

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**Equipping Spiritually Mature Men to Mentor the Next Generation of Leaders**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Lynchburg, Virginia

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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The primary objective of the study was to enhance the operational leadership within the church by implementing a mentorship program. The main target audience consisted of existing ministry leaders who would undergo specialized training to empower them in mentoring the upcoming generation of leaders within the church community. Emphasis was placed on the significance of dedicating resources toward nurturing the spiritual growth of the current leaders, as this would offer valuable insights into effectively guiding the spiritual journey of the future leaders based on solid biblical principles. The project probed into various key themes such as Story, Wisdom, Prayer, Character, and Relationships, which were identified as pivotal elements in fostering the spiritual maturation and overall development of disciples within the context of mentorship relationships. The research demonstrated the importance of instructing mature Christian men in the process of mentoring the next generation of leaders as a biblical practice backed by both the Old and New Testaments. Christian leaders ought to prioritize spiritual growth, leading to a deeper comprehension and drive to participate in the various ministries of the local church. The project underscores the necessity for churches to establish a comparable mentoring process for incorporation into church ministries, rooted in biblical, spiritual, and missional values, to empower believers with quality leadership skills to edify the church.

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## **Abbreviations**

CSF	Christian Spiritual Formation
ESV	English Standard Version
DMIN	Doctor of Ministry
GBBC	Glenns Bay Baptist Church

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

The redemptive work of Christ coupled with the Great Commission as directed by Christ (Matt 28:18-20, English Standard Version) is the foundation for all Christian teaching and practice. Biblical disciple-making is invaluable to the task of advancing the kingdom in the present age. A glimpse of the early church and its success is described by Dallas Willard in these words: “We see in world history the results of a small number of disciples simply doing what he said, with no ‘Omission.’”<sup>1</sup> Mentoring shares a lot of similarities with disciplemaking in that they both possess the ability and purpose of growing others, and they are both functionally built on relationships committed to the betterment and success of the acolyte. A commonality exists in the teaching being passed on from older to younger. The main difference between these two terms lies in their root. Discipleship has its roots in Hebrew culture and is spiritually fed, and mentoring comes from Greek origin with a focus on developing a specific trade or skill.

Discipleship is concentrated on the centrality of the teachings of Christ and following in his footsteps (i.e., making fishers of men), meanwhile mentoring typically involves the teaching of a skillset or skill-based knowledge (i.e., teaching a man to fish). Mentoring is found in the principles of biblical literature and is culturally relevant in the minds of even unbelievers, which makes its employment of significant value, and the similarities to discipleship have found the terms often being used synonymously with good intention. An ongoing need exists to educate people on the truths of God’s Word while at the same time adapting to meet the needs and

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2006), xiii.



challenges that changing cultural contexts present.

Academics have been rigorously investigating the value that mentoring holds in generating effective disciples, and this research has drawn interest from those across numerous academic fields (i.e., philosophy, ethics, theology, etc.). The focal point of this research has been aimed at identifying how effective mentoring is generated and learning how to replicate the process for maximal results while adapting to meet specific needs given their differing demographic and cultural climates. Spiritual growth and formation have been at the forefront of Christian research in the ongoing quest and have brought about a renewed interest in spiritual disciplines as a means of mentoring through formative disciplines.

The highlight of mentoring is meant to lead people toward a better and more active relationship with Christ to offset the disproportion between spoken belief and practice. True mentoring will focus on more than information but also on the need to have the truth of God's Word impacting lives through practical application and relationships. Phil Newton expresses the same thought in how Jesus mentored when writing: "By contrast, his (Jesus') disciples would not just teach, as common among rabbinic and philosophical disciples; they were called to 'fish people,' gathering and recruiting more followers of Jesus. That sets the stage for how Jesus mentored his followers."<sup>2</sup> Mentoring is a method that requires effective and lasting examples of leadership.

Discipleship is directly involved in the mission of God as a means of continuing to communicate the gospel message, which transforms the inner being into a relationship with Christ. It is the essence of the heart in the Scriptures, which informs the faculty of intelligence and produces the will of character and its passions. Bill Hull connects this idea with mentoring in

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<sup>2</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017), 23.

his book on discipleship: “At its heart, mentoring involves the transformation of a person’s soul. This radical change means the mentor has the same effect on a person and in the same way that Jesus did.”<sup>3</sup> Christian Mentoring must begin with an acknowledgment that one’s allegiance is to God and His Word while working to bring others to a better understanding and equipping for replicating this. Ordinary laymen are the best at delivering a grassroots appeal for the truth of Christianity but need to be trained and equipped to perform the task at hand. This pattern was the way Jesus mentored the Twelve who were uneducated men by contemporary formal academic standards (Acts 4:13).

The local church is the vessel to engage in such training and needs to reinvigorate the service of the mission of God. This process can only be done by intentionality and substance and must focus on the quality of teaching and services over quantity. The contemporary church has shifted its focus from making disciples to making active attendees who marginalize biblical teachings to avoid cultural confrontation. Effective discipling begins with leadership and mentoring the next generations of leaders to guide that effort. The local church must again begin to place attention on sound teaching and equipping laymen to become effective leaders in the disciple-making process, which begins by mentoring those leaders as was the case with Paul to Timothy and Titus.

### **Ministry Context**

Glenns Bay Baptist Church (GBBC) is at one of the lowest points of membership and attendance that the church has had in its history. The church was founded in 1987 and had an initial boom which grew to 300-400 members. After the retirement of the founding pastor of the church, successive pastors have had limited success, and the church has seen a steady decline

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<sup>3</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 143.

since 2012 leading into the pandemic. Ultimately, several factions separated from the church as its image had grown to reflect negatively on the local church within the community even landing itself in the local news on more than one occasion that directly involved pastoral staff members and unethical behaviors. Peter Mason and Dino Pedrone describe a target of spiritual leadership as having a good reputation in the community: “If a spiritual leader is to be trustworthy, he must demonstrate a consistency between his life within the body of believers and his life among the wider community of unbelievers.”<sup>4</sup> The previous leaders were inconsistent with this call to be “above reproach” (Titus 1:6) and the image of the church was impacted. GBBC went through thirteen months with an interim pastor (after removing the prior pastor from staff for ethical infractions) from the local association before the arrival of this researcher. The initial membership had kept some things hidden and gradually these attempts at shielding the sins of the leadership came to light, and an overhaul of associate ministers and deacons became a necessity. The researcher has been pastoring the church since March 2020 and has seen gradual and steady growth while seeing nearly the entire church changeover from the initial date of hire.

GBBC can best be described as a replant as it has carried over the name, building ownership, and history (good and bad). Mark Clifton addresses the issue of dying churches and presents his conclusion based on the statistics provided by Lifeway Research: “Only about 15 percent of SBC churches are healthy, growing, and multiplying churches. The vast majority of these churches in North America are struggling.”<sup>5</sup> Approximately ninety-five percent of the membership has changed over the last three years, but all current members are associated with growth given their commitment to join the church during this change period. The church

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<sup>4</sup> R. Peter Mason and Dino Pedrone, *Mentoring the Next Generation: Making a Lasting Difference* (Maitland, FL: Xulon, 2012), 122.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory: Creating A Gospel Legacy Throughout North America* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2016), 5.

previously experienced a spiral with limited and highly disorganized leadership. The pattern demonstrated more of an example from the book of Judges where everyone was following their own spiritual and moral convictions (Judg 17:6; 21:25). This researcher challenged the established administration of the church with biblical conviction, which confronted the misdeeds and fostered an environment predicated on the command of obedience to God. Based the parable of the seed growing in Mark 4:28, Rodney Mills concludes: “As church leaders, it is our responsibility not to grow the harvest, but to create an environment whereby God can bring about His harvest and grow His kingdom.”<sup>6</sup> The initiation of transforming GBBC originated with a focus on the spiritual atmosphere within the church, and a commitment to teaching and practicing biblical principles. The current members of the church have met this challenge with eagerness and a commitment to following the teachings of God’s Word but recognize there are still some things lacking currently to fulfill the functions of a New Testament church. The atmosphere of the church has changed to reflect a feeling of family, and in the last year, three deacons were ordained to the service of the church. With new deacons the church has experienced more investment and engagement than in the previous two years with the former deacons.

The weekly schedule of GBBC includes Sunday School, Sunday Morning Service, and Wednesday Night Bible Study. Sunday School currently lacks a consistent meeting time with only seven regular attendees. The Sunday Morning Service draws an assembly in the thirties, and Wednesday Night Bible Study brings about an attendance of twelve. The eagerness previously mentioned has been primarily seen in the growing commitment of those attending Wednesday Bible Study, as attendance has doubled in the past six months. The low attendance and

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<sup>6</sup> Rodney Mills, “Healthy Churches Grow,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 70.

changeover which occurred within GBBC left necessary functions of the church lacking or non-existent. Within the past six months, membership classes were restructured and able to provide purpose and clarity as to the mission of GBBC.

Discipleship is the largest ministry need in the church because almost no discipleship is present. According to Clifton, “Nearly every evangelical church will recognize the Great Commission’s call to make disciples as a core part of the church’s mission. . . . For the replanting church, discipleship is theologically and pragmatically essential. The replanting church needs to lead new people to Christ, help them grow in their faith, and reproduce themselves.”<sup>7</sup> The church presently lacks any organization or structure to provide a means to fill the void. The COVID-19 pandemic played a major role in the dysfunctionality of certain ministries of the church but did allow for a good time of reflection that helped to identify the areas of greatest need in the church. Sorting through the difficulties of the pandemic left many feeling frustrated and disconnected from the church, and the situation was consistent with even newer members.

Fellowship has been a critical aim of the church to reconvene and plan events that lead to fellowship opportunities and outreach to perform acts of service in the community. Thom Rainer summarizes from the example of Philippians 2:1-4: “Vibrant and living churches look after the interests of others. They are concerned for their communities.”<sup>8</sup> Great strides have been taken to change the atmosphere of GBBC, and a renewed sense of belonging and purpose can be felt by those who visit while on vacation. One element of the vacation destination that has yet to be addressed is the aspect of snowbirds that make up about five percent of the church currently. The gap is a reduction from the initial thirty percent of members who were snowbirds in 2020.

Changes within the church attributed to the decline in snowbirds remaining active, although it

<sup>7</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 73.

<sup>8</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2014), 28.

was positive for reestablishing biblical mission, purpose, and vision.

The church benefits from its strategic location, which offers ample chances to draw in fresh faces; Positioned within the boundaries of one of the most rapidly expanding areas in the United States, namely the Myrtle Beach metropolitan region. According to *U.S. News and World Reports*, the city has been in the top ten fastest growing places for the last three years.<sup>9</sup> The current membership of GBBC consists primarily of these “transplants” who have moved to the area. Historically, Myrtle Beach has been a popular vacation destination as well as a retirement location, but recent years have brought more families and working-class individuals to the area. In 2022, the metropolitan statistical area of Myrtle Beach, also known as Horry County, was 408,000 with nearly 30% of that population being within a 20-minute driving distance of GBBC. Situated within the Grand Strand area, the church resides in a vibrant urban district among a collection of towns and cities. The church actively engages with the town of Surfside Beach and even participates in events and town meetings.

According to the United States Census Bureau, Horry County comprises of a 77.7% White population, followed by 12.3% Black, and 6.5% Hispanic or Latino with statistics showing areas nearer to the church have a population of Whites nearing 94%.<sup>10</sup> The median household income is \$46,791; a poverty rate of 11%; and nearly 40% of the population aged sixty-five and older.<sup>11</sup> The region principally identifies as conservative politically. The majority of the church's congregation consists of individuals of Caucasian descent. A greater section of

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<sup>9</sup> “Fastest-Growing Places in the U.S. in 2023-2024,” U.S. News & World Reports, accessed August 25, 2023, <https://realestate.usnews.com/places/rankings/fastest-growing-places>.

<sup>10</sup> “QuickFacts,” United States Census Bureau, accessed August 23, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/gardencitycdpsouthcarolina,horrycountysouthcarolina,northmyrtlebeachcitysouthcarolina,myrtlebeachcitysouthcarolina,US/PST045222>. \*Surfside Beach is not represented due to population less than 5,000.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

the church membership classifies as retired at roughly seventy-five percent, which indicates the gap between generational involvement, but not exclusively so. In this way, limitations are present within the church as to adequate resources to engage in specific mission efforts for both financial reasons and volunteer availability/capability.

One of the goals of the church aims to engage with and grow families with the church through effective outreach, fellowship, and discipleship/mentoring. Corresponding with the data that has been presented, the local area has traditionally had an age gap being home to a greater degree of retirees, but the age gap has changed rapidly with the influx of people moving to the area from around the country. The Myrtle Beach statistical area used to have a large disparity between summer and winter months due to vacationers, but residents are becoming more permanent. The vision of the GBBC in making disciples looks at this data and determines that a critical need exists to connect the different generations by giving each a sense of purpose and belonging. Reinvigorating the older generations to share their wisdom and expertise in the church proves a challenge when they have mentally engaged in the hard-earned reward of retiring from their prior occupation. The data suggests the challenge primarily resides with men and evidenced suggests women comprise a larger percentage of church attendance than men. Mentoring proves essential in any profession and has service for the church, but the process requires commitment from all sides.

A mindset that has plagued GBBC in its history, and manifests as a product of culture, establishes the belief that church serves as a once-a-week, or at most, twice-a-week event that involves attending a service and monetarily giving a little. This perception gives a superficial impression of what being a disciple of Christ truly includes. Michael Gorman concludes, “Paul wanted the communities he addressed not merely to *believe* the gospel but to *become* the gospel

and thereby to *advance* the gospel. That is, they were to participate in the very life and mission of God, through proclamation, praxis, and even persecution.”<sup>12</sup> Relationships are an essential element of the dynamics of discipleship, and successful relationships are active not rigid or idle.

Superficial relationships and the mentality they portray had roots in the decline of GBBC in its history. Merely concentrating on gaining members or attendance can function in the same capacity. GBBC aims to invest or pour into the lives of its assembly which will result in exemplifying the love of Christ. Dallas Willard writes: “too much of what is called Christian is *not* a manifestation of the supernatural life of God in believers’ souls. Too much of what is called Christian is just human.”<sup>13</sup> The complications of sin and the inherited nature provide difficulties when seeking to mentor and disciple others. Physical maturity does not segue into spiritual maturity; thus, age provides an inadequate factor for determining the need to be disciplined. GBBC needs to disciple and mentor through active relationships with one another in Christ but has limited expertise and training for even its more mature members to implement. When examined from an outside perspective, the church may appear as not having a lot working in its favor currently, but this researcher believes in the power of the Spirit to provoke a response in the people. GBBC has been blessed to have the resources of a fully paid church building and numerous classrooms in which to hold sessions. GBBC has grown its online followers by 400% since this researcher began serving this community, and these pathways have yielded results.

### **Problem Presented**

The ancient English proverb comes to mind: “You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.” However, the application of such a proverb implies that the horse may be

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<sup>12</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 297.

<sup>13</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*, 51.



unwilling to participate in the action which has the intention of providing a benefit to the horse. Conversely, the men at GBBC express a willingness to be participants in the ministry but lack the nurturing and mentoring of their own to confidently reciprocate the scriptural direction. In earnest bewilderment, a real presence of uncertainty exists on the part of these men, when they are asked to lead and struggle with confidence, even where a pre-packaged curriculum has been provided. A lack of education and example from the predecessors has demonstrated in the inability for these men to display confidence.

Discipleship through mentoring intends to build meaningful relationships and help lead others to an obedient relationship with Christ. As of the current time, a discipleship class does not exist, and/or mentors leading others beyond a Sunday school class, and uncertainty exists about how to begin to tackle the problem. As such, following a simple action research routine as described by Ernest Stringer and Alfredo Aragón is beneficial in how one must look, think, and act to identify and change for the better.<sup>14</sup> Facilitative processes are important for generating the changes desired and will often conflict with the routines that have been part of the problem. As in any organization, change proves to be constant and necessary, but universal scriptural directives must be followed while adapting to the medium in which one communicates the message. Creating change through the implementation of curriculum coupled with the desire to facilitate a process that aids in the building of quality relationships displays the hope for the church. In general, individuals encountered within the church exhibit a certain fluidity, necessitating the adaptation to their needs as a crucial aspect.

