin, and strongholds, such as frustrations, bitterness, unforgiveness, and other barriers of the flesh and self (Gal 5:24). In Module 1, participants are equipped with practical tools, such as learning the Deep Dive and using a Truth Light, another important spiritual tool. Participants learn to identify the scars, hurts, wounds, and debris of the past and move into an attitude of surrender as a living vessel of the Lord. Participants learn to identify intent and motive and develop skills to fully step into the love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness of God. Participants begin to find transformative peace and healing in Christ.

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innovation of discovering and implementing one's new identity in Christ, changing the value proposition from self to Christ, and ultimately waging war against the flesh by learning to firmly root, stand fast, and function in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[28] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 145.

[29] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 145, 159.

Module 1 focuses on certain attributes of God that the model advocates are essential to the Christ-follower's choice to live in Christ in an attitude of surrender and to walk in obedience to His will and His way. The decision-making discussion within the model's context includes attributes such as God's sovereignty, faithfulness, trustworthiness, love, and approachability. In Module 1, significant time and attention are oriented toward exploring the Christ-follower's belief that these attributes are true and applicable to him or her. Cognitive distortions, past experiences, and entrenched and conditioned ways of being and doing often block the Christ-follower from what the model calls "*ginōskō*-knowing."[30] Anchoring firmly into the inspired, inerrant truth of who God declares Himself to be in the Word of God is an essential element of making decisions based on faith through trust in the consistency and changelessness of His attributes.[31]

In Module 1. there is a focus on cultivating a Spirit-centric awareness of intent and motive in choices and decisions. Learning to live life intentionally requires activation of executive function (EF) skills that are aligned with the wisdom from above (Jas 1:5-8, Prov 4:7), understanding and guidance through the Spirit (Luke 24:45, John 16:13), and discernment of the Spirit (Rom 12:12) to avoid the traps of willful, intentional sin. EFs facilitate our centering in the PFC, allowing us to grow and learn from Christ rather than our limbic system reactions, often leading us into the flesh and willful disobedience toward the Savior (Rom 8:5).

What is the detoxification process? Detoxification focuses on spiritual cleansing. The process involves learning how to identify and release areas of struggle, sin, and strongholds, such

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[30] To "know" (absolutely) in many applications and with many implications; to be resolved in one's knowing. Strong's "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 1097.

[31] See Hebrews 11:1, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, Hebrews 7:24, and Hebrews 13:8.

as frustrations, bitterness, unforgiveness, and other barriers of the flesh and self (Gal 5:24). As

one steps into Module 1, there is an initial focus on developing a healthy spiritual and therapeutic

understanding and acceptance of one's sinfulness and fleshly ways based on the theological

construct of total depravity.[32] A healthy recognition and appropriation of this truth will hopefully

cause one to respond with a cry for more of Christ and less of one's self (John 3:30). To listen to

and truly, deeply embrace Paul's plea to the Romans in Romans 12:1-2 and apply it to oneself

recognizing the powerful truth of Ephesians 2:4-5 and Ephesians 2:10.

In Module 1, the participant is equipped with practical tools, such as learning to Deep

Dive into oneself and using God's Truth Light, an important spiritual tool.[33] The Participant

learns to identify the scars, hurts, wounds, and debris of the past and move into a current attitude

and posture of surrender.[34] The participant learns to identify intent and motive and develop skills

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[32] Total depravity is the extensive ruin of man's nature. By nature, we are children of wrath, declared the apostle (Eph 2:3). This sinful nature, which all people have by birth, is that capacity to do those things (good, neutral, or bad) that do not commend us to God. The scriptures are filled with statements of the corruption of many aspects of man's nature. His intellect (2 Cor 4:4; Rom 1:28), his conscience (1 Titus 4:2), his will (Rom 1:28), his heart (Eph 4:18), and his total being (Rom 1:18–3:20) have been corrupted. This is the doctrine of total depravity. Total depravity does not mean that everyone is as thoroughly depraved in his actions as he could possibly be, nor that everyone will indulge in every form of sin, nor that a person cannot appreciate and even do acts of goodness, but it does mean that the corruption of sin extends to all men and to all parts of all men so that there is nothing within the natural man that can give him merit in God's sight." Charles Caldwell Ryrie, A Survey of Bible Doctrine (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972). Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 626.

[33] A Truth Light is a light that one uses to shine deep within oneself to reveal the truth about areas in one's life that require Christ's transforming work and power. A truth light shines Christ's searching, revealing, precision-finding Truth, which identifies and reveals flaws and fleshly toxic traits that fuel the flesh and lead one astray and away from God's perfect way and will for our lives. When one chooses to shine a Truth Light, he allows the Lord to examine and reveal fleshly areas, sinful susceptibilities, and toxic traits. The choice to use a truth light from the spiritual toolbox demonstrates a desire for freedom from the flesh, which is in opposition and antithetical to the Spirit in the Christ-follower.

[34] In the model, Andrew Murray's *Absolute Surrender* is a required reading in Module 1. Murray writes "that believers should be occupied with God in the matter of surrender. I pray you be occupied with God." He continues to remind us that surrender is by the grace of God, the power of God – the power of the Holy Spirit. We use the words cultivating Holy Spirit-inspired awareness to promote the ability to see – to be able to clearly and accurately perceive our own thoughts, feelings, and interactions with us and around us. We use words, such as filtering, to mean that we cannot see clearly when we are in our flesh (which we use synonymously to mean our 'self'). We cannot discern accurately when we cannot see clearly. Our flesh and not the Spirit drive our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Living Christ in this fallen, challenging world requires Holy Spirit-wrought surrender, the ability to see, and the desire to serve. Charles Spurgeon has a quote, "Before God uses the man, God breaks the

to fully step into God's love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.[35] Module 1 is the beginning of discovering transformative peace and healing in Christ.[36]

The model emphasizes the "intrinsic," the "internal," not the "external." All humans are impacted by "externals," the events existing around one, the beliefs of others, interactions, perceptions, what the model refers to as the Land, the convergence of one's work landscape, home landscape, personal landscape, and social landscape. The model teaches one how to develop the intrinsic stability to be firm, rooted, and grounded in Christ Jesus through cultivating a deep, intimate relationship with the Savior.[37] The model teaches one practically how to

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man." Andrew Murray writes in *Humility*, "And here it is that the teaching is needed: If you would enter into full fellowship with Christ in His death, and know the full deliverance from self, humble yourself. This is your duty. Place yourself before God in your helplessness; consent to the fact that you are powerless to slay yourself; give yourself in patient and trustful surrender to God. Accept every humiliation; look upon every person who tries or troubles you as a means of grace to humble you. God will see such acceptance as proof that your whole heart desires it. The path of humility leads to the full and perfect experience of our death with Christ. Beware of the mistakes so many make. They have so many qualifications and limitations and thoughts and questions about what true humility is to be, and to do that, they never unreservedly yield themselves to it. Humble yourself unto death. It is in the death to self that humility is perfected. We cannot possess humility without brokenness, and we cannot surrender lest we are broken." Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017): 8. Andrew Murray, *Humility* (Morgantown: Toll Publishing, 2018), 41. Charles Spurgeon, *Deeper Christian Quotes,* https://deeperchristianquotes.com/breaking-a-man-before-using-him-charles-spurgeon/, accessed June 4, 2024.

[35] God's grace is evidence of the absolute freeness of the loving-kindness of God and His desire for us to live in freedom, freedom from sin, and the power of our flesh so that we could have a relationship with Him, Creator-Savior God. God pours His favor upon us even though we do not deserve it, nor do we merit it. A gift from the Giver of all perfect gifts. A gift that never fades, never changes, never becomes stale. A gift that is fresh and fragrant to nourish our souls and strengthen our spirit. A gift that gives life – eternal life. How glorious that God should delight in giving us Himself that we might have victory over the bondages of this world.

[36] The model reminds the participant that His unconditional love is a refining, sanctifying love. His love is transformative. His love desires our best through Him and in Him. His love is perfected as we grow in Him, empowered and equipped by Him. It is His work in us—not our work in ourselves. We cannot perfect ourselves or His love for us, which is complete and whole from the day He calls us unto Himself. The participant comes to *ginōskō*-know that His love is perfected in him. God's love is made perfect or complete in us. This does not mean we become sinless. Instead, the focus is on maturity or the quality of love in us. We can find no greater love than God's love. The Christ-follower experiences God's love inside them, offering us everything we need to live for Him and love others. The love of God is sufficient. His love is perfect.

[37] The model uses a psychological construct of stability, including balance. To be stable is to be balanced. Balance does not preclude the fluctuations of a healthy emotional life or even the extreme emotions of a life-shattering event. Stability allows us to ride the waves while making prayerfully led and Spirit-guided decisions and not allowing the waves (the externalities) to carry us into the flesh or dangerous places of darkness. Even amid the deepest loss and grief, during horrendous pain, we can find the light who is Christ through our spiritual eyes of faith and immersion in the truth of His Word.

cultivate surrender moment by moment, day by day, in a real, tangible, personal, and meaningful way. The participant learns to live as a surrendered vessel, to deepen belief, knowing, and understanding - to "taste and see" the power that comes from within because of Christ within and to find joy in Truth, power in powerlessness, strength in weakness, boldness in dependence on the Christ as Lord, and peace in the promise of knowing the living, Savior.[38] The hope is a greater love for the Savior and a Spirit-cultivated desire to live in conformity and obedience to Jesus, as Lord.

In Module 1, participants are asked to identify places needing exposure to a Truth Light for detoxification. Some common areas include hurt feelings, perfectionism, people-pleasing, lack of confidence, jealousy, pride, fear, anxiety, idolatry (dependent attachment to something or someone), desire/ lust, or lack of control.[39] These issues clog one's ability to see, making it challenging to "see" (spiritually) and discern accurately. Detoxification provides a way to learn to unclog and cleanse, making an internal, chosen way for the Holy Spirit to move freely in and through the participant to provide a way to see and discern.[40]

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[38] Living the surrendered life as a surrendered vessel begins with a desire for more – more of Jesus. Not more studies, rules, requirements – not more "I have to," "I should," – not more condemnation, judgment, or failure – more of the person of Jesus living in you. It is not salvation; it is sanctification – the process of growing through the work of the Holy Spirit in you. It is peace and joy and life more abundantly. Knowing that He knows the way when you cannot see past the circumstances, feelings, and thoughts of your present. Surrender comes from within and not without.

[39] The model generically defines idols as anything that deprioritizes God's place is more important than God or receives more of our time and attention than God. An idol comes between the participant and God. It comprises commitment, prioritization, and steadfastness to obedience to God—His holiness, righteousness, and desires for His children, including His requests and desires. To be steadfast in Christ mandates a desire to walk according to His Way. To live according to His truth. To consistently, with agility and resilience, follow His terrain for you. Steadfast in Christ is to be resolutely firm and unwavering in our commitment to His Word, Truth, Way, and timing. understanding, discernment. Steadfast in Christ is to run into the loving, healing, powerful arms of Christ and choose to allow Him to be your

[40] It is essential to understand that the Spirit always has full access. Still, our willingness to surrender and submit can create barriers, allowing our flesh to dominate our attitudes and actions. The struggles and entanglements we face, such as those listed as examples, create strongholds. However, the Spirit, guided by the light of Christ, initiates a detoxification process that gradually loosens these strongholds, enabling us to move more freely in the Spirit.

As the participant learns to surrender, seeing begins as one moves through Module 1, the detoxification process. The work of surrender is one of the Spirit in connection with the willingness of the vessel, which allows the Spirit to shine His Light of Love and Truth deep within the nooks and crevices. The participant develops boldness, courage in surrender, and a willing desire to see tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities. The fear of flaws is forsaken as the participant is grounded in God's delight in performing a healing, transformative restoration. A freedom from the entanglements and bondages of the fleshly ways.[41] The participant learns to see the susceptibilities of the flesh and can claim Galatians 5:17 as an essential truth – which in the model's vocabulary is "our flesh is not our friend.[42] The participant comes to see past oneself and into the truth of who God desires to use His creation for His purposes and glory, which allows His creation to desire to serve Him through His Truth and His Will. Living Christ in an attitude of surrender and desperate dependance requires a desire for His

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[41] Freedom allows one to own the past in humility and grace, knowing he has asked for and received the full forgiveness of God. Freedom allows you to walk/live in the Spirit and not need to explain, justify, rationalize, or spin to satisfy others. One of these bondages is people-pleasing, and as Paul says in Galatians 1:10, "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."

[42] Even as Christ-followers, we will fall prey to the flesh. We will step out of humility and into pride. Even when we have surrendered and have believed, digested, and embraced the truth of Galatians 2:20 and say with Paul, "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So, I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," we will step into our flesh and create a mess. We need continual breaking to remain broken so that we are malleable in the hands of the Potter. Our Christ-centric desire to be His vessel, useful for His service, mandates that we continually pray for breaking – breaking of our fleshly tendencies, propensities, susceptibilities – our fleshly ways. Pride must be broken. Pride is connected to arrogance. Pride is connected to reliance on self. Pride defends, justifies, rationalizes, and explains itself. Pride leads us to make up our own 'truth' and neglect the Word of God. Pride causes us to be self-focused, inward, and apt to dismiss others – preferring our own wants, way, and will, contrary to the Biblical exhortation in Philippians 2:3-8 to "do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Pride blinds us to anything but ourselves.

breaking, transforming, and refining.[43]

Two pivotal questions that are foundational in the participant's therapeutic and spiritual toolbox are: (1) what is my intent and (2) what is my motive? These questions allow the participant to think intentionally about and discern motive in every word and action. The participant learns the Deep Dive, an authentic and transparent journey inward to uncover blockages and roots that create stumbling blocks to walking moment-by-moment with the Lord.[44] The deep dive teaches the participant to ask oneself before every word or action, "What am I doing?" and "Why am I doing it?" "What is my intent?" and "What is my motive?" This may seem burdensome and unnecessary, but the goal is to build a new way of 'being 'and 'doing.' Therefore, the Christ-follower needs to develop a depth of understanding for each intent and motive and each attitude, action, behavior, or response. In the beginning, there is an emphasis on repetition, as when one begins to cultivate a skill, repetitions are necessary to build an ability. The same methodology applies to cultivating Holy-Spirit Inspired Awareness. As Paul states clearly in Romans 7, the flesh wants to lead, to control, to exert its influence.[45] If one does

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[43] Romans 12:2 reminds us, "Do not copy the behavior and customs of this world but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good, pleasing, and perfect." Transformation is God–achieved and God–sustaining, requiring no effort on our part to attain it or live it out. Transformation is not trying to be like Jesus but rather the fruit of the Spirit.

[44] The model defines root as a source, a deeper cause of susceptibilities. A root is usually profoundly embedded in past experiences and deeply entrenched and conditioned ways of being and doing. A root's primary function is anchoring and absorption; however, in the model, the root is deeply embedded in the flesh and is used to symbolize discovery for extraction. In the model, a root perpetuates the lies that distort thinking and false beliefs about oneself, God, others, institutions, principles, situations, and circumstances that often cause one to react in a fleshly/sinful way. The model uses techniques from root cause analysis (RCA) and follows the four steps: data collection, causal factor charting, root cause identifications, and recommendations for extraction. "Root cause analysis (RCA) is an analysis framework used in health care to determine the systemic causes and prevent recurrences of adverse events." Katherine B. Percarpio, B. Vince Watts, and William B. Weeks, "The Effectiveness of Root Cause Analysis: What Does the Literature Tell Us," *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*, 34 no. 7 (2008), 391.

[45] The self is desperate for control, not dependence. Yet, we are called into desperate dependence upon God. The self believes it can find a way out. The self believes it will restore manageability if it keeps control and keeps trying. Yet, this directly opposes the truth of God's Word. The flesh and the Spirit are not compatible: one must be the victor, and the other must die – the flesh must be crucified with Christ. Paul writes in Galatians 2:20, "I

not cultivate Holy-Spirit Inspired Awareness, it is easier to fall prey to the condition and comfortable ways of the flesh. Therefore, following after Christ as a Christ-follower requires an active awareness.[46] Active awareness allows the Christ-follower to live "paying attention." If one is paying attention, one is apt to fall prey to one's ways – the ways of the flesh.[47]

The participant learns Spirit-led reflection: "What do I know about myself in this moment," both mindset (cognitive) and feelings/emotions (affective)? Questions include "What may be in the way of specifically identifying any annoyances, frustrations, irritabilities, negative thoughts, negative feelings, regrets, shame, etc.?" Learning to use very specific, granular words when speaking to oneself and identifying feelings, emotions, and thoughts in the moment is emphasized, as is answering questions with specificity because it highlights more generalized thoughts and feelings that lead to negative thinking and catastrophizing.[48] The participant asks,

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have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." In Romans 6:6, "we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin." Our flesh will fight for self at all costs. Our flesh will resist surrender and death at all costs. Our flesh wants to rule and reign at all costs.

[46] Active awareness is connected to intentionality. Intentionality is the art of acting with purpose, clarity, insight, and wisdom. Cultivating intentionality is a spiritual and therapeutic discipline. We must learn to pause and identify what we will say or do and why. We must choose to identify intent and motive and allow the Holy Spirit to constrain and restrain our choices to not fall into the problematic statement declared by Paul in Romans 7:15. In every moment, we can choose to dive deep into the depths of Christ and not allow our limbic system – our emotions and feelings – to be our decision-maker. In every moment, we can choose to stand fast in the Way that the Lord has paved and not allow our limbic system – our emotions and feelings – to turn us into our own way. Active awareness is grounded in perspective. Active awareness can be defined as choosing to actively (participating as a surrendered vessel in His sanctifying work), intentionally cultivating the ability to identify what you are feeling, believing, seeing (not just visually but through understanding), and thinking about the externalities around you as well as yourself.

[47] Living in active awareness requires consistency in commitment to Christ above all. Our flesh will wander (and is more than prone to wander) into comfort, convenience, complacency, casualness, and carelessness, which are all contrary to active awareness. Active awareness is arduous for the flesh. It is accomplished in His awakening power within us.

[48] Generalized words include, for example, always, never, no one, impossible, etc. Negative thinking includes thought processes where one looks for or thinks the worst and focuses on pessimistic and worse-case scenarios. Catastrophizing is when one believes something is far worse than it is in reality. Catastrophizing manifests as irrational thoughts and may be about a past, present, or future event or situation.

"Am I willing to learn to work through, shift from, and overcome in Christ to focus (pay attention with clarity and purpose) to move forward well, in a Christ-honoring way? Each time participants want to speak or act, they learn to pause, complete a Holy Spirit-inspired check of intent and motives, and conduct a Deep Dive in the moment.

To dive deeply into the sanctified life, the crucified life, and the Lifestyle, Who is Christ, the Christ-follower must be mindful and intentional of word choices. The model advocates avoidance of generalizations and refers to them as "Big bucket words." Overwhelmed and stressed are two examples of Big bucket words. The challenge with big bucket words is that while their use may communicate a generalized meaning, there are so many specific meanings, personal to an individual's perception, usually filled and driven by emotions and feelings and perpetuate a belief that feelings are in control, there is powerlessness to overcome, and further there is a 'stuckness.' Big bucket words, by definition, are usually words replete with various meanings, generalized and self-defeating.[49] It is, therefore, necessary to parse and untangle the word to drill down to a specific meaning that can then be assessed and, as necessary, re-framed accurately into a meaningful representation.

It is also important to note when there is fear, worry, or insecurity, it is more likely that one will be prone to negative thinking and negative affect, which moves us closer to the Limbic System, which is a reactor, rather than the PFC, which is a responder.[50] The emphasis is on

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[49] It is further necessary to note that Big Bucket Words do not serve a useful spiritual or therapeutic purpose. When one uses a Big Bucket Word, one speaks in nonspecific, generalized ways that reinforce a negative or distorted, dysfunctional belief about a situation or oneself.

[50] Fear, anxiety, worry, and many other emotions that are deemed disruptive and disturbing have powerful physiological aspects of these emotions, – But God – they may be powerful, intense, and physiologically distressing, but they do not need to have power over our choices, actions, thoughts, our person! This is a critical point. The feelings and emotions may come, but they do not need to take us captive, enslave us, direct us, control us, or own us. We do not need to be in bondage to these emotions and feelings, no matter how powerful they seem to us – God is bigger, stronger, and more able. Through Him, there is a way forward, and they can be cast out from making our choices and directing our thoughts or behaviors even in the midst of physiological discomfort. They may come, but

learning to respond and not react. Participants also learn that when one is worn down, tired,

impatient, experiencing strong feelings, pressed in, and a host of others tugging at the flesh, more

cognitive and emotional resources are necessary for the constraint of self because one is not

functioning at the highest level. In these moments, pausing, deep diving, and choosing to respond

in the PFC and not react from the limbic system is imperative to avoid stepping out of the Spirit

and into the flesh or deeper into the flesh. If one cannot Deep Dive at the moment, then the

spiritual and therapeutic tool of Duct Tape is recommended to avoid speaking from the flesh.[51]

Duct Tape is helpful when one feels or thinks there is no way to resist urges, triggers, or flesh-

driven ways. Duct Tape is necessary when the reality of controlling the tongue is low. The goal

is to cultivate Holy Spirit-inspired responses through Holy Spirit-inspired awareness for control

of self.[52]

The development of Holy Spirit-inspired awareness allows one to learn to identify and

name thoughts, attitudes, and feelings as they form, shape, and drive behavior. It is necessary to

learn to accurately and authentically re-frame for forming, shaping, and driving behavior from

our responder, not our reactor.[53] As participants allow, or choose to allow, negativity, fears,

anxieties, insecurities, worries, etc., to control choices, the Reactor is activated, drawing us

deeper into the flesh, which then reinforces original negative, pessimistic, fear-based anxious

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the Christ-follower can choose through His perfect love, to choose to cast them out, turn out of the flesh and into the Spirit, and make different choices even amid the very powerful and distressing feelings and thoughts. It takes time, practice, and Spirit-led intentionality to change the deeply entrenched conditioned ways. But God – you are an overcomer in Him.

[51] Duct Tape aids with adhering to Proverbs 10:19, "Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut." Duct tape ensures that "no corrupt talk comes out of our mouths" (Eph 4:29a). Duct is also useful as a guard over one's mouth (Prov 17:28) and implements Titus 3:2.

[52] "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (Rom 8:14).

[53] "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal 5:16).

beliefs, which often turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. According to R. Merton:

> a self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the original false conception come true. This specious validity of the self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates a reign of error. For the prophet will cite the actual course of events as proof that he was right from the very beginning.[54]

In cultivating Holy Spirit-inspired awareness, participants can learn to identify the negative thoughts and feelings, obstacles, and perceived (or real) challenges and make the necessary adjustments by deploying the techniques and utilizing the tools to move through (not avoid or go around) the negative thoughts and feelings, obstacles, and perceived (or real) challenges to equip themselves to be the overcomers they are proclaimed to be in Christ (1 John 5:4). In this process, the participant is continually reminded that "our old self was crucified with Him so that our body of sin might be done away with so that we would no longer be slaves to sin" (Rom 6:6) and "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24).

As part of this process, participants learn to identify and be aware of their susceptibilities – our fleshly tendencies, conditioned behaviors, habits, beliefs, etc. Susceptibilities can include places, emotions, praises, fear, situations, or people that cause unbiblical or non-Christlike reactions. Participants learn to use another spiritual tool, the Susceptibility Scanner, which allows the Holy Spirit to examine, search, try, and test thoughts, intent, and motive to explore deep within (Ps 26:2). Tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities stem from the flesh and not the Spirit. In the model's development of a new way of thinking about word choices, subtle semantic differences facilitate the ability to cultivate Spirit-led awareness and re-frame to identify the pitfalls of the flesh accurately.

A tendency is a likelihood of behaving in a particular way or going in a particular

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[54] R. Merton, "The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy," *The Antioch Review*, 8, (1948), 197.

direction, a tending toward something – a leaning or inclination. In the model, a tendency is less severe than a propensity. Participants learn to catch tendencies before they become propensities. If tendencies have become propensities, a deeper awareness and action is necessary to step out of the flesh and into the Spirit. A tendency is a potential way of being, acting, and thinking that does not necessarily manifest externally. Tendencies may be more distressful internally than externally. For example, a tendency may be impatience or frustration with the words or actions of self or others, which may be easier to suppress, restrain, and control and may not manifest externally as easily as a propensity. The model emphasizes nuances because the flesh is very subtle, devious, and deceptive. For example, participants are asked, "What arises within when things do not go your way, you do not get your way, you are hurt, angry, lonely, frustrated, or [fill in the blank] with any number of emotions or feelings, or you believe or think you have been treated unfairly or in another manner that provokes your flesh. What are your tendencies (thoughts, feelings, potential actions) in those moments?"

A propensity encompasses a tendency, a preference, or an attraction. Tendencies, if left untreated, can become potential propensities. Tendencies are still internal, in the thought or feeling stage, while propensities (although they can still be internal) are more likely to appear externally in word or deed. For example, the question is asked, "Does your impatience lead you to behave, act, or speak angrily? Does your frustration, lead you to sigh, roll your eyes, turn away?" A Susceptibilities is harder to resist. It is a more sensitive and intense form of a tendency or propensity. It is harder to overcome a susceptibility without stepping into the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is protective gear akin to the armor of God. The Christ-follower steps into the fullness of the Holy Spirit by visualizing oneself as sealed into a Ziplock bag that has been sprayed with Rain-X so that no matter the environment, the metaphoric weather, the

circumstances, people, events, we are fully covered and protected (Eph 1:13). All that comes at

the Christ-follower, like rain on a windshield covered with Rain-X, slides off and reactivity is

avoid, keeping one from falling prey to susceptibilities. The Christ-follower stands fast in the

Spirit in Christ, "[being] kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in

Christ forgave you" (Eph 4:32).

      This process aims to move through the Boulder, Rock, Pebble, Grain of Sand metaphor to

live at the "Grain of Sand Level" in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Figure 1: Boulder, Rock, Pebble, Grain of Sand

The metaphor posits that when one starts the journey, there are many what seem to be large and

insurmountable obstacles in one's path, and these are referred to as the Boulders. As participants

journey through Module 1, they learn to clear Boulders, which are deeply rooted, embedded,

conditioned, and entrenched ways of being and doing so that they can see the Rocks, next-tier-up

and less embedded entanglements. When they move through the Rocks, participants can see the

Pebbles closer to the surface and then move to the Grain of Sand Level. At the grain of sand

level, the analogy is akin to walking on the road, and a grain of sand finds its way into a shoe.

The healthy choice is to stop and remove it. The unhealthy choice is to ignore it where it

becomes embedded, an infection ensues, and the grain of sand becomes a pebble, a rock, and

even perhaps a boulder if left unattended. Once at the grain of sand level, it is important not to

allow the grains of sand to remain and then develop back into pebbles, rocks, and even boulders.