The pursuit of authenticity in discipleship allows individuals to experience a dynamic and enriching relationship with Christ. Adequate time and energy must be allocated for the endeavor from both the mentor and mentee understanding that reaching the goal delivers an ongoing

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<sup>14</sup> Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2021), 8.

relationship like one's relationship with God. The process can be understood as the development of a Christian worldview as they work together. Belief demands action, and this belief has a foundation in the love of God, which drives the heart of mentoring another. Mentoring proves more than informational; consequently, the execution provides formational and relational benefits. The problem is that spiritually mature men at GBBC lack the expertise to mentor effectively young adult men in Christian leadership.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to equip spiritually mature men to become effective mentors to the next generation of leaders through a weekly leadership class. The project will aim to foster an environment that provides a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, along with a nine-week curriculum, which facilitates personal growth, preparedness to educate others through sound scriptural doctrine, and relevant mentoring techniques, which will impact generations to come. The chief aim of the project guides the education of men on the scriptural call to be disciple makers who principally mentor other believers to promote relationship-building that pleases God through obedience to His Word. Christian mentoring has the potential to impact another's personal development and education better than any curriculum or textbook ever could. Christian mentoring follows the model that Jesus gave in mentoring His disciples. Jesus not only adhered to the Mosaic law through His teachings but also exemplified the principles by leading a life free of sin, despite facing various challenges that served as a model for others to emulate. An element of Christian mentoring that cannot be replicated in secular forms encompasses the spiritual life that the Spirit directs within the believer, and mentoring considering biblical principles will shape a Christian worldview.

The curriculum aims to give people the principles of Scripture that guide the need to

mentor the next generation of church leaders. The curriculum also directs one toward identifying that the Spirit leads the way in transforming people from within and how that transformation should foster loving relationships with other brothers and sisters in Christ. One way that transformation could be identified models the change that the Spirit initiates in the life of the believer. Everyone has a story, and the goal of mentoring includes identifying how God's story impacts the individual's story. The merging of God's story to an individual primarily expresses itself through the redemptive work of Christ and how He providentially devoted Himself to imputing righteousness into the believer's life. God's redemptive and transformative work was a plan from the beginning through Christ Jesus. Wisdom can be found when one begins to see that God has a purpose for all believers, and it should be His will on display in how believers conduct themselves. Mentoring confirms the notion that maturity provides justification for why one ought to look less at oneself and more toward the growth and development of another. Christian mentoring serves as a pertinent practice for men and women alike, which makes the practice eternally relevant to the Church. Christian mentoring offers significance as the practice directs the leadership of the local church and how one generation of leaders naturally pours into the lives of the next generation of leaders in the church.

### **Basic Assumptions**

This researcher has five general assumptions addressed as part of this action research project. The first assumption identifies that the participants in the group are all regenerate men who are ill-equipped to lead a discipleship class due to inexperience through lack of previous training involvement. Nonetheless, a large potential for success exists when the operator has been provided with the right tool for the job because stressing the problem does not reside with capacity.

The second assumption states that all participants will be encouraged to engage in the process with honesty and openness. Methodology plays a vital role in the openness of the project along with the desire of the participants to positively effect change in the ministry. Generally, many research participants will aim to give only answers that they believe the researcher wants to hear. Within action research, an important aspect includes communicating that ownership of the outcome resides with all participants as well as the researcher. The participants are the ground-level force to effect change in the ministry, which should be made evident to all who are called upon to be participants in the study.

The third assumption illustrates that the implementation of a small group setting for the study will foster closer relationships. Relationships are an essential part of mentoring others properly by expressing that one must be fully committed to building a lasting relationship for the process to work. The effectiveness of the study depends on those who are engaged in the process to have the desire to grow in their relationship with Christ aiming for obedience to His Word.

The fourth assumption states that participants of the study will strategically move through the curriculum and grow in their knowledge of Christian mentoring. The result of the classroom instruction and techniques will prime participants to competently lead others in discipleship either through personal disciple-making or leading discipleship classes that train others to become effective disciplers/mentors. By engaging in the program, the participants will be able to enhance personal spiritual gifts and skills, thereby enabling them to have a direct and profound influence on the individuals under their instruction.

Finally, the fifth assumption is that those participating in the study will become effective disciple-makers/mentors, and their knowledge and enhanced skill set will aid GBBC as a retention tool. The church will experience enhanced ministry outcomes through the leadership of

trained individuals, leading to a more impactful and efficient functioning of its various ministries. The aim of any discipleship/mentoring program in the church should be and will be directed at growing the kingdom. The growth of the kingdom examples best through the active involvement of those in the local church. The relationships built by mentoring are designed to increase this outcome and last.

### **Definitions**

This project hinges on the expression of Christian mentoring. Key terms used with the project are Christian mentoring, discipleship, leadership, and spiritual formation. It will become evident that some of these terms are used interchangeably throughout the project.

*Christian Mentoring.* Christian mentoring acts as an expression of the routine of one Christian investing their time and energy into another believing Christian who lacks spiritual maturity and actively desires to receive their tutelage. The mentor's engagement with the mentee serves to aid in their spiritual growth and maturity as it targets the development of these future leaders with no expectation of recompense.

Finding a beneficial definition of mentoring proves useful in understanding the principal nature of its practicality, especially for a secular word to encroach upon the boundary of Christian practices. Dean Thompson and Cameron Murchison provide these insights: "The word mentor calls to mind the Greek word *meno*, meaning 'to abide' or 'to remain.' The mentoring context frequently involves an intimate, committed, continuous, developmental, and reciprocal relationship. Such relationships include a reciprocal availability, where unforced influence and helpfulness take place."<sup>15</sup> A mentoring mentality is exemplified in Scripture and resembles spiritual fatherhood as exemplified in the case of both the Apostle Paul to Timothy (1 Tim 1:2) and

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<sup>15</sup> Dean K. Thompson and Cameron D. Murchison, *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 1.

Peter to Mark (1 Pet 5:13). Paul's words to the Corinthian church speak volumes: "For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15, ESV). All these responses originate with the way Jesus mentored the Twelve. According to Jesus, "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4a, ESV). This principle aligns with the need to be mentored by Christ and mentor others in Christlikeness. Scripture guides one toward the principal task of mentoring and being mentored by Christ and in His likeness.

*Discipleship.* In addressing the Great Omission, Willard wrote of discipleship in biblical times: "Primarily it meant to go with him, in an attitude of observation, study, obedience, and imitation."<sup>16</sup> To truly follow Christ means undergoing a complete transformation in every aspect of the individual's being. J.T. English notes, "The source of true discipleship is not better programs, better preaching, or better community. All of those, and more, are hugely important tools, but the source of discipleship is God himself. Thus, at the heart of everything we do is the desire to grow in our love and knowledge of God."<sup>17</sup> Discipleship brings focus to a lifelong pursuit of sanctification that all believers are called into. Discipleship proves broad conceptually, but often renders as synonymous with mentoring in a contemporary setting. Discipleship involves connecting with elements of the vertical (God) and horizontal (neighbors) relationships.

*Leadership.* Refers to Members of the body of Christ who have a role in directing other members to accomplish the goals of the ministries of the church. The leadership motivates the people to pursue a common goal in unity. J. Oswald Sanders writes, "Often truly authoritative leadership falls on someone who years earlier dedicated themselves to practice the discipline of seeking first the kingdom of God. Then, as that person matures, God confers a leadership role,

<sup>16</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> J.T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2020), xvi.

and the Spirit of God goes to work through him.”<sup>18</sup> Leadership transpires through many different roles in the church including pastors, deacons, committee heads, and teachers to incorporate the ministries articulated in Ephesians 4:11. These positions are known to many as the five-fold ministry but also extend to practical needs of the modern church. Spiritual leadership must be applied when engaging with a church ministry as it keeps the mission of God as the foundation of activity. Servant leaders are the best example of spiritual leadership as they follow the model of Christ. The supervision of leaders necessarily enables others to make informed and independent decisions with the principles being derived from biblical instruction.

*Mentee.* A person under individual commitment who submits to the instruction of another who can teach and admonish for personal spiritual growth and development, especially in the tier of leadership. The term may be used synonymously with protégé within the context of this project. Mentees are disciples who are being groomed to become effective ministry leaders as pupils of more experienced ministry leaders. As such, the mentee/protégé learns from the more experienced leader(s) to enhance their upward ministry trajectory and achieve personal ministry goals set by themselves. Disciples in the New Testament writings exemplified a mentee/protégé relationship with their Rabbi/teacher.

*Spiritual Formation.* Willard writes, “Spiritual formation is the process whereby the innermost being of the individual takes on the quality or character of Jesus himself.”<sup>19</sup> Spiritual formation exists not as a legalistic practice of following certain liturgy or pharisaical procedures, but reveals the transformation of the entire self. Like how one’s worldview develops over time, spiritual formation emerges over time as one conforms the whole self (mind, body, spirit, etc.) to that of Christ. Spiritual formation works on the bounds of living a sanctified life in Christ

<sup>18</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: A Commitment to Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2007), 17.

<sup>19</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*, 56.

through the power of the Spirit. Spiritual formation takes on the practice of spiritual disciplines and practices as one is being formed and transformed. Spiritual formation furthermore evidences discipleship and growth through personal and communal prayer. Mark Maddix details, “A definition of spiritual formation first begins with a focus on being ‘formed’ and ‘transformed.’ The human person is being transformed into the ‘image and likeness of Christ.’”<sup>20</sup> Becoming an imitator of Christ accounts for the pursuit of a sanctified life in conformity to what pertains to holiness.

A good definition of spiritual formation has roots in the work of the Spirit that transforms the life of the believer and inspired the Apostle Paul to write: “My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!” (Gal 4:19, ESV). Spiritual formation represents a critical component of the Great Commission's imperative to “make disciples” which instructs that one should “go,” “baptize,” and “teach.” Each of those three participles serves as an example of how disciples engage the environment and relationship aspects of following Christ. Through spiritual formation, relationships are being built and strengthened between mentor-mentee and one’s relationship with God. Spiritual formation embodies a means of applying spiritual discipline to one’s life and these disciplines bring the mentee’s character into closer conformity to that of Christ. CSF can be applied across many fields and personal situations. The main purpose seeks to exalt and honor God while assisting others.

### **Limitations**

Functional restrictions on this action research project are described in the following. The first of such restrictions will be in association with the sample size of the project as limited to

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<sup>20</sup> James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, eds., *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2010), 240.



only those men who understand the purpose of the study and have willingly agreed to be active participants in the efforts to effect change. Action research requires such measures to be taken, which, in this project, is expressly aimed at addressing the problem of the lack of men mentoring other men in the ministry. Communicating the intentions of the study provides each participant an opportunity to become an effective change administrator and take ownership a relationship with Christ and others. The intended result would lead toward an increase in men fulfilling their scriptural obligations as leaders in the local church.

Another limitation exists by the sample size being limited to men who are best positioned to lead in various ministries or committees of the church. GBBC represents a small congregation made up primarily of individuals over the age of fifty, and a small number of leadership positions are available at GBBC. The project aims to train those mentors, who will by their efforts carry forth and train the next generation of disciples and mentors. The mentoring process purposefully strengthens the leadership of the church to carry out the function of discipling through mentoring relationships.

Another limitation exists in the time constraints of the thesis project as the initial phase of training the mentors will be accomplished, but a thorough evaluation of mentoring must be weighed over the long term. A longitudinal study best fits the evaluation of mentoring techniques and their effectiveness, but the study must be limited to the time constraints of the Doctor of Ministry program. Carrying out the next phases of the mentoring process and the trajectory of future ministry success will be beyond the scope of the Doctor of Ministry program. The assessment of enduring success may be distorted by the fact that the relationships are still in their early stages; nevertheless, the data will include essential components that could serve as indicators for potential future achievements.

### **Delimitations**

This researcher acknowledges that the first delimitation of the study is the topic that was chosen. Discipleship and Christian mentoring are often synonymously used to identify the goal of fulfilling the Great Commission; however, Christian mentoring as the motivation of the action research project functions as a specialized tool used in discipleship. The study examines only male congregation participants who are active members and involved in the leadership structure of GBBC. As such, the project will look to equip current leaders with mentoring skills to replicate with future leadership candidates in the future. As a result, participants will be kept between five to nine men of GBBC. The age range of the participants will be kept to those between forty and seventy years old. The selected age range reflects upon the commonality that mentoring generally flows from older to younger. Due to the demographic makeup of GBBC as significantly Caucasian, and an SBC-affiliated church, certain characteristics of the study and their inferences may be unrepresentative of other denominations and the general culture.

### **Thesis Statement**

If the chief aim strives to endow men to use the Scriptures as the footing to mentor, then a cardinal principle exists that they must understand the Scripture as a spiritual discipline in their lives. The methodological research and practice must have a foundation upon which it may be put to the test of time as principally dominant to the mentorship exercise. The Word of God gives the best example of what discipling and mentoring consists of in the different contexts of time and writing. The principles of God's Word are eternal and thus, they were/are present in the various eras and times of history.

The lack of education that has occurred for many of these men in understanding the

necessity of obedience has led to many men not securing the knowledge to evaluate the scriptural call to lead the church in various roles that incorporate mentoring. The lack of instruction and motivation has led to spiritual apathy where little effort has been put toward investing personally in the work of the mission of God. The structure of the modern church has shifted the attention away from the individual as an essential ingredient of the mission of God and placed it largely on the shoulders of the pastoral staff, which weakens the body, especially in smaller churches. All Christians are meant to take an active part in the Mission of God, or else, the Great Commission does not serve as a directive for everyone; nonetheless, the leaders in the church are coordinated by God to direct the flock to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. A nine-week course on explaining, training, motivating, and inspiring the men of GBBC commences the first step toward leading them to obey their calling to disciple others, which endures as a scriptural directive. If spiritually mature men at GBBC are equipped to mentor young men toward spiritual leadership, then younger men will mentor the following generation.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Chapter Two incorporates the project's review of literature, theological foundation, and theoretical foundation. The literature review uses an array of sourced material incorporated through paraphrased citations in the form of footnotes, which is meant to enhance the study surrounding the topic in a comprehensive and current format. The theological foundation is the essence or heartbeat of the biblical roots surrounding the project and will help to establish its needed pursuit. The theoretical foundation is the examination of the material currently in the field of Mentoring and highlights various approaches consisting of relevant and useful action research. All three elements are meant to illustrate the conceptual framework surrounding the project's proposed problem, purpose, and thesis.

### **Literature Review**

The research conducted on the topic of Christian mentoring in men as a specialty tool of discipling considered several contemporary sources of literature as a form of consulting with experts in the field. These sources were broad and included journal articles, dissertations, and books to emphasize an array of themes that targeted the topic. Each author had a unique perspective to offer on the subject matter and all carried their thematic treatment of the topic aligning with their specific contextual relationship with mentoring. Mentoring covers a variety of themes, topics, and ideas in both theory and practice. The literature review is molded around the essential influences presented and synthesized to show their relevance both scripturally and within the context of contemporary mentoring practices. This review considers the relevance of the previously published works and how these works interact with scriptural leadership examples

both theologically and theoretically. The five motifs of story, wisdom, prayer, character, and relationship give relevance to the critical needs that the men of GBBC have concerning their walk with Christ and mentoring practice.

### Story

A fundamentally ancient concept that has revived contemporary interest in academia is the idea of storytelling and how the concept influences the way one perceives situations, especially historically. Alister McGrath concludes, “For Christians to tell their own story is for them to speak of how Christianity became real to them as living human beings.”<sup>1</sup> The connection between evidence and experience is best expressed through storytelling. In this connection, the objectivity of truth meets the subjective reality of personal testimony and/or faith while maintaining objective character. Finding the right measure to view the objective alongside the subjective is important and many have postulated the best way to view God and Scripture as a result. Cynthia Rigby is such a scholar who has broadened her view of the way by which she observes the mentoring of Jesus and uses a passage from Luke 10 with Mary and Martha to describe the text as feminist mentoring.<sup>2</sup> Undeniably, the perspective is decidedly feminist in the presentation, and the example used in Luke 10 from a good hermeneutical approach would restrict eisegesis for the proper exegesis of the text.

The concept of storytelling and how it impacts the way Scripture is viewed can help bring a personal connection to the stories that have principally true elements to one’s own story. Storytelling is a vital part of being a human being and knowing God. McGrath summarizes, “As the Old Testament makes clear, a story can be told about the ‘God of Abraham, God of Isaac,

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<sup>1</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Narrative Apologetics: Sharing the Relevance, Joy, and Wonder of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2019), 70.

<sup>2</sup> Dean K. Thompson and Cameron D. Murchison, *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 85.

God of Jacob’; the ‘God of the philosophers and scholars,’ however, has no story to tell. The Bible bears witness to the God whose actions and character can be seen in history and hence can be expressed in the form of a narrative.”<sup>3</sup> The ancient Hebrew culture was embedded with storytelling, and the Old Testament is filled with magnificent stories of miraculous occurrences and covenants that prove to resonate with a miraculous and magnificent God. Some of the stories are so magnificent (i.e., Jonah and the Whale, Daniel in the Lion’s Den, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace) that they have led certain scholars to suggest they are merely allegorical. These stories have played a vital role in how one understands and perceives the God that exists and His providential and preordained plan of salvation. Of all the stories in the Scriptures, none brings more discussion, curiosity, speculation, doubt, and faith than the resurrection of Jesus.

Beyond historical narrative, the accounts of biblical figures and daily occurrences would also lend credence to the fact that every individual has a story to tell, and their life is a story that continues to unfold. In contrast to Rigby’s approach, which emphasizes an adaptation of the Scriptures toward feminism, Joe Gunby posits that the church needs to help young adults. Gunby writes, “Re-frame the stories that the culture has taught them to tell.”<sup>4</sup> The value of a story is unique to the life of the individual and exists as part of their worldview, which is a melding and shaping of past experiences.

Worldviews are shaped over time and will undoubtedly have hurdles caused by societal influences when compared with the Christian worldview developed from the teachings of Scripture. Christianity makes use of the Bible to construct a clear and consistent framework for understanding the world and one’s place in it. Gunby also adds that mentors have born the spirit

<sup>3</sup> McGrath, *Narrative Apologetics*, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Joe Allen Gunby, “Discipleship, Development, and Discernment: A Plan for Young Adult Formation” (DMin thesis, Duke University, Durham, 2022), 19, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

of know-how through life experience and experiences enable them to hear the stories of others and provide wise insight.<sup>5</sup> Building a bridge to connect the lived experience with the scriptural precedence is of monumental value and impact. Understanding how to engage the stories of Millennials, Gen Z, and the following generations is required for effective wisdom to be passed from one group to the next, and this wise insight is needed and sorely lacking in the context of many ministries. Finding the right avenues to communicate wise instruction is essential when dealing cross-generationally, and the stories of both the mentor and protégé play a role in the openness to give and receive the instruction.

The fact that not all Christians think the same is reflected in the vast field of denominations and suggests that on a smaller scale, there will be differences within any local church that will inevitably lead to some worldly views that differ from scriptural principles. Authors Kate Siberine and Lisa Kimball, who are part of the Episcopal Church, concur that confirmation mentors should remain consistent with good practice and Scripture, which would allow them to share stories of faith with their confirmands.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, mentors may pour into the lives of protégés through years of experience and insightfulness that ideally have bred wisdom in the mentor. Accordingly, the truth remains that political, economic, and social situations are going to need to be met with biblical clarity, and Christian mentors can provide the wisdom and resolve that the church needs to meet the challenges of the day. Finding ways to incorporate storytelling into the ministries of the church can prove to be a vital element of how to engage in a meaningful mentoring process.

William Valmyr describes the various ministries of the church and the activities as focal point of how the church shapes the narrative and relationships of the church, which is how

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<sup>5</sup> Gunby, *Discipleship, Development, and Discernment*, 55.

<sup>6</sup> Kate Harmon Siberine and Lisa Kimball, "Confirming Mentoring: Mutual Experiences of Incarnation," *Theology Today* 76, no. 1 (January 2019): 43.

contextually the congregation shares in the spiritual story of the church.<sup>7</sup> An ever-growing presence of storytelling occurs through the age of technology that has a multitude of storytelling tools that can help bring the biblical story to life but also help to depict elements of present-day successes and struggles that modern Christians are experiencing. Author Scot McKnight also contends: "No place can embody, or ought to embody, the gospel story of Jesus as Lord like the church, and by this, I mean especially a local church."<sup>8</sup> McKnight's view coincides with what the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1, ESV). For this reason, believers must recognize that despite having individual stories that relate to other human beings, the lives of Christians are meant to tell a grander story concerning the story of Jesus. Paul wrote, "I 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" (Gal 2:20, ESV). As mentors who are to impart storytelling to protégés, the life of Christ and life in Christ provide the best story that anyone could live. Utilizing modern tools to connect individuals to the grand narrative of Scripture as an expression of God's redemption story for humanity is essential. Modern technology is becoming an invaluable resource, and technology allows mentors a variety of ways to connect with the next generation.

Cultural apologetics is at the forefront of storytelling within the context of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with others as a means of building and encouraging long-lasting relationships. Cultural apologetics gives a place for the Christian voice to be heard satisfyingly. Paul Gould concludes, "The most beautiful thing you can do is locate your life in God's story.

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<sup>7</sup> William B. Valmyr, "Developing a Model of Ministry Leadership with a Trinitarian Approach" (DMin thesis, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, 2020), 99.

<sup>8</sup> Scot McKnight, *Pastor Paul: Nurturing A Culture of Christofirmity in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2019), 101.



Find your meaning in the true story, a story that is alive and inviting.”<sup>9</sup> A common mistake exists among believers that the only people still learning about God’s story are unbelievers; however, the reality is that people continue to work out an understanding of a worldview. The understanding and the lessons concerning God never cease. The important part is to find the connecting link between God and where others presently reside. Gould addressed how the Apostle Paul did this: “Notice that Paul did his homework. He ‘walked around’ and meticulously examined the culture he sought to reach with the gospel. In his search, he found a starting point, a place where he could begin to build a bridge between something familiar to his audience and the gospel: their religiosity and their worship of an unknown god.”<sup>10</sup> Finding how to navigate the culture is not only beneficial to evangelism but has significant benefits toward discipleship and mentoring followers of Christ. Reading the cultural story of the times involves reading the particularity of one’s own story. Keith Anderson helps connect the cultural story to spiritual mentoring by writing: “Spiritual mentoring is learning to read the unfolding particularity of a person’s life with the help of another reader, someone called a mentor.”<sup>11</sup> Mentoring incorporates the formational teaching of experience and story which helps shape the heart and soul of the individual. Reading a text is of importance to learning, but spirituality will never be complete as text only. It is only through the storytelling of the Bible that knowledge exists about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; causally, storytelling is one of the best methods to connect the believer to the formative disciplines that influence a Christian mentoring relationship.

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<sup>9</sup> Paul M. Gould, *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 105.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>11</sup> Keith R. Anderson, *Reading Your Life's Story: An Invitation to Spiritual Mentoring* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 51.

## Wisdom

In understanding how the believer’s story connects to God’s story, an improbability exists that one can overlook the wisdom of God on display in His creation. In the pursuit of the meaning of life and existence, the study of philosophy is an invaluable asset to knowing God as philosophy is the love of wisdom. The Scriptures reveal, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10, Prov 1:7, ESV). Knowing God as the Creator of all existence alludes to the necessitation of revering Him. Paul Copan concludes, “Ultimately, we can’t truly have wisdom without being rightly connected to God and his Word. We’ll be out of touch with the human problem and its redemptive solution in Christ. That is, wisdom, at its heart, can’t be ‘secular.’”<sup>12</sup> Wisdom in Christian mentoring is dependent upon knowing God in a deeper and more personal manner, which is encouraged through the spiritual disciplines. On the mentoring front, consideration can be made toward effective practices, but the Christian mentor must recognize the Spirit of God as the foundation of wisdom and virtuousness.

David Clutterbuck, a leading global authority on coaching and mentoring in the material world, states: “Wisdom is the ingredient that enables the transition from IQ, EQ, and SQ as limited, narrow lenses on the world to the holistic, unbounded horizon of collective intelligence. So much so that it might better be described as collective wisdom.”<sup>13</sup> Although Christian mentoring cannot apply Clutterbuck’s exact thinking, there are principal truths that speak to mentoring requiring knowledge of Cognitive Ability (IQ), Emotional Intelligence (EQ), and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ). The wisest explanation behind the practice may be a combination of Clutterbuck’s expertise with scriptural insights as it impacts the way a person lives, works, and

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Copan, *Loving Wisdom: A Guide to Philosophy and Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 7.

<sup>13</sup> David Clutterbuck, *Coaching and Mentoring: A Journey Through the Models, Theories, Frameworks and Narratives of David Clutterbuck* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2023), 94.

plays.

Like what Clutterbuck offers in a secular way, Anderson writes: “Spiritual mentoring is learning to read at least three things: Torah (Scripture), telos (purpose) and kairos (timeliness).”<sup>14</sup> The Old Testament expands to the whole of the Scriptures for the Christian mentor and is befitting to how New Testament authors spoke confirming scriptural authority (2 Tim 3:16). As a result, the basic principles of any Christian mentoring practice may be found in the various texts of the canon and rooted in the wisdom of God through the presence and power of His Spirit. Concerning purpose, Anderson summarizes: “Discovering one’s telos may be referred to as vocational discernment or discovering one’s calling . . . if there is no God there is no intentionality to live at all.”<sup>15</sup> The wisdom of God is found within these elements of life because they are from His Word, give purposefulness to the functionality of human lives, and indicate God’s providential involvement in His timing.

As Christians, it is necessary to turn to biblical insights for such wisdom that came by way of a variety of authors who wrote down God’s revelation. A Bible-based approach will lead to the unique source of wisdom possessed by the Creator alone. Gary Harpst in addressing truth and wisdom in leading others writes: “You can think of the Bible as a user's manual explaining why we are here and how we are designed and providing wisdom for life. The Bible states that creation itself reveals the truth about God . . . .”<sup>16</sup> According to Proverbs 9:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” A renowned biblical figure, Solomon, is known for receiving his wisdom because God granted it to him, and

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<sup>14</sup> Keith R. Anderson, *Reading Your Life's Story: An Invitation to Spiritual Mentoring* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 115.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>16</sup> Gary Harpst, *Built to Beat Chaos: Biblical Wisdom for Leading Yourself and Others* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2023), 7.

Proverbs is a record of much of Solomon’s reception of divine wisdom. McKnight helps put the concept of biblical wisdom into contemporary understanding: “Wisdom is not established by going through a course on spiritual formation, though that may help. Wisdom is not established by reading the Bible or by praying or fasting, though again these will help. Wisdom—and this echoes pastoral nurture as emulation and imitation—is established by reverent reception of wisdom in the ageless chain of wisdom.”<sup>17</sup> Wisdom is not something that can be simply taught through methodology, but a structured curriculum shared within a mentoring relationship will help to bring a person into the core truth of wisdom that originates with the Creator.

The apostle Paul is a tremendous example of sharing the wisdom of the cross and the gospel of Jesus without reservation, and he expects others to share the gospel as well (1 Thess 5:11). Paul incurred many afflictions in the process but remained faithful to the mission (2 Cor 11:23-28). These persecutions are extreme compared to Christians in the West, but certain principles guide the way believers should view limitations and persecutions. On the side of limitations Peter Scazzero concludes: “When we trust in God’s goodness by receiving his limits as gifts and expressions of his love, we mature in wisdom.”<sup>18</sup> The catalyst for this wisdom to expound is the Spirit of Christ, and all Christian formational discipline and faith begins with the wisdom of the Spirit. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Prov 9:10; Ps 111:10) and the precursor to a relationship that brings one closer to the likeness and oneness of God (John 17:21). Christians have a relationship with the Creator through the work of Christ and the Spirit, but God has given others as relational beings to edify the Church through fellowship and companionship as one unified body.

Paul as an example of running the race finds joy in the corporate nature of relationships

<sup>17</sup> McKnight, *Pastor Paul*, 141.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship: Moving From Shallow Christianity to Deep Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021), 110.

that God established in His wisdom. Angus Paddison summarizes Paul's relationship with the Thessalonian Christians: "So vibrant is the Thessalonians' faith that it even enables Paul to 'live' (3:8), a flourish which reveals how faith is something built up (cf. 5:11) corporately."<sup>19</sup> Christian mentoring and spiritual formation in sincerity will boast in the wisdom of God as found in the truth of the gospel; therefore, the mentoring relationship must establish and seek the wisdom found in knowing Christ through personal faith and experience with the struggles associated with being a Christian.

The mentor has a specific duty to provide the wise insight that comes by way of knowing Christ beyond natural capabilities, which grounds Christian Spiritual Formation (CSF) in the evidentiary work of Christ. James Wilhoit and Evan Howard take a slightly different approach from McKnight by addressing the wisdom in CSF and how in the modern era people reduce CSF to simple formulae and programs.<sup>20</sup> Wisdom is something that requires an understanding of the limitations learned in the process of mentoring. Having goals and desired outcomes is practical to the process, but divine timing dictates a necessity of patience, prayer, and utter reliance upon the Lord for success, which may not always appear as such on the surface.

Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge/wisdom (Prov 1:7, 9:10) it follows that the best mentoring practices will consider the need for God's wisdom to govern the process. Being spiritually disciplined is a vital part of the Christian mentor's role and gathers wisdom. The most direct way to seek God's wisdom is to communicate directly through prayer. God has established prayer as the avenue that believers use to communicate with the Lord to receive His supernatural help.

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<sup>19</sup> Angus Paddison, *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 171.

<sup>20</sup> James C. Wilhoit and Evan B. Howard, "The Wisdom of Christian Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 13, no. 1 (January 2020): 7.

## Prayer

Prayer is familiar to much of the world, and even in secular settings, it is not uncommon to find people speaking, writing, or expressing that they are praying in various circumstances; nonetheless, the Christian understands that there is a loving and powerful God who can answer back. The liturgical practice and spiritual discipline of prayer is not a foreign concept to speak about as it relates to religion and Christianity; however, the concept of mentoring, as it relates to the secular practice, will lack the necessary relationship with the Spirit of God that a person must have to enjoy a level of spiritual edification. Bruce Winston explains, “A Christian can pray two to three times a day, which aligns with the biblical pattern. For example, Daniel prayed three times a day (NASB, Daniel 6:10).”<sup>21</sup> The number of times is flexible, but the spiritual discipline of prayer must go beyond simple recitations as is found in many of the longer-standing denominational settings and be a personal connection between the individual and God. The Psalmist writes, “So teach us to number our day that we may get a heart of wisdom” (Ps 90:12, ESV).

Prayer has varying degrees as to how one grows, which bears similarities to other maturational disciplines. Scazzero explains in the earliest stage of prayer infancy that prayer is more a duty than a delight.<sup>22</sup> Progression in the discipline serves as the focus of the practice but setbacks are a natural part of the process. A healthy awareness of the patterns will prove useful to the engagement that mentors have with mentees. Cultivating a disciplined prayer life will require encouragement, planning, and intentionality. As with other disciplines, this focus can be filled with complaints and complacency, which tends to focus more inwardly on selfish desires rather than selfless endeavors.

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<sup>21</sup> Bruce Winston, *The Mind of a Leader: A Christian Perspective of the Thoughts, Mental Models, and Perceptions That Shape Leadership Behavior* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 165.

<sup>22</sup> Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*, 33.

Prayer serves the role of communicating directly with the Creator through which one seeks guidance, receives wisdom, and experiences grace. Maturing in the discipline of prayer necessitates praying during all circumstances; both good and bad times shape the spiritual life of the prayer warrior. In adulthood, Scazzero concludes, “The Christian life has moved beyond simply serving Christ to loving him and enjoying communion with him.”<sup>23</sup> Engaging in a prayerful journey will examine the heart and the process of maturation, which will lead one from the start of an inward-focused prayer life through an excursion toward outward focus and joyful communion with God.

Prayer is not only about one’s situation but involves praying for others. Casey Barton infers that it is through time spent with, and prayer for others, that God grows the love for one another, and that discipline kindles the inspiration to journey through the remainder of life.<sup>24</sup> Praying for others is an essential aspect of being more like Christ in putting others before oneself with intentionality. William Hardison highlights an example from the Word when he states: “Jesus spent all night in prayer to intentionally choose a smaller group of twelve from the larger crowds that he could focus on to teach them the truth of the kingdom of God by personal example.”<sup>25</sup> Jesus came to not only provide salvation for those who would believe but likewise to give an example of how His disciples should be toward one another. As a reference, Jesus washed the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-20); therefore, the mentoring that Jesus provided for the Twelve is a biblical example of how men should mentor the next generation of men as leaders of the church. Jesus’ disciples were also curious about how Jesus prayed and desired to learn from

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<sup>23</sup> Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*, 34.