      Throughout this Module, Participants learn to ask questions like, "Why do I feel this way

right now?" "Why is this bothering me?" "Why am I responding in an attitude of [fill in the blank with the thought or emotion/feeling]?"[55] Some examples of answers may include hurt feelings, which often turn into resentment; miscommunications, which frequently produce frustration; not getting one's way, which is a manifestation of pride; or lack of control, which is usually an issue of impulsivity and the lack of disciple, as well as many more. The power of the flesh is evident. Pride and defense of self are frequent culprits of leading one into the flesh. Defense of self becomes a powerful and deadly tool of the flesh that wants to self-justify, self-rationalize, defend, and explain, often derived from needing to be right, control, vindication, retaliation, or the need to prove a point.[56] This is where the spiritual discipline of "letting your yes, be yes, and your no, be no" is an important tool that equips participants to be more authentic in their responses and avoid the trap of defense of self.

Another metaphor used in Module 1 is the 'Water Bottle and the Coffee Cup.' The metaphor is used as a reminder that each of us is unique, and we have preferred ways of being and doing. Recognizing and understanding differences is important in reducing interpersonal conflicts often arising from miscommunications and misunderstandings. Relationships will have

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[55] Fill-in-the-blank is a phrase frequently used in the model to depict a placeholder where one uses the word most appropriate to fill-in-the-blank.

[56] The model teaches that the deception of control says, "Hold on, stay hurt, stay angry; you cannot let him/her off the hook, remember what (with a pointed finger extended sharply) he/she did, he must pay. "The truth is, he is not 'paying,' the 'he/she [full stop] may not even be aware or care, and whether that is 'right, wrong, good or bad,' you have become a prisoner to your hurts. We must remember our key verse, the cry of Paul in Galatians 5:1, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." The first step is to recognize we have become powerless against our hurts and that our hurts have entangled (burdened) us again to a yoke of slavery to the bondage of our flesh. Letting go, turning over control, and releasing your mandate to hold on to preserve the hurt and protect the hurt has given all of your power to the hurt rather than your freedom in Christ. To effectively do so, we must acknowledge that fear controls us and blame (either at self or at others or both) has become our excuse. The lies of the flesh, disguised and covered with half-truths and self-justification, have caused us to point fingers in all directions at everyone and everything. We have made our hurts the result of everything other than recognition, acknowledgment, and confession of our powerlessness over our hurts. Even if a finger has not been pointed at self, there is often a self-condemning blame or an arrogant self-dismissal. We need to be willing to open our hearts, eyes, and ears and see the truth of our inabilities.

tensions and even conflicts, but we can learn how to navigate them in the love of Christ and with the intent of growing forward together "as iron sharpening iron" (Prov 27:17). Inherent in the metaphor is the underlying driver that the coffee cup wants the water bottle to be a coffee cup and vice-a-versa – be similar to and operate in the same way, particularly on matters of importance to the coffee cup or water bottle. To know one's inner workings is connected to the ability to individuate and differentiate, learning to see and not perceive one's coffee cup or water bottle.[57]

The model teaches that differences can be impediments or catalysts. Every moment of every day, we have a choice to identify perceptions, focus on what we focus on, and frame an experience, attitude, or behavior.[58] If a Christ-follower can embrace the differences in relationships and see through a lens of complementary collaboration, greater acceptance, and peace can be found in walking in the Spirit. That is not to say that there is a cry to 'settle for less,' say with resignation, "it is what it is," justify, rationalize, or accept bad behaviors, nor

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[57] This illustrative example may be helpful. Susan feels marginalized by her friend Shana. Susan feels as though Shana does not reach out or check-in, and as a result, she is not important to her. Susan must choose to stop and say, "What do I know to be true about Shana." "Shana does care about me." "She is available to me." "She does pray for me." However, Shana is not proactive in communicating. She is not a communication initiator. That does not mean that Shana cannot learn to choose to be proactive or initiate communication. It just means that it is not her natural propensity. Susan, who is a proactive initiator (the water bottle, in this instance), must choose to anchor into the truth that Shana is not a proactive initiator (the coffee cup, in this instance). If it is important for Susan to share her thoughts with Shana on the need for some proactive communication in their relationship, then she can have a courageous conversation. Suppose it is not that important to her. In that case, Susan can accept Shana as a coffee cup while acknowledging their difference and finding acceptance in the difference, which will lead to peace in the relationship. If Susan does not anchor into acceptance, her frustration that Shana is not naturally inclined toward proactive communication will fester. It will likely become a resentment based on an unspoken expectation that negatively impacts the relationship. All so often, our unspoken expectations and frustrations with the differences between us can cause cracks to arise in our relationships.

[58] The model teaches therapeutically and spiritually how to change perception by identifying and removing filters to see clearly through His eyes of truth. Identifying perceived fears and learning to shift and anchor into the truth allows us to accept a consequence, if, in fact, there is one, rather than worry about its impact because our confidence is in the sovereignty of our Savior. Imagined fears differ from perceived fears in that imagined fears are not based on paradigms, predispositions, expectations, or prior conditioned experiences but rather on lies – lies from the enemy, the world, others, and ourselves. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ."

make excuses for oneself or others. The model advocates that there are times when one needs to have clear boundaries and courageous conversations, but there must be clarity on intent and motive. To speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15), the Christ-follower must first remove the speck from his eye (Matt 7:5). The Christ-follower must first purify and cleanse one's heart to see clearly (1 Pet 1:22). Participants learn to shine, a Truth Light and through the love of Christ fueled by the Spirit, reveal an attitude or behavior and then make a Christ-centric realistically reasonable request for change. After prayerful consideration and personal cleansing, the Christ-follower can share how a behavior or attitude impacts the relationship. The final choice and decision is for the Christ-follower to accept and make peace with the differences for a healthy, restorative relationship. The Christ-follower reminds oneself that the other person is the water bottle or coffee cup and then anchors into the positives of the relationship rather than focusing on the negatives.[59]

In Module 1, there is also an emphasis on identifying expectations, pre-determinations, and set-ups. These human categorizations are derived from the flesh and are dangerous and detrimental to those desiring to walk in the Spirit. A few of the greatest human pain points are frustration, disappointment, and internalization, which often come through filters that distort what one hears, sees, thinks, and believes.[60] Some of the greatest relationship disrupters come

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[59] It is necessary to note that in the actual work in the individual or group setting, it is emphasized that prayer and wisdom are necessary to discern if the relationship is healthy. These approaches do not apply to abusive and destructive relationships, as psychologically defined. Participants are also encouraged to read Herny Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017). Jesus makes "asks" of His children. A few of His 'asks' include loving one another (John 13:34–35) and praying for "your enemies" (Matt 5:44-45), "to repent" (Matt 4:17), and to "follow after Him" (Matt 16:24–25). We cannot change anyone. We can change ourselves through the power of the Holy Spirit in us. We can choose our focus. We can choose acceptance. We can choose reconciliation. We can choose peace. The question is, "What choices will you make today for the coffee cups or water bottles in your life?"

[60] The model does not advocate that we intentionally or purposefully seek out discomfort and pain. Still, they are a part of our human experience in a fallen world, and we must learn how to make spiritual peace with our circumstances (external to us) and our feelings and thoughts (internal to us). In our attempts to minimize, alleviate, or even eliminate our discomfort, pain, and struggles, we often turn to unhealthy self-soothing and self-medicating

from these painful feelings, which often take root and usurp perspective (leaving one stuck in perception), responses (relegating one to the power of reactions), and root us in resentment. In the model, an expectation is a belief that someone will or should do something. The state of looking forward to or waiting for something. The state of believing that something should be a certain way. An expectation is a definition, a set-up. If an expectation is not satisfied, think about the outcome – it is flesh. An expectation comes from a place of fleshly bondage. The model places expectations on the "no-fly list." This means that participants learn to identify and dispose of expectations. As they move closer to the Spirit and begin to walk in freedom, they learn to express desires, wants, and preferences rather than expectations.[61]

Developing and cultivating the ability to distinguish between an expectation and a desire, preference, or need is important. Notice that the word 'want' is intentionally not a part of the Christ-follower's developing vocabulary, as want is also implicitly riddled with entitlement, deserving, and expectation, which are usually connected to the flesh rather than the Spirit. This is

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ways that fuel our flesh and damage our souls. Any flesh-driven attempts to reduce our suffering only increase our discomfort. The truth is that we cannot make peace with our flesh. If our flesh is 'our what' and in times of distress, when we are already weak, vulnerable, and even potentially spiritually compromised, it is easy to say yes to the flesh – to make peace and ease the pain. Do not negotiate with your flesh. Your flesh will win when you allow it to debate with you. The façade and the deception are that, in the moment, we have relief – we have applied a band-aid – but we have not addressed nor extracted the root of the issue. When we are negotiating with our flesh, debating with ourselves, we find even more discord in our lives. Feeding and fueling the flesh causes great distress because as the flesh increases, we move ever so slowly away from the peace of Christ. After all, we move away from Christ. "For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom 8:6). We need Christ for deep-root extraction, healing, and spiritual peace. In a troubled world filled with suffering, we can have "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, [who] will guard [our] hearts and [our] minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). We do not need to settle for the deception of false flesh-peace when we can have the God of peace himself sanctify [us] completely" (1 Thess 5:23a).

[61] Think about the difference momentarily and revisit the expectation definition. A belief that someone will or should do something. Notice the will or should. Further, often, 'should' is stated in commanding, demanding ways that imply entitlement and resentment. It is not healthy to assume that one 'will' if one expects a 'will,' then one may be very disappointed, as there is no control over others. A desire that one will is different. A want that one will is different. A preference that one will, is different. Think about the subtleties. 'Should' implies an obligatory meaning of an act, a behavior, or a result. Think about it. Does the Spirit demand, or does the flesh? Does the Spirit become offended, or does the flesh? Does the Spirit use self-will, manipulation, passive-aggressive, throw-away comments, or does the flesh?

a challenging process because the ask is to think past conditioned, entrenched ways of being and doing and step out of self and into Christ. To die to self and live to Christ. To walk/live in the Spirit and not provide the flesh an opportunity, which is it always eager, ready, and wanting to grab every moment for its prideful, entitled self. In this process, it is also necessary to note the difference between perception and perspective. When one perceives, there is often filtering through undetected but real blind spots, hurts, personal pain, and others rather than through the eyes of the Lord, which provides perspective.[62] Perception is a way of seeing or viewing something or someone with a particular attitude, from a particular paradigm, or a particular position. Perception is guided by one (or several) prevailing principles, precepts, and propositions - in other words; perception is prejudiced by flawed humanness. From a CBT vantage point, attitudes and perspectives matter in guiding behavior.[63]

In the Lifestyle Who is Christ, the emphasis is on Spirit-guided balance. Perceptions and feelings that often drive attitudes and actions can be imbalanced and incompatible with the Truth of Christ. When participants learn to develop a 'healthy suspiciousness of self' by scanning, assessing, and examining themselves, the intent is to choose to do so through the lens of the Holy Spirit, as He is the Guide into all Truth (John 16:13). For example, when one feels unworthy then

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[62] The release of pain is essential. The model teaches that one can choose today, this moment, in the here and now, to empty hurts into the powerful, life-changing, life-healing hands of Him who is more than able to "[carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us" (Eph 3:20). There is a chronic maladjusted belief from the familiar, the comfortable and a self-righteous victimization that screams hold onto me (the pain) as in doing so you will be vindicated in your pain, your hurt, and your anger. The Scriptural truth, "Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God" (Rom 12:9).

[63] All humans have attributes, traits, characteristics, values - descriptors ascribed to the self. It is perspective that influences the interpretation of a word. A word can certainly have a "negative" meaning or connotation. For example, consider the word condescending. It is hard to ascribe a positive meaning or use of this word. Yet, for many words, how they are used - what is meant by them really matters and creates a view and interpretation that can be positive or negative. Another example is the phrase: 'Appropriate an intentional and meaningful focus,' which can be a great and healthy attribute. Now consider the phrases: 'Hyper-focused, acutely-focused, obsessively or compulsively focused,' which can be perceived as problematic and unhealthy.

unworthiness is often ascribed as a characteristic defining self, rather than a perception or a

feeling. The message is that there is a difference between a feeling and an ascribed trait. Christ

sees us as worthy, and we are made worthy and righteous in Him (Rom 3:22). Through Christ,

the Christ-follower can move from perception and a feeling of the flesh, adjust, and shift into

perspective. Shift up to perspective.

What is a pre-determination? Pre-determination can be defined as the ordaining of events

beforehand. Pre-determination can also be defined as fixing or settling in advance. The word pre-

is a giveaway in that it signals the making of a determination before an event, a circumstance, or

an action. A pre-determination is a set-up based on an expectation that what has been determined

in advance will occur, and when it does not, the pre-disposition is a self-fulfilling prophecy and a

flesh reaction. The choice for the Christ-follower is a willingness to see and desire, above all,

freedom from the bondage of sin and self, which includes expectations and pre-determinations.[64]

No matter how competent, accomplished, gifted, or not, in so many ways, the heart of God is one

of obedience, obedience to Him as Lord and Savior. The lifestyle, Who is Christ requires

commitment.[65] A focused, deeply-driven desire to know the Savior personally, intimately, truly,

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[64] The model's teaching exhorts Christ-followers to choose to plant their feet freely within the freedom Christ brought through his death on the cross and choose not to live/walk in a way that captures us in the yoke of slavery – slavery to the flesh. Slavery to the ways of the world. Slavery to our conditioned, entrenched, and sinful ways. Paul asserts in the indicative (which grammatically is a verb form used to make declarative statements that are assumed to be factually accurate) when he states, "For freedom Christ has set us free." In 2 Corinthians 3:17, we read, "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Paul then uses an imperative and issues a command when he states, "Stand firm and do not be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." An imperative grammatically indicates a necessity, something completely unavoidable, demanding or requiring that an action be performed. We are not only to identify, acknowledge, and deeply digest and appropriate our freedom. We are to live and love in a way that demonstrates our freedom by standing firm and making life choices that do not place us in places of entanglement, bondage, and slavery to [fill in the blank].

[65] Murray reminds us, "It is possible to live every day and hour of your life in fellowship with the Holy Jesus. He continues, "If you will throw open your heart and give up everything except believing and allowing Him to do what He wants, it will come." He continues, "He will reveal Himself to the one who is ready – He must know you are wholly committed to Him – Jesus is willing to make Himself wholly known and to wholly know." Andrew Murray, *The Secret of Spiritual Strength*, 74.

deeply. Not just an intellectual or theological understanding (which are both important) but a circumcised-heart-driven personal connection that comes from a deep digestion of the Word of God (Module 2), a pray-driven attitude of surrender, and a willingness to obey no matter the cost.

Once participants learn to identify expectations, pre-determinations, and set-ups, they see more clearly. They can learn to appraise context and environment, which the model refers to as one's 'land.' The construct of Land is significant in several ways. First, it represents the Biblical truth that God worked in His children in the land. The land has covenantal significance.[66] The Land is a symbol of the contextual realities of one's environment. Land includes home, work, and school - the encompassing environments in which a Christ-follower finds himself daily in the usual course of his life. The Land can change, as it did for the children of Israel and the apostles and disciples of Christ. The Land is identified as one's current land, and analogies as to landscape are abundant within the model as the participant learns to settle into the Land, make peace with the Land, and accept the realities of the Land. For example, frustrations will ensue, and resentment will build if one wants to go to the beach and live in the mountains, which is not logistically possible.

Participants learn four steps to develop acceptance of the Land. Step One: An accurate appraisal of our landscape for acceptance. Step Two: A courageous internal review of oneself. Is one imposing upon oneself an unrealistic expectation and unsuitable for your Land, and which is

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[66] Although it is beyond the scope of this work, it is necessary to note that land is a central promise in the Old Testament. Kaiser notes, "In the Old Testament, few issues are as important as that of the promise of the land to the patriarchs and the nation Israel. In fact, אֶרֶץ, "land," is the fourth most frequent substantive in the Hebrew Bible. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Promised Land: A Biblical---Historical View," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138 (1981): 302. Weinfeld notes, "The whole biblical historiography revolves around the Land. The pivot of the patriarchal stories is the promise of the land for the Patriarchs and their descendants." Moshe Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 183.

implicitly a set-up? Step Three: An analysis of one's personality styles and traits.[67] Step Four: Analyze current skills and abilities related to the very specific issue identified in the Big Bucket Word.[68] The process allows one to overcome the feelings associated with the Big Bucket Word and shift out of the flesh into the Spirit with an attitude of willingness and ability derived from and driven by the Spirit. The Participant "practice[s] these things, immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress" (1 Tim 4:15). In Paul's exhortation to Timothy, there was an emphasis on not neglecting his gifts. In the model, infusion (Module 2) of the Word of God is foundational to strengthening oneself in His Truth, perspective, and Way so the participant can find one's way in the Land. The goal is growth, and in the words of Paul, "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment" (Phil 1:9).

In Module 1, integrity, authenticity, trust, transparency, credibility, and accountability are introduced, as these traits are cultivated throughout the model and are a part of the Lifestyle Who is Christ in service to others, as further depicted in Chapter 7. Proverbs is filled with a call to integrity. Paul exhorts integrity in Philippians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 8:21, and Colossians 3:23, as examples. The focus is to do what is honorable for the Lord to "work heartily" in all to the Lord. As ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5:17-20), there is an implicit call to representation, and representation requires integrity, sincerity of intent, truthfulness, and uprightness of oneself as representative of the character of Christ.

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[67] We all have personality traits that can serve as strengths and weaknesses. Often, a strength can be a weakness and a weakness a strength, depending on the context. Some identifiable traits that are contributing to the angst about the "inbox " for example are: For example, perfectionism, procrastination, avoidance, people-pleasing, imposter syndrome, self-deprecation, and expectations, among others.

[68] The choice is to move from big bucket non-descript, self-defeating words of set-up and shame to Hope-filled words of desire, intentionality, and prioritization of He who is more than able " to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us" (Eph 3:20-21).

Paul's emphasis was on representing Christ by action as well as word. Paul recognized he had liberty of action or freedom of choice and made courageous, challenging choices to honor God in his triumphs and in his sufferings.[69] Paul's dedication to service is an integral aspect of the continuing theme of his Christ-centeredness. As a dedicated servant, Paul is always a pointer, pointing upward to Christ. In Galatians 5:13, Paul exhorts them to be servants of one another through love, and Colossians 3:23-24 reminds them that they are serving the Lord Christ. In Romans 15:16, Paul describes himself as a minister in the priestly service of the gospel. Paul's dedication to service is also vividly apparent in his focus on discipleship and modeling. Christ's character in his own life. Throughout his epistles, Paul serves as a model. The emphasis on character is profound, as he reminds the churches to imitate Christ.[70] In 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, we read, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."

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[69] Living Christ in His freedom exemplifies the hope of righteousness that we have in Him. A capital H, hope, who is Christ, which points the Christ-follower forward and allows him or her to focus on his or her union with Christ as all that matters, which is why Paul says his sole identity is found in Christ and the truth of Gospel is to not only be believed with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind But God to be obeyed with a whole-hearted devotion to an Almighty God worthy of our all for His all. Suppose we undermine confidence in the Gospel by adding to, distorting, denying, or not believing. In that case, we are likely to end up in sin-based fleshly choices. It is important to not only recognize the subtleties of the flesh but the ease by which we are deceived, as is evident by those baiting the Galatians were using wise and pervasive words – they were using eloquence and superior wisdom to convince them of a heretical doctrine of the need for circumcision for salvation thereby perverting the truth of the cross and the sufficiency of Christ. Paul wanted his messages to be of the Spirit, not based on his own eloquence or human wisdom and for the church to hear the message loud and clear: if we accept perversion of the Gospel, then we will lose our way and Christ the Way and become captive once again in the yoke of slavery and the entanglements of the flesh. Paul's confidence was in the Lord and in Him alone.

[70] Within the model, imitating Christ is an underlying current anchored in the call to be conformed to His image (Rom 12:1-2). The call is not to identification but to imitation. "Psychoanalytically, the difference between one who imitates and one who identifies is that the latter not only displays similar behavior but adopts the [modeled] person's motivations, goals, and emotions, as well. This requires a 'libido impulse' or affection between Christ and believers and eventually leads to 'a radical restructuring of the Ego by identification with Christ.'" P. Lampe, "Identification with Christ. A Psychological View of Pauline Theology," in T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm, eds., *Texts and Contexts. Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts. Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 940.

In closing, the overarching theme in Module 1 is freedom (Gal 5:1). God cares about one's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.[71] God's love creates a spiritual environment of safety and security.[72] The teaching within the model reminds the Christ-follower that it is imperative to distinguish between our spiritual well-being and a Christ-centric perspective versus the worldly environment and flesh-derived feelings, emotions, and thoughts. We live in the world. The world is real, and the world is fallen – filled with sin. We are called to be in but not of the world.[73] We are called to walk/live in the Spirit, not the flesh (Gal 5:16). Perfect love (1 John 4:18) suggests that fear and love are antithetical. In abiding in Christ, one can use the language of John to be victorious and overcome (1 John 5:4) and then, as Paul exhorts, to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (Eph 4:1), as safety and security are found in the depths of intimacy within Christ.[74] In the vocabulary of the model, this requires vertical

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[71] It is important to note that while God cares for all, the model emphasizes that God's priority is in cultivating a relationship with Him. God's focus is not necessarily on the circumstances or externalities. But God, it is very much on those who belong to Him and their relationship with Him. God may change the circumstances and externalities, as He chooses and wills, as Paul reminds us in his battle with his thorn in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

[72] When we pull away, follow our way, and move without the Spirit, we are apt to fall prey to feelings of insecurity because we have become reliant on self instead of dependent upon the One who truly knows the way and the perfect way. Self-sufficiency, no matter how confident, convinced, or persuaded we are can never lead us into the spiritual concept of rest in security. We will likely become depleted, frustrated, overwhelmed, worn down or worn out, dissatisfied, and all the other emotions that flow from recognizing we are out of His protective care. We have left His path and have strayed into our own way – no matter the reason, life in Christ is a choice to stay on His path. If we find ourselves off the path, we immediately implement a course correction to move back onto His path, no matter the cost or the consequence.

[73] The model repeats the reminder that this world is really hard. The world, the flesh, and Satan are the enemies. Even when 'life - things' are good, we struggle with the hurts and disappointments of man. The unfairness and injustices that surround us. It is real. It is hard. It is even, at times, unfathomable. But God. The battle within is often one for control. A battle between our old self and our new self. A battle between our conditioned ways and prior experiences and the reality of the present. A battle between unforgiveness and forgiveness. A battle between what we know or believe we know and what we cannot see. A battle between our way, or . . . We know from 2 Corinthians 5:7 that "we walk by faith, not by sight."

[74] No matter how self-sufficient we may feel, it can never lead us to the spiritual concept of rest in security. Straying from God's path can lead to depletion, frustration, overwhelm, and dissatisfaction. Recognizing that we are out of His protective care can be a painful realization. Life in Christ is a choice to stay on His path, a constant commitment to align our steps with His. If we find ourselves off the path, we must immediately implement a course correction to move back onto His path, regardless of the cost or consequence.

alignment with Christ, eyes up and Eyes on Him who is infinitely able and willing. He can. He will. He is at work (Phil 2:13). The call is to step in and step forward and allow Him to have His perfect, love-filled way in Him as the Christ-follower chooses to pursue and follow based on the truth of who He is according to the truth of His Word.

Module 2: Nourish - Infusion

Infusion, Module 2, is cultivating the desire and the spiritual discipline to read God's Word repeatedly, cover to cover. Infusion is the (taking in) through the ingestion (intentional, prayerful reading) of God's Word and its Biblical foundational truths. The analogy for infusion stems from the medical term, which means introducing a liquid substance into the body for therapeutic purposes.[75] The metaphor is one of dehydration. When one is dehydrated, defined as insufficient water in the body, it impacts numerous bodily systems, including blood pressure, heart rate, and body temperature. It also causes a loss of electrolytes and sodium, potassium, magnesium, and calcium (the necessary minerals). Dehydration can lead to death. Since the model uses many medical metaphors, infusion to push 'liquids' into the body also infuses the Word into Christ-followers. The visual is an intravenous connection from the Christ-follower to the Living Water - the Word of God. In the model, God's Word is seen as filling and protecting.

The model advocates that there is no better way to get close to the heart of God. To learn who God is according to the truth of His Word, which is a foundational belief. It is hard for believers to put roots into Him if they are unsure as to His attributes and His Way. The model posits that the best way to know His Way is to know Him, and the best way to know Him is from His Word. But God. If there is doubt as to inerrancy, infallibility, or the truth of God's Word,

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[75] Tabers Medical Dictionary, "Infusion," https://www.tabers.com/tabersonline/view/Tabers-Dictionary/755362/all/infusion, accessed June 4, 2024.

then it is very hard to trust, walk by faith, and anchor into the full assurance and security

believers have in Christ. The model posits that the Bible reveals the character of God, His

redemptive plans, and salvific grace. The model is aligned with the Bible as inspired (2 Tim

3:16) and inerrant (2 Pet 1:20-21).[76] In Module 2, the participant learns to appropriate and digest

the truth of God's Word.[77] The Word of God equips the Christ-follower with the knowledge and

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[76] Inerrancy is the Church's historical view – the church has always believed this to be true. St. Vincent of Lerins said: "Now in the catholic church itself, we take the greatest care to hold that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all; that is truly and properly catholic." St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium 2.[6]. The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy is a modern, historical statement on the view of the Bible held by the Christian Church for 2,000 years, as well as by Jesus and all the Biblical authors. Article V reads: "Holy scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises." God's special revelation (e.g., Gal. 1:11-12 and 1 Cor. 2;1-4) is manifested in scripture centering on Jesus Christ. William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Alan W. Gomes, 3rd ed. (Phillipsburg: P & R Pub., 2003), 88. Special revelation is commonly used in a restrictive sense, signifying the written Word of God. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 1971), 114. Jesus is the Father's final and most authoritative manifestation (e.g., John 1:1,14 and Heb 1:1-2). Special revelation has been revealed through various means in the past but is now communicated specifically through the scriptures. The ultimate end of special revelation is man's salvation to the glory of God. David S. Dockery, ed., *HolBD* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 1385. The process of redemption is revealed in the scriptures for man's salvation. The divinely inspired scriptures were written through human authorship. In (2 Tim 3:16) θεόπνευστος specifically means "God-breathed," emphasizing the authority of the scripture. The belief in verbal and plenary inspiration means that every part of scripture, to the very word, originated in God. William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Alan W. Gomes, 3rd ed. (Phillipsburg: P & R Pub., 2003), 92. Verbal and plenary inspiration is the view that prevailed in the patristic, medieval, and Reformation periods. It teaches that God inspires the very words of scripture. "God's inspired scripture continues to reveal truth to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Plenary inspiration extends to the writings in their totality, both in the whole and the parts. The entire text is inspired, not general points or spiritual truths alone (e.g., 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21)." E. J. Young, *Thy Word Is Truth: Some Thoughts on the Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1972), 113. The original manuscripts of the scriptures were without error. This is logically deducible and consistent with Church history. F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 836. The notion that the scriptures are infallible means they cannot err in any teaching. Clement of Rome (c. 95) said, "You have searched the scriptures, which are true, which were given by the Holy Spirit; you know that nothing unrighteous or counterfeit is written in them." 1 Clement 45.2–3 claimed the scriptures are "true" because they came from the Holy Spirit, pure and genuine. (1 Cor 2:13). God, being truth (John 1:9,15; 14:6; Rom 3:4.) by His Spirit, spoke His Word through chosen men. Charles C. Ryrie, *What You Should Know About Inerrancy* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 57–78. Jesus indicated that the Holy Spirit would bring to the disciples' minds everything He had said, indicating that what they wrote would be infallible. (John 14:26). Therefore, His Word is infallible and true. scripture is inerrant because God is inerrant. God speaks truthfully; therefore, God's word is true (e.g., Num 23:19; Ps 31:5; Isa 65:16; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18; Ps 119:160; John 17:17).