<sup>24</sup> Matthew D. Kim, ed., *No Program but Time No Book but the Bible: Reflections on Mentoring and Discipleship in Honor of Scott M. Gibson* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018), 65.

<sup>25</sup> William M. Hardison, “Effective Discipleship of College-Aged Young Adults” (DMin thesis, Biola University, La Mirada, 2019), 16, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

their master and teacher (Luke 11:1). The nature of this request shows that the mentoring dynamic is fueled by the desire of the individual to learn even more than the mentor's desire to teach.

The mentoring process is a special dynamic that depends not on obligation but rather on interest and inquisition. Gary Wilder shares how the mentoring of Jesus required prayer with Him and quiet time with God to gain direction and correction.<sup>26</sup> Often in the ministry of Jesus, He was found going off to pray alone and a notable instance was on the night before choosing His disciples (Luke 6:12). Jesus set the precedent to pray early and often; specifically, He evidenced prayer when crucial decisions would be made. In the example of Jesus, he expressed a degree of love and care for His disciples that was rooted in a love for God. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, the request was made from a curiosity about the example that He had outlined in His discipline. The statement is true of the life of Jesus that, when He came, part of the purpose was to set an example of behaviors to imitate, which mankind had been unable to fully keep due to sin.

As a warning to avoid worldliness, James writes: "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions" (James 4:3, ESV). The pursuit of worldly passions clouds the minds of even the most intelligent of persons; therefore, earnest prayer is a critical component of one's relationship with God. Prayer reveals the intentions of the heart toward God and others. Steven Porter calls to attention that the false forms of prayer are either intended to impress others or even God Himself.<sup>27</sup> Prayer is critical to mentoring as it helps guide the intentions of the heart that should be aligned with the multiplication method of

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<sup>26</sup> Gary L. Wilder, "A Legacy of Leadership: Mentoring Today's Adult Males" (DMin thesis, South University, Savannah, 2020), 100, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>27</sup> Steven L. Porter, "Will/Heart/Spirit: Discipleship That Forms the Christian Character," *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (April 2019): 80.



discipleship. Clarity in prayer is often a concern of those who are spiritually immature as they tend to need guidance and direction on how to come to the throne of grace. Porter writes of the Lord's Prayer and how it shows that Jesus corrected false methods of approaching the kingdom of God to help His disciples have an accurate understanding of life in the kingdom to engage that kingdom as it is.<sup>28</sup> Mentoring will not take on a necessary "Kingdom element" if it is void of prayer that seeks the counsel of God. In writing on leadership, Larry Snyder sees prayer as the first element expressed by Paul to Timothy and how prayerful intimacy should flow from the mentor's heart as an expressive desire to disciple the next generation, which is utterly dependent upon prayer.<sup>29</sup> The posture of individuals who have an ignorance toward prayer is often evident in their reluctance to practice openly the formative discipline. In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus tells a parable of the posture of prayer between two men and reveals that it is not piety on the outside but the inside that leads to justification before God.

The burden of developing the discipline of prayer lies both on the individual and the Church. An obligation exists for both the Christian mentor and the Christian mentee to be active in their prayer lives for the most benefit to occur. Active prayer is a formative discipline for both parties, which will result in development as it pertains to serving God effectively. In taking a glimpse of the discipline, Tyler Groves shares that the number of people who pray weekly has declined in the United States, and the trend serves as an indication of the decay in both the Church and discipleship.<sup>30</sup> Keeping a written record of the goals that one has and how God has answered certain prayers serves to benefit the vocational productivity of those who are invested

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<sup>28</sup> Porter, "Will/Heart/Spirit," 81.

<sup>29</sup> Larry Snyder, "A Strategy to Develop Leaders at the Well Baptist Church Venice, FL" (DMin thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, 2020), 25–26, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>30</sup> Tyler Ryan Groves, "New Testament Patterns Of Discipleship As Evidenced By The Apostle Paul" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, 2023), 19, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

in mentoring. A record also serves as a reminder of the progress that has been made through recognition of what God has blessed.

Going back to the example given in the book of James, the intentionality of prayer provides evidence of the heart of man, and God has neither obligation nor responsibility to bless the prayers of those who do not have the right heart. In the same breath, man needs to communicate with God as He desires for people to relate to Him through prayer. Approaching the Lord with the right heart will yield fruitfulness through a surrender of one's own heart to the will of God because of the formation and transformation process of sanctification. Melissa Kruger concludes from the matter: "While reticent to admit it, how one spends their time is indicative of what they truly believe . . . often living in a false understanding that hard work is the key to success, that one can shape their circumstance with effort, and at the end of the day they are in control of their lives."<sup>31</sup> Recognizing that God is the sovereign of the universe helps keep man in his rightful position and shapes the purposefulness of ministry. Scazzero shares, "Every time we purposefully and thoughtfully mentor someone, especially amid stress and conflict, we advance the maturity level of our ministry a hundredfold."<sup>32</sup> As stated, prayer is a critical discipline as it relates to the disposition and intentionality of mentoring. For this reason, prayer is essential to the mentor-protégé relationship, and it builds character in the believer. The recitation of hymns is another form of prayerful connection with God through directly communicating from the heart. The posture that man should have toward God is best communicated by Jesus, who being God, still humbled Himself to the estate of humanity as He took on flesh and prayed to the Father in a representative fashion. This prayer relationship serves as an example of the character of Christ. The life that He lived is an expression of a character

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<sup>31</sup> Melissa Kruger, *Growing Together: Taking Mentoring Beyond Small Talk and Prayer Requests* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 72.

<sup>32</sup> Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*, 219.

that Christians strive to take on in likeness, which has been drastically impacted by sin. The effect of an increase in prayerful living that ushers the leadership personnel to maturity in a prayer life has the benefit of transforming the character of the community of believers within the church.

### Character

The communicable attributes of God are what will be examined as part of the character of God concerning the concept of bearing His likeness. The communicable attributes of God have been effectively described in the Scriptures but come to life as part of the indwelling of the Spirit of God imparted to the believer whose service is to honor God by them (1 Cor 6:19-20).

Geoffrey Brailey and Stephen Parker specify that Christian mentoring identifies and promotes the work of God's Spirit in the lives of others.<sup>33</sup> The work of the Spirit is active in the life of all believers who have received the Son by faith (John 14:16-17), but one may conclude that true character is not only built by things going well. The Apostle Paul mentions that "endurance produces character" (Rom 5:4a, ESV). Seth Nelson also echoes endurance as an element of character building as he posits: "Crisis and conflict are process items that the Lord uses to refine the character of the leader."<sup>34</sup> Character, therefore, progressively builds in the individual as one experiences the fluctuating twists and turns of life. The refining of character through endurance must be possessed of quality by both the mentor and the mentee. Antione Hutchins asserts, "Christian discipleship calls for a discipline in following the principles and practices of Jesus Christ Himself. Adhering to the teachings and life of Jesus will develop a change in character mentally, spiritually, and emotionally until one constitutes a follower of Christ. Being a follower

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<sup>33</sup> Geoffrey Samuel Brailey and Stephen Douglas Parker, "The Identity Imperative: Mentoring as a Tool for Christian Young Adult Identity Formation," *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 25, no. 2 (2020): 111.

<sup>34</sup> Seth J. Nelson, "Christian Leaders At Midcareer: Navigating The Opportunities And Challenges In Midlife," *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 48.

of Christ is otherwise known as being a 'disciple.'"<sup>35</sup> This discipleship is the basis for the Christian community and may be enhanced in part by the specific focus of mentoring that leaders seek to develop. Christlikeness is the aim of the believer as the attribute addresses the topic of character.

As Christlikeness moves toward the concept of building Christian leaders, the character of those who are involved must exemplify integrity, respect, empathy, courage, and more. These characteristics are also compatible with the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Hardison adds to the expression by looking at the broader context of the Christian Worldview, which he writes, stands on the foundation of God's character as revealed through Christ.<sup>36</sup> One may accept as axiomatic that the character of God is revealed in the fruits of the Spirit because the Spirit of God is working His character into the heart of man. Rebekah Miles extends the concept with a reflection on what secular mentoring looks like in the corporate world: "Corporate mentoring generally focuses on career advancement, professional skills, and utility and material success—both the success of the company and the protégé . . . there is often little focus on character formation, the reduction of vice or growth of virtue, with little reflection on the larger goals of a good life that go beyond material success, as improving the common good."<sup>37</sup> Christian character formation is an example of God's predestining believers to conform to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29). Conforming to the image of Jesus is to surrender the will to that of the divine Creator. The essence of God's character is the root of what mankind understands as morality, which has been presented in Christian circles under the theme of God's communicable attributes.

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<sup>35</sup> Antione Jevon Hutchins Sr., "Equipping Members for More Effective Discipleship at Christian Unity Baptist Church in Waldorf, Maryland" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, 2019), 66, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>36</sup> Hardison, "Effective Discipleship," 16.

<sup>37</sup> Thompson and Murchison, *Mentoring*, 72.

Integrity reveals a characteristic that imparts the dealings of moral uprightness and honesty by which one lives, and there is no better example than Christ; and integrity also imparts the aspect of wholeness and unity, which exists in the perfect relationship of the Triune Godhead. Truth is found in God as the Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 16:13). Jesus is also the Truth (John 14:6) and taught: “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31b-32). Kim and others add, “Not only is wisdom caught and taught, illustrated, and modeled, but truth learned in context is truth understood.”<sup>38</sup> Proper Hermeneutics would agree that context is a critical element to understanding truth and the principles found in the wisdom of God’s Word. Through an appropriate lens of scriptural information, the truth of God’s character and man’s character becomes clear.

Any minister of God’s Word and steward must be a person of integrity as leadership is not only spoken knowledge but that which is exemplified in how one conducts themselves concerning their convictions. Matt Thomas in writing on Christ’s leadership presents the idea of integrity as being an element of character that is a qualifying factor for those who are to lead mentoring ministries.<sup>39</sup> Christ had impeccable character and integrity, which was tested in the wilderness by Satan (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13), but He never succumbed to the temptation (Heb 4:15). An essential comprehension of the information will lead one to see in these examples that the character that one is called to in the Christian life is formed from within by the Spirit of God, and that there is no secular model that can account for the supernatural presence of the Spirit.

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<sup>38</sup> Matthew D. Kim, ed., *No Program but Time No Book but the Bible: Reflections on Mentoring and Discipleship in Honor of Scott M. Gibson* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018), 130.

<sup>39</sup> Matt Thomas, “The Indispensable Mark Of Christian Leadership: Implications From Christ’s Methods Of Leadership Development In Mark’s Gospel,” *Perichoresis* 16, no. 3 (July 2018): 111.

A proposition in the written account of Paul's works is that of being "above reproach" as a reflection of character (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6-7). The pastoral epistle accounts give reference to the various measures that moral character is to inform the relationship one has with the church. Spiritual leaders are expected to exhibit blameless behavior as they are expected to no longer be spiritual infants but mature in faith. A blameless character is not grounded in human effort, but rather in the Spirit of God's transformational power of regeneration, and Paul expresses the same quality of being above reproach as the condition that all believers will be presented as before Him (Col 1:22). The character of Christian mentors needs to be remarkable in how they serve the church, lead their family, lead personal lives, are spiritually disciplined, and communicate the truths of spiritual matters. The interaction with the protégé is to exemplify these characteristics and inspire the protégé to grow in these ways as followers of Christ.

Humility is at the heart of mentoring as leaders demonstrate this attribute while expressing their dependence on God and service toward others. Joshua Henson Concludes, "To think of humility as the absence of confidence or lack of recognition of one's self-worth is an inaccurate perception. Jesus underscores that humility is the presence of an awareness that does not require self-aggrandizement."<sup>40</sup> Jesus was the sovereign King over all creation but humbled Himself to become a servant and give His life for humanity (Phil 2:8). Service in humility requires self-awareness and an understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Henson conveys, "Christian leaders must realize that they are servants of God and be humble while serving those around them like Jesus did. Christian leaders as shepherds must feed their sheep, allow the Holy Spirit to transform their hearts, and guide them on the path toward divine truth"<sup>41</sup> Humility can be an example of both service toward others as a quality leader and an acknowledgment of one's

<sup>40</sup> Joshua D. Henson, *Biblical Organizational Leadership: Principles from the Life of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 133.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

shortcomings in a specific way that demonstrates their dependence on God and others to communicate wise insights and/or solutions that address the issue. As one pursues the Christian mentoring relationship, certain psychological theories may provide useful conveyances of relationships. Humble mentorship demonstrates a relationship in which both protege and mentor accept the traits of teachability, strengths in others, and openness to admitting mistakes and limitations. The identification of such tenets of the mentor-protégé relationship proves invaluable to overcoming the natural obstacles of rejection and inadequacy.

Mentoring requires an active relationship that thrives on communication, and listening is at the core of communication. James reminds the church, “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” (James 1:19, ESV). This can be a challenge as the mentor needs to evaluate the times to instruct and the times to remain silent. Stephen Burt concludes, “‘Listening’ encompasses all how a listener becomes aware of what a speaker is experiencing and expressing in each moment. It is, therefore, over time, how the listener gets to know who the speaker is.”<sup>42</sup> The development of any discipline leads one from the stage of infancy toward the destination of maturity. For Christians, this growth and development leads one from inward thinking to an outward and upward trajectory in serving God and others. Listening requires dedication and discipline, and becoming an active listener takes practice. Peter Mason writes, “The Holy Spirit is identified by the Lord Jesus as the *parakletos* (e.g. John 14:26). He is the Comforter, Helper, and Encourager. One evidence of the Spirit’s presence and power in a Christian’s life is that the believer encourages others.”<sup>43</sup> Mentoring is a protégé driven engagement, which puts significant accountability on the mentor to understand the needs being expressed by the protégé, and to offer the best solution in

<sup>42</sup> Stephen Burt, *The Art of Listening in Coaching and Mentoring* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 3.

<sup>43</sup> R. Peter Mason and Dino Pedrone, *Mentoring the Next Generation: Making a Lasting Difference* (Maitland, FL: Xulon, 2012), 50.

exhorting/encouraging and correcting. The character of the mentor is always to be on display in a manner that is consistent with the Word of God and is edifying concerning a relationship built on brotherly affection (Rom 12:10; 2 Pet 1:7).

### Relationship

God established relationships from the creation of Adam and Eve and His presence in Eden with them. Serine Buggs puts the concept of relationships in mentoring into full view by going to the biblical example of the Apostle Paul and how he held a teacher-student relationship with Timothy, where he trained him with the gospel and wanted Timothy to extend that teaching.<sup>44</sup> Good mentoring practices are only accomplished through the proper building of relationships that focus on relationships over the long term. Relationships are necessary for the proper growth and development of a person, and God has purposed for man to be in a relationship with Him and other people. Spiritual maturity is a product of relationships that have been facilitated by the church, and the discipline becomes especially visible in a local church body. Brailey and Parker express that the need is a reality, but young adult Christian mentoring is neither automatic nor widespread.<sup>45</sup> The local church is the essential catalyst to facilitate and foster Christian mentoring relationships as has been designed by God through the Scriptures (1 Tim 1:2). The apostle Paul in the pastoral epistles laid the framework for the institution of leadership and the model of development through Christlike relationships and behaviors. Siberine and Kimball communicate, “Mentoring relationships must be lasting, and the mentor must give of their time, wisdom, skill, and story. It is in the altruistic act of giving without the bonds of familial attachment that the mentor models the value of communal and social

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<sup>44</sup> Serine Kimberly Buggs, “Christian Discipleship: An Effective Approach” (master’s thesis, Bethune-Cookman University, Daytona Beach, 2020), 3, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>45</sup> Brailey and Parker, “The Identity Imperative,” 119.



connection, and the connection of the individual to the broader whole.”<sup>46</sup> A disciple is certainly a learner, and learning is best accomplished through relationships. Jesus established relationships with His followers. Many were “disciples” but the Twelve truly became elevated to mentee/protégé status that lasted without Judas (John 6:66-71).

Two things are true about relationships in the process of Christian mentoring: one must have a relationship with God, and one must have relationships with other people. John the Apostle shows the familial bonds in the way that believers are called God’s children (1 John 3:1a). Scriptural evidence indicates that the concept of parent-child relationship is carried through to the apostles (1 Pet 5:13; 1 Tim 1:2). On a broader scale, Paul encourages believers to carry on relationships by way of edification (1 Thess 5:11; Eph 4:29) and to please God above all else (Col 3:23). Paul also highlights relationships that Christians are to continue to have with one another: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb 10:24-25, ESV). Hardison points out a practical aspect of contemporary relationships by stating that churches need to prioritize the relationship needs as Millennials prioritize relationships with their friends.<sup>47</sup> The results are evidentiary that relationships are important to the newest generations, but how to engage in those relationships is the lingering question, especially with technological advancements. Technological tools are beneficial to ministry because of their extensive usage; nevertheless, relational dialogue best ministers to the needs of the human person through direct contact. Christopher Beard helps to bring the relationship issue to light through one aspect of adherence to the *Missio Dei*: “Missional discipleship acknowledges that information transmission in a classroom-type setting

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<sup>46</sup> Siberine and Kimball, “Confirming Mentoring,” 45.

<sup>47</sup> Hardison, “Effective Discipleship,” 34.

is only one-way adults learn, and using the example of Jesus, experiential learning in mentorship/apprenticeship relationships and by contextual immersion is given priority.”<sup>48</sup>

Missional discipleship along with the intentionality of mentoring brings purposefulness to the task of developing others by practically engaging in processes that are relation, informational, and enjoyable.

When examining the world, the concept of hands-on learning is to acquire knowledge through direct experience and reflection. Hands-on learning is a beneficial part of developing critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills. The concept has a means of stimulating the senses through personal interaction. When hands-on learning is interactive, additional value is found in engagement with the various human senses, and these relationships are most successful in a personal setting as opposed to being done remotely. Hardison sums mentoring up well by arguing that closeness of interaction through relationships is preferable for the discipleship of young adults rather than programs and events.<sup>49</sup> The local church in recent history has been focused heavily on programs and events that can be useful, and a suitability of understanding should be had in finding relevant ways to relate to those who need these mentoring relationships, which is a fluid challenge. Adapting to meet the needs of this age without compromising God’s Word is the key to effective Christian mentoring.

As is true in business, the growth and development of effective programs is a result of hearing the feedback of those who are primary stakeholders and molding efforts to maximize benefits and profitability. The church similarly needs to find the best ways to communicate the gospel message to others and establishing a rapport with the next generation is beneficial to the cause. Problems are exacerbated by the fact that many people are unwilling or do not desire to

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<sup>48</sup> Christopher B. Beard, “Connecting Spiritual Formation And Adult Learning Theory: An Examination Of Common Principles,” *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 262.

<sup>49</sup> Hardison, “Effective Discipleship,” 4.

hear the voice of the one who is hurting. A possible insight into processing this need is offered by Henson: “Communal living must be balanced with solitude, understanding that healthy relationships cannot exist without solitude or space where one can reflect with themselves and trusted others.”<sup>50</sup> The mentor-protégé relationship must exemplify active listening skills to become of service to the cause of growing faithful leaders.

Local churches have an array of ways in which services are conducted, programs are offered, and relationships are brought about; nonetheless, the need for relationships is foundational to the church. Newton explains, “While institutional and conference settings can enlarge trainees’ knowledge of Scripture, theology, and methodology, only a relational approach to training can give trainees the accountability they need to best prepare for ministry.”<sup>51</sup> In the Second letter to Timothy, Paul can express this in his relationship with Timothy concerning the continuation of the instructional knowledge of the gospel message by the observance of Paul’s obedient lifestyle (2 Tim 3:10-17). As the mentor, Paul was an expression of what the transformational effects of the gospel revealed, which he demonstrated in both word and deed. Paul also called upon Timothy to continue promoting and representing the truth of Christianity as Paul’s protégé. Timothy spent many years under the tutelage of Paul which formed a familial bond in perpetuity. The mentoring relationship is not a substitute, however, for the involvement and investment in the local church body through the various ministries and serving opportunities brought about by the communal need. The consequence of Paul’s mentorship meant that Timothy would be more invested in the local church as a catalyst for the sharing of the true gospel of Christ. Hull concludes, “The church often tends to ‘teach and then not do.’ To have their spiritual hunger cultivated, people need to see the benefits of knowing God and experience

<sup>50</sup> Henson, *Biblical Organizational Leadership*, 220.

<sup>51</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017), 115.

him in action. This is why Scripture repeatedly reminds us of the importance of example and imitation. Otherwise, exhortation falls on unprepared ears.”<sup>52</sup> The result is a church filled with leaders who have effective relationships with mentors and the whole congregation.

Considering the scope of the mentoring relationship, an unshakeable truth exists that the mentor will always have more influence and authority than the mentee regardless of how well-intentioned it may be. The mentor must lead this relationship as a role model to the mentee, which is explained well in sports as the coach-athlete relationship, especially in areas where there are coaches specific to the skillset. Those involved recognize that, although mentors will have a level of authority and experience that exceeds their mentees, the relationship will suffer if clear communication of goals is not expressed. Kruger states, “Since sin entered the picture, every relationship—even the best of relationships—is marred by the painful consequences of Adam’s sin. Relationships with friends, coworkers, parents, children, and a spouse suffer from the effects of self-centeredness and pride.”<sup>53</sup> Pride is likely the biggest culprit for failed mentoring because of unclear or unreasonable expectations. The character of God must shine through in all areas of the Christian mentoring relationship including giving grace when things go awry. A plan to overcome the obstacles begins with a clear vision of what one seeks to accomplish. Critical insight into Christian mentoring recognizes that the protégés drive the outcome of success, which pursues adult development and maturity both spiritually and morally. Christian mentoring seeks to develop others, especially leaders, to be effective ministers of the gospel and to worship God by exercising their gifts and skills that are harnessed through spiritual discipline. English writes, “The best and deepest spiritual formation happens when we clearly state the plan we are committed to, and we follow it. A structured approach to ministry will

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<sup>52</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 174.

<sup>53</sup> Kruger, *Growing Together*, 81.

allow you to give people clear commitments to discipleship and, at the same time, will allow relationships to develop organically.”<sup>54</sup> Organic relationships provide the best potential to blossom into long-term relationships that glorify God and feed the soul. Fellowship is a functional aspect of the church that portrays the quality of Christian relationships.

### **Theological Foundations**

When standing on the mountain in Galilee at the point of the ascension, Jesus gave what is famously referred to as the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). A desire to read the commission as universal for all believers is beneficial and includes elements of appeal; nonetheless, the commission was given only at first to the eleven (Matt 28:16-17). Keith Krispin states, “In the New Testament, the gospels continue this theme as Jesus develops the faith, character, and leadership of his twelve disciples (Mt. 10:1-40), future leaders for the church.”<sup>55</sup> The male leadership example is not to construct that as the church grew, all people (male and female) became participants in the *Missio Dei* but to emphasize how God ordained men to take charge and lead the church. Iain Duguid and others expound that the Great Commission is of first importance a call to make disciples with a focus on reaching converts and leading them in the arduous journey to maturity.<sup>56</sup> The essence of the mentoring process for the leadership of the church must follow the general principles of discipleship as a process of growth and development.

One of the more apparent aspects of leadership felt within Scripture concerns setting an example. Mentoring requires the type of leadership that reflects the commitment to live by the

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<sup>54</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Keith R. Krispin, “Christian Leader Development: An Outcomes Framework,” *Christian Education Journal* 17, no. 1 (January 2020): 19.

<sup>56</sup> Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, eds., *Matthew-Luke*. vol. 8, ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 606.

biblical examples on the part of the mentor as evidence of its importance. Matthew 5:14-16 states, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” The product of Christian mentoring is a life that glorifies God for all to witness. James writes, “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13, ESV). John Garvey writes of the virtue of meekness: “The gentle person acts with kindness and generosity toward those who have been the cause of his anger. The meek receive criticism well; the gentle give it well.”<sup>57</sup> Mentoring is a skill that requires both meekness and gentleness. One must remember that God expects the life of the believer to be a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:5), and sacrificial living is often exemplified in the Scriptures through the imitation of one’s spiritual teacher/mentor (Heb 6:12, 13:7; 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6, 2:14; Eph 5:1).

Recognizing how the call to make disciples was a command to those who had the authority to teach the gospel first and then flowed outwardly from there. As the church grew, the pastoral epistles became the guiding instruction for the governance of the church. The apostle Paul appealed to the created order when providing instruction to Timothy about how to govern a church body, and Paul referred to the deception of Eve (1 Tim 2:11-15) as a segue into the qualifications of elders/overseers/pastors and deacons. God’s organization of the church does not exclude women from making disciples and engaging in mentoring relationships that build the younger women to maturity (Tit 2:3-5); however, men are progressively lacking in filling leadership roles in many churches and statistics show women are increasingly filling these roles. Women are more actively serving while men in the church have been reluctant to serve. Ryan

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<sup>57</sup> John H. Garvey, *The Virtues* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2022), 166.

Burge from Barna Research identifies that over 70% of Evangelicals support women preaching, and the share of pastors that are women was 9 percent in 2017, up from 3 percent in 1992.<sup>58</sup>

The shift in evangelical support of women preaching on Sundays works closely with the cultural shift of women in business leadership roles and likely has contributed to the change. Kevin DeYoung shares a traditional understanding of church offices contrary to this cultural shift: “A closer look at eldership in 1 Timothy reveals that the two unique functions given to elders are teaching (3:2) and ruling (5:17)—the two activities specifically denied to women in the church.”<sup>59</sup> The functional prohibition is foundational to the Spirit-inspired writing of Paul as he addressed Timothy in governing the Ephesian church(es); however, this has presently come under scrutiny as a progressive take on the interpretation of the Scriptures has shifted understanding for some.

Although some of the numbers may seem insignificant, the increase reveals a monumental shift in how the church, especially in the United States, is viewing and reading the Bible. Janet Thompson writes, “Each generation has a predisposition to look at God as the God of the past who doesn’t understand the current culture with its issues.”<sup>60</sup> Challenging God is at the front of the current cultural movement and is consistent with humanity. The Apostle John wrote, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him” (1 John 3:1, ESV). Many variables have an impact on the referenced data and are directly attributed

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<sup>58</sup> Ryan P. Burge, “Researcher: Most Evangelicals Support Women in Church Leadership,” *Christianity Today*, June 30, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/june-web-only/research-evangelicals-women-leaders-complementarian-preach.html>.

<sup>59</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 39.

<sup>60</sup> Janet Thompson, *Mentoring for All Seasons: Women Sharing Life’s Experiences and God’s Faithfulness* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2017), 31.

to the way one interprets the Scriptures. Furthering the conversation, Conrad Hackett, a demographer from the Pew Research Center identifies that, of those who attend religious services weekly in the U.S., women attend more by a gap of 6%, and there are no countries where Christian men are significantly more likely than Christian women to attend services weekly.<sup>61</sup> This researcher suggests that the decrease of men involved in church attendance and leadership has a detrimental impact on authentic discipleship, which would likely yield beneficial changes from intentional mentoring relationships. Statistics are not always the best indicator of authentic Christianity as more worldly adaptations may draw increasingly larger crowds but remain scripturally unsound.

The data helps to identify reasons for the reduction of male leadership in evangelical circles and suggests a reason why spiritually mature men have limited experience with being called upon to mentor the next generation. The theological review is centered on how to encourage this mentoring attitude in men and is not intended to minimize the value of Christian mentoring amongst women; however, Paul tells Timothy that women should not exercise authority over a man as it pertains to orderly service and worship before the Lord (1 Tim 2:8-15). John Stott summarizes, “Women should submit to the headship (caring responsibility) of men, and not try to reverse gender roles, but not necessarily refrain from teaching them.”<sup>62</sup> The text has critical principles for both the service of men and women in the church based on God’s ordained plan, and recognizing the text as orchestrated by God helps to identify the heart of the instruction from truth and love, and not guided by feelings. The outcome portrays an

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<sup>61</sup> Conrad Hackett, “The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World: Women are generally more religious than men, particularly among Christians,” Pew Research Center, accessed March 22, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2016/03/22/the-gender-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/>

<sup>62</sup> John R.W. Stott, *The Message of 1st Timothy and Titus*, The Bible Speaks Today, ed. John R.W. Stott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2021), 51.



organized body of Christ that functions in a God-glorifying manner. Both men and women have a call to action in this passage and active roles of teaching within the body within God-organized parameters. Regarding this passage, Christopher Hutson concludes:

The point of 2:11-12 is that a woman should maintain decorum by learning “in full subordination” to the ordained leaders of the church, and she should not “presume authority” to teach in the assembly without the approval of church leaders and whatever man was legally responsible for her. Such deference demonstrated “modesty and temperance” (2:9) as much as clothing. A woman who flouted those conventions could bring criticism to herself and the church.<sup>63</sup>

Ultimately, God inspired Paul to write about the created order of Adam first and then Eve to show the ordained purposes of how God has structured the accountability of church leadership residing with men. The previous research mentioned above suggests that men are not doing their part to maintain scriptural obedience.

One biblical example of men in mentoring roles is Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who influenced his leadership process by encouraging a better method of delegation (Exod 18). Wright summarizes, “No doubt cultural respect for his father-in-law may have influenced his immediate compliance (v. 24), but the text has Jethro mention[ed] twice, and very diplomatically, that his advice would most probably express the wisdom of God himself (vv. 19 and 23).”<sup>64</sup> The relationship between Moses and Jethro signifies a benefit that both the mentor and protégé have on one another when God is acknowledged as the wisdom within. Additionally, Elijah became a spiritual father to Elisha during their time together as prophets of God (2 Kings 2). Differing from the example of Moses and Jethro, Elisha became a direct protégé of Elijah and carried the torch after Elijah’s miraculous departure. Walter Brueggemann details, “Elijah gives him no instruction or command. ‘Follow’ surely means to be in the company and under the

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<sup>63</sup> Christopher R. Hutson, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament, eds. Mikeal C. Parsons, Charles H. Talbert, and Bruce W. Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2019), 97.

<sup>64</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021), 329.

instruction of Elijah. The casting of his mantle over him, moreover, is an act of designation.”<sup>65</sup>

The instruction to “follow” is surely indicative of the command that Jesus would give to His disciples. Elijah’s special mentoring relationship came on the heels of Elijah feeling defeated and thinking that he had been the only one left serving the Lord. One may conclude that the Lord thrusts mentoring opportunities upon some, and an example of such an opportunity may be found in those who may take custody of someone else’s children. The bond between Elijah and Elisha became extremely close to the extent that Elisha would not leave Elijah’s side until the Lord swept him away by sending a chariot of fire. The commitment that Elisha had for his mentor was genuine in the way that the apostles were to Jesus. Peter states, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68-69, ESV).

An extensive list of mentoring figures may be found in God’s Word. Mentoring is not mentioned by name in the Bible, but examples of the practice, especially between fathers and sons remain evident. The New Testament gives credence to the continued practice of mentoring as produced in the lives of Jesus and the Twelve, Paul with Timothy, Titus, and others, and Peter with Mark. Accordingly, mentoring has been taking place through the centuries and will continue. Every single person (male or female) can be mentored so long as there is a willingness on the part of the mentor and mentee. The focus of this study avoids gender issues, but the Bible includes the directive for women to mentor one another as was the case with Ruth and Naomi and others (Titus 2:3-4). Thompson writes, “There are few commands in the Bible this gender specific. The Lord seldom says specifically, Women, you do this for me. However, in Titus 2:3-5, he did!”<sup>66</sup> One may find relevance and benefit for leaders of both genders to engage in this

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<sup>64</sup> Thompson and Murchison, *Mentoring*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> Thompson, *Mentoring for All Seasons*, 34.

meaningful practice. The focus of this study is to increase the mentoring practice among the men at GBBC to grow future leaders of the church in the next generations.