[77] As we learn to see, we learn to walk in His way, His will, His footsteps. We come to see and truly believe that we can live 'in but not of' this world. We come to digest and appropriate the truth of His Word, truly the truth of His character, not based on our past experiences but on the Word, the truth of His character, not based on our past experiences, our hurts, wounds, resentments, bitterness, struggles, etc., but based on the Bible – the inerrant, inspired Word of God. We focus less on what is externally happening to us and around us and more on what He is accomplishing within us. We crave more and hunger for me and yearn to serve more. Serving Christ 'in but not of'

understanding to make wise choices and depend on His Truth as our compass.[78] He would have

us live in obedience to Him for His glory. The Word of God reminds us of His love, His active

working in every aspect of our lives, and the powerful truth that in Him, we are victorious

overcomers who have a sure and secure Hope in the living, resurrected Christ—our Savior.[79]

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this world does not require a mountaintop experience. It does not require moving (unless the Lord calls you to do so). It does not require a ministry position. It does not require anything but a yearning to learn to seek (through prayer, His Word, Wise Counsel) and to *ginōskō*-know, that you know what God desires for you in the here and now. Life in Christ is a lifestyle composed of many seasons. We can live at the Grain of Sand Level as teachers, stay-at-home parents, lawyers, business owners, accountants, nannies, servers, etc. The occupation is not relevant. The attitude of the heart is relevant. The attitude is relevant.

[78] Just as Christ is the anchor in Module 1, the Word of God becomes our anchor in Module 2. It is through the Word of God that we gain understanding, find guidance, and deepen our relationship with Him.

[79] The model's theological frame is that of eternal security. This is a recognized debatable topic and is beyond the scope of this work. For purposes of understanding, the model anchors into the doctrine of eternal security or "perseverance of the saints" or "once saved, always saved," which has been a core Protestant doctrine since the Reformation (1517). This can be defined as once a person has accepted by faith the saving grace of Christ, no deed or action can cause a person to lose his salvation and be lost to eternal damnation; the same unmerited grace eternally secures the individual's salvation. John 10:28-30, "And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand." These words of Jesus make clear that our guardian – the Son of God, is Himself testifying that salvation is in His hands, as Calvin says, "This is a remarkable passage, by which we are taught that the salvation of all the elect is not less certain than the power of God is invincible." John Calvin and William Pringle, vol. 1, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 416. John 10:29 reads, "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand." We can rest assured from this verse that the invincible power of God the Father will always be sufficient to protect believers. Some opposed this view, conjecturing that we could remove ourselves from the hand of the Lord, but as Grudem comments, this "seems to be pedantic quibbling over words— does not "no one" also include the person who is in Christ's hand?" (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 789). Ephesians 1:13 assures believers that the truth of the gospel had sealed us in salvation by the Spirit: "In him you also when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." Romans 8:38-39 tells us there is nothing in the universe that can keep us from God: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 1:14 Paul says that "Holy Spirit is the "guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" – the Holy Spirit who has indwelled the redeemed is God's promise and guarantee of eternal life. 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24: "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. " Romans 8:30 "And these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." The "golden chain of redemption" is clear that as God works in His eternal purposes of predestination, the ultimate end and assurance is glorification of those he has justified, there is no qualification of some potentially falling away. All who are predestined are called, all who are called are justified, and all who are justified are glorified. "One of the new covenant promises that Hebrews emphasizes is cited initially in 8:12b: "Their sins I will remember no longer" (quoting Jer 31:34). This is repeated in Hebrews 10:17, where it is cited to give the grounds for the statement of 10:14, "by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." This also may be the background for the statement in 9:15 that "he is the mediator of a new covenant … so that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. " Fanning commented: "These are also significant statements about the security that Christ's high priesthood provides to those who benefit from its

In considering God's Word, it is important to recognize that coming to His Word is a critical first step as one recognizes his desperate need for the Living Water and the Bread of Life - who is Jesus. To cultivate a desire to truly, deeply, intimately know Him as Lord based on the truth of His Word - the Bible – the Inerrant, infallible, unchanging Word of God. The desire for His Word must flow from a deep desire for an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord, as He invites us to know Him and be known by Him. He invites us to draw near and commune with Him (Rom 10:17). In infusion, participants read the ESV or NET version of the Bible without notes or commentary. Participants are asked to use a paper Bible rather than an electronic one. The request is based on constructivist, active learning pedagogies.[80] This is foundationally important because educational and cognitive psychology and neuroscience

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provisions." Buist M. Fanning, "A Classical Reformed View." In *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, ed, Herbert W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2007), 134.

[80] According to Huitt, the constructivist approach emphasizes that "an individual learner must actively build knowledge and skills (e.g., Bruner, 1990) and that information exists within these built constructs rather than in the external environment." W. Huitt, "Constructivism," *Educational Psychology Interactive* (2003), 386. Retrieved June 1, 2024, from http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/cogsys/construct.html. J. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*. (Cambridge*:* Harvard University Press, 1990). In active learning, the learner must assume responsibility for the learning experience. Contemporary views of learning suggest that the learner's knowledge construction process is based on experiences and beliefs, a derived epistemology that scaffolds based on the continual interaction between the learner and the experience. J. Bransford, A. Brown, and R. Cocking, R. *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, and Experience School*, (Washington: National Academy Press, 2000). From an instructional strategy perspective, Giesbrecht advocated that "instructional strategies that provide an epistemological pluralism and accept the validity of multiple ways of knowing and thinking are recommended" N. Giesbrecht, N. *Strategies for Developing and Delivering Introductory-level Statistics and Methodology courses* (Report No. SE057914, Alberta: University of Calgary, 1996): 2. Learners who view learning as a knowledge reproduction task tend not to personalize or internalize the learning experience while learners who are constructivist and oriented towards knowledge construction tend to be "inherently progressive," engaged internally, and active in searching for deeper understanding. C. Bereiter and M. Scardamalia, *Surpassing Ourselves: An Inquiry into the Nature and Implications of Expertise*. (La Salle: Open Court, 1993), 165. The connection between an active, constructivist-oriented instructional strategy that engages metacognitive skills activities with various components essential for learner success, such as motivation and personal epistemology, is more meaningful for learner development. Studies reveal that learners with well-developed constructivist-oriented, epistemological beliefs demonstrate more advanced and deeper higher-level thinking and decision-making. L. D. Fink, *Creating Significant Learning Experience* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003) and Y. W. Tu, M. Shih, M., and C. C. Tsai, C. C., "Eighth Graders' Web-searching Strategies and Outcomes: The Role of Task Types, Web Experiences and Epistemological Beliefs," *Computers & Education* 51*,* (2008): 1142–1153. It is, therefore, apparent that transforming instructional pedagogy to foster active learning is necessary for more effective and meaningful learning.

research has empirically shown that active, interactive learning is more powerful than passively

receiving information.[81] This pedagogical approach is discussed in greater detail in the Digestion

Module 3, as participants learn to appropriate and extract more deeply from the truth of His

Word.

In infusion, the methodology is to "touch and taste" the Word by physically handling the

Word, interacting with the Word through "parsing" (circling, underlying, color coding, words

that "pop," making notes in the margin as God reveals Himself, turning the pages, and moving

the bookmark, in the vernacular of the model, as the participant reads from Genesis to

Revelation, cover to cover, over and over and over again. There is no – too much of God's Word.

As Christ-followers infuse, they do not, in the model's vernacular, 'go off-roading," which

means they do not consult commentaries or look up words. Rather, the initial intent is to push the

liquid to infuse the person with a complete dose of God's Word – Genesis to Revelation, for the

first infusion. Subsequent infusions move to different translations and types of Bibles to expose

the participant to, in the model's vernacular, broader-spectrum antibiotics for greater protection.

To stay focused in the initial infusion, the participant is asked to reflect on what it means to

approach the Word of God personally. In the vernacular of the model, the "ask" is when the

participant reflects on one's attitudes and actions to record some observations, then reviews the

record/log and asks oneself what it specifically and personally reveals about attitudes and

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[81] Since the mid-1990s, traditional passive, behavioral approaches to teaching and learning have succumbed to more constructivist-based views that recognize learners as active participants in their learning experience. E. Salas and A. Cannon-Bowers, "The Science of Training: A Decade of Progress," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52 (2001): 471-499. The active constructivist theory is based on the view that learners are active processors of content, in control of their own learning, and are active agents assuming responsibility and management for their own learning process. P. H. Winne, and A. F. Hadwin, "Studying as Self-Regulated Learning," in D. J. Hacker, J. Dunlosky & A. C. Graesser, eds., *Metacognition in Educational Theory and Practic*e (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998): 277--304.

actions. In other words, the participant is learning to identify and cultivate insights towards God and His Word of God – the Bible.

Participants learn to watch for self-talk that includes "ought's," "should's," and other "legalistic obligations." Self-talk words indicate an attitude of the heart toward His Word. They are intimately connected to the attitude toward the One who provided His Word for edification, conviction, growth, transformation, and relationship with Him. Participants recognize that there is often a struggle with approaching His Word, as some view it as an obligation, a requirement, a check-the-box duty of the Christian faith. Some may think/say to themselves and possibly others, "I have to read the Bible and/or I have to follow a certain Bible reading plan." The opportunity for growth in this process is to shift the paradigm and view reading the Bible reading as a "legal obligation," a check the box, a "chore" in the Christ-centric life.

As participants move through the initial process of infusion, the "ask" is a shift in mindset and a change from perception to perspective. The model posits that approaching His Word is approaching God – it is a way to draw near to God to come into His presence and learn of Him. Christ-followers can commune with God in many ways: stillness, solitude, prayer, meditation, and, for infusion, His Word. They open His Word to learn about Him – to know their Heavenly Father, Creator, the Author, and Finisher of faith. They come to His Word to cultivate a personal, intimate relationship with the One who loved them and loves them enough to not only provide a way out of sin and spiritual death but a way forward into hope and healing through transformation and growth in Jesus – the Waymaker.

Participants utilize the Deep Dive and ask themselves: In what specific ways can they choose to change their mindset and paradigms about reading the Bible? How can they reframe how they think about His Word so that they can approach Him, come into His presence, and

know His Truth to be guided by His ways, in the here and now, every moment of every day?

The scriptures are clear. God has an amazing, unconditional love for His children (e.g., John 3:16

and Rom 5:8). God's story as it unfolds in His Word is a love story for His creation. The Grand

Story progressively unfolds the creation and progressive development of God and His creature as

it moves from the Garden to Gethsemane, the Cross, and the New Jerusalem. Witherington

quotes Zachariae, who depicts thematic contours as "those related to God, to human sin and

divine response to it, and changes to the human condition and Christian conduct."[82]

In cultivating attitudes, the desire flows from the two-way fountain of love from God and

to God, cultivated in Module 1. Attitudes are essentially connected to an openness to receive, and

an infusion is premised on flow and receiving the necessary minerals. Attitudes of humility,

thirst, openness, hearing/listening, attentiveness, implementation, obedience, and

accomplishment are cultivated in the infusion process. Participants are reminded that it is

necessary to approach His Word with an open heart, receptivity, and a desire to surrender to His

Truth. They are reminded of the necessity of interacting with His Word, as it states in Hebrews

4:12, "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the

division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions

of the heart." From Romans 10:17, Christ-followers can extract that faith is developed and

increased from hearing the Word of God, and as one feasts on and infuses His truths and His

from His Word, faith is developed in His Truth.

Infusion also provides a foundation for the teaching and practices of subsequent modules.

Participants learn how to build spiritual core stability through gleaning from God's transforming

truths and allowing them to heal and teach for *praxis* - to live practically, in but not of the world.

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[82] Witherington, *Biblical Theology*, 14.

The Bible explicitly reminds one of the entanglements, bondages, trappings, enticements, and sinful ways of the flesh that are prevalent and constant and must be continually moved through in Module 5. There is also an emphasis on keeping (guarding, protecting) the truth of His Word through implementation and execution of the riches of His Word through obedience to our Lord – Jesus, the Christ, as seen in all the subsequent modules, in living the Lifestyle Who is Christ. It is also difficult to grow deep roots, as depicted in the plant metaphor, and absorb, digest, and grow, as discussed in Module 3, if one is unfamiliar or unsure about His attributes and His Way. The model posits that the best way to know His Way is to know Him, and the best way to know Him is from His Word.[83]

Module 3: Absorb - Digestion

In the digestion module, participants learn to move from head to heart. They learn how to shift from an intellectual/theological head knowledge of God and the Bible into a circumcised heart attitude (Ezek 36:26) of His word to promote healthy digestion of the truth of God's character and His word (2 Tim 2:15). Digestion promotes growth and flourishment as it stems from a deep internalization of God's word for living application - to live Christ in a fallen world. Participants learn how to appropriate and apply the truths of the Bible in all aspects of life, in but not of the world. As mentioned in Module 2, this begins with extraction for digestion and absorption. Participants learn to extract as they read the Word. They learn to touch and taste the truth of God in the physical and spiritual handling of His living Word. Modules 1 and 2 have

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[83] When one becomes disoriented by all the externalities of life and even one's own internal dialogue, thoughts, feelings, or knowing, reorienting and connecting to scripture is paramount for shifting into a new perspective – His perspective – one filled with Hope and healing. The life of the Christ-follower is a choice to follow after and lean into, turn into the truth of Christ when the darkness surrounds us, or we cannot see or find our way; we turn into His Word, which is light onto our path, and walk in His way. His attributes and the promises of His Word allow the Christ-follower to persevere even if they feel weary and incapable of doing so.

prepared them to come to extraction by choosing to believe that God is greater than His creation. God is Sovereign (He is the supreme authority and has all things under His control), Omnipotent (able to do anything, with unlimited power), and Omniscient (knowing everything). Participants come choosing to believe that He desires to instruct, sharpen, and transform His children more and more into His image as we read in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "and we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

Module 3 is designed as a medical metaphor for the digestive system. As Goodman reminds us, "Nutrient digestion and absorption is necessary for the survival of living organisms."[84] Digestion is necessary to break food into nutrients that the body can use for energy, growth, and cell repair. As noted by MacFarlane, "Digestion is the breakdown of food into smaller particles and then on to simpler molecules."[85] As participants read the Word in infusion, they take in the nutrients from the fullness of reading cover to cover and gain, as Witherington would state, a view of "' the Grand Story,' the progressive revelation of the character and work of God."[86]

Extraction is the process of allowing God's Word to speak and interacting with it – searching through the power of the Holy Spirit - for words that "pop," for tidbits and tips God is revealing at the moment, in the near and now. Since God's Word is living, active, and sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb 4:12), we "see" and "hear" differently (not differently in terms of His truth) – differently in terms of application as we read it. That is what is amazing about God's

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[84] Barbara E. Goodman, "Insights into Digestion and Absorption of Major Nutrients in Humans," *Advanced Physiological Education* 34 (2010), 44.

[85] N. G. MacFarlane, "Digestion and Absorption," *Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine* 19 no. 3 (2018), 125.

[86] Witherington, *Biblical Theology*, 5.

Word and extraction. Every time we read His Word, we may extract differently, and each person

may extract differently as His relationship with us is so personal and intimate. As participants

extract, it is important to believe His word is transforming, healing, and a guide for living in

relation to Him and one another in the here and now, moment by moment, and day by day.

The process for extraction is derived from a constructivist pedagogy. For many years,

constructivist principles have provided a methodology for recent pedagogical and instructional

design movements. These pedagogical reform efforts reflect the view that:

> the acquisition of knowledge is not a simple straightforward matter of 'transmission,'
> 'internalization,' or 'accumulation' but rather a matter of the learners' active engagement
> in assembling, extending, restoring, interpreting, or in broadest terms, constructing
> knowledge out of raw materials of experience and provided information.[87]

Participants become active learners, interacting with the Word of God through a scaffolded

pedagogy. Abrami indicated that constructivist approaches to learning endorse active (rather than

passive) responses for constructing meaning in the learner's realistic (rather than artificial or non-

referent) contexts.[88] According to J. MacDonald, "active learning is a process whereby learners

are actively engaged in constructing knowledge in a meaningful, realistic context through

exploration, reflection and social discourse with others, rather than passively receiving

information."[89] As M. Martinez and V. Bunderson argue, learners will learn adaptively from an

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[87] Katherine Pang, An Examination of Constructivist-Driven Instructional Design and its Pedagogical Implications for Effective Learning. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*, 3, no. 2 (2009), 1. G. Salomon, and D. N. Perkins, Individual and Social Aspects of Learning *Review of Research in Education*, *23*, (1998), 15.

[88] P. C. Abrami, Understanding and promoting complex learning using technology. *Educational Research and Evaluation* 7, no. 2-3, (2001*): 113-136.

[89] J. MacDonald, "Rules of Engagement: Fostering active learning for performance improvement," *Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation, and Education Conference. (I/ITSEC),* Paper No. 2139 (2005), 1-9. Retrieved on May 4, 2024, from http://www.iitsec.org/documents/E_2139_001.pdf. Pang, "An Examination of Constructivist-Driven Instructional Design and its Pedagogical Implications for Effective Learning," 2.

active environment designed to meet the objectives of a learning orientation.[90] The participants, through a scaffolded, constructivist, active process, learn to construct meaning from engagement with the living Word and interpretation through infusion and Spirit-led meaning-making.
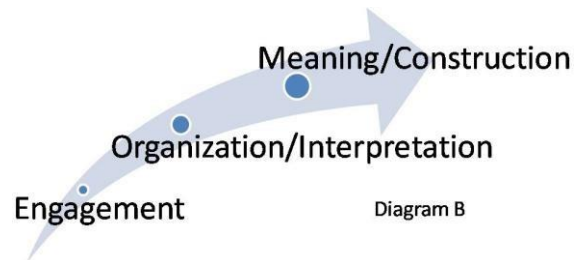

Figure 2: Constructing Meaning

As participants conduct a Deep Dive, they continually seek to assess whether they believe they can be transformed by God's Word, which is a different question, and whether God's Word is transforming. The struggle is often not with the power of God, which has hopefully been resolved with significant certainty before reaching Module 3; it is often found in self-doubt within the believer. As they continue to grow in the knowledge of God through His Word, and in this Module, focus on extraction, digestion, and absorption, they explore an application question: how does extraction facilitate God's transforming process? The answer, while personal, has a generic component common to any extraction process: the extraction method, or in theology, hermeneutics. While an exploration of hermeneutics is beyond the scope of this work, the methodology adopted is what Jeremy Punt identified when he stated:

> Paul used the scriptures according to 1st-century hermeneutical practices, which in short entailed that the scriptures are holy and, therefore, should be interpreted, are the living word of God, and therefore remain actual for the love of other generations as well that the scriptures can be interpreted by inspired, spirit-filled interpreters.[91]

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[90] M. Martinez and V. Bunderson, "Building Interactive World Wide Web (Web) Learning Environments to Match and Support Individual Learning Differences," *Journal of Interactive Learning Research* 11, no. 2 (2000): 163-195. Pang, "An Examination of Constructivist-Driven Instructional Design and its Pedagogical Implications for Effective Learning," 2.

[91] Jeremy Punt, "Hermeneutics in Identity Formation: Paul's Use of Genesis in Galatians 4," *HTS* 67, no 1 (2011), 2.

In combination with Punt's description of Paul's hermeneutic is Paul's exhortation to Timothy in

2 Timothy 2:15 to choose to handle the Word of God correctly, "to be accurate in delivering the

message of truth. The truth is the gospel. Paul showed concern that Timothy would present the

gospel without perverting or distorting it."[92] In other words, to handle the word 'rightly' with

respect and reverence: a desirous way of coming to His word expecting change, growth, and

healing, approaching His Word expectantly as He is a God who delights to work in His children.

Digestion requires connection, as the esophagus to the stomach, so too, the branch to the

Vine (John 15:5).[93] As the healthy functioning of the gastroesophageal junction is necessary for

digestion, so is the branch's connection to its source, the Vine. This connection is, as Carson

notes, "nothing less than the outcome of persevering dependence on the vine, driven by faith,

embracing all of the believer's life and the product of his witness."[94] Christ makes it clear that

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[92] Interpreters find a variety of possible sources for the derivation of the term ορθοτομέω ("handling aright the word of truth," ASV); ("driving a straight furrow, in your proclamation of the truth," NEB). Lock presents the possibilities as a plow cutting a straight furrow, a road engineer building a straight road, or a mason squaring and cutting a stone to fit its proper place. He questions whether any one of these was consciously present in Paul's mind. Walter Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1924), 99. J. E. Huther properly suggests that the notion of cutting falls quickly into the background so that the meaning is to "deal rightly with something so as not to falsify it." J. E. Huther, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to Timothy and Titus* (1884; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983), 234. Paul wanted Timothy to perform the task opposite that of a peddler of God's word (2 Cor 2:17). Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 215.

[93] Murray notes, "The vineyard was the symbol of the people of Israel, in whose midst the True Vine was to stand. The branch is the symbol of the individual believer, who stands in the Vine. . . Is it possible for the believer to always abide in Jesus? Is a life of unbroken fellowship with the Son of God possible here in this earthly life? If abiding is our work, to be done in our strength, then the answer must be no. But thankfully, the things that are impossible for men are possible with God. In one sense, it is true that all believers are always abiding in Jesus; without this, there could not be true spiritual life. ''If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out'' (John 15:6). But when the Savior gives the command ''Abide in Me'' with the promise ''He who abides in Me bears much fruit'' (John 15:4–5), *He speaks of that willing, intelligent, and wholehearted surrender by which we accept His offer and consent to abiding in Him as the only life we choose or seek* (emphasis added)." Andrew Murray, *Abiding in Christ*, Retrieved on May 22, 2024, from Logos Bible Software.

[94] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 517.

our connection to Him is the only way for life and function. He states clearly that if we are

disconnected from Him, not abiding in Him, we can do nothing, as He reminds us when He says,

"Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself" (John 15:4-5). It is through

connection to Christ, abiding in, and empowering by the Holy Spirit that the Christ-follower

digests the truths of God's Word. Murray states:

> What a beautiful image of the believer who is abiding in Christ! He not only grows in strength as his union with the Vine becomes progressively surer and firmer, but he also bears fruit, much fruit to God's glory. He has the power to offer others something to eat and by which they may live.[95]

In the model, digestion is also the active process of acceptance. For the Christ-follower,

the scaffolded progression of the modules allows the Christ-follower to digest and appropriate,

through absorption, the rich truths of the power of God, the person of Christ, the work of the

Spirit, and his place or position in Christ. Murray writes, "The whole Christian life depends on

the clear consciousness of our position in Christ."[96] Murray continues to note:

> [Paul] would have us not only remember our union to Christ but also, more particularly, that it is not our own doing but the work of God himself. As the Holy Spirit teaches us to realize this, we will see what a source of assurance and strength it is to us. If it is of God alone that I am in Christ, then God himself, the Infinite One, becomes my security for all I need or desire in seeking to abide in Christ.[97]

In digestion, participants begin to absorb their identity in Christ more fully. Digestion of

the fullness of God has begun from a foundational infusion in Module 2. Digestion continues as

participants begin to make meaning of truths such as 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 2:13, 1

Corinthians 8:6. These verses all reflect aspects of belonging: belonging to Christ. It is essential

to the sanctified life that Christ-followers digest and appropriate the truth that He is Lord and

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[95] Murray, *Abiding in Christ.*

[96] Murray, *Abiding in Christ.*

[97] Murray, *Abiding in Christ*.

Master. We are His vessel for His will and purposes. We exist by Him and through Him (1 Cor. 8:6). The New Testament is replete with a call to surrender, deny, and embrace the newness of our connectedness to Christ. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 15:3, "I die every day." Daily death to self is a prerequisite to following, pursuing, picking up our cross, surrendering and submitting, and living as a vessel for Christ.

Learning how to appropriate and apply the truths of the Bible in all aspects of life - in but not of the world, is facilitated by proper digestion and absorption of the nutrients, the truth of who God is and who we are in relation to Him and one another. The life in Christ is an intentional life. Cultivating intentionality requires a commitment to Christ and a relinquishment to the power of the Holy Spirit within – as He is our Helper, Guide, and Truth (John 14). As participants digest, extract, and absorb, they align vertically with the Truth and Hope, who is Christ. They remember to pause, breathe, and remind themselves that the limbic system is not the master. Still, rather, He who is in us has equipped us with the ability to turn into and rest in Him who is exceedingly abundantly able to do more than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us (Eph 3:20). Active awareness is connected to intentionality, Active awareness is grounded in perspective and choosing to actively (participating as a surrendered vessel in His sanctifying work), intentionally cultivate the ability to identify in the moment and then shift into an extraction from the truth of His Word, a Truth Anchor.

In absorption is Active awareness. Active awareness is accomplished in His awakening power within us. In active awareness is a mindfulness of 'paying attention.' If we are not paying attention, we are apt to fall prey to our own ways – the ways of our flesh. Living in active awareness requires consistency in commitment to Christ above all. Our flesh will wander (which

is more than prone to wander) into comfort, convenience, complacency, casualness, and carelessness which are all contrary to active awareness. Active awareness, as with all spiritual practices, is arduous for the flesh. Active awareness is pleasing to God because it allows us to focus not on our flesh and its ways but on Him and His ways. When we can anchor into the truth of who God is according to the truth of His Word, then we can choose to digest and appropriate the truth from His Word that everything God does, He ultimately does for His name's sake, for His glory.

In absorption, knowing God becomes experiencing God. Experiencing God moment by moment, personally in (but not of) this world, is very different than knowing about God. Experiencing God requires infusion (reading His Word cover to cover), digestion (of His truth, His way, His will), and absorption (of these truths) so that His living water and His abundant life may flow in and through you moment by moment, in the here and now, in a real way, in this messy world - called life. In physiology and medical biochemistry, there is a calculation for the rate of digestion and absorption of nutrients, which is defined by nutrient behavior.[98] In Module 2, the nutrient is the Word of God, and its digestion and absorption rate is a function of the healthiness of the spiritual digestive system in the Christ-follower.

The Christ-follower is exhorted to grow in Ephesians 4:14-15 steadily and progressively, not tossed "to and fro by the waves," creating instability and a sense of "wobbliness," in the vernacular of the model. A potential cause of wobbliness is a lack of grounding in the truth of Christ according to the truth of His Word. Christ-followers can fall prey to the beliefs of others, the culture, one's internal dialogue, misperceptions, inaccuracies, comparative thinking, unwise counsel, and so many other external and internal sources. If digestion and absorption of the

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[98] Toru Takahashi, "Flow Behavior of Digesta and the Absorption of Nutrients in the Gastrointestine," *Journal of Nutritional Science Vitaminol* 57 (2011): 265–73.

nutrients of God's word are impaired or blocked by unhealthy spiritual practices, then it becomes easier to compromise the truth of God's Word and the representation of God's character to fit one's paradigms and perceptions. Another possible cause of "wobbliness" is a lack of grounding and anchoring into the truth of God's Word through impaired digestion and absorption. The strength of one's belief system is analogous to one's digestive system. There is the very real and impactful influence of "not understanding and perhaps, even, not fully trusting" which produces potential pitfalls of the failings of one's faith – misplacing or temporarily losing one's mustard seed (Matt 17:20). Faith can become "wobbly" creating a chain reaction in the Christ-follower of digestive doubt which blocks absorption and triggers fleshly regurgitation resulting in segmentation and impairing peristalsis, which makes digestion possible.

In Module 3, faith is further developed through the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of God's Word, preparing participants for a heart check in Module 4. To shift into a spiritual heart check and continue the cultivation of growing in Christ, the digestive tract must be free of bacteria and allow the free flow of nutrients from the Biblical truth that Christ is the Lord and Master, and we are the vessels, the branch, the temple, and other referenced metaphors. The Christ-follower has absorbed the intangible reality that one can choose to believe that no matter the circumstances of life, the trials, and tribulations, God is a sovereign and is working His perfect plan in the lives of His children. They step forward into a heart check choosing to believe the character of God, the truth of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit and to not allow fleshly feelings and externalities to guide decision-making. They come to *ginōskō-know* that the abundant life is found in connection to the One who nourishes and grows us in Him: Jesus, the Messiah – the King – Lord of Lords, the Alpha and Omega. Abundant life is found in God's great desire that His children know Him and His power (2 Cor 13:4).

Module 4: Monitor - Heart Check

Module 4 of the model is titled Monitor – Heart Check.[99] It focuses on spiritual health and tools that equip the Christ-follower to detect and avoid what the model refers to as 'hardness of heart.' Heart check focuses on spiritual heart health analogizing to the medical condition of cardio-metabolic disease. In Module 4, participants continue to infuse, emphasizing appropriating and applying the truth of God's Word. The focus and emphasis is on cultivating and growing spiritual heart health so that we can walk in a manner worthy of God in obedience, as God desires, and in accord with the truth of His word and avoiding hardness of heart or cardio-metabolic disease. The exhortation is to have our whole heart turned toward God, turned away from man, from all that occupies and interests, whether of joy or sorrow. Then comes the fulfillment of the precious promise that all self and self-effort will be humbled. The Christ-follower comes to recognize and respond to temptations and trials through Christ and the guiding work of the Holy Spirit.

As an advocate of lifestyle health and functional medicine, I suggest to my patients that they examine their lifestyle for the possible signs of Cardiometabolic Syndrome (CMS) and discuss this insidious physical condition with a medical professional. CMS is a combination of metabolic dysfunctions mainly characterized by insulin resistance, impaired glucose tolerance, dyslipidemia (increasing the risk of heart disease or a heart attack), hypertension (high blood pressure), and central adiposity (a condition of severe overweight or obesity). Various factors can increase the risk of developing impaired glucose tolerance, including severe overweight challenges and obesity, a family history of diabetes, lack of or low physical activity, high blood

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[99] As discussed in previous chapters, the heart is used to represent the locus of a person's thoughts (mind), volition, emotions, and knowledge of right from wrong (conscience).

pressure, and high cholesterol, among others.

The fear is that many do not consider hardness of heart a life-threatening condition. Yet, CMS can be a life-threatening condition. In Module 4, participants are asked: "Have you ever asked yourself why the medical side of our wellness is often prioritized over the mental health or spiritual health sides of our wellness? We are a whole, integrated person with physical (medical), emotional (mental), and spiritual sides. Yet, we often wait until we see a physical manifestation of our wellness before we step in and examine our lifestyle. As to the spiritual issue, the follow-up question is, why is hardness of the heart, not a spiritual condition that warrants significant attention? Perhaps we need to address hardness of heart with a preventative, lifestyle approach to how we live Christ in but not of the world. To do so, we must first understand hardness of heart.

Hardness of heart reveals itself as early as Genesis 6:5, "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Followed by Exodus 4:21, "And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go." The Psalmists, Solomon in Proverbs, the prophets, Jesus, Himself, and Paul, all reference either the wickedness of the heart, the need for a renewed and clean heart, and the devastation of what the model refers to as hardness of heart. Yet, many often ignore its effects and impact on one's spiritual condition. Jesus states it clearly in Mark 8:17 when he says, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Paul could not be plainer in Romans 2:5, when he rebukes his listeners, "But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."

It is important to note that Jesus was speaking to His disciples when he said, "for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened" (Mark 6:52), and when he spoke to them in Mark 8:17. These were Christ's disciples, as we are His disciples. Hardness of heart begins to occur when we step into our flesh. The hardness of heart sets in when we do not seek when we disobey, and turn from God's voice, His Way, His Word, and His conviction. Hardness of heart begins in very subtle ways, much like cholesterol. One can eat cholesterol-rich foods and not hear or see your arteries begin to harden. You can turn from God, go your way, do your own will, and not hear your heart harden. The issue with hardness of the heart, much akin to hardening arteries, is that we often do not notice it until we have distressing or disturbing symptoms or receive a warning from a professional.

In Module 4, participants learn of a few symptoms (as there are many more) of hardness of heart: disinterest in the Word, lack of time to pray, church becomes an activity with minimal investment, not a place to meet the living God in community with others, community is predominantly in social events not in growth and service, listening to God is impaired, service is act-based and not heart-based or calling-based, there is a comfort and complacence in the common and expectation that the Living God will act are limited, lethargy is increasing, and participants are asked to reflect on symptoms in their own life, beyond the list. Participants then learn of and examine the Stages of Hardness of Heart, where the focus is on identifying the stages of spiritual heart disease and then how the Christ-follower can take preventative measures to stop this spiritual life-threatening illness.

Discussing symptoms and stages can be painful for participants because of existing medical conditions. It is also emphasized that as with general health issues, medical health, or emotional health, there is a propensity to ignore symptoms, medical appointments, or diagnostic

tests because of emotions ranging from apprehension to panic to face the possible outcome of the results. Other reasons for avoidance may include discomfort, lack of time, non-compliance with recommendations about lifestyle changes, such as healthy eating and exercise, or labeled as tiresome, boring, old news, and, frankly, unimportant. Humans, in general, and believers are not exempt; as they are often hesitant to share struggles, pain, or flaws for fear of embarrassment, shame, rejection, and many other flesh-driven preoccupations and pre-determinations. Yet, Christ is the one great Hope and Healer. Participants learn to de-throne the power of the flesh, step into the love and light of Christ, and ask Him to reveal the truth of the condition of one's heart. These same concerns and reasons abound in the believer with the symptoms of the hardness of the heart.; yet it is a life-threatening spiritual illness but one which is completely reversible and curable through the forgiveness and spiritual healing power of Christ.

Sin loves the darkness. Sin wants to stay tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the flesh. Sin does not want exposure, lest the light of Christ destroy it. The flesh is sin (Rom 8:7, 13, Eph 2:1-22). The Bible makes it evident that the flesh has a long lineage of hiding, disobeying, justifying, and ignoring God. The spiritual discipline continually cultivated and re-emphasized in Module 4 is the chosen desire to walk in the light of His way and a willingness to allow Him to expose the sin within, to ask, "Do I have hardness of heart?

The metaphors with the medical diagnostic criteria for cancer are intentional and not insensitive. Christ-followers must be willing to allow the light of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth about their spiritual condition. The model suggests that the abundant life, the fullness of the Hope and peace found in Christ, require running into His arms and allowing Him to examine for spiritual Hardness of Heart Syndrome (HHS),™ for which there is a full and complete recovery if one chooses to turn fully into Christ and surrender to His refining

fire. As advocated for certain types of cancers, one is encouraged to conduct self-examinations, which is vivid in 1 Corinthians 11:28-32 and 2 Corinthians 13:5. We, as in medical life, then consult with a physician and allow her to conduct an examination. Jesus, the Great Physician, needs to conduct his examination and then make a diagnosis. As with many forms of cancer and other diseases, there are stages. HHS also has stages, which are as follows:

Stage 0: Feelings of wobbliness; some hurt and unforgiveness, still very involved with spiritual growth and development but not as intentional. Excuses surface based on real-life events, such as busyness and real-life demands that start to infringe on spiritual commitment and practices. In this stage, indicia of HHS are beginning to form but are contained. HHS can easily be abated at this stage with a re-frame and a shift into intentionality and prioritization of Christ-centered growth and spiritual practices, such as forgiving and stepping out of ungodly practices. If one is lax, hardness of the heart will quickly move to Stage 1.

Stage I: Increased feelings of wobbliness, more hurts, and resentments begin to grow, furthering more unforgiveness, with a continuing reduction in involvement in growth in Christ-oriented practices. Bible reading, infusion, and prayer continue to dimmish, church and community become less of a priority because of fatigue and busyness, and there is a reduction in mindfulness and intentionality of one's connection to and dependance on Christ daily. The Christ-follower starts to pay less attention to spiritual practices and personal growth. Stagnation and complacency are more evident. In this stage, HHS is growing but has not yet spread into the vital areas of your life. It is still contained. This is known as the Lethargy phase – a pathological state of lack of spiritual energy and enthusiasm and the onset of spiritual unresponsiveness.

Stage II: There is an increased detachment from church, community, the Bible, and prayer. There is a more noticeable and impactful decline in seeking God in decision-making.

Mindfulness and intentionality are diminishing with the conditioned and entrenched ways of the flesh. Pebbles and rocks are emerging as there is a lack of focus on spiritually moving through hurts and resentments with justifications and rationalizations for unforgiveness. There is more self-focused and a 'me' and 'my' increase in daily choices, practices, and attitudes. In this stage, HHS is growing, expanding, and impacting more functions in daily life and manifesting in more powerfully subtle ways. This is known as the Malaise phase. When the Christ-follower is experiencing malaise, he may often feel frustrated and depleted in perseverance with decreased resiliency. In addition to a generalized feeling of spiritual disinterest, overall unwellness, and a more serious decline in a focus of 'in the world' and more of a focus on an 'of the world' emphasis.'

Stage III: The seepage of hardness of heart is evident and influential in attitudes and actions regularly. The Christ-follower 'may sit in church' but 'cannot wait to return to doing that which is more fun and interesting.' There are more rocks than pebbles, increased frustration, disappointment, and overall discontent. In this stage, doubt begins to influence faith and question the truth of God's character, His Word, concern, love, and way, not necessarily overtly (but perhaps so) but subtlety, in rationalizations, explanations, and justifications. The Christ-follower becomes more detached and seeks those who tickle the ears, not truth speakers (Eph 4:15). The Christ-follower becomes overtly defensive of self: positions, opinions, views, and ways more frequently. Cataracts emerge as the Christ-follower cannot clearly see sinful desires, choices, and practices and becomes a more entrenched defender of self. There is a lack of openness to seeking a conviction, and it may have even become hardened to conviction. In this stage, HHS is growing, expanding, and impacting more overtly. This is the Infiltrating and Spreading phase where HHS is now metastasizing throughout one's spiritual life and into 'in' the world life,

which is becoming more of an 'of the world life. In this phase, the Christ-follower is analogous

to the church in Laodicea: "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you

were either cold or hot!" (Rev 3:15).

Stage IV: The blockages are significant. There is a physical and spiritual turning away

from God, and there may even be anger or disbelief about God that continually manifests in

questioning His character and His Word. The Christ-follower may even say, "I have read the

Bible, so there is no need, I know what it says." "I have been in church for many years; why

bother? The people are hypocrites; the music is not to my liking; the pastor is OK." "I don't need

prayer, and I do not have time for God." "I am busy." "My life is fine." "I am good.". In this

stage, HHS is becoming pervasive in all aspects of life. HHS is causing a shift away from

the ways of Christ. The Christ-follower is ensnared by the world and has become one of its own.

The acts of the flesh are obvious. The Christ-follower is ruled by pride and lust. "For all that is in

the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not

from the Father but is from the world" (1 John 2:15–16).

Once the diagnosis is complete, lifestyle changes are prescribed for the continued journey

in Modules 5 and 6 and then into the personal prescription in Module 7. The participant is

encouraged that HHS is reversible and curable even at stage IV. God can reach in and change

any heart if there is a desire, a willingness, and repentance that makes a way for Him to do so, as

God desires a willing vessel who wants Him to heal and restore us to spiritual health. As

Paul cried out, "wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks

be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 7:24–25a. The Christ-follower can eradicate

HHS through Christ's healing work and the Holy Spirit's equipping by living at the grain of sand

level. What does this mean? If a Christ-follower is willing to choose to live a preventative

lifestyle in Christ, then he can overcome (Rom 8:37), 'more often than not,' in the vernacular of the model, the power of the flesh, even when one stumbles. Participants then learn some of these preventative lifestyle choices. For example:

Cataract Surgery: Cataracts, a metaphor for the flesh, block one's ability to see and gain perspective, as flesh is limited to perception. Cataracts keep one from seeing past the "the desires of the flesh. They keep one incapable of identifying conditioned ways, expectations, predeterminations, resentments, and other fleshly bondages that make it impossible to gain perspective, discern, and move forward into Christ. Therefore, the first treatment is cataract surgery.

Identifying Tendencies, Propensities, and Susceptibilities: The Christ-follower may need to return to detox (Module 1), re-learn to identify tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities, or re-familiarize himself with his spiritual toolbox. Tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities are flesh traps that cause one to stumble, self-condemn, and fuel the power of the flesh. If left unidentified, they will lead to fleshly choices, decisions, attitudes, and actions, which will result in HHS.

Identifying and Laying Down Assumptions, Expectations, and Pre-determinations: As explained in Module 1, these are set-ups and have infiltrated the Christ-follower in HHS. They lead to all types of frustration, disappointment, hurt, etc., and need to be identified and eradicated, once again facilitating another visit to detox. Participants also re-visit learning to listen to one's internal dialogue, re-framing, using Truth Anchors, and re-cultivating living in the moment guided by the Holy Spirit to make Spirit-guided choices rather than following your fleshly predeterminations.

Identifying Resentments and Writing Inventory: The model follows the 4th step inventory approach of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to identify resentments as it has an excellent 4-column approach. The approach is derived from the belief that resentments are 'killers,' in the vernacular of the model, as they keep one in bondage to the hurts and pains of the past under the pretense that 'one deserves,' which is a flesh statement, that the person who committed the wrong needs to 'see,' another flesh statement, and that somehow there is control in holding onto a resentment an unforgiveness, which is another flesh statement. These flesh statements are lies and produce rapid hardness of heart.

Practicing Forgiveness of Others: Once resentments are identified and an inventory completed, participants practice choosing forgiveness and not allowing unforgiveness to creep in as they anchor into the truth that forgiveness is not a feeling but an attitude and an action. Matthew 6:14-15 is clear. Lack of forgiveness produces a rapid onset of hardness of heart as it is pure disobedience to the Word of God.

Practicing Forgiveness of Self: 1 John 1:9 makes it clear God forgives, but one must come to Him and confess (speak forth) one's sin and repent (turn away) from it. For many, this is a stumbling block as the challenge of forgiving self for past mistakes is more insurmountable than acceptance of the forgiveness that flows freely from the Savior. Lack of forgiveness of self often leads to self-condemnation, which leads to self-pity, which leads to hardness of heart.

Guarding One's Mind: James 1:8 reminds us not to be double-minded. Philippians 2:5 exhorts us to "have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." Participants learn that while they may not be able to choose their thoughts all the time (intrusive, obsessive, and unwanted thoughts are excellent examples), they can choose what they choose to do with

their thoughts. Participants learn they can choose to allow their thoughts to come and go without attachment or judgment.[100] The Stray Cat metaphor is a method to manage unwanted, negative, and other dangerous and damaging thoughts. The captivity of our mind through the flesh is one of the surest ways to end up with hardness of heart because one begins to disbelieve and moves away from trust. Participants anchor into the scriptural trust that those in Christ have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:14-16) and can put on the helmet of salvation to guard their minds (Eph 6:17).

Developing Appropriate Authenticity: Discovering who one is in Christ and identity formation is essential to avoid the accumulation of heart blockages. Cultivating a Christ-centered perspective of who one is in Him facilitates the development of Christ-centric integrity, credibility, and righteousness (e.g., 2 Cor 5:21 and Matt 6:33) that flow from Christ the Vine to the Christ-follower, the branch. Authenticity is invaluable for living as one whose 'yes, will be yes and no, will be no' (Matt. 5:37). This authenticity and credibility are essential for developing relational trust and living in this world reflecting Christ. Appropriate authenticity requires contextual awareness and Spirit-inspired emotional intelligence. Authenticity does not mean 'I do whatever I want to do, whenever I want to do it' in the vernacular of the model. Authenticity is discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

Disable the Autopilot: Humans develop many entrenched, conditioned ways of 'being and doing.' We tend to move through our day on autopilot. A preventative spiritual lifestyle requires intentionality and slowing down to learn to see clearly in the moment through the light of Christ. When one lives on autopilot, there is a susceptibility to miss the subtleties and nuances

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[100] The model uses The Stray Cat metaphor. The premise is built on the thought that if an actual stray cat comes and looks up with its longing, big eyes, most people will feed it—give it milk or food. The stray cat then lovingly appreciates the nutrients and wanders off to share with the neighborhood stray cats that they found a food source. As one continues to feed the cats, they continue to return more. The analogy is that the stray cat is an unwanted thought, and as one 'attaches' to it – thinks upon it, it is analogous to feeding it, and in feeding it, it grows in power – the power of the flesh which pulls one in and out of the influence of the Spirit. The idea is that one cannot feed the thought, and as one learns to watch it come and go, it eventually leaves because it is not fed.

of the flesh, which often starts the hardness of heart process. A Christ-follower cannot live on autopilot as it directly conflicts with the construct of intentionality.

Intentionality: A preventative lifestyle in Christ is not haphazard. It is not casual. It is not complacent. It is not based on legalist rules nor fleshly imposed constraints but rather on Holy Spirit developed freedom in Christ which comes from an attitude of intentionality. Learning to choose an intention is a spiritual discipline and critical to the abundant life in Christ.

There are many more practical spiritual disciples. Living Christ requires a choice and a commitment every moment of every day to be His surrendered vessel. To desire more of Him. To want His way and His will above all else. The preventive lifestyle in Christ is not done in the flesh but empowered by the Spirit. It requires a choice to believe His promises according to the truth of His Word. In Module 4, there is also preparatory work for Module 5 in cultivating an attitude of waiting upon God, as what the human heart cannot conceive will be revealed to us (1 Cor 2:9-10). In heart health, the heart draws near to God alone, who gives the deep spiritual life to he who waits on the Lord knowing the truth of Romans 5:3-4. Participants are reminded that they can only be strong in the life of faith or the work of love, as they are attentive to their connection to Christ and communication with God through their belonging to Christ. Participants are exhorted to allow the One True and Living God alone, none and nothing but He, to be their hope and to be aware, alert, and on guard for two great enemies: the world and self who want to keep them from seeking His way and waiting on Him as they continue to cultivate a life of faith demonstrable in their walk of faith.

Module 5: Engage – Faith Walk

In Module 5, Engage - Faith Walk, participants learn to be still (Psalm 46:10) and listen to His voice, learning how to hear God and walk by faith. Participants learn to discern God's

promptings through the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit into God's truth (John 16:13;

Psalm 46:10). They learn more deeply how to live by faith, through prayerful communication

with the Savior, who empowers their walk in Christ daily through the various challenges of life.

They learn practical spiritual disciplines and are equipped with the tools to live victoriously as

overcomers in but not of the world. The emphasis is on stillness and hearing His voice, and the

truth of God's Word is that no matter the feelings of instability, the Christ-follower's reality is

that faith is grounded in Christ, and His stability provides the anchor. He is the One who

establishes His children (2 Cor 1:21-22).

The module begins with a Spiritual Check-up. Participants deep dive and ask themselves,

"How am I in Christ," based on 2 Corinthians 13:5. They assess using the following questions:

Am I responding in the flesh? Am I using speculations, making assumptions, perceiving through

predeterminations or expectations? Or Am I pausing to focus on and align with Christ? Am I

seeking and using His wisdom, understanding, and discernment in this [fill in the blank]

situation? Do I recall scripture to aid in the process? Am I anchoring into the word of Truth? For

example, am I reminding myself of 2 Corinthians 10:5: "We are destroying speculations and

every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought

captive to the obedience of Christ?" Am I living in the moment and choosing not to worry about

what may or may not happen tomorrow from Matthew 6:24? Am I intentionally walking to

discern distractions and avoid pitfalls, traps, and other susceptibilities? Am I focusing on what

the Lord desires as my Lord, living as His surrendered vessel, desperately dependent upon Him

in all ways?

Next, Participants choose to allow the Lord to examine them to see if they have a

'Spiritual Pressure Wound' in the vernacular of the model. A spiritual pressure wound's etiology

is in Proverbs 18:14, "A wounded Spirit, Who can bear?" And the hope comes from Psalm

147:3, "He heals the brokenhearted and heals up their wounds." A spiritual pressure (sin) wound

is an interruption in the integrity of walking with Christ. A wound that causes a temporary

break in the intimacy of our fellowship with our Savior. A wound can come from another, an

event, and even oneself. Some causes of spiritual pressure wounds include placing oneself on the

throne of one's heart (rather than allowing the Lord to be the Lord of one's life – in other words,

usurping His Lordship). Believing a lie, a false narrative, the opinions, thoughts of others, or

those around (in the externalities), and even our own unhealthy, negative self-talk, contrary to

the truth of God's Word – the Bible. Another cause is falling prey to "I deserve," it's unfair," or

"what about me." In other words, the sin of self-pity and self-centeredness.

The severity of spiritual pressure wounds can be determined by the intensity of the

pressure – how impactful and destructive the sin is.[101] The duration of pressure can determine the

severity of spiritual pressure wounds. Once again, all sin is impactful and destructive, but the

longer one stays in the sin, the more damage to oneself and others. The severity of spiritual

pressure wounds can also be determined by tissue tolerance. If one has hardness of heart and

discovers symptoms of HHS, then one is less likely to feel the impact of the sin, less likely to be

disturbed by its destructiveness, and less likely to notice the spiritual pressure wound. Detection

of a spiritual pressure wound is directly connected to one's ability to heal a spiritual pressure

wound. It is imperative to develop a strong foundation - steadfast and immovable in the Lord (1

Cor 15:58). That foundation comes from Detoxification (Module 1), Infusion (Module 2),

Absorption and Digestion (Module 3), and Monitoring (Module 4). Participants continue to

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[101] All sin is impactful and destructive, but consequences can vary, and the effects can be diffuse and diverse.

practice living Christ Who is the Lifestyle as a surrendered, desperately dependent vessel of the Lord through obedience, confession, prayer, and repentance. Good nutrition and hydration are important, so Infusion, Module 2 is so important. As Christ-followers, we must infuse the Word of God, drink the Living Water, consume the Word, and spend time with the Lord in prayer, which is communication and communion with Him. The Lifestyle, Who is Christ becomes one focused on living/walking by faith rather than sight (2 Cor 5:7), infusing God's Word, and allowing the Holy Spirit to grow one deeper in maturity in Christ. Faith - God's Word – Growth (Rom 10:17).[102]

Since the model is rooted in Pauline theology, participants journey with Paul, examining and extracting certain facets of engaging faith and living the Lifestyle, Who is Christ. Paul's vision and ministry were centered on Jesus Christ. Paul continually points away from himself and points towards God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Paul's focus is on Christ and Christ alone. Paul's Christ-centeredness is foundational in understanding his pastoral theology. It is his focus on Christ that allows him to model Christ to the churches as well as those outside of the faith. Paul continually emphasizes and focuses on the importance of obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul's focus is on Prayer. Paul's foundation built on the rock of Christ is also composed of prayer and thanksgiving to God. Prayer is a vital aspect of Paul's ministry and his life as a missionary, an evangelist, a pastor, a teacher, a discipler, and a servant of Jesus Christ.

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[102] Our walking in the Spirit then allows us to fulfill our Christ-centered responsibility to our Savior by understanding our need to take action that is not legalistic or formulaic but depends upon Christ's power in our lives. We must, as Christ-followers, not stand idle and allow sin to develop or continue in our lives, which is a representation of willful sin. Instead, we must choose to stay focused on God's desire for our absolute holiness through Him, by Him, and to Him. The fulfillment of our Christian responsibility must be diligent and uncompromising so that we desire to fully obey God's requirements for holy living. The reality of the power and subtlety of our Flesh requires us to recognize our need to appropriate the power of the Spirit to free ourselves from sin's control and its influence in our lives. This desire to be obedient to God's requirements for holiness will naturally lead us to desire and then allow the Spirit to have His way in us, work in us through a process of transformation so that we may be the victorious overcomers He has called us to be in Him – in Christ.

Paul, in many of his epistles, reminds the churches he is praying for them; for example, in 1

In Thessalonians 1:2, he writes, "making mention of you in our prayers." In 1 Corinthians 7:5, he

commands them to devote themselves to prayer, and in Romans 12:12 commands devotion to

prayer. In 2 Thessalonians 1:11, Paul refers to his praying for the Thessalonians "always." He

prays for their faith, needs, "comfort, and strengthening," as we read in 2 Thessalonians 2:17.

His prayers for them are that they would also pray for him. In 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, Paul asks

for prayer: Paul understood the importance of prayer. Prayer is prominent in all of Paul's

writings. The model leans into Bounds' use of the word, "importunately," which means robustly

urgent, overly persistent and he states in his chapter titled, Prayer and Importunity, that

importunately must be demonstrated with humility, sincerity, and fervency. Prayer is mentioned

in more detail in Chapter 7.

Another important concept for our Lifestyle Who is Christ is Authenticity, which is also

discussed more fully in Chapter 7. Paul was and is a model for leadership in his Christ-centric

lifestyle (his Authentic modeling, in the vernacular of the model), an essential aspect of his

leadership and discipleship. Paul only asks what he himself performs in, through, and for Christ.

If Paul commands prayer without ceasing and devotion to prayer, then we must conclude that he,

too, prayed without ceasing and was devoted to prayer. This is evidenced in his statement to the

Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 3:10, that he is praying night and day. In the Christ-follower's

Faith Walk, our Lifestyle Who is Christ, participants are reminded to choose a focus with

intentionality.

Paul also models gratitude and thanksgiving. Paul's expression of his thanks to God is an

illustration of Paul's practice of taking his various experiences, whether "sad" or "glad," "good"

or "bad," "into the presence of God" which is not only with the Christ-centered focus of Paul's

ministry and lifestyle but urgent for a circumcised-heart attitude in Christ. Paul's message of

thanksgiving upward to God is not only a rendering of giving thanks from a circumcised-heart

but a powerful and meaningful reminder to the Thessalonians that they, too, need to thank God

for all things and in everything (1 Thess 5:18). It is also important to note that the notion of

"always" which is used by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 1:2 is reiterated in 2:13, as "constantly" but

not as a repetition, rather as an amplification. The use of 'constantly' in 2:13 communicates

"without intermission" or "unceasingly." It is a work of paramount importance to Paul and is a

reminder that it is Christ who is central to both his life and his ministry. Paul demonstrates the

importance of thanksgiving for everything, whether pleasant or unpleasant. It is not an arbitrary

thanksgiving to God dependent upon circumstances or the personalities of the Thessalonians but

rather one of pure gratitude for those God has entrusted to Paul and for his opportunity to

advance the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul places tremendous importance on their adherence to the

faith and is grateful and rejoices because of them. As Paul rejoices in them, he commands them

to "rejoice always" (1 Thess 5:16). The commands are grounded not in empty words but in the

actions and teaching of Paul as he, himself, has modeled these traits to them in his own life and

relationship with them. Participants are reminded ass ones who are living Christ, the Lifestyle,

that they are to choose to place a significant emphasis on active faith- based living in and

through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In living faith, participants also learn to wait upon God with a heart filled with faith in

His working. Faith to pray for His mighty power. Faith to pray that the eyes of one's heart be

opened to see God working by learning how to maintain a place of humility and stillness.