The mentoring method and outcomes depend upon the circumstance, and an example includes Jethro's mentoring of Moses as a function of delegating responsibility. Christopher Wright specifies that Jethro's proposal to Moses reinforced his mediatorial role as Israel's representation of the people before God but delegated responsibility through a program of teaching decrees and instructions to those who took on these roles.<sup>67</sup> One may describe delegation as of critical importance, and the importance becomes obvious when the number of individuals in leadership is fewer than can meet the needs of the congregation. Generally, in any operation, the natural processes of life require that delegation and training take place to pass on the wisdom and instruction necessary to continue serving the mission. The apostle Peter references the Psalmist when stating: "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And that word is the Good News that was preached to you" (1 Pet 1:24-25, ESV). The Church has been in existence for nearly 2,000 years and functions based on the principles passed on through the Scriptures. Adapting to the practicality of generational and cultural differences remains an enduring process.

Jesus taught about many facets of life especially the topic of moral character in his followers. Jesus' mentoring was to be replicated by His followers. Jesus exemplifies what a relationship through mentoring looks like, and He called the disciples out of their former professions to become His followers (Matt 4:19). Duguid and others write, "Jesus summons them, promises to equip them, and commissions them. The men are decisive— they leave family,

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<sup>67</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *Exodus*, The Story of God Bible Commentary, eds. Tremper Longman III and Scot McKnight (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021), 326.

work, and home at once (v. 22). The mention of a boat shows that at least James and John have capital and enjoy middle or upper-class status.”<sup>68</sup> The calling was away from a life of self-service toward learning to serve others. Jesus provided the best proactive teaching as a leader who was willing to lead by example in acts of service as is the example given in John 13, where He washed the disciples’ feet. Humble service was at the heart of Jesus’ instructions, and He warned His disciples to avoid the pridefulness of lording their position over others (Mark 10:42-45). Daniel Akin comments on humble service: “You want to be great, do something great for God? Do you want to please and honor the Lord Jesus with your life? Then become a *diakonos* (servant; v. 43), a *doulos* (slave) of all (v. 44). Become a table waiter, a household servant.”<sup>69</sup> Jesus did many things to leave His mentees fully prepared to continue forth, and John states that the world would not be able to continue all the works that would be written concerning what He did (John 21:25). He gave the promises that affirm that the triune God is present with all believers and that there is unity as with the Triune Godhead itself (John 14:16-24).

The apostles of Jesus taught this replication process in the way that they continued in their ministries, and Justin Irving and Michael Strauss emphasize the following substantiation: “Paul has replicated his ministry in Timothy, and now he expects Timothy to do the same in others. A leader’s primary role is to work him or herself out of a job, to equip and empower others to utilize the gifts and abilities they have been given.”<sup>70</sup> It should be the goal of all mentors to help the protégés to become effective in the ministry, and reliable partners who

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<sup>68</sup> Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, eds., *Matthew-Luke*. vol. 8, ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 106.

<sup>69</sup> Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2014), 217.

<sup>70</sup> Justin A. Irving and Michael L. Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2019), 31.

eventually may take over when the situation dictates. Hiring or training a potential replacement in ministry is not as simple as it may be in the business world as mentoring in the church is dependent on the Lord's will for where they will be utilized best. In many instances, mentoring will benefit the local church, but the benefit may be realized in the short term. The protégés development may also lead to opportunities outside a local church.

A life of obedience is a call upon the life of believers, and a calling stems from the love that one has for the Lord (John 14:15). Martin Scott expresses, "The language here indicates that Jesus' current relationship with the disciples will find its counterpart in the Paraclete's later work."<sup>71</sup> Through this love, believers come into obedience to the commands of God, and through this same love, they seek to make disciples. According to Matthew, discipleship calls forth a life of obedience to the commands of God and is the element of the Great Commission that expresses: "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20a, ESV). Mentoring is a tool of this discipleship, and the focus is set on the maturing of those who are young in the faith. Spiritual formation is at the heart of discipleship, and the process is one of the outright challenges. Paul wrote, "For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child" (Heb 5:13, ESV). The apostle Paul indicts the Corinthians as being spiritually immature in their quarreling and misunderstandings (1 Cor 3:1-4). Matthew Kim summarizes, "A failure to make progress in one's spiritual formation has the potential to seriously compromise their ability to help others. New Testament writers such as Paul and Peter even warn that a minister of the gospel can become disqualified on account of poor character."<sup>72</sup> Complacency serves as a temptation for one to feel content in their circumstance. Feeling secure as though all has been accomplished or the job completed may lead to fruitless endeavors or

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<sup>71</sup> J. Martin C. Scott, *John*. Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), 93.

<sup>72</sup> Kim, *No Program but Time*, 3.

subpar performance. Christianity does not allow for complacency, and believers are encouraged to “finish the race” through an effort to live for Christ daily. The wisdom of the elders serves the purpose of pouring instruction into the hearts and minds of the following generations.

Believers are encouraged through the establishment of a community. God began by giving Israel the status of a nation to live in a community as God’s chosen people which occurred as a precursor for Christianity to find commonality through the community of the faithful. Scot McKnight argues that Scripture brings a perspective of spiritual formation that is a communal calling of the church and fellowship through the church.<sup>73</sup> The most beneficial perspective on church fellowship is the understanding that there is a wealth of resources that can be mobilized through the local church as the church is designed to foster the mentoring environment. Individual mentoring relationships are possible in this environment and ought to be encouraged by the whole of the church as a unified and faithful center of the gospel mission. The two ordinances of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which give support to this idea, as each is meant to be shared by the whole community in a sense of unity and belonging. Melissa Kruger summarizes, “The church is our home as believers. It’s not enough for us to be part of the invisible church (which consists of true believers all over the world); we need to commit ourselves to a local Bible-believing church. The church is where we are baptized, celebrate Communion, hear God’s word, build fellowship, pray, and worship God.”<sup>74</sup> Jesus is the institutor of these ordinances, and as the mentor to the disciples, He helped them to see that these ordinances are established to promote spiritual discipline, obedience, and unity among the body of Christ. The act of obedience occurs in the presence of the community of believers as a unifying expression of the transformation that the gospel has on the believer.

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<sup>73</sup> McKnight, *Pastor Paul*, 23.

<sup>74</sup> Kruger, *Growing Together*, 48.

## Theoretical Foundations

Male leadership is beginning to wane as statistics show Christian men are less religious than their female counterparts. Dahlia Fahmy from the Pew Research Center shares research that more than seven in ten U.S. Christian women (72%) say religion is “very important” in their lives compared to 62% of the country’s Christian men.<sup>75</sup> The statistics additionally show that men are less inclined to pray and overall have less commitment. In many churches, one may find that the women’s ministry programs are also more vibrant and effective in engaging their sisterhood identity than the brotherhood does in men’s ministry. A partial cause reveals neglect on the part of male leaders within the church to foster the environment that creates such relationships through mentoring and how this encourages men to reemerge as spiritual leaders within their home environments. Many variables impact the degree to which one becomes involved in the church, but the disparity between men and women shows that, on average, women are more invested in their spiritual walk with the Lord.

Christian mentoring includes distinctions from secular mentoring even though the practice may prove beneficial in both contexts. The distinction between the two is certainly the centrality of Christ as the guiding Lord over the process and development of the individuals who participate in the program. Krispin points out a helpful reminder that secular literature provides a fuller set of outcomes with greater specificity but neglects the concept of Christian character and spiritual formation.<sup>76</sup> Secular mentoring can offer benefits to the development of effective Christian mentoring processes. Siberine and Kimball wrote, “Spiritual mentoring, one particular

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<sup>75</sup> Dalia Fahmy, “Christian women in the U.S. are more religious than their male counterparts,” Pew Research Center, accessed April 6, 2018, [http://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/04/06/christian-women-in-the-u-s-are-more-religious-than-their-male-counterparts/?utm\\_source=pew%20research%20center&utm\\_campaign=42abbcbd7d-email\\_campaign\\_2018\\_04\\_03&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3e953b9b70-42abbcbd7d-399934421](http://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/04/06/christian-women-in-the-u-s-are-more-religious-than-their-male-counterparts/?utm_source=pew%20research%20center&utm_campaign=42abbcbd7d-email_campaign_2018_04_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-42abbcbd7d-399934421).

<sup>76</sup> Krispin, “Christian Leader Development,” 26.

form of mentoring, may be characterized by greater depth and may be more explicitly concerned with our vocation and relationship with God but cannot be completely removed from ordinary forms of mentoring.”<sup>77</sup> Mentoring occurs in many forms and styles, which lead to a circumstantial evaluation for determining the best implementation. The most frequent mentoring relationship seen throughout the Bible and today includes hands-on mentoring. Joshua and Moses demonstrated this relationship, which can be seen in the leading of Israel, and Jesus took this approach with the disciples. In both examples, the apprentice(s) were able to witness the work of the individual, but most importantly they saw their prayer life and interaction with and reliance upon God in their daily workings.

Relevance may be associated with the concept that mentoring is best accomplished organically, and relational mentoring proves more successful than merely institutional methods. This project will aim to take a hybrid approach to let the personal and relational elements of mentoring occur as necessary, but allocating specific meeting times to come together within the local church building allows for biblical instruction on building mentoring relationships to take place. Organizational measures will allow for a structure fitting to the societal aspects of fast-paced everyday life in the United States as the participants are not being mentored in a profession. Determining how mentoring is conceptualized and implemented serves as a guidepost for how best to achieve desired results.

Mentoring is accomplished because of having a clear plan of action though the goals may shift and evolve during the process. In her book on mentoring, Julie Starr points to a five-stage process of mentoring that has preparation for mentoring, beginning/setting out, navigating and maintaining progress, setting down or consolidating learning, and finally parting ways.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Siberine and Kimball, “Confirming Mentoring,” 43.



Throughout the process, mentoring requires a plethora of communication, and Starr provides a model that evidences the necessity of communication. One must identify the proper level of engagement on both sides of the relationship. Mason advances the following phrasing for mentoring that he learned from a personal mentor. Mason wrote, “Mentoring is a brain to pick, a shoulder to cry on, and a kick in the pants.”<sup>79</sup> Many of the mentoring programs that have been designed agree that mentoring relationships are intended to last with many ranging between nine months and three years. This intervention plans to bring awareness and preparation to the attention of those who are best suited to engage in the practice itself within the church. The equipping of these individuals will allow them to create mentoring relationships, and the church can periodically revisit the equipping of others who have grown themselves to seek out others.

Mentoring extends beyond age limits or requirements and includes wisdom and experience that may be passed on to others to advance discipline and growth. The mentor serves as a subject matter authority and uses the experience to aid the mentee. Clutterbuck writes, “The role of a mentor is like a guide through difficult terrain. Their experience of similar transitions allows them to provide the mentee with timely conversations that help the executive think through the next steps on their path and link where they are with where they envision, they are going.”<sup>80</sup> The apostle Paul advised Timothy, who was young, to avoid allowing those he was instructing “despise his youth” (1 Tim 4:12). Being knowledgeable in the subject matter is the critical component, and the instruction flows from older to younger; however, exceptions may arise which allow for the inverse. Similarly, the methodology is somewhat dependent upon the specifics of the mentoring context. Rick Lewis identifies various methods used within mentoring

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<sup>78</sup> Julie Starr, *The Mentoring Manual: Your Step-By-Step Guide to Being a Better Mentor* (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2021), 92.

<sup>79</sup> Mason and Pedrone, *Mentoring the Next Generation*, 20.

<sup>80</sup> Clutterbuck, *Coaching and Mentoring*, 92.

especially with a Christian focus. Lewis concludes, “There are some ways of operating in practice that are foundational and others which are optional. Methods such as prayer will be used constantly. Journalling is used often, but not always. Other methods may be held in reserve and employed occasionally as the need arises.”<sup>81</sup> A hybrid technique of methods highlighting written, conversational, spiritual, diagnostic, conceptual, and planning/profiling approaches serves as a great technique for addressing the variables impacting the mentoring relationship. A tactical approach provides mentors with tools for mentee utilization as needs determine.

The nine-week course of instruction will require a weekly formal gathering to address the basic elements of Christian mentoring and principles found within the Bible. Active mentoring will demand a level of weekly communication to contact the protégé to ensure that participants continue to make progress and instruct from the biblical examples each week with a time of reflection on mentoring principles. Spiritual discipline is necessary as the instruction and application will lead the protégé to become more scripturally literate and enhance prayer life. Keeping one centered on imitating the mentorship of Jesus, as the foundation of practice, and moving forward to engaging with one another in practical scenarios contributes toward effective ministry engagements. The result of the study includes developing Christian men who mentor the next generation.

Christian mentoring may avoid distancing from all extra-biblical mentoring theories; however, some secular influences may prevent Christian formation from taking root. Spiritual formation is at the heart of the Christian mentoring relationship since all Christians have a unified purpose rooted in the gospel of Christ. On the topic of leadership responsibility and spiritual intelligence, Gary Roberts writes: “Our first response to tribulation is to seek God’s

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<sup>81</sup> Rick Lewis, *Mentoring Matters: Building Strong Christian Leaders, Avoiding Burnout, and Reaching the Finish Line* (Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch, 2009), 124.

wisdom on our contribution to the situation, and confess, repent, and renounce any causal acts or sinful responses.”<sup>82</sup> The factors that contribute to mentoring techniques in a secular setting limit the use of spiritual intelligence to inform the practice. Christian mentoring will fail without following the guidance of God. Sanders writes, “The Holy Spirit has been sent to transact big business for the kingdom of God, nothing less than to participate in the redemption of a lost world. In this vast enterprise, He seeks our partnership as He oversees the interests of Christ on earth.”<sup>83</sup> Reflecting on the focal point of Christian mentoring, the probability of success would greatly diminish if one regularly neglected guidance from God. Christian mentoring includes a large scale of academic literature, but with an abundance of literature, one may experience more difficulties in ascertaining the most practical methodologies for mentoring, and societal influences have only further convoluted the message. Many of the so-called “advancements” of today appear more like regressions into the sinful state of worldliness. On spiritual intelligence literature, Roberts concludes, “From a religious standpoint, most of the published literature embraces either a generic spirituality or a polytheistic, pluralistic hybrid of spirituality and religion.”<sup>84</sup> Maintaining a biblical worldview can only occur by way of Scripture setting the precedent, and Christian mentoring is no exception.

The goal of the outcome of the project includes encouraging participants to build mentoring relationships from one generation to the next; nonetheless, the project may still find success in strengthening the Christian character of the participants. The process will still encourage members of GBBC to pursue personal sanctification as a product of a

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<sup>82</sup> Gary E. Roberts, *Working with Christian Servant Leadership Spiritual Intelligence: The Foundation of Vocational Success* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 174.

<sup>83</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship: Principles of Following Christ for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1994), 36.

<sup>84</sup> Roberts, *Working with Christian Servant Leadership Spiritual Intelligence*, 30.

mentoring-focused class and leading others to do the same. In all things, a pertinent exhortation occurs for all believers to become imitators of Christ as the Apostle Paul proclaims, and he aimed to be a mentoring model of Christlike behavior (1 Cor 11:1). James Arthur adds, “because Christians understand moral theology as the study of the implications of faith in Christ or the way people live, the actions performed, whether virtuous or not, affect one’s union with God and so all moral actions have a religious significance.”<sup>85</sup> One can anticipate that Christian mentoring will result in an arduous struggle based on the notion that the Adversary desires believers to stumble in faith endeavors. Trusting in Jesus and maintaining an active prayerful lifestyle serve as essential aspects of the project and in one’s walk with the Lord.

Participants may expect to face hardships in the process, but through the toils and strife, one may learn about the meaning of following Christ. A benefit of experiencing difficulties and struggles comes with the understanding that suffering and difficulties improve steadfastness and endurance. The improvements occur through prayer and walking closely with God (Rom 5:3-4; James 5:13; John 14:16-17). Solomon, in the wisdom of God, wrote, “A threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl 4:12). The principle behind the proverb expresses that God’s involvement in relationships greatly increases longevity and success. Christian mentoring relationships wisely ought to follow the proverbial principle of trusting in God and communicating with Him from the onset. Communing with God involves conversing, sharing, and interchanging ideas and sentiments with Him through the power of the indwelling Spirit. Similarly, God provided the attributes which allow people to interact with one another in personal and intimate relationships.

The Church functions as a family organized and orchestrated by God and His Word, and the apostle Peter describes the familial relationship through the concept of brotherhood (1 Pet

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<sup>85</sup> James Arthur, *A Christian Education in the Virtues: Character Formation and Human Flourishing* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 115.