Participants resolve to continually, humbly, and truthfully wait upon God, as He never

disappoints. Participants are reminded that in waiting on Him, they shall find rest and joy and

strength, and the supply of every need (Phil 4:19). They learn to wait for supplies, day by day, at every step, to receive what only he can supply from above – from Him alone. There is nothing so needful than to cultivate a spirit of dependence on God and place full confidence in Him.

Participants learn to wait for guidance and instruction from the one true God who has real knowledge and is the One who is the only true source of wisdom and goodness. The living assurance that waiting on God can never be in vain as we cannot seek close fellowship with God without a very honest and entire surrender to all of His will. Participants cultivate the courage to believe that God will hear and help and that it is necessary to choose to resolve beforehand with the most confident expectation of God's meeting and working as one waits upon Him. Participants learn to choose that it is with the circumcised heart that the choice is to wait on God and be on guard for the worldly and fleshly temptation to lean on one's own understanding (Prov 3:5–6). In waiting upon God, eyes look up, and there is vertical alignment to Him who looks upon us. As we wait and pray, allowing apparent contradictions to fade away and in the exercise of waiting, one leans into an abounding hope - a hope as bright and boundless as God's mercy. It is waiting upon God that eyes are opened to believe in His wise and sovereign will. It is resting in the Lord, in His will, His promise, His faithfulness, and His love, that makes patience easier, and the resting in Him is waiting before Him with a peace that keeps the heart and mind anxious for nothing because we have made our requests known to Him (Phil 4:6-7).

The surrender to full obedience to all His will is the secret of full access to all the spiritual blessings of His fellowship. God can do for us exceeding, abundantly above all that we can ask or think (Eph 3:20), and we are in danger of limiting Him by usurping Him in not waiting on His perfect time, will, and way. Participants are reminded that He is teaching His children to leave all in His hands and to wait on Him alone. Patience then becomes our highest

blessedness and our highest grace – it honors God and gives Him time to have His way with us. It is the highest expression of our faith. True patience is the replacement of self-will with His perfect will. And when one feels that patience is an unbearable struggle, participants can remember to pray 2 Thessalonians 3:5, "May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ." In patience, faith is developed, and faith, simple faith in God's word and love, is to be the opening of the eyes, the opening of the heart, to receive and enjoy the unspeakable glory of His grace as we abide in the light of God and let it, and let Him, fill one with the life and brightness it brings – embracing the spirit of the crucified Christ. Participants develop more of a living consciousness that what is essential is to give God His place of honor and of power – to choose a confident expectation of His saving power and cry out, "Open the eyes of my heart, Lord" from Ephesians 1:18. It is God alone who develops the deep spiritual life for the one who is really waiting on God for all.

Participants also learn that waiting does not mean turning off the brain or tuning out the God-given abilities to think, consider, learn, know, cultivate wisdom, and develop expertise. But God, human knowledge or wisdom never compares with God's (Rom 11:33). Participants are reminded that in and through Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, they can *ginōskō*-know God and choose to cultivate a depth of relationship that leans into a deeper understanding that they can trust God because His ways are not ours. God's ways are higher than ours (Isa 55:9). God is perfect, holy, and sinless (1 Pet 2:22, 1 John 3:5). Participants continue to learn to set their minds on Christ, thinking and meditating on His attributes, the truth of Who God is according to the truth of His Word to ground them in Him. As they think upon the truth of Christ, according to the truth of the scripture, they can shift into Philippians 4:8. Participants are reminded that a faith walk requires a grounding in perspective derived from the truth of who God is and who

they are in Him. Thinking intentionally, choosing a focus, and setting their mind on Christ requires a Spirit-led choice. These shifts begin with a cognitive choice to focus forward and anchor into the truth of God's character and attributes. Thinking is to turn into the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, who facilitates the shift into the mind of Christ, focusing thoughts on the truth of God and conformity to Christ (Rom 12:2). Participants are reminded that the flesh focuses on the world. The Spirit focuses us on Christ.

Finally, Paul exudes clarity confidently in his obedience to the Holy Spirit's guiding, leading, and direction. Paul is not predisposed to know God's will, timing, or outcome. He is content to follow and allow the Lord to unfold His ways (Phil 4:11-13). Paul's perspective was anchored in the sufficiency and provision of the Lord. His identity was strongly grounded in who he was in Christ. Paul's confident clarity came from *ginōskō*-knowing His savior and Lord. Participants are reminded that the key is to *ginōskō* know – to have confident clarity so that they can say authentically from a circumcised heart, "Whatever comes my way, I know it is in accord with God's will, and I know and desire to be constrained by the Holy Spirit and Him alone to be where He wants me, how He wants me when He wants me, guarding one's mind and heart in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:7)."[103]

Module 6: Preserve - Immunity

In Module 6, participants focus on the Holy Spirit as Helper, Guide, and Comforter (John 14:26; John 16:13-14). Through the "Holy Spirit Ziplock" metaphor, participants develop a strong spiritual immune system that fosters a balanced life of purposeful intentionality to

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[103] This of course, is based on the Christ-follower not walking in intentional sin and indicative of a disposition turned towards God.

cultivate, preserve, and harness His power and energy (2 Cor 1:21–22). They learn how to live in a way that appropriates His protective care, fostering spiritual care to press on, preserve, and run the race with endurance (1 Cor 9:24-27) in this messy world. The emphasis is on cultivating meaningful personal prayer, His direction, and His will in every daily decision, living at the grain of sand level. Participants spend significant time in scriptural truth regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Konsmo reminds us that "the primary contributing factors that might have molded Paul's conception of *pneuma* include the Hellenistic mysteries, Greek philosophy, the Old Testament, Second Temple Jewish literature, and the personal revelation of Jesus the Messiah."[104] As the model often refers to the intangible-tangible reality of the presence of God it is important to note with Konsmo that "the adjectives 'tangible' and 'intangible' contain a depth of meaning that is necessary for discussions about the nature and characteristics of the Spirit of God."[105] Further, for purposes of the model and as highlighted in Module 6, aligned with Konsmo, "the term 'tangible' . . . includes those elements of the Christian experience with God, who has revealed himself in manners that can both be perceived by the physical senses as well as in experiential ways that defy logic and empirical scientific procedures."[106]

Participants are reminded that the Holy Spirit is a person. He is one person of the triune God, the Trinity. He, Himself, is God. Tozer writes, "Let's cultivate the Holy Spirit by honoring the Lord Jesus Christ."[107] Participants are asked, "How do you honor the Lord Jesus?" One way is to choose to walk in His truth, righteousness, and holiness guided by the Spirit, and while this

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[104] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 1.

[105] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 22.

[106] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 22.

[107] A. W. Tozer, *Life in the Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 41.

is often easier said than done, the participants' growth in personal heart-knowledge, *ginōskō-knowing*, the Word and facilitated by the Spirit illuminates mindsets towards communion with God in the practice of prayer and meditation. Tozer writes, "If any church is to be a church of Christ, the living, organic member of that redeemed Body of which Christ is the Head, must fight encroachment and seek power. A Spirit-filled and Spirit-led church is a useful, influential, and joy-filled church, and how is that accomplished through the emphasis on the Spirit."[108]

A cursory review of a few scriptures reminds participants of a few key concepts about the Holy Spirit. In Exodus 31:2-5 "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship." Emphasizing that the Spirit provides ability, intelligence, and skill. In Deuteronomy 34:9, Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom, emphasizing that the Spirit gives wisdom. In Judges 14:6 and 19, "Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces, And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and he struck down thirty men, "emphasizing that the Spirit gives strength and power. In Romans 8:16, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God," emphasizing the Spirit bears witness. In Romans 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words," emphasizing that the Spirit intercedes for us. Galatians 5:17 says, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do," emphasizing that the Spirit helps to keep us following after Christ. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, "Who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not

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[108] Tozer, *Life in the Spirit*, 68.

of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life," emphasizing that the Spirit gives life. Participants put into practice Ephesians 5:11 and continue to practice Spirit-guided wise decision-making based on the truth of God's Word – a willingness to turn from the enculturation and ways of the world and the culture deeper into Christ.

Participants are reminded to be mindful and intentional, allowing the Holy Spirit to scan and identify what is attaching itself to oneself so as to, at the moment, take Spirit-guided action and not accumulate the toxins of this world. Participants are encouraged to resist the urge to become, in the vernacular of the model, "Walking Velcro." Walking Velcro will attract and attach to anything and everything it comes near. In the care of the Holy Spirit, Ziplock participants become less susceptible and build up immunity to the mess and stuff of life, allowing it to slip off rather than take hold. Participants then live at the grain of sand level, protected, in humility and surrender. They cultivate Spirit-guided awareness by remembering and implementing the attitude and actions of surrendering, seeing, and serving in the light of Christ (2 Cor 4:6).

The Holy Spirit is the engine, equipper, empowerment, and in module 6, the Christ-follower's immune system and intercessor (Rom 8:26-28). Paul depicts the Spirit as the sustainer "amid the burdens and disappointments of life."[109] The Spirit aids in many ways and serves in many roles and functions in the life of the Christ-follower. In Module 6, the Spirit's work is emphasized in his intercession for the saints and in the reminder that He guides the believer into all truth as he seeks to pray. According to Brown, "The gift of the Spirit is only the beginning of a life-long process of being saved, of sanctification, of being conformed to the image of Christ (2

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[109] Everett F. Harrison and Donald A. Hagner, "Romans," in *EBC: Romans–Galatians (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III & Garland, David E., vol. 11 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 139.

Cor 3:18, 2 Thes 2:13, Rom 8:28, 16:16, Eph 3:16)."[110] The Holy Spirit is the primary force in

the spiritual transformation process in the believer's life, as he brings the grace of God into the

heart of Christ's followers. The emphasis in Module 6 is effective living in but not of the world

in the power of the Spirit, protected by His guidance, informed by His truth, and comforted by

His intercession. As surrendered vessels, participants choose to rest in the transforming work of

the Spirit as He draws believers away from the world and the flesh into the Word of God for

comfort, encouragement, perspective, hope, and healing even through trials and challenges of

life. In these places of surrender, the message is one of desperate dependance and complete

reliance on the Holy Spirit's empowerment, protection, and intercession. Paul's message is 1

Thessalonians 5:17, which is one of living in an attitude of prayer, moving through one's day

conversing with God, often emphasizing listening and waiting for His still, small voice. Bounds

suggests that:

> prayer has inherent meaning: devotion, communion, fellowship, enjoyment, access—how are these characteristics alive in your prayer life?" . . . The whole force of the Bible statement is to increase our faith in the doctrine that prayer affects God, secures favors from God, which can be secured in no other way, and which will not be bestowed by God if we do not pray.[111]

When we are in the midst of trial, it is often easy to forget how to pray or even be able to

pray. We can, as Paul says in Ephesians 6:18, "pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and

supplication." Prayer is foundational in the life of a Christ-follower. Prayer is powerful and

reminds us of the greatness of God and the infinite possibilities that can flow from the hand and

heart of God. Trials and challenges will come, and Christ-followers can choose to "rejoice in

hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer" (Rom 12:12) and have "peace with God

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[110] Brown, "πνεῦμα," 689. Brown, Colin, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 701.

[111] Bounds, *Complete Works on Prayer*, 212.

through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1).

Participants begin to cultivate a deeper understanding of prayer and peace. Peace is urgent in a world filled with conflict, prejudice, bias, self-centeredness, and unfairness. Peace nourishes – it is a healing balm to brokenness and pain. Peace has a connotation and implication of calm and quietude. In a world so rushed and our flesh so easily pulled in so many directions, Peace is so important as its focus is calm, quiet, and rest, and peace comes from the intimacy of a relationship with the Living God. God's presence is personal. God's presence is practical. God's presence is purposeful. 2 Corinthians 3:17 powerfully reminds us, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Spiritual rest requires the relinquishment of self-reliance and a shift to God-dependence. Jesus was modeling God-centric dependance and a need for communion through His night of prayer. Tozer writes:

> So the life of man upon the earth is a life away from the Presence, wrenched loose from that 'blissful center' which is our right and proper dwelling place, our first estate which we kept not, the loss of which is the cause of our unceasing restlessness. The whole work of God in redemption is to undo the tragic effects of that foul revolt, and to bring us back again into right and eternal relationship with Himself.[112]

Cultivating a holy and righteous relationship with God, aligned with Him, and surrendered to Him, as one chooses to step aside and allow Him to truly be present, as he is waiting and desirous not to step forth without Him. In that place, there is peace and rest, even in the midst of life's busyness. Participants practice the spiritual disciplines of quieting the mind, bringing every thought captive, praying without ceasing, rejoicing in everything, and leaning into the fullness of His love. Spurgeon writes:

> I will give you rest." This ought to be a very precious word to all believers. You have come to Christ. He promises to give you rest—be sure that you get it. Do not rest content until you have that perfect peace which He alone can give you, that peace which is here called "rest." He continues and states, "I believe that living in communion with God is

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[112] A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, (Bloomington: Bethany House, 2013), 76.

the only sure cure for doubt. Trusting wholly to Christ crucified, resting in His precious blood, and daily seeking to have it applied to the conscience— and then walking in the light as God is in the light, is the surest way to end all those undermining processes which seek to destroy the very foundations of our hope.[113]

Module 7: Grow – Personal Prescription

In Module 7, participants are presented with a customized, personal transformative growth plan. This plan integrates the principles and practices of the 6-modules for individual functional spiritual wellness where God has placed the participant and what He has placed before him. The emphasis in Module 7 is a practical, applicable way to persevere and overcome in daily life in Christ, in His freedom, in a messy world. (Col 1:9-10). The emphasis is on growing forward every day in every way in Christ. In this Module, the participant is equipped with a practical, reliable, spiritual toolbox built on the Rock, Who is Christ, and the truth of His Word, to navigate the mess of this world. The spiritual toolbox, which applies to all and is further discussed in Chapter 6, is presented with personalized therapeutic techniques derived from the participant's individual journey in each of the preceding modules. It is analogous to a personalized nutrition plan as if one had consulted with a nutrition coach for a personalized health plan.

Summary

The model is intended for use in any environment where believers want to grow deeper in Christ through discipleship, mentoring, church or organizational programs, and spiritual coaching, individually or in a group. When an organization or an individual approaches the

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[113] Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Christ-given Rest," From *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, volume 39, March 5, 1983, accessed May 7, 2024, from https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-christ-given-rest/#flipbook/.

Christian Life Institute to partner, develop, train, or grow, the structure and process are discussed

to develop an educational/discipleship/coaching plan utilizing the workbooks and other materials

to glean and grow forward through each of the modules in the model. This summary presents a

macro-overview of the model, the modules, and the primary foci.

In Detoxification, participants learn to identify and release areas of struggle, sin, and

strongholds, such as frustrations, bitterness, unforgiveness, and other barriers of the flesh and

self (Gal 5:24). They are equipped with practical tools, such as learning how to Deep-dive into

oneself and use a Truth Light. They learn to identify the scars, hurts, wounds, and debris of the

past that hinder an attitude of surrender. They learn to identify two essential constructs, intent

and motive, to shift into God's love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness—the journey of moving

towards transformative peace and healing in Christ.

Participants read Andrew Murray's *Absolute Surrender* and practice cultivating

awareness, using the Deep Dive, and identifying intent and motive in all actions – verbal or

behavioral. They learn to re-frame and anchor into present truths, which are re-fashioned from

personal lists of negative and destructive thoughts and self-talk. The process is known as

'deconstructing to reconstruct.' Participants begin to employ a new vocabulary, avoid big bucket

words, and become mindful and intentional of walking in the Spirit and not fueling our flesh.

They start with Spirit-led reflection, "What do I know about myself in this moment:" both my

mindset (cognitive) and my feelings/emotions (affective)? Each time one wants to speak or act,

they take a moment and pause to complete a Holy Spirit-inspired check of intent and motives.

They conduct a Deep Dive in the moment by asking, "What is my intent in making this

statement or choice, response, or decision? What is my motive?" As part of this process, they

learn to identify and be aware of our susceptibilities – fleshly tendencies, conditioned behaviors,

habits, and beliefs. They use Spirit-led Scuba diving gear to identify and extract the roots driving

unhealthy ways. As they identify the root causes of susceptibilities and idolatry, they shine Truth

Lights upon them to bring forgiveness, repentance, and healing. In our spiritual toolbox is a truth

light.

In Infusion, participants immerse themselves in the Bible. In considering God's Word, it

is important to recognize that coming to His Word is a critical first step as participants cultivate

recognition of a desperate need for the Living Water and the Bread of Life, who is Jesus, yet to

truly, deeply, intimately know our Savior believers must know how He describes Himself

according to the truth of His Word – the Bible – the Inerrant, infallible, unchanging Word of

God. The desire for His Word must flow from a deep desire for an intimate, personal relationship

with Jesus as Savior and Lord. As participants approach the Word of God, they reflect on their

actions and attitudes and record some observations. They review your record/log and ask

themselves, what does the record/log show you about actions and attitudes? What insights can be

gleaned about attitudes and actions towards the Word of God – the Bible? As participants think

about the infusion process, they learn to shift mindsets and change paradigms. Approaching His

Word is approaching God – it is a way to draw near to God to come

into His presence and learn of Him.

Participants then read Andrew Murray's *Humility*. They remind themselves, as beloved

children of God and Christ-followers, that they can choose attitudes in approaching His Word.

They can choose an attitude of humility, hunger and thirst, openness, hearing/Listening,

attentiveness, implementation, and accomplishment. Participants learn to extract as they read.

They have developed a strategy for infusing the Word of God. A strategy based on cultivating a

desire to open His Word to approach His throne of grace and spend time cultivating a

relationship with Creator-Savior. They are cultivating an awareness of the Living God through His Living Word, the Bible, approaching Him and it in humility and openness – ready to receive, touch, and taste in interaction with God's active, living, transforming Word, and extracted through listening, gleaning, and prayerfully waiting on the Lord.

Now, participants come to keep (guard, protect) the truth of His Word through the implementation and execution of the riches of His Word through obedience to our Lord – Jesus Christ. In Module 3, participants learn to implement through digestion, as digestion promotes growth and flourishment as we deeply internalize God's word for living application - to live Christ in a fallen world. Participants learn how to appropriate and apply the truths of the Bible in all aspects of life, in but not of the world, and to move from head to heart. Participants learn to *ginōskō-know* and develop an intimate knowing that flows from the investment of getting to know, learning to know, perceiving to know, building the know, and committing to know. Participants begin to walk in intentionality, cultivating Active Awareness assessing for HHS, in Module 4.

Participants then cultivate the Faith Walk in Module 5, allowing the Lord to examine for Spiritual Pressure Wounds - an interruption in the integrity of walk with Christ. A wound that causes a temporary break in the intimacy of our fellowship with our Savior. A wound can come from another, an event, and even ourselves. Participants engage in faith and life in Christ, Who is our Lifestyle as they are continually perfected by Spirit-produced Christ-like conduct, actions, attitudes, and living to honor the Lord and bring Him the glory as imitators of Christ. Participants continue to examine if they are imitators of Christ in attitude and action, exemplifying Christ in all facets of life. As those living Christ, a significant emphasis is placed on active faith-based choices and decisions in and through the power of the Holy Spirit, as

exemplified in Module 6. Questions such as, "How is living your faith actually manifesting in your life?" and "How is your faith authentically modeled as the Spirit conforms you and transforms you?" are explored in a Deep Dive.

Participants are reminded that the Christ-centered life is not a sprint or a marathon. It is a lifestyle. To continue to walk after Christ, led by the Spirit, participants must be willing to step into every moment of every day with an open heart and mind and ask the Lord to convict us, when necessary, as He deems best. The emphasis in Module 6 is on a willingness to set aside time for reflection to continue to assess if one is gathering grains of sand so they do not turn into pebbles, rocks, and even possibly boulders. A desire to "not grieve the Holy Spirit" (Eph 4:30) and "not give Satan any opportunity" (Eph 4:27) must be front and center as phylactery was worn by male Jews (Deut 6:8, Deut 11:18, Ex 13:9, 16). Christ-followers cannot risk the possibility of disobedience, the devastation of hardness of heart, the risk of accumulating resentments, falling into dishonesty, deception, and destruction. When Christ-followers notice the grain of Sand and when they feel the Holy Spirit's nudge – conviction, then the act is to "run" and "set it right" (Matt 5:23-24). There is no time to waste. Christ-followers practice 1 John 1:9 in the moment, 'own' the sin, confess and repent, and then make it a priority to make every effort to set matters straight, to make amends, and to walk in the Spirit not making any provision for the flesh (Rom 13:14). Participants 'work' their personal spiritual formation plan, from Module 7, and live a lifestyle Who is Christ choosing to allow the Lord to perform whatever work is necessary and bring His work to perfect completion (Phil 1:6).

CHAPTER 5: ASSESSMENT OF THE MODEL

This chapter describes Gruenberg and Asumang's 4-axis model for assessing theories of

spiritual formation and then assesses the model's fit with the 4-axis model.[1] According to

Gruenberg and Asumang:

> This multiplicity of theories has generated a need for systematic and standardized
> approaches of theory assessment. Such assessment should be formalized and constructed
> in order to enable fair and consistent comparisons between theories. This article thus
> seeks to make a contribution to the development of versatile tools for assessing theories
> of spiritual formation.[2]

The 4-axis model provides a formal methodology for assessing spiritual formation theories. The

authors support its development by stating that there is a "paucity of formalized assessment

models, which is thus a gap in the academic venture into Christian spiritual formation."[3] They

believe that the ability to assess models of spiritual formation will provide a manageable way to

move towards an "ongoing work of comparison and reconciliation between theories."[4]

According to Gruenberg and Asumang, regardless of the discipline or ecumenical nature of a

model of spiritual formation, all models in Christianity need to be based in scripture, be

"theologically sound—reflecting basic Christian orthodoxy in a holistically consistent manner,"

and exhibit a comprehensive orientation.[5]

According to Gruenberg and Asumang, the 4-Axis model includes, first, "the goal of a

theory is its articulated *telos* of Christian spiritual formation. Any theory of spiritual formation

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[1] Jeremiah Gruenberg and Annang Asumang, "Axes of Formation: A model for Assessing Theories of Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 12, no. 2 (2019): 217-18.

[2] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 213.

[3] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 214.

[4] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 215.

[5] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

will need to articulate the "end state" toward which spiritual formation is thus aimed."[6]

Secondly, "The paradigmatic concept of a theory is the overarching metaphor, analogy, image, or model which guides both the elaboration and reception of the theory."[7] According to Gruenberg and Asumang:

> The paradigmatic concept of a theory is the element which gives the theory its overall coherence and character. Often, theories rely on metaphors, analogies, images, or concepts which take on an overarching role in characterizing the nature of spiritual formation. For example, metaphors of growth or spatial metaphors, such as path, way, or walk, may be employed as the all-encompassing concept which describes the nature of spiritual formation. The paradigmatic concept guides both the conveyance and reception of the theory in a definitional image. A strong spiritual formation paradigm will encapsulate the associated theory and maintain coherence among the other three axes of spiritual formation.[8]

Then, thirdly, "the theology which provides the underpinnings of the theory. This axis may draw on interdisciplinary theological principles or other relevant nontheological disciplines. Still, it must ultimately reflect sound Christian theology."[9] As Gruenberg and Asumang further explain, "In other words, this axis answers the "why" questions behind any theory. While this axis is described by the term "theology," theories of spiritual formation may draw from many disciplines, including biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, general religious studies, philosophy, psychology, and educational theory."[10]

Finally, the model's "activities form the arms and legs of the theory. That is, the activities express directly how a theory is practically enacted."[11] As Gruenberg and Asumang explain

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[6] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

[7] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

[8] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 220.

[9] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

[10] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 223.

[11] I Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 216.

further:

> The formational activities propounded by a theory include all actions taken by the believer in the movement toward spiritual growth. Assessment along this axis will first describe the methods by which spiritual maturity is pursued. After doing so, the activities should be reviewed as they relate to the previous three axes. Activities must be properly aligned toward the goal of spiritual formation. They must also express the descriptive qualities of the paradigmatic concept. Further, activities must put into practice the theology of the theory consistent with the fundamental truths of the gospel.[12]

After the axes of The 4-Axis model are described, the model will be assessed to explore whether it fits within its established criteria and, if so, how specifically. Then, based on its fit assessment, how does the model fit within the field of spiritual formation?

The Axes of Formation from the 4-Axis Model

This section identifies and describes the axes of The 4-Axis model based on the depiction by Gruenberg and Asumang. In the discussion of each axes, the dissertation author's model will be assessed to explore whether it fits within its established criteria and, if so, how specifically for purposes of the model's utility in the field of spiritual formation.

The First Axis: Goal of Spiritual Formation

The first axis is oriented towards the *telos*, the end state. Gruenberg and Asumang state, "From the biblical perspective, Christian existence is always described as a stage in the movement toward a final form of existence."[13] As evidenced in Chapters 3 and 4, the model is

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[12] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 225.

[13] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 218. "In analyzing Tang's three goals of formation, it is recognized that 1) "becoming Christlike individually" is a common goal shared with other formative theories (e.g. Gruenberg and Asumang [2019, 7-8] listed nine major works on formation showing the same goal) and reflects biblical concepts of believer's growth (e.g. Gal 4:19; Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18)." Alex Tang, "Evaluating Alex Tang's Holistic Spiritual Formation Crucible Paradigm by the Axes of Formation Assessment model," *Spiritual Formation on the Run* (January 31, 2024). Retrieved on June 2, 2024, from https://draltang.wordpress.com/2023/01/31/evaluating-alex-tangs-holistic-spiritual-formation-crucible-paradigm-by-the-axes-of-formation-assessment-model/

grounded in Pauline theology. The model is grounded in biblical theology and integrates the main components of Paul's systematic theology, including his Anthropology, hamartiology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology.

The model's emphasis on the distinction between flesh and Spirit is replete and foundational to how the Christ-follower lives in this messy world in Christ, with the simplistic answer proposed by walking/living in the Spirit. While the model is focused on extracting Paul's themes and metaphors for individual growth and development in Christ, it is within the broader context of community and connection as members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12–27).[14] Paul's anthropology is inextricably connected to his soteriology, as our ability to live Christ, walk in the Spirit, obediently pursue, and serve Christ are a direct function of our connection to Christ as God's children (Gal 3:26, Rom 8:16) adopted sons and daughters (Rom. 8:15), a status received by grace and through faith, a gift of God (Eph 2:8–9). The model depicts the flesh as synonymous with self, which implies the flesh of sin (Rom 8:3) and the inherent indwelling of sin due to man's fallen nature.

The model emphasizes that living in a way that displeases God is a choice influenced and impacted by the chosen controlling force and factors to which the Christ-follower is allowing himself to pursue. Specifically, choices and decisions made by the Christ-follower in his flesh rather than under the constraining and guiding influence of the Holy Spirit. The constructs of "Christ crucified," particularly as the term pertains to reconciliation, and "in Christ," as

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[14] According to Tang, "A Christian spiritual formation community with underlying spiritual formation and discipleship coupled with committed leaders and members to spiritual formation will provide the impetus, vibrancy, and identity to the spiritual dynamics of congregational life," Alex Tang, "Evaluating Alex Tang's Holistic Spiritual Formation Crucible Paradigm by the Axes of Formation Assessment model," *Spiritual Formation on the Run* (January 31, 2023). Accessed June 2, 2024. https://draltang.wordpress.com/2023/01/31/evaluating-alex-tangs-holistic-spiritual-formation-crucible-paradigm-by-the-axes-of-formation-assessment-model/.

representative of union and position, "not I, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20), "new creation in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17), and "belong to Christ," (Cor 3:23) are a few of the terms that are replete throughout the Modules of the model. The crucified Christ is at the core of Paul's Christology. Another key topic for Paul, as it pertains to our relationship to Christ, is the fact and the truth that we belong to Christ (1 Cor 3:23, Rom 14:8). The fruit of belonging to Christ is free (through the work of Christ on the Cross), precious, life-giving, and life-sustaining. Belonging to Christ assures us that we have reconciliation with Christ.

In the model, the Spirit is the change agent and the mediator. The Holy Spirit guides, leads, and directs the Christ-follower in the ways of Christ into obedience in pursuit of holiness and righteousness (Rom 8:14, Gal 5:18). In John 14:26, Jesus declares to his disciples that this Comforter, or Paraclete, is the Holy Spirit and that He would help them with a wide range of functions, such as teaching, recalling, and interpreting His words and ways. As such, the model's use of Christ who is a Lifestyle, as representative of living Christ in a way that represents Him according to His biblical presentation is seen in Paul's use of "walk" structures as "life is a journey" [and] in the context of Paul's thinking in Galatians 5, can be expressed as Christian life is a journey." The emphasis on the Spirit in the Christ-follower's individual life (Rom 8:3) and the community of Christ is emphasized in one body, one Spirit (1 Cor 12:13), and the unity produced by the Spirit (Eph 4:3-4).

While "in Christ," as used in the model, is directed at the individual's position and connectedness for belonging (1 Cor 6:16-17), it is also used to denote that one 'in Christ' is part of the body of Christ reflective of Paul's ecclesiology. While the model primarily focuses on personal growth in Christ, it is in the context of the Christ-follower's connection to the community. The model extracts from Paul many of his corporate exhortations, admonitions, and

encouragements across a systematic theological perspective of Paul and proposes them for a personal *praxis.* This is not to diminish the recognition that Paul emphasized corporate interdependence and a need for one another in the facilitation of growth in Christ and the implementation of Paul's ethical *ethos.*

As is evident in the brief review above and as articulated in greater depth in Chapters 3 and 4, the model would appear to meet the stated purpose that "the efficacy of a theory is best judged by whether or not it coherently and conceptually leads to the achievement of the telos of spiritual formation."[15] The *telos,* or goal of the model, is to develop the Christ-follower in his relationship with Christ through a seven-module process that emphasizes many of the popular Pauline exhortations, such as imitation, walking in a worthy manner, increasing in fruitfulness, and reflecting on the holiness and righteousness of Christ, among others explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

The words "walk," and "walking" are abundant in Paul and are classified by Konsmo as a metaphor of progression.[16] To note a few of Paul's exhortations, we read 2 Corinthians 5:7, which says, "We walk by faith and not by sight." Galatians 5:16 says, "Walk by the Spirit." Colossians 1:10 says, "Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord," and is similarly seen in Ephesians 4:1, "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling." Ephesians 2:10 says we are to walk in the "good works" as "His workmanship." In Ephesians 4:2, "walk in love." Romans 6:4 says, "walk in newness of life." In Ephesians 5:8, "walk as children of light." The message is clear: we are to walk, "figuratively represent[ing] the totality of one's conduct on earth."[17] Further, Konsmo

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[15] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 218.

[16] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit.*

[17] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 101.

notes that "Paul uses walking as a metaphor for the Christian life more than 30 times in his letters."[18] Finally, to connect the model's use to this metaphor, it is noted that the model uses it in the structured way of life as a journey, in the orientation of "up," toward God, and in the ontological aspect of "setting goals and motivating actions."[19] Paul sets forth a focus and a goal for them to be united to Christ, servants for Christ, and representatives of Christ. Paul is intent and insistent that they imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Thess 1:6) and that they strive to be an example (1 Thess 1:7). Paul impresses upon his readers the importance of obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thess 1:8) and the obligation to glorify the name of [the] Lord Jesus Christ within [them] (2 Thess 1:12) by continually points away from himself and points towards God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:6).

The model equips the Christ-follower to make choices and decisions that align with Christ-centric ways of being and doing. Believers in Christ are brought into a personal relationship with God with an experiential dimension, as discussed in the confessed beliefs in the Holy Spirit. It is foundational to the model that the reader views living Christ as a lifestyle, "it is not just about beliefs and values; it is about real life, in which those ideas and values are expressed and embodied in a definite way of living," As a praxis, spirituality is a practical collaborative, participatory, interactive partnering between the Christ-follower and the Holy Spirit, as well as connection with and participation, as members of one another in community. As such, the model has a clearly enunciated and articulated *telos* that would meet the concerns of the 4-Axis model's first axis.

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[18] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 103.

[19] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit*, 106. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 27.

Second Axis: Paradigmatic Concept

According to Gruenberg and Asumang, "The paradigmatic concept of a theory is the element which gives the theory its overall coherence and character . . . The paradigmatic concept guides both the conveyance and reception of the theory in a definitional image."[20] This axis focuses on the "definitional concept, analogy, or metaphor which encapsulates the character of a theory."[21] In the model, the paradigmatic concept is the Lifestyle, Who is Christ. In the vernacular of Gruenberg and Asumang, the Lifestyle, Who is Christ is "the defining emphasis of the theory."[22] The model is built on a constructivist, scaffolded pedagogy that moves the Christ-follower from module to module as he is progressively and continuously conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Spirit, with the sole purpose of living in Christ, through Christ, and by Christ, every moment of every day in the here and now with the mindset that his life in Christ is a lifestyle and that Lifestyle is reflective of the person of Jesus Christ.

Gruenberg and Asumang state, "The most fundamental reason the use of paradigmatic concepts is so prevalent in the field is that analogies and metaphors are effective vehicles in conveying and exploring spiritual concepts." The heavy emphasis on metaphors, as depicted in Chapter 4, and the use of a re-framed vocabulary developed to facilitate the development of new semantic neural pathways is evidenced in Chapter 2. It is clear from the work in the previous chapters that the model meets Gruenberg and Asumang's concern and solution when they state:

> the spiritual dimension of formation is rarely adequately described in practical terms. For this reason, authors are wise to find a figurative image or concept which serves as a center point in the holistic communication of a theory of spiritual formation.[23]

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[20] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 220.

[21] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 220.

[22] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 221.

[23] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 221.

The model, in its anchor into the Lifestyle Who is Christ, facilitates the development of Christ-followers by equipping them with a spiritual toolbox designed to provide a lifestyle for living Christ in but not of the world in the here and now. The model emphasizes the process of sanctification, theologically described as the continual process of the Holy Spirit refining us into the image of God—progressive sanctification as evidenced, for example, in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Paul's life became a testimony of strength and struggle, of flesh and spirit, as he soldiered onward to fulfill his call in Christ. His life forms a type of *praxis* for the modern church. His life became a way, a model, a template, for those then and now to live the Lifestyle, Who is Christ. The model equips Christ-followers to live Christ (Phil 1:21), choosing to follow Christ in a lifestyle of obedience and walking in the Spirit, ultimately living in a way that demonstrates a commitment to live out Colossians 1:10. The model advocates life in Christ as a Lifestyle, and faith through connection to Christ provides meaning at all stages of development and everyday life. As Gruenberg and Asumang advocate, the paradigmatic concept is "the element that unifies a theory," and the Lifestyle, Who is Christ, is the foundation and the core unifier that transcends all facets of the model.[24]

Third Axis: Theological Underpinnings

Gruenberg and Asumang state:

The axis of theological underpinnings addresses a theory's evidential material on the nature and process of spiritual formation . . . In essence, the axis of theology should contain all the biblical, theological, and philosophical material comprising the evidence, premises, and arguments which inform the other three axes.[25]

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[24] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 221.

[25] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 223.

Chapters 2 and 3 clearly emphasize the critical theological systems that form the basis for the model. As stated in the discussion of the model in the context of the first axis, The model is grounded in biblical theology and integrates the main components of Paul's systematic theology, including his Anthropology, hamartiology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Gruenberg and Asumang's third axis is concerned not only with the theological underpinnings, or as they are referred to in the model, the theological pillars, but also with an evaluation of scope and prioritization. It is evident that Pauline theology is front and center in the model and is pervasive throughout the discussion of the model and its modules in Chapter 4. While Gruenberg and Asumang state that "no theory will manage to be exhaustively comprehensive," there must be a balance, and the model provides evidence of a balance between the theological systematic areas, albeit with an emphasis on Christology, hamartiology, and pneumatology. The model evidences "a greater reliance on systematic theology in the study of spiritual formation."[26]

Gruenberg and Asumang also state, "When theories include evidential material from fields such as the social sciences, psychology, or education, such material must be reviewed in the Christian biblical-theological context."[27] The model is integrative and leans heavily into Pauline theology and its systematic constructs while relying on psychological techniques and neuroscience to equip the Christ-follower with tools and an understanding of his brain function for living the Lifestyle Who is Christ. As such, with its interdisciplinary approach, the hope is that the model can be "wholeheartedly embraced, assuming that the scriptures are the ultimate

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[26] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 223.

[27] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 224.

gauge of orthodoxy and orthopraxy."[28]

Fourth Axis: Formational Activities

Gruenberg and Asumang state:

Assessment along this axis will first describe the methods by which spiritual maturity is pursued . . . Activities must be properly aligned toward the goal of spiritual formation. They must also express the descriptive qualities of the paradigmatic concept. Further, activities must put into practice the theology of the theory consistent with the fundamental truths of the gospel.[29]

The model is replete with methods and activities, many of which are described in the depiction of the model and its modules in Chapter 4 and also reiterated in the spiritual toolbox presented in Chapter 6. Although, the model includes spiritual disciples, such as prayer, reading of the Word (infusion), and service, among others, as further described in Chapter 4 and also as depicted in the intrapersonal and interpersonal pillars of Chapter 7, representing, as Gruenberg and Asumang label them, "the most common activities often referred to as the disciplines," there are many tools and activities that are constructed from psychological science, neuroscience, and medical science as vividly described in Chapters 4 and 6, many of which are also "attitudinal."[30]

Gruenberg and Asumang express a concern that activities may be scriptural but impractical. The model's entire raison d'être, its *ethos*, is *praxis,* and its activities are all practical, emphasizing empirical psychological, medical, and neuroscience-constructed techniques with a theological foundation. Gruenberg and Asumang's caution that "certainly, an overemphasis on the believer's activity naturally leads to a diminished recognition of the

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[28] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 224.

[29] Gruenberg and Asumang, "Axes of Formation," 224.

[30] Gruenberg and Asumang "Axes of Formation," 225–26.

impotence of such activities without an attendant work of divine transformation" is not a concern in the model as it is described in detail in Chapter 4. The model's message is that it is only through the Spirit for the one grounded in Christ that the activities are useful and practical and helpful for spiritual transformation and growth in the Christ-followers' continuous process of living Christ as a lifestyle.[31]

Summary

The in-depth depictions and discussions in the preceding chapters indicate the model's foundation, orientation, and *telos*. The brief review in this chapter illustrates that the model fits within Gruenberg and Asumang's articulation of each of the 4-Axis model's axes. The systematic theological approach to Paul's theology, the concern for balance among these areas, and the practical approach of the activities known as the toolbox in the model point towards a fit within the 4-Axis model that meets Gruenberg and Asumang's previously stated purpose of providing a "systematic and standardized approach of theory assessment . . . [that is] formalized and constructed to enable fair and consistent comparisons between theories." The hope is that others may see the utility of the theory within the field of spiritual formation and proceed with confidence that it has been developed with a concerted focus on the axes identified by Gruenberg and Asumang.

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[31] According to Tang, Spiritual formation for a disciple of Christ describes the sanctifying and transforming process as a journey (discipleship pastor Bill Hull 2006, 35, quoted in Tang 2014, 73), and it is not linear and predictable like a pilgrimage but the journey "is like an unfolding drama, with unpredictable twists and turns in the plot" with "fits and starts, sudden shifts and surprises, as well as imperceptible growth," Tang, "Evaluating Alex Tang's Holistic Spiritual Formation Crucible Paradigm by the Axes of Formation Assessment model."

CHAPTER 6: THE TOOLBOX

This chapter highlights the crucial role of the spiritual and therapeutic tools in the model. These tools form the backbone of the spiritual and therapeutic toolbox for the Christ-follower dedicated to the Lifestyle Who is Christ, the model in question for this research. The tools are both spiritual and therapeutic. The tools are used as analogies and metaphors, integrating Pauline metaphors as well as creating a way for participants to apply biblical truth. The tools provide practical ways for participants to visualize, apply, and use tangible products, often found in everyday surroundings, as reminders to walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. The tools are also introduced in the module where they are first used. However, this does not restrict their use throughout the journey. Once introduced, a tool becomes a permanent part of the toolbox, readily accessible in the Lifestyle Who is Christ model. The tools are not meant, in any way, to demean nor diminish the reverence and respect required of the Christ-follower towards each person of the Godhead. The modules, particularly the first, spend a significant amount of time introducing and reinforcing scriptural truth about the persons of the Godhead. The tools that incorporate nomenclature referencing the persons or role(s)/function(s) of the Godhead are presented with great respect for their holiness. The tools are intended as practical ways to remind oneself of the importance of walking in the Spirit and not the flesh and are discussed throughout regarding Scripture.

Module 1: Prepare-Detoxification

Spiritual and therapeutic tools in this module predominantly focus on equipping the Christ-follower to cultivate awareness to discover aspects of self that are impairing, impeding, or blocking one's growth in Christ. These foundational tools are used consistently and regularly

throughout the Lifestyle Who is Christ. They are identified in a scaffolded taxonomy that represents the uniqueness yet interconnectedness of the tools in the life of the Christ-follower. Participants in Module 1 begin by learning the Deep Dive, an authentic and transparent journey inward to uncover blockages and roots that create stumbling blocks to walking moment-by-moment with the Lord. The Deep Dive teaches the participant to ask oneself before every word or action, "What am I doing?" and "Why am I doing it?" "What is my intent?" and "What is my motive?" The Deep Dive teaches the participant to invite the Holy Spirit to search within and identify the truth in words and actions. The Deep Dive discovers the depth of fleshly holds within and prompts the Christ-follower to seek Spirit-led surgical removal of one's fleshly traits and dispositions. The Deep Dive requires a stop/pause, identification, and reframe.

Another tool acquired in Module 1 is Deep-diving Scuba Gear**.** Deep-diving Scuba Gear is similar to the Holy Spirit Ziplock, described later. Deep-diving Scuba Gear is intended for an internal examination, and the Holy Spirit Ziplock is used for external protection, akin to the armor of God (Eph 6:10-18). By analogy, Deep-diving Scuba Gear consists of the protective face gear of chosen clarity, a snorkel to allow for the breathing in of courageous exploration, a wet suit of the protective seal of the guiding and insight of the Holy Spirit, the fins of purpose and direction to propel one deeper, and a spear to extract the fleshly traits and dispositions from within one's conditioned and entrenched ways of doing and being and move from familiar cognitive ruts to creating new neural pathways. Deep-diving Scuba Gear is also used to discover, identify, and extract the roots driving fleshly ways.

The Holy Spirit Ziplock is protective gear akin to the armor of God. The name provokes familiar imagery as Christ-followers step into the fullness of the Holy Spirit by visualizing that they are sealing themselves into a Ziplock bag sprayed with Rain-X. No matter the environment,

the metaphoric weather, the circumstances, people, or events, Christ-followers are fully covered

and protected (Eph 1:13). All that comes at us, like rain on a windshield covered with Rain-X,

slides off, and we do not react – we do not fall prey to our susceptibilities. Christ-followers stand

fast in the Spirit in Christ (Eph 4:32).

Holy Spirit Inspired Awareness is the starting point for the Deep Dive. In Holy Spirit-

inspired Awareness, the Christ-follower learns to pause, Deep Dive, and then choose to respond

or not, rather than allow oneself to be controlled by the flesh and limbic system. The goal is to

cultivate new neural pathways of Holy Spirit-inspired responses cultivated through Holy Spirit-

inspired Awareness (Rom 8:14). It is necessary to develop Holy Spirit-inspired Awareness to

learn to identify and name thoughts, attitudes, and feelings because they do form, shape, and

drive behavior. Christ-followers need to learn to accurately and authentically re-frame so that we

form, shape, and drive behavior from one's Responder (the PFC) and not one's Reactor (the

Limbic System). In cultivating Holy Spirit-inspired Awareness, participants learn to identify the

negative thoughts and feelings, obstacles, and perceived (or real) challenges and make the

necessary adjustments by deploying the techniques and utilizing the tools to move through (not

avoid or go around) the negative thoughts and feelings, obstacles, and perceived (or real)

challenges to equip themselves to be the overcomers; they are proclaimed to be in Christ

(1 John 5:4). Spirit-led Reflection and Spirit-guided Balance are similar to Holy Spirit-inspired

Awareness. Spirit-led Reflection asks, "What do I know about myself at this moment," both

mindset (cognitive) and feelings/emotions (affective)? In Spirit-guided balance, participants

learn to develop a 'healthy suspiciousness of self' by scanning, assessing, and examining

themselves; the intent is to choose to do so through the lens of the Holy Spirit, as He is the Guide

to all Truth.[32]

The Idol Identifier is also obtained in Module 1. This tool has one purpose: to identify any idols that are usurping God's prioritization in the life of the Christ-follower. An idol can be anything important to the Christ-follower, which usually consumes time and resources or is an external motivator for determining priorities. An idol often presents as a stronghold, trap, snare, entanglement, bondage, and more. It can be a person, a thing, a place, or a tradition; there is no limit to its categorization if the value placed on it is equal to or greater than the value placed on an intimate relationship with Christ in pursuit of Him. When identifying an idol, questions such as "Do you have anything you are holding tightly," and "Anything you are hesitant, fearful, or unwilling to let go of?" are used.

Once idols have been identified, participants are asked to participate in the Idol Box exercise. We ask everyone to find, make, and designate some containers and label them in the Idol Box. They are then asked to place idols in the Idol Box. People in the past have put jewelry, sports tickets, and Star Wars memorabilia as tangible items and examples into their Idol Boxes. Intangible items, such as places, people, ideologies, or even large objects that will not fit, are written on paper, such as the name of one's dog, grandchild, job, etc. When we meet in our cohort, we ask that each person, through prayer and the courage provided by the Holy Spirit, share what is in their idol box and why it is an idol in their life. We then ask if they are willing to place the idol on the altar of the Lord, release the grip, and re-prioritize Christ to His rightful place.

Another tool is the Root Revealer, which, as the name implies, is used to reveal roots. A

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[32] Some ways that participants learn to develop Spirit-guided balance is through the cultivation of care of self-practices, spiritual disciplines, such as meditation, learning to be mindful and be present in the moment, and the development of strong executive function skills, such as time-management, organization, and planning.

root is a primary or significant contributory deeper cause of susceptibilities and idolatry. A root is usually why one reacts the way they do to the person, place, or thing. A root perpetuates the lies Christ-followers believe about themselves, God, others, and situations/circumstances that cause us to react in a fleshly/sinful way. Questions such as "What ignites your fuse?" "What happens when you feel the flash fire?" "What can we do about the problem of anger at self?" The goal is to find the roots. The Root Revealer is often used in connection with the Deep Dive, as it is important to discover roots such as anger, a 'cover emotion.' Anger is often a first reactor. It is familiar and easier than a Deep Dive Discovery journey. A Deep Dive requires the investment of a Spirit-led discovery journey to the truth of the root – to reveal the root, which is likely more painful than the familiar pain of externalized or internalized anger. The Susceptibility Scanner is a tool used with the Root Revealer, which scans for and identifies susceptibilities. This allows the Holy Spirit to examine, search, try, and even test you (Ps 26:2).

The Truth Light is the light of Christ (John 1:9), which Christ-followers use to reveal the truth about areas in their lives that require Christ's transforming work and power. It is one of the most frequently used tools in the Christ-followers toolbox. A Truth Light shines Christ's searching, revealing, precision-finding truth, which identifies and reveals flaws and fleshly toxic traits that fuel the flesh and lead one astray and away from God's perfect way and will for the lives of His children. When Christ-followers choose to shine a Truth Light, they intentionally allow the Lord to examine and reveal their fleshly areas, sinful susceptibilities, and toxic traits. The choice to use a Truth Light demonstrates a Christ-follower's desire for freedom from the flesh.

Untangling is a therapeutic tool derived from a cognitive-behavioral perspective to identify hurtful and unhealthy memories, experiences, thoughts, or feelings to identify, sort,

examine, and come to understand the significance, impact, or influence to move through to overcome, resolve, understand, or accept. Untangling has a similar implied meaning as processing but also includes the concept of parsing, used in linguistics to break down into specific parts so that specific strands are sorted and categorized on a very granular level so that unhealthy perceptions can be constructed into healthy perspectives to cultivate a Christ-centric meaning which is then applied for forward growth. When a Christ-follower untangles, there is a parsing with specificity through Holy Spirit insight for clarity of sight and moving from a perception to a perspective. As words develop clearer meaning, the Christ-follower is better equipped to discern flesh traps, negative thoughts, self-fulfilling flesh prophecies – overall unhealthy ways of constructing meaning – and through the Word and the Light of Christ, allow Him to clear a way to lead us into a more precise narrative of our thoughts or feelings.

Duct Tape is another therapeutic tool because it is a powerful visual, and most people are familiar with its adhesive solid binding qualities and the challenges of removing it. Duct Tape is a safeguard. As participants learn and cultivate Holy Spirit-equipped restraint, when they feel as if they cannot resist an urge to speak or do, they use their Duct Tape as a restraint (Eph 4:29a). There are times when a participant must metaphorically duct tape oneself for his growth and benefit (as well as that of others). Duct Tape is useful when Christ-followers feel or think they cannot resist their urges, triggers, and flesh-driven ways. When they cannot control the tongue. (Jas 3:7–8). Duct Tape is an interim measure, as the goal is to cultivate Holy Spirit-inspired responses through Holy Spirit-inspired awareness for control of self.

Active Awareness allows Christ-followers to live with an attitude of paying attention and intentionality. If one is paying attention, one is apt to fall prey to one's ways – the ways of the flesh. Active Awareness is a mindfulness technique used in conjunction with what the model

refers to as the Distraction Discovery Tool. The Distraction Discovery Tool identifies areas of susceptibility to externalities. These distractions grab the flesh because the Christ-follower is not engaging in a chosen intentionality of living in active awareness of himself and his Land. Active Awareness and mindful intentionality also assist with avoiding generalizations referred to as Big Bucket Words. Big Bucket Words, by definition, are usually words replete with various meanings, generalized and self-defeating. Examples include 'stressed,' 'overwhelmed,' 'anything,' 'everything,' and many other illustrations. It is, therefore, necessary to parse and untangle the word to drill down to a specific meaning that can then be assessed and, as necessary, re-framed accurately into a meaningful representation.

Module 2: Nourish – Infusion

Module 2 emphasizes infusion, the (taking in) through the ingestion (intentional, prayerful reading) of God's Word and its Biblical foundational truths. The first spiritual tool is Approaching the Word of God**.** Approaching the Word of God is a reflective tool combining the Deep Dive and Active Awareness to guide one's approach to the Word of God. An analogy is how a pilot may approach an instrument landing. Participants learn to reflect on actions and attitudes and record observations; then review their record/log and ask themselves questions, such as "What does the record/log show about actions and attitudes?" "What insights can they glean about attitudes and actions towards the Word of God – the Bible? They learn that choosing a mindset and adopting an attitude of the heart towards God's Word influences how one approaches God's Word, whether then comes with filters or an openness for Holy Spirit-guided awareness as they infuse. The truth of the attitude of the heart toward God's Word is intimately connected to the attitude of the Heart toward the One who provided His Word for edification, conviction, growth, transformation, and, most importantly, relationship with Him.

Approaching the Word of God is a way to draw near to God to come into His presence and learn of Him. We can commune with God in many ways, through stillness, solitude, prayer, and meditation, among others, and for infusion, we come through His Word. We open His Word to learn about Him – to know our Heavenly Father, Creator, the Author, and Finisher of our faith. To cultivate a personal, intimate relationship with the One who loved us and loves us enough to not only provide a way out of our sin and spiritual death but also move us forward into hope and healing through transformation and growth in our Lord, Jesus – our Waymaker.

Seeking Clarity and Walking in Clarity is a process and outcome attached to approaching the Word of God. Cultivating a deeper *ginōskō-knowing* God personally, intimately, and experientially through the truth of His Word facilitates the development of clarity and an accurate understanding of Who God is and what He desires, generally, for His children. Clarity clears a path to knowing and taking the next step, even when the entire way has not been revealed, which is most likely, as a walk of faith is usually one step at a time. Clarity, *ginōskō-knowing*, develops confidence, and clarity becomes confident clarity that the Christ-follower is pursuing and trusting the pillar of cloud and fire in his walk. Confident clarity is also valuable in providing assurance and reassurance with tough and unpopular decisions or courageous conversations. It is a countermeasure to the uncertainty of fleshly wisdom and the ensuing wobbliness.

Extraction is a technique used in approaching God's Word. It is a tool for allowing God's Word to speak while interacting with it. Searching through the power of the Holy Spirit for words that 'pop,' for tidbits and tips God is revealing now, in the here and now. Since God's Word is living and active and sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb 4:12), Christ-followers can 'see' and 'hear' differently (not differently in terms of His truth) – differently in terms of

application to each, personally. The powerful truth is that every time one approaches the living, active, transforming Word of God, the extraction may be different, and it is certainly. Profitable for "teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for very good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17). As the Christ-follower extracts, he is impacted by the transforming, healing, and guiding power of the Word and finds hydration in Approaching the Word of God.