2:17, 5:9). Brotherhood emphasizes a fundamental aspect of Christianity and the power of intimate relationships shared in the community with other believers. Certain values embody the Christian brotherhood such as service, sacrifice, and love. The mentoring relationship captures these values and upholds their integral nature to serving as leaders in the body of Christ. A distinguishing mark between mentoring and discipleship separates the broad focus of discipleship of the whole of the spiritual person to a more specific skill, especially directed at individual ministries. Another way to comprehend mentoring as a more narrowly focused practice separates people according to their spiritual gifting as specific members within the body of Christ for ministry-specific development.

The Christian mentoring relationship requires an understanding of life's purpose, along with guiding instruction and principles that guide virtuous living, powered by God. Spiritual disciplines are examples of elements in this relationship and other intellectual disciplines are formed within the process. Stephen Burt writes, "Becoming a good listener is therefore a mix of learning, unlearning, allowing abilities to emerge, honing and developing, and becoming. That is why each listener has a unique learning edge, which reflects their strengths and preferences, their gaps and blind spots, their deepest potential, who they are, and who they can become."<sup>86</sup> Developing the art of listening is beneficial for both mentor and protégé but especially the mentor who acts as a coach. Concerning moral formation in the realm of discipline, Estep and Kim conclude: "Teachers must listen to students to ascertain their level of moral formation and aid them in advancing."<sup>87</sup> The mentor must actively listen to the needs of the protégé as it concerns real-life situations and experiences. The relationships are not artificial but focus on meeting the actual circumstances directly to achieve tangible results.

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<sup>86</sup> Burt, *The Art of Listening*, 141.

<sup>87</sup> James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2010), 151.

## Conclusion

Cultural shifts have upended the attraction of intentional formation as it relates to virtues, morals, and personal development. Gunby shares, “Our culture’s suspicion toward intentional formation is perhaps nowhere more felt than in our approach to young adults—an age group that seems old enough to figure things out for themselves but that still manages to underperform given our expectations of them.”<sup>88</sup> Mentoring as a tool of discipleship is biblical and present in the way that Jesus chose and instructed the Twelve and was carried forth by the disciples as they became spiritual fathers to others. When evaluating the essential motifs, one may notice the importance of recognizing how a person’s experiences play a role in their development as an ongoing process. Wisdom resides at the center of all good biblical practice, and true wisdom comes from the Lord rather than worldly wisdom. Estep and Kim express, “According to the inspired biblical authors, wisdom was a universal phenomenon available both within and beyond the believing community.”<sup>89</sup> Faith development requires the merging of faith with reasoning as one understands the universe that God created and the principles that govern it. Concerning wisdom coming from the Creator, Paul wrote: “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart’” (1 Cor 1:18-19, ESV). Paul also concluded, “For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness,’ and again, ‘The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile’” (1 Cor 3:19-20, ESV). God must be sought at the heart of the matter, and seeking God must be done through a prayerful relationship with Him. The character of the mentor includes shining as a light in the world (Matt 5:16) and serving as an example of the

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<sup>88</sup> Gunby, “Discipleship, Development, and Discernment,” 12.

<sup>89</sup> Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 189.

character of God because Christians are to be Holy like God (1 Pet 1:15-16). In addition, Christians sharpen one another (Prov 27:17). Groves shares that the character of the older men shapes the younger to match the truths of the gospel.<sup>90</sup> Through the desire to serve God, relationships must be built and maintained by the brotherhood (1 Pet 2:17, 5:9) as a routine that highlights the call for men to be leaders in the body of Christ. The nine-week curriculum will highlight the five motifs as mentors engage and interact with the call to influence obediently the lives of their mentees, and the study provides a means of replicating this process for future generations. These mentors can shape personnel for individual stories to impact others through pertinent biblical practice.

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<sup>90</sup> Groves, "New Testament Patterns," 43.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The problem at GBBC has been extensively presented in the proceeding chapters regarding the lack of spiritually mature men mentoring the next generation. The age of technology has exacerbated the problem of spiritual apathy by enabling impersonal relationships through social media, and the COVID-19 pandemic broadened the impersonal nature of relationships and the shift toward online church attendance. The church's prosperity hinges on effectively integrating technology and personal connections. While some attribute spiritual apathy to spiritual immaturity, additional factors impacting the fostering of personal growth and development are worth inquiry. Complacency has the potential to significantly reduce one's ability to connect with others, and mentoring serves to bring individuals out of the impersonal realm of technology and imbue the essential human element into the church's intended growth. Moreover, unwillingness does not serve as the sole matter among spiritually mature leaders, but at times a need exists for proper motivation to understand the advantages of mentoring. Despite the absence of the term "mentorship" in biblical texts, the concept of guiding, teaching, and supporting others can be found throughout various stories and teachings in the Bible. The concepts provide the importance of mentorship as a valuable practice for Christians with which to engage. This realization can also dispel any apprehension concerning mentoring among Christians.

Numerous publications have been dedicated to the subject of discipleship and mentoring. Clergy members typically invest significant amounts of time delving into these resources, participating in conferences, and engaging in activities aimed at recognizing, enlisting, and



nurturing potential leaders within the ministry. The individual conducting the research possesses a background in pastoral work and expects to utilize this experience for investigating and identifying optimal strategies for discipleship that uphold Christ-centered principles. Church leaders in Southern Baptist-affiliated churches have access to a range of resources at the Associational and State Convention levels, which are beneficial; however, the importance of personal connections at the local level cannot be overstated. While the tools provided are valuable, the church must use the assets effectively. Mason states, “Mentoring is a critical link in the preparation, protection, and empowering of Christian leaders for the new millennium.”<sup>1</sup>

The Bible serves as the foundational instruction for all discipling endeavors emphasizing the importance of mentoring relationships for strength, perseverance, and success. In the theological section of Chapter Two, the text emphasized how Jesus empowered His disciples (the Twelve) by imparting to them authority and guidance for advancing the Kingdom. Jesus entrusted the Twelve with the building and development of future leaders in the church entrusting them with the mission of carrying out His teachings (Matt 28:18-20). Additionally, the apostle Paul documented God’s divine appointment of male leaders in the church by outlining the qualifications for leaders in his letters to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 3; Titus 1). The book of Acts further highlights the establishment of the first deacons (Acts 6) and the subsequent growth and progress of the church.

In Chapter Three, the focus outlines the approach used for the research design and intervention. The study will exclusively involve participants who are members of GBBC. The research will also seek male participants from GBBC who have a history of church service and hold leadership roles within the church. Participants will first be briefed on the study’s

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<sup>1</sup> R. Peter Mason and Dino Pedrone, *Mentoring the Next Generation: Making a Lasting Difference* (Maitland, FL: Xulon, 2012), 15.

requirements followed by selected individuals undergoing private one-on-one interviews with confidentiality ensured. Tim Sensing suggests, “Rather than leading the conversation, one should aim to follow the conversation.”<sup>2</sup> The interviews are scheduled to evaluate the perspectives of individuals on the issue that needs intervention and to introduce them to the basics of mentoring. Following the interviews, a survey will be carried out within the church to gauge the spiritual condition of the congregation through a discipleship traits assessment. The congregation-wide survey aims to assess the spiritual well-being of the church community and incorporate relevant findings into the curriculum’s application. After the completion of the surveys, the gathered data will be utilized to customize the nine-week course to better cater to the spiritual requirements of the congregation as part of the direct mission field with a specific focus on mentoring. Upon the conclusion of the nine weeks, all participants will undergo a second interview and survey to evaluate their development and document any changes. After the nine weeks, participants will have the chance to explore mentoring opportunities by observing, selecting, and establishing connections with potential protégés within their specific ministry fields. Every individual who consents to take part in the mentoring intervention must fulfill the requirements of both interviews, surveys, and the nine-week mentoring program.

### **Human Development and Spiritual Formation**

The concept of spiritual formation has widely been embraced by individuals of various religious backgrounds including both Christians and non-Christians. Despite some similarities, the characterization of spiritual formation holds different and unique standards in diverse religious settings. Spiritual formation serves as a fundamental aspect of many religious movements, focusing on the existence of the intangible and nonphysical realm, which provides

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<sup>2</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 103.

meaning and significance to the physical and tangible aspects of life. Buddhism, for instance, embraces a unique perspective on spirituality that diverges from the concept of a personal deity. Buddhism emphasizes principles such as morality, meditation, and wisdom. In this belief system, the pursuit of moral conduct, the practice of meditation, and the cultivation of wisdom are regarded as essential components of spiritual growth.<sup>3</sup> Buddhism claims to offer a path to enlightenment and liberation from suffering without relying on the notion of a personal God. The attributes prove advantageous in terms of comprehending and implementing Christian principles; however, a deficiency exists in terms of the fundamental conviction in the existence of God and the embodiment of a Christ-centered life. Consequently, this deficiency renders them comparable to Naturalism, as both fall short in acknowledging the divine and the transformative power of a relationship with Christ.

Sunni Islam, the largest branch of Islam accounting for 85% of the Muslim population, is another illustration of a religious group that firmly believes in the existence of a singular god. Within Sunni Islam, followers adhere to the belief in a personal god who can be experienced through the practice of the five pillars. Nigosian writes, “These pillars include the belief in the oneness of God (monotheism) and the acceptance of Muhammad as the messenger of God. Additionally, adherents engage in daily prayers, aid those in need through acts of charity, observe fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, and undertake the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca.”<sup>4</sup> These practices serve as a means for Sunni Muslims to establish a closer connection with God and strengthen their faith. In terms of spiritual development, this exhibits a stronger similarity to Christian orthodoxy; however, Islam fails to acknowledge the divine nature of

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Conze and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Buddhism: The Wisdom of Buddha, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and Buddhist Texts Through the Ages* (New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media, 2018), 185.

<sup>4</sup> S.A. Nigosian, *Islam: Its History, Teaching, and Practices* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 102.

Jesus, which serves as the fundamental principle of Christian teachings and beliefs.

Recognizing diverse beliefs proves important as familiarity reveals the complex background of the influences surrounding the Christian converts shaped by various stimuli and experiences. Christians face challenges in a world with many beliefs often stemming from the worship of false deities and different interpretations of existence and human life. In his writings, the apostle Paul emphasized the distinction between belief in God and the recognition of Christ as separate from the false gods. This distinction can be seen in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 8:4-6). Paul recognized the importance of having a strong apologetic stance as crucial in attracting others toward a comprehensive and logical worldview. By presenting a well-reasoned defense of one's faith, individuals can effectively communicate the truth and draw others toward a deeper understanding of God and the teachings of Christ. Paul Gould summarizes, "The cultural apologist works to awaken those within the culture to their deep-seated longings for goodness, truth, and beauty."<sup>5</sup> Developing a Christian worldview necessitates perceiving the world through the lens of God's creation and aligning oneself with the biblical truths that establish the correct relationship between God and humanity. Opposing forces of darkness plague the world, and sin acts as a corrupting agent that undermines the essence of truth, beauty, and goodness thereby diminishing the authority and existence of God. Paul refers to this opposition as "spiritual forces of evil" that have brought about the prevailing darkness (Eph 6:12). In summary, spirituality needs to consider the existence of both good and evil characteristics within the spiritual realm. The view of CSF acknowledges the presence of both good and evil forces enabling individuals to discern and evaluate spiritual influences effectively (1 John 4:1).

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<sup>5</sup> Paul M. Gould, *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 24.

The core of Christian mentoring lies in spiritual development and character formation, where mentors impart wisdom and motivation to help individuals grow and achieve developmental goals particularly within the context of church leadership. Defining spirituality proves to be a challenging task due to the conflicting viewpoints promoted by a secular society, which often hinders the application of spiritual principles outside of a Christian framework. The concept of spiritual formation, as described by Estep and Kim, underscores the significance of intentional growth and progression in one's spiritual life. Estep and Kim write, "Spiritual formation first begins with a focus on being 'formed' and 'transformed.'"<sup>6</sup> The process of being shaped and changed displays the fundamental aspect of the Christian spiritual journey as illustrated in the writings of the apostle Paul using the Greek terms *morphoō/metamorphoō* (Rom 12:2; Gal 4:19). The etymology of the English word "metamorphosis," is derived from these Greek terms highlighting the idea of a profound and significant transformation taking place within the individual. The transformation process evident in the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly serves as a clear analogy for the spiritual growth and maturation that Christians are called to undergo. Just as the caterpillar must go through various stages of development before emerging as a butterfly, Christians must also go through a journey of spiritual growth and renewal by allowing the Spirit to lead them toward a restoration of God's likeness within themselves. By surrendering to the guidance of the Spirit and actively engaging in the process of growth and maturation, believers can ultimately become creatures that reflect the divine likeness more fully embodying the love, grace, and compassion of God in their lives.

The Bible asserts that knowing the Son is to know the Father (John 14:9), a declaration attributed to Jesus, illustrating how individuals can deepen their knowledge of God through faith

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<sup>6</sup> James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, eds., *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010), 240.

and following His teachings. For the Christian, CSF is intertwined with the Spirit of God residing within them (John 14:17; 1 Cor 6:19-20). This Spirit not only brings about spiritual rebirth (Titus 3:5) but also affirms their identity as heirs of the promises of God (Rom 8:15-17). Consequently, CSF influences all dimensions of the individual. The traditions of the Church offer numerous practices that can be analyzed. Christian theology plays a crucial role in teaching formative disciplines, which aim to help individuals and communities grow and develop. Both personal and collective engagement are essential for spiritual formation and adult development with an emphasis on investing in the growth of others. This highlights the interconnectedness between spiritual formation and the maturation of individuals.

#### Participant Theological Development and Formation

The individuals selected for the action research will be adults who have displayed characteristics of spiritual maturity and/or leadership potential. Many participants in the study will fall within the age range of midlife to late adulthood as outlined by Gregory Carlson. Furthermore, two key factors are evident among adult learners: their extensive experience and their preference for learning through practical application and necessity.<sup>7</sup> The distinction lies in the contrast between pedagogy, which refers to teaching children, and andragogy, which focuses on teaching adults. Understanding the target audience helps establish boundaries and determine the most effective approach to achieve desired outcomes. Children and adults have different learning styles, and acknowledging the differences for the project capitalizes on the distinction of the valuable knowledge and resources that adults bring to the table. By tapping into these resources, the project can identify the most efficient methods to engage primary stakeholders. The process of recruitment ensures that those involved in problem-solving are closely connected

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<sup>7</sup> Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 212.

to the subject matter and have a vested interest in finding solutions. The initial stage of development for the Christian participant involves the completion of surveys and questionnaires designed to assess indicators of discipleship and spiritual growth framing the study process. The surveys and questionnaires will be crafted to evaluate participants' discipleship status at the commencement and conclusion stages of the project. In the early stages, aspects requiring attention are likely to be revealed, and the participants' progress will be evaluated by the conclusion of the project. Aspects related to discipline and spiritual maturity are likely to reveal vulnerabilities due to the prevalence of sin and temptation in the world. In 1 Corinthians 3:2, Paul observed that the Corinthians lacked maturity and were not performing up to their potential. However, in Philippians 3:12-14, Paul also acknowledged his imperfections and highlighted the ongoing pursuit of growth and perfection.

Sanctification is a continuous process that requires constant effort and dedication; the perpetual journey unfolds over time across the story of one's life. Millard Erickson expounds, "The term 'sanctification' does not appear in the Synoptic Gospels at all. To convey the idea that believers' lives are to be pure, Jesus emphasized the position of being children of God. Belonging to God necessitates that one show a likeness to Him."<sup>8</sup> The imperfections of spiritual life and personal growth in the physical realm can be likened to the experiences of an athlete or soldier who, despite rigorous training, may occasionally fall short of their desired performance. The deficiencies of the individual can catalyze increased effort and dedication toward achieving a goal, yet these same shortcomings have the potential to hinder progress and lead to negative outcomes. The Apostle Peter emphasizes the importance of holiness in one's conduct, urging believers to strive for holiness as God is holy, as stated in the Bible (1 Peter 3:15-16). The aspiration for all believers includes receiving a glorified body, which represents the highest level

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<sup>8</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 898.

of spiritual perfection free from a sinful nature; nevertheless, hurdles and hindrances arise due to the fallen nature of the world.