Moving the Bookmark is the mantra of infusion. Participants are not following a reading plan or on a timeline. In infusion, the goal is to turn the pages and Move the Bookmark. While participants in their cohort will read the Bible cover-to-cover in approximately six months, the exhortative encouragement is to keep moving the bookmark. Some days may be more pages and others less, and while there is a recommended reading guide for the cohort, the focus remains on infusion. Infusion is not a time for commentaries, deep exploration, or theological exploration. The purpose of infusion is to take in the Word of God, preferably through reading with a pen and highlighter, circling words that pop at you, highlighting phrases that pop at you, and making notes in the margins as the Holy Spirit guides the process. Infusion is for immersion in the truth of His Word – to *ginōskō*-know Him and to grow in Him, for conviction and training in righteousness. When Christ-followers Move the Bookmark and are infused with His Word, they are equipped to stand firm and have the Holy Spirit bring to mind the scripture that is needed when it is needed the most amid the trial.

Keeping the Truth of His Word is an outcome of Infusion and a spiritual tool that reminds participants that they are to keep (guard, protect) the truth of His Word in implementing and executing the riches of His Word through obedience to our Lord Jesus, the Christ. In keeping His Word, Christ-followers must be willing to allow Him to be the potter, and they approach as the

clay. The spiritual tool of Anchoring In is an important construct and way to choose to stand fast in the truth of God's Word and keep it active at work every moment of every day. Anchoring In is anchoring into a choice, a mindset, a perspective. An anchor is typically used to moor (secure) a vessel, such as a ship. The emphasis is on securing, stabilizing, and preventing the vessel from tossing to and fro because of the waves and sea turbulence. In this metaphor and for this tool, The Christ-follower is the vessel often tossed to and fro by the tumult of life – the stuff of life, the challenges of life, the distractions, upheaval, and the hurts of life. If not Anchored In, the Christ-follower can be easily swayed and even knocked off course by one's circumstances, the actions, and the words of others – almost anything that surprises, overwhelms, hurts, or disappoints can destabilize him.

The anchor is Christ. Christ and all He encompasses and represents as He is the sure and steadfast anchor for the soul (Heb 6:19–20). Trust and hope in Christ are securely embedded, anchored in the truth of who Christ is, His work on the cross, His ongoing work through the Holy Spirit in sanctification (refinement and growth), and in the future, promised hope and resurrection with Him. Safety and security are found in the depths of intimacy within Christ. The spiritual tool of Stability is found in Anchoring In Him. Stability is not a function of externalities but rather the internal grounding, rootedness, in Him who is ever stable, as He is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). When a Christ-follower Anchors into the truth of who God is according to the truth of His Word then they can digest and appropriate the truth from His Word that everything God does, He ultimately does for His name's sake, for His glory. What does it look like to anchor into stability? The model uses a psychological construct of stability, including balance. To be stable is to be balanced. Balance does not preclude the fluctuations of a healthy emotional life or even the extreme emotions of a life-shattering event.

Stability allows Christ-followers to ride the waves while making prayerfully led and Spirit-guided decisions. It does not allow the waves (the externalities) to carry them into the flesh or dangerous places of darkness.

Re-framing is a therapeutic tool derived from cognitive behavioral therapy. Re-framing applies to the specific ways a Christ-follower can choose to change mindsets and paradigms about reading the Bible for Infusion and use in the model. Questions include "How can I re-frame how I think about His Word into a way that allows me to approach Him, come into His presence, and know His Truth." "How can I approach His Word to use it as a Truth Light." How can I use His word as a frame, a lens to find Clarity?" In re-framing, the frame presents a lens – a way of seeing that governs how one thinks or acts. Our natural man frames are often constructed from prior experiences, disappointments, frustrations, successes, and our conditioned ways of thinking – the frame's construction is a combination of positive and negative experiences, and negative experiences can taint and distort one's view, accuracy, perspective, and inhibit clarity. Participants learn that reframing is not deceiving oneself, lying to oneself, faking it to make it, rationalizing, justifying, or any other technique that is not authentic to who one is in Christ. The spiritual tool of Speaking Authentic Truth to oneself is critical to successfully re-framing into a Truth Anchor that develops a new neural pathway and moves one out of cognitive ruts. Old thoughts create well-entrenched frames, which create cognitive ruts. Like deep ski tracks on a mountain, participants learn to see the value in avoiding the well-trodden packed snow ruts and skiing on the fresh powder, which carves new ways of productive, authentic, truth-speaking, which drive decisions, actions, and behaviors. Choosing a new pathway through a re-frame produces a new perspective, which facilitates a shift into a more authentic narrative of how one thinks and acts aligned with the truth of Christ.

Module 3: Absorption - Digestion

In the Absorption-digestion module, participants learn to move from head to heart. Participants learn to extract as they read the Word. They learn to touch and taste the truth of God in the physical and spiritual handling of His living Word. Digestion is also the active process of acceptance. For the Christ-follower, the scaffolded progression of the modules allows the Christ-follower to digest and appropriate, through absorption, the rich truths of the power of God, the person of Christ, the work of the Spirit, and his place or position in Christ. In digestion, participants begin to absorb their identity in Christ more fully.

Digestion promotes growth and flourishment as participants deeply internalize God's word for living application—to live Christ in a fallen world. They learn how to appropriate and apply the truths of the Bible in all aspects of life, in but not of the world. With the digestion of God's Truth—the Powerful, Living, and Transforming Word—Christ-followers can learn to live intentionally. Participants come to digest and appropriate the truth of His Word, the truth of His character, not based on past experiences but on the Word truth of His character. Christ-followers focus less on the externalities and more on what He is accomplishing within – intrinsic transformation and growth. They begin to crave and hunger for more of the powerful living truth of His Word and yearn to serve more in community with Him and members of His body.

As Christ-followers digest, they cultivate authenticity, the spiritual tool of living in transparent authenticity with Jesus as Savior and Lord. Within the cultivation of authenticity is the development of trust, transparency, credibility, and accountability, which are discussed more fully in Chapter 7. Through absorption and digestion, participants choose to walk in integrity and not intentionally indulge in or engage in sin. Take a stand against sin by not treating others

in sinful ways. The spiritual tool of Integrity requires the cultivation of absolute authenticity, rigorous transparency, and a surrendered vulnerability. Participants learn to ask themselves, "Is what I am about to do; is what I am about to say - does it edify, encourage, feed my Spirit or fuel my flesh – is it worthwhile for the Kingdom, the cause of Christ, my refinement in Him or is it worthless (1 John 2:16). In Cultivating Authenticity through Absorption-digestion, participants commit to the spiritual tool of allowing our yes to be yes, our no to be no (known as, Let your Yes be Yes and Your No, No) (Matt.5:37), and Speaking Truth in Love (Eph 4:15). They Draw a Line in the Sand by purposing they will use the tools to see, be, and do differently as they grow forward. They choose Buy-In, to step in 100%, to trust the process, to recognize it is a lifestyle; it will take time, and there will be missteps and mishaps, but there is always the choice to stay on the narrow road, to live the sanctified life deeply, truly, intimately. For it is the Holy Spirit who is at work for growth and Spirit-led decisions to continue in authenticity and not to allow old ways to rule and reign "for to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom 8:6).

While Intentionality is emphasized throughout the modules, it is in Module 3, through Absorption-digestion, that one uses the spiritual and therapeutic tool of Cultivating Intentionality: the art of acting with intent – with purpose – with clarity, insight, and wisdom. The intentionality of moving from head to heart and walking authentically is based on a *ginōskō*-knowing. Knowing God requires a deep desire. Knowing God requires prioritization of Him above all. Knowing God requires spending time with Him in prayer and His Word. Knowing God means desiring to honor Him in obedience to His truths through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a choice. The challenge is learning to reframe and shift mindsets and attitudes intentionally. This requires the Cultivation of Specificity, which is granularity in word choices,

to identify the accuracy of a word's specific use. This specificity is meaningful from a narrative therapy methodology, which provides a way to identify and change the noise, negativity, and notions inside our minds and choose to build an authentic and accurate identity narrative in Christ.

More noticeably, humans tell stories to themselves to make sense of their place in the world. We assign meaning to our experiences to understand what we are experiencing better. It is those meanings that make up the stories of our lives that can create our reality. So, what happens when the stories we tell ourselves are not aligned with the truth of Christ and who he declares us to be in Him? Narrative Therapy is employed in the model as a therapeutic practice, whether through self-reflective writing, therapeutic processing by speaking, or other modalities to identify the entrenched conditioned ways of being and doing which are problematic, impacting us in unhealthy and negative ways, and creating distortions in our way of seeing, identifying, connections so that they can be examined through the lens the absorbed and digested truth of who God is according to the truth of His Word. Participants have the opportunity to write/live their story through the power of the Holy Spirit, to see outside of the darkness and to step into the light, to embrace the freedom that comes from allowing the Holy Spirit to examine us and identify those areas of blockage is critical for the cultivation of Spirit-led awareness and Spirit-led transformative change. In this process, participants become agents of change in themselves, allowing the Lord to work within as His desperately dependent surrendered vessel and implement by learning to hear the still, small voice, walk/live in the Spirit and not the flesh, move with the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire.

Participants learn to Re-align, which is a spiritual tool used when one is experiencing symptoms of wobbliness, to pause, look up, re-align with Christ, and use Truth Anchors that

connect to the accuracy of the Word of God, which has been absorbed and digested to recall His Word, His love, His forgiveness, and His truth and not fleshly-derived truth, our internally-generated flesh-guided narrative, our filters, paradigms, and distortions. Participants re-align and allow the searchlight of the Holy Spirit to examine nooks and crannies and reveal His truth. Re-aligning is a Shift Up, a shift from the limbic system to the PFC. To shift into one's reasonable responders, such as awareness, thinking, and intentionality that facilitate the ability to plan, organize, and implement well. Participants learn to shift up into the PFC to access the higher-level executive function skills necessary to maintain alignment and focus on Christ, the One from whom Christ-followers are empowered and equipped through the working of the Holy Spirit to choose and maintain attitudes of praise, no matter the externalities. Shifting provides the capability to move between cognitive mental sets flexibly, to create positive mood-enhanced cognitive flexibility, and to decrease distractibility and negative emotions and affect.

Module 4: Monitor Heart Check

Module 4 focuses on spiritual health and tools that equip the Christ-follower to detect and avoid what the model refers to as hardness of heart. The focus and emphasis is on cultivating and growing spiritual heart health so that we can walk in a manner worthy of God in obedience, as God desires, and in accord with the truth of His word and avoiding Hardness of Heart or cardio-metabolic disease. The exhortation is to have our whole heart turned toward God, turned away from man, from all that occupies and interests, whether of joy or sorrow. This module focuses on the spiritual tool of the Self-examination and the Spirit-centric Examination. In the first, the participant uses the previously acquired tools to continually reassess. It is akin to living in the

10th and 11th steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.[33] The spiritual tool emphasis in this module is a willingness to live a preventative lifestyle in Christ and walk in His victory as overcomers, even when one stumbles.

Practices include identifying tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities, which are traps that cause one to stumble and self-condemn, and if left unidentified, lead to fleshly choices, decisions, attitudes, and actions and result in hardness of heart. Identifying and laying down assumptions and expectations as they are set-ups that lead to frustration, disappointment, hurt, etc., all leading to hardness of heart. Identifying and laying down predeterminations as they can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Identifying resentments as resentments are killers. They keep one in bondage to the hurts and pains of the past under the pretense that 'you deserve,' which is a flesh statement. These resentments produce rapid Hardness of Heart. Practicing forgiveness of others is urgent, as the lack of forgiveness produces a rapid onset of Hardness of Heart, as it is pure disobedience to the Word of God. Practicing forgiveness of self as a lack of forgiveness of self leads to self-condemnation, which leads to self-pity and hardness of heart. Guarding your mind as captivity of the mind through the flesh is one of the surest ways to end up with hardness of heart because we begin to disbelieve and not trust, which starts in our mind. We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:14–16) and can put on the helmet of salvation to guard our heads and minds (Eph 6:17). Participants also Disable the Auto Pilot**.** We develop so many entrenched, conditioned ways of being and doing that we tend to move through our day on autopilot. A preventative spiritual lifestyle requires intentionality and slowing it down so you can see clearly

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[33] Step 10 states: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it." Step 11 states: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

in the moment through the light of Christ. When one lives on autopilot, he is apt to miss the subtleties and nuances of the flesh, which often starts the hardness of the heart process.

Module 5: Engage – Faith Walk

In Module 5, participants learn to be still (Ps 46:10) and listen to His voice, learning to hear God and walk by faith. Participants learn to discern God's promptings by leading and guiding the Holy Spirit into God's truth. The module begins with a Spiritual Check-up to assess alignment with Christ. Alignment with Christ is a spiritual tool that reminds participants to remember their position in Christ. In Faith Walk, our Lifestyle Who is Christ participants continue to choose a focus to see the urgency of eyes on Christ and in such alignment vertically. While complete in justification, Christ's work results in a manifesting and out-working of Christ in the Christ-follower. The Christ-follower can practically, in the here and now, seek the things above – the things not of this world and value them as Christ values His children. He will align His children with Himself as His children allow Him to direct, guide, and lead His children in His ways (1 John 2:20, 27).

Participants also learn to use the spiritual tool of Proactive and Preemptive – or Courageous Conversations**.** Proactivity can pre-empt and prevent any challenges or conflicts arising when one avoids unpleasant or difficult conversations. The phrase is also very relevant in our relationship with the Savior. It is not surprising that cultivating courageous conversations that are proactive and preemptive would be valuable not only in interpersonal human relationships but also in the most sacred and important relationship, the one with Christ. What does it mean to be proactive and preemptive relationally? First, proactiveness is not reactive. To be proactive, one must be aware, intentional, discerning, and wise. Christ-followers must be courageous to step in based on a Holy Spirit-guided assessment, not based on fleshly reactivity.

Secondly, to be preemptive, one must choose to move with the Spirit in discernment and timing. One must resist the urge to move/step in or out based on feelings, filters, fears, and other factors of the flesh. Holy Spirit-guided pre-emptiveness requires contextual awareness as well as timing. It must be of the Lord, not based on fleshly perceptions and purposes. The purpose of a courageous conversation is not confrontation. The purpose of a courageous conversation is not to prove a point. The purpose of a courageous conversation is not to defend self. A courageous conversation aims to speak authentic truth (discerned and vetted by the Holy Spirit) in love for clarity and forward movement toward change, resolution, and mutual buy-in and agreement.

Before one can have a courageous conversation, it is necessary to conduct a Deep Dive and vet oneself using a Truth Light. One must ask, "What is my intent in having the courageous conversation (beware of the traps)?" "What is my motive in having the courageous conversation?" Christ-followers need to ensure no lingering bits of resentment, bitterness, hurt, or unforgiveness. Prayerful preparation is critical. It is important to approach courageous conversation in truth and love with a desire for redemptive resolution. A courageous conversation is for the spiritual health of the relationship and requires clarity from a close connectedness to the Savior. Courageous conversations with humans are hard and require preparation, commitment, and time. Courageous conversations with the Lord are easy and allow the Christ-follower to come as he is to His throne of grace (Heb 4:16).

Authentic modeling is another tool in this module and was essential to Paul's leadership and discipleship and one designed for Christ-followers as they heed the call of "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 1:11). In such participants learn to Practice the Presence of God which encompasses a focused attitude, intentional choice, Spirt-guided, Spirit-disciplined, Spirit-led way of living moment-by-moment, day-by-day, in all—a Christ-centric way of living at all

times and in all places. Practicing the presence of God begins with recognizing and acknowledging He is near. He is present. Practicing the presence of God is a perspective—a perspective of peace. God's presence is personal. God's presence is practical. God's presence is purposeful. Participants practice entering His presence by choosing to enter, a Spirit-led cognitive choice. By Drawing near, looking up, and aligning with His ways. Depending on the Spirit, not the flesh, leaning into Him, and maintaining an attitude of continual prayer.

Participants conduct a continual Spiritual Check-up**.** Asking questions, such as "Am I responding in the flesh?" "Am I using speculations, making assumptions, perceiving through predeterminations or expectations?" "Am I pausing to focus on and align with Christ?" "Am I seeking and using His wisdom, understanding, and discernment in this [fill in the blank] situation?" "Am I recalling scripture to aid in the process?" "Am I anchoring into the word of Truth?" "Am I living in the moment?" "Am I walking intentionally to discern distractions and avoid pitfalls, traps, and other susceptibilities?" "Am I focusing on what the Lord desires as my Lord, living as His surrendered vessel, desperately dependent upon Him in all ways?"

Module 6: Preserve - Immunity

In Module 6, participants focus on the Holy Spirit as Helper, Guide, and Comforter (John 14:26; John 16:13–14). Participants develop a strong spiritual immune system that fosters a balanced life of purposeful intentionality to cultivate, preserve, and harness His power and energy. The emphasis is on cultivating meaningful personal prayer, His direction, and His will in every daily decision, living at the grain of sand level. Participants spend significant time in scriptural truth regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Participants are reminded to be mindful and intentional, allowing the Holy Spirit to scan and identify what is attaching itself to oneself to, at the moment, take Spirit-guided action and not accumulate the toxins of this world.

Participants are encouraged to resist the urge to become Walking Velcro. Walking Velcro will attract and attach to anything and everything it comes near. In the care of the Holy Spirit, Ziplock participants become less susceptible and build up immunity to the mess and stuff of life, allowing it to slip off rather than take hold. Participants then live at the grain of sand level, protected, in humility and surrender. They cultivate Spirit-guided awareness by remembering and implementing the attitude and actions of surrendering, seeing, and serving in the light of Christ.

Participants practice Walking in the Spirit. The spiritual tool is derived from Galatians 5:16, in which Christ-followers are assured that they can control the Flesh by walking in the Spirit. Christ-followers have the power to be free from the control of the Flesh and produce the fruits of the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit allows the Christ-follower to fulfill his Christ-centered responsibility to glorify God in all (1 Cor 10:31). Christ-followers do not stand idle and allow sin to develop or continue in, representing willful sin. Instead, they stay focused on God's desire for holiness through Him, by Him, and to Him. The reality of the power and subtlety of the Flesh requires the Christ-follower to recognize his need to appropriate the power of the Spirit to free himself from sin's control and its influence in his life. This desire to be obedient to God's requirements for holiness will naturally lead to a desire and a willingness to have the Spirit have His way and work through a transformation process.

As a part of this process, participants use the spiritual tool of God's PET Scan, an imaging device that reveals all the areas of unhealthiness – all the fleshly tendencies, propensities, and susceptibilities so that the Christ-follower can cultivate the awareness that allows him to proactively avoid reacting to his triggers and falling prey to his flesh. The mantra is that, as Christ-followers, we do not want to survive at the Baseline. We want to thrive at the

Summit. This requires that we use the spiritual tool of Intrinsically-generated Thinking**.**

Intrinsically-generated Thinking includes doing and being to allow the Christ-follower to be, think, and do with Holy Spirit-generated guidance rather than flesh-driven reactions. When Christ-followers allow the externalities to guide decisions, thoughts, etc., they allow people, the world, the flesh, and many other factors to guide them rather than the Holy Spirit, and they can become Walking Velcro**.** To avoid becoming Walking Velcro, the Christ-follower is mindful and intentional, allowing the Holy Spirit to scan and identify whatever may be attaching itself so that, in the moment, the Christ-follower can take Spirit-guided action and not accumulate the toxins of this world. The Christ-follower is not to be Walking Velcro as Walking Velcro will attract and attach to anything and everything it comes near.

Module 7: Personal Prescription

In Module 7, participants are presented with a customized, personal transformative growth plan. This plan integrates the principles and practices of the 6-modules for individual functional spiritual wellness where God has placed the participant and what He has placed before him. The emphasis in Module 7 is a practical, applicable way to persevere and overcome in daily life in Christ, in His freedom, in a messy world. (Col 1:9-10). The emphasis is on growing forward every day in every way in Christ. In this Module, the participant is equipped with a practical, reliable, spiritual toolbox built on the Rock, Who is Christ, and the truth of His Word.

Summary

The spiritual toolbox resembles many other tools, such as a survival backpack and a medical first aid kit. The spiritual and therapeutic toolbox intends to equip the Christ-follower

with metaphors, acronyms, and powerful imagery to facilitate the development of new neural

pathways and have quick access to familiarized new ways of thinking and doing to simplify.

Words matter, and language and visual imagery are powerful tools that facilitate learning and

change. The spiritual and therapeutic tools developed during the progressive journey of

transformative growth throughout the module are connected to exercises and practices that are

both scriptural and therapeutic. As participants use the tools throughout the modules, they

develop new ways of seeing and doing things. They are familiarized with a new vocabulary that

facilitates communication with themselves and others journeying in the cohort as fellow

travelers.

CHAPTER 7: PRAXIS: THE LIFESTYLE WHO IS CHRIST

As previously discussed throughout the Lifestyle Who is Christ, the purpose of the model is growth and transformation towards fullness and maturity in Christ. The model's emphasis on the Christ-followers progressive and continuous transformation in conformity with Christ, while an individual process, and in some ways, an individual journey, is relational, as members of one another (Rom 12:5). As such, we have guides, mentors, and leaders, as well as upholding the scriptural responsibility to "serve one another (Gal 5:13)," "bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2) and build one another up (1 Thess 5:11), as illustrative examples or our connection and community in and through Christ, As such, we all shepherd in various ways to foster maturity, growth, and spiritual transformation.

As such, the Lifestyle Who is Christ, in addition, is depicted and described closely with an emphasis on both intrapersonal pillars for continued development and interpersonal pillars for service in the body. These are both referred to as attitudes, emphasizing the model's continual call to choosing one's attitude and cultivating an attitude of living Christ as a lifestyle. These are the intrapersonal reflective attitude and the interpersonal reflective attitude. The intrapersonal reflective attitude consists of transparency, authenticity, and accountability. The interpersonal reflective attitude comprises exhortation, warning and admonishment, an equipping and encouragement. The final Attitude is one of a living faith in action, caring for one another in Christ, referred to as Living Faith in Soul Care Action and includes Dependence on the Spirit, Dependence on Christ – the Word/The Gospel, and Dependence on Prayer woven throughout Pauline theology.[1]

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[1] Soul care is not intended in a technical sense as a profession but rather used more informally to signify a care and concern for the brethren.

An impetus for the Lifestyle Who is Christ is to pave the way for the development of attitudes in Christ that exhibit a firm, authentic desire to derive one's identity from Christ and live in a way that exemplifies transparency, authenticity, and accountability with dependence on the Spirit, Christ, and prayer as one who interpersonally receives from ad provides to others in Christ, exhortation, warning, and admonishment (represented of Eph 4:15), and equipping, and encouragement. The author adheres to Willard's belief that "the goal of Christian spiritual formation is "an obedience or conformity to Christ."[2]

The Lifestyle, Who is Christ emphasizes the need for intrapersonal development and interpersonal responsibility. Paul evangelized, even lived among, and served as a shepherding influence, assuming responsibility for his continued spiritual development and the responsibilities inherent in shepherding, discipleship, and mentorship. Hardin reminds us that he did not leave his young believers to find their way. He felt a continual call and pull to help them grow in faith. When Paul could not be present, he "sent proxies to shepherd believers in his stead and wrote letters imbued with his presence and thought."[3] Ladd notes, "Paul is concerned for the welfare of the whole person and everything life involves, but the emphasis is upon the inner life," and while his statement is geared towards Philippians, which is not the subject of our examination, nor are Paul's other epistles, they have relevance to a holistic understanding of Paul. Ladd notes from Philippians 1:27, "to strive for the gospel with one's soul is very close to standing firm in one spirit and *psyche* is nearly interchangeable with *pneuma*, to do the will of God from the heart (Eph 6:6), to serve God with all of one's being and personality" recognizing

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[2] Willard, Renovation of the Heart, 22

[3] Hardin, *Is a Pauline Spirituality Still* Viable, 143.

"the most important use of *pneuma* is a designation for God's Spirit."[4]
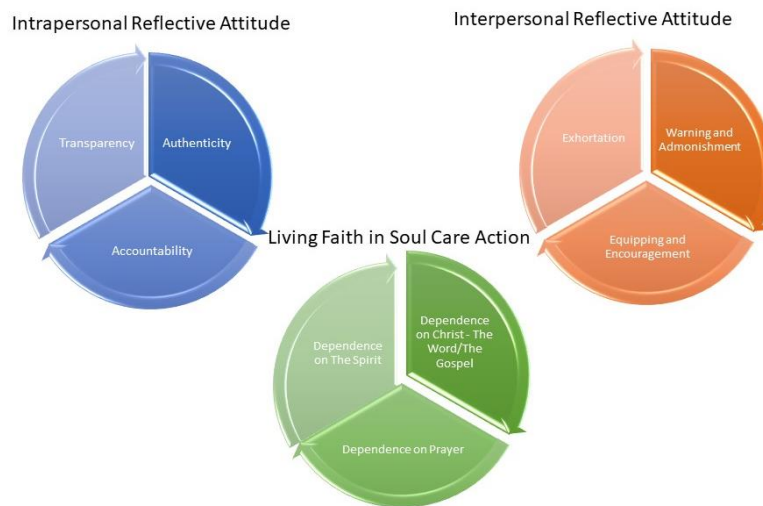

Figure 3: The Tripartite Pillars

Intrapersonal Reflective Attitude

An interpersonal reflective attitude is the first pillar in the model, as it cultivates an awareness of oneself, facilitated in module 1 of the model, which is essential for the cultivation and expression of the components of this pillar. While knowing 'self' is a topic beyond the scope of this paper, without an emphasis on one's representation of self as it pertains to the components of this pillar, the author asserts it is challenging and perhaps unlikely that transparency, authenticity, and accountability will shine through as characteristics, traits, attributes, whatever one chooses to name them, in the words and actions of the brethren. A heart must first be inclined towards cultivating these components for one's relationship with Christ before one can live them in a relationship with one another.

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[4] Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament,* 502–503.

In the context of this pillar, it is about obedience to Christ through the conforming, transforming work of the Spirit for the Glory of God, as revealed in our words and actions. God has created us as unique individuals with our personalities and gifts. We are limited, unique beings created to live in a relationship with an unlimited God. We are powerless over sin, and the Holy Spirit, who guides us into all Truth, reminds us we have access to the Father, power over sin because of what Jesus did for all on the cross. Our hope is in Christ. We can be the overcomers He desires us to be as we allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work in us. Hardin defines spirituality as "a partnership with the Spirit of God" and notes that Paul's spiritual practices for himself were manifested in the form of Pauline spirituality.[5]

Transparency

As one can imagine, these contracts are replete with epistemological, psychological, and theological significance. The operationalization in many fields can differ and present different emphases and foci. Once again, the intent is not to explore these constructs in depth but to state propositions that drive the author's intended meaning and use of these terms. To begin, transparency has been studied within numerous cognates, and for purposes of the Chapter, the anchor is in a basic epistemic of a perspective of self that aligns with a psychological understanding of one's flaws and a theological reckoning that Christ knows His own and, in such visibility, a revealing of oneself allows us to produce authenticity and open ourselves to accountability. We use the cultural word real as synonymous with transparency. In Christ, our authenticity flows from a circumcised heart desire to be seen, not only by Christ, from whom we can hide nothing but also by one another to prefer one another (Rom 12:10) and serve one

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[5] Hardin, *Is Pauline Spirituality Still Viable,* 137.

another in love (Gal 5:13). Transparency, for this paper, is an openness, a revealing of oneself in ways not designed to minimize flaws of imperfections, as Paul was chief of the sinners, as he readily admits in 1 Timothy 1:5.

Transparency also allows us to be self-disclosing, which presents authenticity. Transparency inherently requires vulnerability and often implicitly invites critique and evaluation by self and others. Paul quickly shares his faith experience throughout his epistles and Galatians Chapter 1. He could articulate his conversion, his recognition of his sinful state, and the deeds of the flesh (Gal 1:13). The salvific love and grace of Christ revealed to him (Gal. 1:16) allowed him to experience love in a deep, personal, transformative way that propelled him to, though the Holy Spirit, move out of himself and into Christ. The transparency of the narrative of a portion of his journey allowed him to connect with the Galatians in a deeply caring and protective way, evident in his epistle's exhortations, admonitions, and warnings. Paul became the change he promoted and the motive behind the polemic, which polarized even his companions, such as Cephas and Barnabas (Gal 2:11–14). Wilhoit exhorts those in the church to "become the change you yearn to see in your church."[6] Transparency facilitates trust, which facilitates change.[7]

Finally, the absorption of the human "I' into the pneumatic "I" is essential to the type of transparency modeled by Paul. While he clearly articulated his battles with the flesh (Rom. 7), he also would quickly shift to the transparent theological essence of his being, which was the import of the relationship of faith and Spirit in His walk with Christ. Faith as obedience is central in Paul's theology and life in transparency and authenticity. Faith is a conscious and directed effort,

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[6] Barton et al., *Spiritual Formation in the Church*, 309.

[7] A. K. Schnackenberg et al., "Clearing Opacity: Change Management via Leader Transparency in Native American Neotraditional Organizations," *Business & Society*, 0, (2023): 1–40.

a convergence of knowing, being, and doing, in the vernacular of the model; they are not in and

of themselves, neither predominantly ethical nor intellectual, but rather produced through a

'knowing' of Christ, the mystery of His will, illuminated by the Spirit, and revealed through

God's redemptive grace and will. Transparency shifts the focus and removes the burden of

pretense, hiding, and disguising, and instead of seeking merit for oneself before God by boasting

about own excellence (Gal 6:1), faith brings one to move away from oneself to live in the divine

love which is inclusive rather than exclusive (Gal 3:26-29) and to reflect the caring character of

God in one's own life (Gal 6:2).

Authenticity

As noted in the discussion on transparency, the operationalization of this term is subject

to numerous differing meanings and definitions. For this discussion, authenticity is used to

convey a meaning of consistency between 'being' and 'doing' – words and actions. Harter notes,

in his definition of authenticity, that it "stipulates the requirement for thoughts and feelings to be

consistent with actions."[8] It is also relevant to note that the author has scaffolded the constructs

based on the premise that transparency facilitates authenticity. If one fears revealing oneself, one

is apt to hide in the shadows, distortions, and deceptions of the self and avoid authenticity. If one

is willing to, in faith, step into the fullness of His glorious light (1 Pet 2:9), then the authenticity

can flow from a heart willing to be who he or she is in Christ without pretense. As with

transparency, there is no shortage of scholarship and praxis in numerous fields, including this

author's academic accomplishments, such as psychology, business, law, and education; however,

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[8] S. Harter, "Authenticity," in *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, eds. C. R. Snyder and S. J. Lopez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 382–394.

the emphasis is an emerging field for the author of praxis within spiritual formation.

As discussed extensively throughout the model, Paul's revealing, self-disclosing autobiographical narratives exemplify his authenticity among his spiritual children, colleagues, and often his opponents. Spiritual growth and maturity were strong motivators for Paul's display of the components of this pillar and the interpersonal reflective attitudes. Paul's willingness to self-disclose and self-reveal was inextricably interwoven into his commitment to obedience to the Gospel of Christ. Paul's commitment to authenticity, although not explicitly stated, is implicitly evident in His commitment to walk in the Spirit and live by the Spirit (Gal 5:25) to manifest Christ by acts of explication, choice, and application.

Accountability

Chandler proposes that for spiritual formation, it is necessary for leaders in local churches to "commit to their personal growth and have accountability."[9] Why is accountability so important, and why is it emphasized by Paul in his epistle to the Galatians? Paul's position as Apostle, his encounter with Christ, and his public displays of persuasive rhetoric and passionate polemic in defense of the Gospel represented a template for a messenger, a credible source of the truth of God's Word. Paul's sense of responsibility, not only as a guardian of the Gospel but as one who was "a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15), was first and foremost to the One who called him, and secondly to guide others into the truth and protect them from "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Matt 7:15). He had a deeply developed personal sense of accountability as well as a prompted desire to foster accountability within and among the community of Christ. Paul was cultivating in those

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[9] Barton, et al., *Spiritual Formation in the Church*, 309.

who belonged to Christ and with whom he had influenced what some scholars refer to as perceived accountability. "Perceived accountability is individuals' expectation that they are possibly required to defend or justify their actions or beliefs to others who possess reward or punishment."[10] The example of Paul's exhortative warnings to Cephas and Barnabas in Galatians 2:11–14 is a clear illustration of not only admonishing them for their hypocritical actions but implicitly calling them back to a position of accountability as influencers on the behaviors of others. "At the heart, accountability is one Christian submitting to the Christ-centered admonition of another Christian in one or more areas of life. Hand in hand with accountability is an attitude of grace, forgiveness, and taking on one another's burdens (Rom 12:16, Col 3:13, Gal 6:2).[11]

Pink refers to accountability as a testing doctrine, one which has great practical as well as spiritual importance.[12] Sin is a universal, terminal illness from which no one is exempt. According to Paul, the power and temptation of the flesh are never to be underestimated and never aligned with the heart of God, desires of God, or will of God (Gal 5:16-18). There was accountability to God in the Garden and one on which God inflicted a consequence for choice. All who profess Christ are responsible for adhering to the Gospel's truth. For Paul, accountability in living in a way that intimated and honored Christ was paramount. As such, his demands of those also professing Christ were birthed from his own transparent and authentic commitment, and what he asked of those traveling this journey of Christ with him was no more nor less than

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[10] Robert Steinbauer, et al., "Ethical Leadership and Followers' Moral Judgment: The Role of Followers' Perceived Accountability and Self-Leadership," *Journal of Business Ethics* 120, no. 3 (2014), 382.

[11] *What about Biblical Accountability*, https://leadmin.org/articles/what-about-biblical-accountability#:~:text=At%20the%20heart%2C%20accountability%20is,%2C%20Galatians%206%3A2), accessed June 4, 2024.

[12] Arthur Pink, *Our Accountability to God*, (Kindle Edition, Moody Publishers, 1999), 107.

he asked of himself: accountability to God and one another. In the words of Pink, intellectual, conscience, and will "collectively constituted the moral, rational, accountable being."[13] Pink's emphasis on accountability is not diminished nor eradicated by man's depravity. Paul made no excuses, and his expectation was that neither would those who were members of one another. Let us embrace Galatians 6:1–5 as a call to accountability.

Interpersonal Reflective Attitude

This section aims to briefly highlight those components that illustrate Paul's approach to the churches and demonstrative modes of communication that were imperative to Paul's concerns in his Epistles. The three components have been selected to represent a scaffolded approach to communicative methods that are necessary for the brethren utilizing established means proven meaningful and effective for Paul in his desire to urge those with whom he came in contact into an aligned theological understanding of the Gospel as well as a way to walk in the Spirit and pursue a commitment to and growth in Christ.

Exhortation

Let us begin with another acknowledgment that this term has many meanings and views of interpretation, particularly in different disciplines. Paul often uses exhortation to restate theological truths, particularly in his polemic against the Mosaic Law, as a means to heirship or sonship in the epistle to the Galatians. There is also evidence in Galatians 5:2–12 that Paul uses exhortation as a mode of communication to state his opinion emphatically along with Gospel truth. Alleti provides an example from Galatians 5:16-24 of exhortation used to announce

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[13] Pink, *Our Accountability to God*, 108.

themes, state motivations or reasons, and then move to exhortative repetition, which is demonstrative of his commitment to theological correctness for living Christ and walking in the Spirit in the model's vernacular. [14] Paul's use of exhortation is always purpose-driven and woven into his persuasive communication tools and logical reasoning.

While *parakaleó* is not used in the epistle to the Galatians, the commentaries on the epistle are replete with explicit references to verses in which Paul is engaging in the act of exhortation, which does overlap with the meaning of warning and admonishment. For this paper, those words have been set apart to emphasize a different type of approach in the toolbox of the Christ-follower. This is not to say that Paul does not use exhortation for warning and admonishment as he uses exhortation for equipping and encouraging; the tool of exhortation can be used with different purposes and forces in different contexts, and for this discussion exists as a mode of purpose-driven communication. It is also interesting to note that the field of rhetoric is replete with discourse on exhortation, and one view, among many, the purpose of which is not to evaluate but to highlight, as it seems a-pro-pros to Pauline theology is Black's label "that genre exhortation: "the congregation of discourses potentially inspiring greater intensity of conviction."[15] The model advocates that Paul's use of exhortation is intended to inspire a greater intensity of conviction of the truth of the teaching of the Gospel as distributed through his ministry. Marinelli proposes, "To be properly understood, the orator utilizes stylistic devices such as concrete descriptions and a prophetic tone."[16]

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[14] Jean-Noel Alleti, "Paul's exhortations in Gal 5, 16-25 From the Apostle's Techniques to His Theology," *Biblical* 94, no. 3, (2013): 395–414.

[15] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin 1978), 471.

[16] Kevin Marinelli, "Revisiting Edwin Black: Exhortation as a Prelude to Emotional–Material Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 46, no. 5 (2016), 471.

Warning and Admonishment

As mentioned in the discussion of Exhortation, there is an overlap in meaning with the words warn and admonish and between these words generally in Paul's epistles. Warn generally means to provide information, notice, or cautions to make aware of or about an impending danger. Perhaps we can think of it as a yellow flag warning that a red flag is ahead if there is no change in direction. Warnings are important to remind us seriously of the importance of warning statements. Schreiner suggests that "Warnings are not opposed to promises but are one of the means God uses to fulfill his promises."[17] Galatians 5:19–21, particularly verse 21, is an example of a specific warning. Warning as a communicative mode is often up front and center for Paul, as is evidenced by Galatians 4:9–10, 5:4, and many others. Schreiner reminds us that "warnings are like road signs along the way in our Christian lives that admonish us to keep driving in the Christian life in the right way."[18] This is one of the many functions of the brethren in service to one another.

Admonish generally means to warn or reprimand. In the Greek *noutheteó* can mean warn, admonish, or exhort, depending on the context. Paul often uses admonishment as an authoritarian warning, and for this paper, it is analogous to a slap on the hand or even a 2x4 upside the head, metaphorically speaking. Paul's admonition of those causing dissensions and disruptions – a salvific and eschatological reminder to stay, in this author's vernacular, aligned with Christ's truth of the Gospel. For the model, admonishment is more than the inclusion of a warning. It carries a connotation of exhortative urgency and directness. There is an implication in

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[17] Thomas Schreiner, "Learning to Live By Faith Alone: Galatians 5:2-12, (blog) https://credomag.com/2011/11/warning-live-by-faith-alone-galatians-52-12/, accessed June 4, 2024.

[18] Schreiner, "Learning to Live By Faith Alone.

admonishment of course correction. This model would describe it as the yellow flag warning was in place, the course correction did not occur, the intensity driven by the theological purpose escalates, and becomes an admonishment for course correction and avoiding more dire consequences resulting from failure to adhere to the warning. Admonishment carries a more intense emotionality, making it more emphatic and even dogmatic, particularly as evidenced in Paul's writings. According to deSilva, Galatians 4:8–11 illustrates admonishment or rebuke "based on an argument from analogy."[19] The brethren will need to be dogmatic for the cause of Christ, manifested by speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15). with a focus on pleasing God and not man (Gal 1:10).

Equipping and Encouragement

Equipping is a key component of Paul's theology and his exhortations. Ephesians 4:12 illustrates Paul's attitude and heart towards those in ministry and the brethren concerning one another. Equipping in a Christ-centric context is defined as providing someone, in the tangible sense, practical resources and intangibly in knowing, understanding, and internalizing in meaning-making how to live out of the Gospel. The Greek word *katartismos*, equipping, also means preparing or complete furnishing.[20] Another way equipping has been defined is "to make something or someone (in this case, the "sheep" in the flock) completely adequate or sufficient for something. The basic idea is putting a thing into the condition it ought to be."[21] A key point

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[19] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians, 362*.

[20] James Strong*, The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 2677.

[21] Equipping (2677) 'katartismos,' accessed, June 19, 2023, https://img.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/article_pdf.php?aid=33983

emerging from these definitions is the pouring into and investing in someone for growth towards completeness and, from a Pauline perspective, completeness in Christ as part of the journey of the Lifestyle, Who is Christ. It is also worth noting that in "classical Greek, this word group is derived from the root "ar-" which indicates appropriateness, suitability, usefulness, . . . in which 'artios' and its derivatives are used in connection with the preparation and equipment of the believer and the church, for the service of God and their fellow-men."[22] The focus of Paul in equipping the community of believers was to point them, assist them, and guide them into not only the theology of the Gospel but toward a closer connection with Christ and with one another.

According to Adler, encouragement is a core component of human development. It is foundational to one's ability to persevere at any time, particularly in challenging times and amid disturbances, disruptions, and attacks. Encouraging words are found throughout scripture to renew hope in the consistency and purposefulness of God's provident actions. Main and Boughner said, "When people lose social interest, they need encouragement, especially with regard to engaging others."[23] The church in Galatia, for example, was losing interest in persevering amid persecutory struggles and persevering in the truth and not falling prey to judgment, disparagement, and worse, they required encouragement among, as has been explored, exhortation, warning, admonishment, and equipping to stay grounded in the truth of the Gospel. According to a psychological study by Wong et. al," encouragement is a character strength that you benefit from just as much as those being encouraged."[24]

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[22] Equipping (2677) 'katartismos,' accessed, June 19, 2023, https://img.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/article_pdf.php?aid=33983

[23] F. O. Main and S. R. Boughner, "Encouragement and Actionable Hope: The Source of Adler's Clinical Agency. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 67, (2011): 269–91.

[24] Y. J. Wong, et al., "The Encouragement Character Strength Scale: Scale Development and Psychometric Properties," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 66, no. 3 (2019): 362–74.

Forrest states, "Encouragement as a process of formation must also use this two-fold method: to encourage the listeners where they are in life and to encourage them toward maturity beyond their present circumstances." [25] Paul's focus in many of his epistles, including Galatians, was to inspire and motivate, both inherent in encouragement, towards maturity in Christ. To continue to adhere, stand fast in the truth of the Gospel, and pursue and follow after Christ, no matter the external circumstances or the swirling externalities in this author's vernacular. Wong again, from another study, reminds us that encouragement can be defined as "the expression of affirmation through language or other symbolic representations to instill courage, perseverance, confidence, inspiration, or hope in a person(s) within the context of addressing a challenging situation or realizing a potential."[26] At the heart of caring for one another in service to each other is a gift of encouragement, and if not a gift, then a practiced encouragement for the spiritual growth of the regenerate.

Living Faith in Soul Care Action

As Christ-followers, we are called to serve the body of Christ as ones invested in living, active faith. His emphasis on biblical and practical theology shows Paul's focus on living faith. His emphasis on evangelism, teaching, and shepherding are visible in the first two pillars of the model and have now become the focus on faith in action. In the vernacular of the model, Paul's intent and motive can be presumed not just for word's sake but to move to action, action to walk in alignment with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Andres Purves reminds us, "pastoral work is always concerned with the gospel of God's redemption in and through Jesus Christ no

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[25] Forrest, modeling Spiritual Formation from a Distance 118.

[26] Wong, *The Psychology of Encouragement*, 182.

matter the presenting problem."[27] In many of his teaching and parenting metaphors, Paul is living

and modeling the components of the Intrapersonal Reflective Attitudes, expounded through the

components of the Interpersonal Reflective Attitudes, and now represents the components of

Living Faith in Soul Care Action, the third pillar. Purvis continues that pastoral work, by

definition, connects the gospel story, that is, the truths and realities of God's saving economy

with the actual situations of the people."[28]

Dependence on The Spirit

Suffice it to say that there are thousands of credible sources on this topic, which prompts

a very brief highlighting of this component's connection to the model into Paul's revealing,

living, and modeling absolute dependence on the Spirit. According to Konsmo, "It will be the

work of the Spirit that enhances life and brings peace and harmony."[29] Many have scrutinized the

emphasis on the Spirit in New Testament and Pauline studies. Libraries on the Spirit in Paul have

been filled with books of all types. The key purpose of this component is to proclaim that one

cannot live this Lifestyle, Who is Christ, apart from complete and absolute dependence on the

Holy Spirit. The sanctified life is possible only through the work of the Spirit. According to

Story, the Holy Spirit is:

> vitally and dynamically involved in the sanctification of individuals and their faith
> communities. An examination of the Pauline terms and texts reveals that sanctification
> through the Spirit includes: 1) God's Provision in his gracious call, 2) The Process of
> sanctification in Christian growth in moral purity and love, and 3) The Consummation at
> the Parousia.[30]

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[27] Andres Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2004), xxix-xxx.

[28] Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology*, xxix-xxx.

[29] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 109.

[30] Lyle Story, "Pauline Thoughts about the Holy Spirit and Sanctification: Provision, Process, and

As deSilva calls it in his discussion of Galatians 5:13-26, the Spirit is sufficient to nurture righteousness.[31] For Paul, the Spirit transforms and provides freedom beyond rules, regulations, and imposed externalities, which represent human-driven and flesh-originated constraints leading back to bondage and not producing the freedom wrought by Christ on the Cross (Gal 5:1). In closing, this section, let the reader consider:

> The liberty of the Spirit may seem dangerous in the face of a person's ability to fool himself or herself, or a person's ability to try to get away with feeding more of the flesh than he or she might have been able to do so under the yoke of the Torah. The integrity of the life in the Spirit, however, is guaranteed by the omniscience of God, "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid (Book of Common Prayer 1979). There is no fooling God, and thus Christian freedom can never be misused without consequences.[32]

The Christ-followers dependence on the Spirit must be visible through a life of, among others, the components of the Intrapersonal Reflective Attitude, pillar one. There must be a reconciliation within the Soul Care Shepherd that the flesh is antithetical to the Spirit and, by definition (Gal 5:16-18), can never lead one closer to conformity to Christ. It is absolute dependence on the Spirit and a chosen intent that the Christ-follower, in living the truth of the Gospel, can facilitate spiritual growth and provide soul care to those entrusted to his care through the power of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual tools available in the construction of the components of the model.

Consummation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, no. 1 (2009): 67.

[31] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 443.

[32] deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 479–80.

Dependence on The Word

First, the Word has several theological meanings and representations. In the model, in Module 2: Infusion, dependance on the Word is dependance on the Word of God. Paul recognized the importance of prioritizing theological precepts from the risen Christ to feed the flock. There are numerous illustrations throughout the Bible of feeding the sheep and sharing the pure milk of the Word (1 Pet 2:2). The imperative for the Christ-follower is that you cannot feed others if you have not fed yourself well. The model's view of the importance of God's Word to spiritual formation and the provision of caring for and serving one another cannot be overstated. The model, in Infusion, advocates the reading of God's Word cover to cover, and over and over, until the coming of the Lord.

The Christological, soteriological, pneumatological, and eschatological implications of the importance of God's Word are clear for the preservation of the saints and growth in the body of Christ. These theological elements of Paul's overall theological approach in his epistles have been touched upon in the journey through the development of the model. His representations of the Interpersonal Reflective Attitudes reveal intent and motive for herding and shepherding his children, the flock, towards a correct theological understanding of not only their position in Christ but also how to stand fast and continue forward in the truth of all of the implications of the authority and importance of the Word, is clear. A Christ-follower must drink richly and digest the powerful truths of God's Word fully in all forms and facets to live the truth of the components of the Intrapersonal Reflective Attitude, Implement the components of the Interpersonal Reflective Attitude, and shepherd towards the Living faith in his Soul Care Action, of the third pillar.

Dependence on Prayer

There are numerous illustrations of Paul's exhortations for prayer (1 Thess 5:17) and examples of Paul's prayers.[33] According to Hendry, "Prayer is the lifeline of theology' because it is the en route to knowing God." [34] There is likely little dispute surrounding the importance of prayer for the Apostle Paul. Hardin reminds us that "the most notable aspect of Paul's spirituality is his practice of prayer."[35] Fee notes that Paul "was a prayer before he was a missioner of a thinker."[36] Suffice it to say that a Christ-follower has almost no ability to sustain the Lifestyle Who is Christ without prayer and indeed, as represented in the necessity of dependence on the Holy Spirit, is equally dependent upon his connection to God through prayer. Further, as the Word makes clear in Romans 8:26, the Spirit and prayer are powerfully interconnected. Finally, it is important to note that according to Van der Merwe, "Paul's prayers are the prayers of an apostle, a missionary with eschatological urgency in mind."[37] The Christ-follower's Living Faith in Soul Care Action must be founded upon a Spirit-driven, chosen commitment to the Word, Dependence on the Spirit, and praying without ceasing or, in the words of Bounds, "importunate prayer," a mighty movement in the soul toward God. It is a stirring of the most profound forces of the "soul toward the throne of heavenly grace. It is the ability to hold on, press on, and wait."[38]

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[33] D.A. Carson wrote an excellent book, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Praying with Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015).

[34] G. S. Hendry, "The Lifeline of Theology," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, (1972), 30.

[35] Hardin*, Is a Pauline Spirituality still Viable*, 137.

[36] Gordon, D. Fee, *Paul The Spirit and the People of God*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 147.

[37] Dirk van der Merwe, "Prayer, the encounter and participation, the experience: A Pauline exhortation towards a spirituality of prayer," *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 39, no. 1 (2018), 4.

[38] Bounds, *The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer,* 39.

Summary

Paul's encounter and experience with the risen Christ formed the foundation for not only his call and passion for a commitment to the Word of God. Paul's life became a testimony of strength and struggle, of flesh and spirit, as he wearied onward to fulfill his call in Christ. His life forms a type of praxis for the modern church. His life became a way, a model, a template, for those then and now to live the Lifestyle Who is Christ. Not only Paul's letters but also the Bible, as a whole, are replete with a way of life designed to create connection and conformity with the Creator, and as such, they emphasize the need for *praxis*.

The model advocates that *praxis* is not biblically intended as a solo endeavor. God did not create us as isolated islands. The need for connection and community is at the core of God's creation. While individually, there is a call to personal connection and growth, there is simultaneously a call to serve one another, to come alongside and share in spiritual growth through a process of care for one another. The model can provide a way, one way for others to cultivate spiritual growth in themselves and others. Along with Paul, a way to experience the resurrected Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, a continuous transformation that births from the truth of God's Word and the power of prayer. A Christ-follower must be willing to commit to the components of the first pillar, the Intrapersonal Reflective Attitude, before one can hope to be heard or seen in the words of the components of the second pillar, the Interpersonal Reflective Attitude. Only then can the expression of Living faith in Soul Care Action be demonstrable and transformative in the lives of others.

CONCLUSION

The literature review in Chapter Two reveals an ongoing discourse in spiritual formation and uncovers a unique opportunity. This opportunity lies in developing a novel, integrated spiritual formation model, which can make a distinct and significant contribution to the existing scholarship. This chapter succinctly outlines the model's alignment within the field and the 4-Axis model, acknowledges its limitations, and proposes the next steps for its advancement.

Research Questions and Review of Findings

This study focused on select theoretical psychological orientations, relevant areas from the psychological sciences, neuroscience, and medical areas, and a limited array of themes and concepts related to the Pauline theology and metaphors used in the model. The focus of the dissertation was two-fold. The first was to survey the relevant literature to identify gaps and a need for the model, to assess if there is a gap in the literature indicating a need for the model, and to indicate the usefulness of the model with the goodness of fit. The second purpose of assessing the model within Gruenberg and Asumang's 4-axis model is to determine the goodness of fit.

Regarding the first purpose, the model responds to the ongoing transformation in spiritual formation and soul care. Its aim is not to undermine the pioneers in this ever-evolving field, but to further expand the dialogue. The model asserts that one can draw from the general revelation of God and propose a view that integrates psychological science, neuroscience, and medical science from a theocentric perspective. The Holy Spirit acts as the change agent, and the human mind, will, and heart willingly participate in the process. The literature review suggests that the model can contribute significantly to spiritual formation and soul care. It aligns with the focus of the scholarship in these fields and adds depth by integrating important constructs from the psychological sciences, neurosciences, and medical sciences. The model's practical application is

evident as it draws from well-established theoretical orientations, tools, and techniques from the sciences, providing a meaningful therapeutic toolbox for the Christ-follower.

As for the second purpose, the detailed descriptions and discussions in the preceding chapters lay the model's foundation, orientation, and telos. The brief review in this chapter demonstrates that the model aligns with Gruenberg and Asumang's articulation of each of the 4-Axis model's axes. The systematic theological approach to Paul's theology, the emphasis on a balance among these areas, and the practical approach of the activities known as the toolbox in the model all point to a fit within the 4-Axis model. This fit meets Gruenberg and Asumang's previously stated purpose of providing a "systematic and standardized approach of theory assessment . . . [that is] formalized and constructed to enable fair and consistent comparisons between theories." The hope is that others may recognize the utility of the theory within the field of spiritual formation and proceed with confidence, knowing that it has been developed with a concerted focus on the axes identified by Gruenberg and Asumang.

Limitations

The author would like to note the limitations of this work. The model depends on certain confessed beliefs, as shared by the author, such as the inerrancy of scripture and the role of the Spirit in progressive sanctification. It is not intended to exegete or exposit the entirety of Paul's theology. It may not be generalizable to those with different worldviews and belief systems. The rationale of this study centered upon the gap in the literature concerning the contributions of other disciplines, psychology, neuroscience, and medical science, with an anchoring foundation in Pauline theology leading to the spiritual development of the Christian. More specifically, this study sought to narrow the gap between traditional models of spiritual formation for discipleship and soul care and provide a way to develop those who profess Christ programmatically. While

the modules are fixed and the methodology established, there is an ongoing Spirit-led desire to improve and continually grow the work in *praxis.* As Konsmo notes, "Life must continually progress toward a likeness of Christ and the person's nature and actions. The observable manifestations of a person who has been filled and refilled give testimony to the power of the Spirit who enables such [Spirit-led] behavior in fallen humanity."[1]

Next Steps

The model proposes to facilitate the growth of the Christ-follower by equipping him with a spiritual toolbox designed to provide a lifestyle for living Christ, in but not of the world, in the here and now. The model can provide a way, one way, for Christ-followers to cultivate spiritual growth in themselves and others. The model presents a way, along with Paul, to experience the resurrected Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, for continuous transformation that births from the truth of God's Word and the power of prayer. The model is currently used in the author's non-profit ministry, the Christian Life Institute, and has facilitated groups and disciplined and mentored individuals in various modules. The author's background includes online education, training and development, and ministry, and the intent is to partner with organizations and institutions that want to offer the model as a program in spiritual development to their students and congregations. The author is adept at content formation and development and intends to continue the development of workbooks for the modules and produce online content as well as hybrid programs for the cultivation of the deeper walk with Christ and the spiritual development of the brethren.

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[1] Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit,* 160–61.

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