The designated curriculum aims to lay a strong groundwork of biblical knowledge while also focusing on a specialized mentoring method that facilitates the personal growth and maturation of individuals. The core of the project lies in developing leaders who are capable of training others to become leaders themselves, yet a significant number of individuals have not been equipped with the necessary techniques or resources to effectively mentor the upcoming generation. By emphasizing the development of the head, heart, and hands, individuals are encouraged to engage with their beliefs on a deeper level allowing for a more comprehensive and authentic expression of Christian obedience and devotion. Expressed in an alternative manner, the primary goal is to cultivate a holistic approach to spiritual development by integrating intellectual understanding, emotional connection, and practical application in living out one's faith. Active Christian formation necessitates the responsibility of inquiry and initiative to be entrusted to the learner/participant. The primary spotlight shines on participants acquiring the skills needed to mentor and guide individuals within the church community preparing them to take on leadership roles in the future.

### Measuring Success

In assessing the effectiveness of a mentoring training program, the review incorporates the evaluation of the spiritual aspects and concentration levels of the individuals who are part of the program. As primary stakeholders, these individuals are at the ground level of the spiritual needs in the local church. Sensing writes on the topic of evaluating a project's effectiveness and concludes: "Evaluation needs to be focused on the research problem, the core of the project; otherwise, it can be counterproductive, directing attention to the wrong areas of activity, and



distorting the research process.”<sup>9</sup> This evaluation helps in understanding the overall well-being and level of focus of the participants throughout the duration of the project. By examining the spiritual aspects of discipleship, insights will be weighed as to how these factors have influenced their engagement and commitment to the mentoring process. Additionally, understanding the concentration levels of the individuals involved allows the researcher to gauge their ability to stay focused and attentive during mentoring sessions, which is essential for effective learning and growth. Throughout the mentoring training program importance will be placed on spiritual welfare and development. Monitoring the spiritual aspects ensures that the values and beliefs of participants are in line with the program's objectives promoting motivation and a sense of purpose.

The evaluation will entail collecting input from the participants enabling them to evaluate their spiritual well-being and identify areas of strength or challenge. Personal development plays a crucial role in both career advancement and within the church community. Personal growth transfers mentor expertise toward the development of others and cultivates the necessary skills and abilities to excel in each profession and to lead effectively in various ministries. Considering the biblical example of Jethro and Moses, and how mentors are to propel their protégés into opportunities, Mason and Pedrone conclude: “He (Jethro) released him (Moses) to ‘attempt great things for God and expect great things from God.’”<sup>10</sup> “By emphasizing personal growth, individuals can uncover and foster their exceptional talents and strengths enabling them to make significant contributions to their respective fields and serve their communities with extraordinary dedication. The focus on personal development not only helps individuals in their professional journeys but also enhances the unity of the church by enabling individuals to reach their full

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<sup>9</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 70.

<sup>10</sup> Mason and Pedrone, *Mentoring the Next Generation*, 77.

potential and contribute positively to their areas of talent and knowledge. Conversely, when mentors and mentees fail to engage in personal growth their spiritual well-being may suffer. Evaluating the performance and influence of these leaders within the existing ministry framework can be used as a measure to assess their training. By analyzing their effectiveness as leaders, the overall success of the training program may be determined. Regular assessment and review of the leaders' performance guarantees that they possess the essential expertise and understanding to succeed in their positions within the ministry.

Success is not only achieved through personal leadership growth but also by forming significant relationships with the youth and providing mentorship and support to guide them toward their goals. Engaging with upcoming generations demonstrates the significance of mentoring as a timeless essential by highlighting its impact beyond individual mentors. Leaders can make a significant impact on the lives of young individuals by offering mentorship opportunities. Through this guidance, they can assist in the development and empowerment of these individuals to aid them in their journey toward success and ultimately contribute to the advancement of their lives and the spreading of the gospel. Edward Smither writes on the impact that Augustine had as a mentor and concludes: “A logical outcome of Augustine’s involving men in ministry with increasing responsibility was to release them to be consecrated as bishops and leaders in other churches where they assumed responsibility and authority for that ministry.”<sup>11</sup> The main goal of this project remains to cultivate individuals who will serve as mentors for the next generation. The training serves to improve the competencies and capabilities of these leaders to mentor effectively and assist their mentees thereby facilitating a positive result. These leaders will be provided with specific training exercises aimed at enhancing their skills in

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<sup>11</sup> Edward L. Smither, *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 249.

connecting with the next generation. Through these exercises, leaders will have the opportunity to practice various techniques and strategies that will help them establish a strong rapport with the younger demographic. By familiarizing themselves with the mindset and preferences of the next generation, these leaders will be better equipped to bridge the generation gap and effectively engage with the future leaders of the church. Bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application is crucial for the effectiveness of church leaders in shaping the future of ministry; furthermore, the weekly classroom sessions will establish specific goals for each week and encourage continuous progress.

### **Intervention Design**

The project is aimed at the training of the next generation of spiritual leaders in the church and how Christlikeness may improve through mentoring relationships. The issue concerning the enhancement of mentorship within the church has been deliberated during church council gatherings with church leaders to highlight mentoring as a crucial aspect of the church's future development. Mentoring has occasionally been perceived as interchangeable with discipleship despite nuances that extend beyond mere semantics. Consequently, the congregation exhibited a degree of unfamiliarity with the concept of mentoring within the church and its connection to discipleship. Establishing a fundamental level of comprehension among primary stakeholders proves crucial in garnering their endorsement to address the identified need. The utilization of data triangulation in the project enhances its credibility by narrowing it down to a specific conclusion. Data triangulation ensures the usage of multiple sources of data providing a holistic understanding of the evidence. This concept is acknowledged by Sarah Tracy who writes: "Triangulation in qualitative research assumes that if two or more sources of data, theoretical frameworks, types of data collected, or researchers converge on the same conclusion,

then the conclusion is more credible.”<sup>12</sup> By incorporating multiple sources of data and cross-referencing them, the project ensures a more robust and reliable outcome. This approach not only strengthens the validity of the findings but also adds a layer of confidence to the overall results. Data triangulation acts as a powerful tool in research allowing for a comprehensive analysis that minimizes biases and increases the project's credibility in the eyes of stakeholders and the wider academic community. Relational to the establishment of the problem concerning action research, Stringer and Ortiz conclude: “Participants first establish the nature of the problem by focusing on the issues involved from the perspective of primary stakeholders.”<sup>13</sup> The significance of building a foundational understanding among primary stakeholders cannot be overstated since they are the principal change agents for the church. With a strong desire to bring about positive changes, the church leadership fully supports the project as a catalyst for implementing more impactful strategies to engage the next generation.

### Recruiting Participants

To initiate the process, the initial step involves informing the members of the congregation about the requirement for individuals to participate in the study. This announcement will be delivered during the Sunday morning sermon from the pulpit to ensure maximum visibility and reach among the churchgoers. To promote active involvement, a participation poster (Appendix B) will be prominently displayed on bulletin boards across various church rooms. This poster aims to encourage the church leaders to engage in one-on-one interviews (Appendix D) that are scheduled to take place within the initial three weeks. By utilizing this approach, the church hopes to foster meaningful interactions and discussions among

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<sup>12</sup> Sarah J. Tracy, “Qualitative Quality: Eight “Big-Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 10 (December 2010): 843.

<sup>13</sup> Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research*. 5th ed., (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2021), 121.

its leaders strengthening the overall community and its spiritual growth. Individuals who express their willingness to engage in the interview procedure will have the opportunity to utilize a secure container situated in the entrance area. This locked box will serve as a means for them to discreetly submit their details, including their name and contact information, to register for the interview process. The information will be accessible solely to the researcher who will then initiate a phone call to the candidate to coordinate a mutually convenient time for the interview. Concerning standards for quality in qualitative research, Sarah Tracy summarizes, “There is no magic amount of time in the field. The most important issue to consider is whether the data will provide for and substantiate meaningful claims.”<sup>14</sup> The objective of the interviews stands to recruit a minimum of five and a maximum of ten participants who will respond to a series of ten questions. These questions will center around current participation in church ministry, strengths and weaknesses in this ministry area, suggestions for church enhancement through their ministry, and their experiences with discipleship.

All parties that are interested in participating in the project will be provided with the consent form (Appendix A) which ensures that all parties are informed of the parameters of the project and their rights within it. Sensing writes, “A hallmark principle for research is rooted in the fundamentals of human dignity and echoed by the second greatest command, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”<sup>15</sup> To ensure the well-being and proper care of all individuals involved in the project, informed consent will be extended to all parties. This process will guarantee that all participants are fully aware of the nature of their involvement and have given their voluntary agreement to participate. By providing informed consent, the project researcher aims to prioritize the safety and welfare of the personnel ensuring that they are fully informed and empowered to

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<sup>14</sup> Tracy, *Qualitative Quality*, 841.

<sup>15</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 34.

make decisions regarding their participation. This approach emphasizes the ethical responsibility of the project to prioritize the rights and well-being of all individuals involved.

Recruitment encompasses the dissemination of information regarding the project's objectives, structure, and the roles of mentors and mentees. The recruitment process must effectively communicate the project's requirements, guidelines, mentor and mentee pairing, consent documentation, and evaluation criteria. The mentoring component consists of a comprehensive nine-week program where mentors and mentees come together to engage in various activities. These activities include learning and growing in discipleship and mentoring, engaging in meaningful discussions, and participating in prayer sessions. This structured approach ensures that both mentors and mentees have ample opportunities to learn, grow, and support each other throughout the mentoring journey.

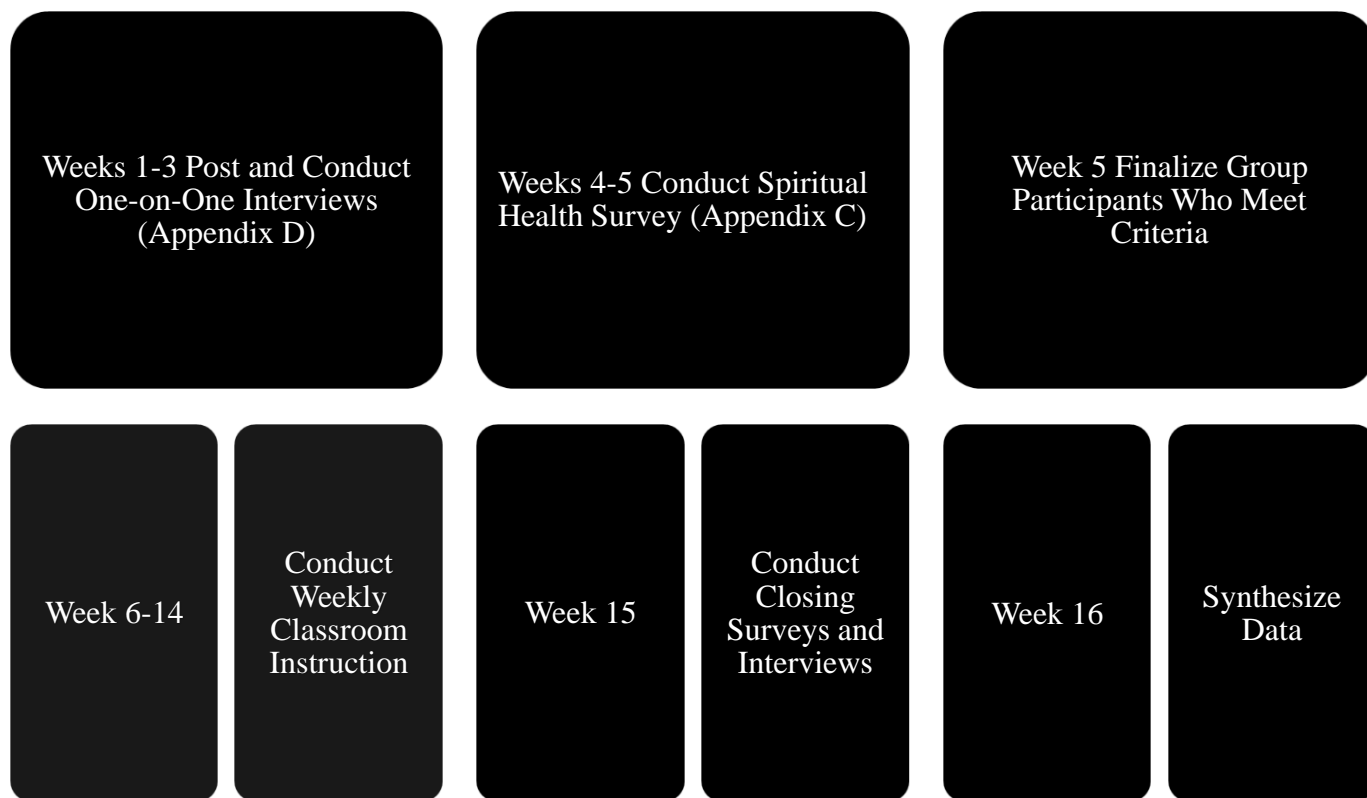


Figure 1. Overview of Research Project Activity

All members of the congregation will receive a bulletin insert during weeks four and five, which will contain detailed information about the project. This insert aims to encourage active participation in the spiritual health survey (Appendix C). The purpose of distributing this insert is to ensure that every congregant is well-informed about the project and the project's significance. By providing this information, the church hopes to motivate and engage all members in the survey fostering a sense of unity and collective involvement in assessing and improving spiritual well-being. For two weeks, church attendees will receive a survey upon entering the church on Sunday mornings. After filling out the survey, respondents will have the opportunity to drop off their completed surveys in a designated inbox situated in the church office. After each week, the surveys will be collected from the inbox for further analysis and review. All attendees will receive an envelope in which they can securely place their filled-out surveys. The unmarked envelopes ensure that the surveys will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be managed with great attention to detail. The survey has been crafted to assess the spiritual growth and well-being of individual followers of Christ by evaluating their progress in various scriptural traits commonly seen in devoted disciples. The objective remains to maximize the level of response by ensuring that every individual is directly presented with a survey. This aim exists to achieve a high participation rate by directly reaching out to each person and providing them with the opportunity to complete the survey. This approach ensures that the survey includes an ease of accessibility for all individuals and increases the likelihood of obtaining a comprehensive and representative set of responses.

### Purposive Sampling

As part of the evaluation process, a selective sample of church leaders who have completed both the survey and interview will be chosen for further analysis. Sensing writes, "A

rule that guides this decision about sample size is, ‘Quality is more important than quantity.’ There are no rules about how many people will be included in a study.”<sup>16</sup> The interviews conducted will serve as a basis for evaluating and analyzing the trends in spiritual activity and maturity among these leaders. To address the problem of apathy toward discipleship, an informative training program will be implemented. This program will provide valuable insights on how to meet effectively the needs of the congregation with a particular emphasis on mentoring the next generation of spiritual leaders. By equipping these leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills, they will be better prepared to guide and support the congregation in their spiritual journey. Throughout the duration of the project, individuals will have the opportunity to gauge their spiritual development from the initial week up until the final week.

The surveys will serve as a tool for evaluating one's spiritual progress and offer valuable insights and feedback on personal growth and transformation over time. The intention of the intervention-style classroom approach directs focus toward educational guidance which will enhance the leadership’s ability to find new and productive ways to engage with the next generation and mentor their spiritual progress by crafting meaningful relationships. On the topic of being a mentoring church, Newton concludes: “They (mentors) conduct the mentoring relationship amid the ups and downs, ins, and outs of congregational life. They do not shield trainees from the church. In this respect, the entire congregation adds to what the mentors seek to accomplish with their pastoral trainees.”<sup>17</sup> Throughout the upcoming data collection phase, the recommendation for participants will be to explore avenues to identify how to connect with the younger generation. This connection process focuses on personal interactions, volunteering initiatives, and other activities aimed at fostering relationships. These efforts will enable them to

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<sup>16</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 86.

<sup>17</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017), 116.



identify potential mentees who are well-suited for the different ministries they oversee. Specific individuals in leadership roles will also be required to oversee the ongoing delivery of training sessions and integrate feedback to enhance overall training efficacy.

The data obtained from the interviews and surveys will be instrumental in understanding the specific needs of the church community, particularly in terms of nurturing spiritual growth and fostering a culture of discipleship among its members. Through interviews, questions are tailored to address specific aspects of the topic at hand enabling a comprehensive exploration of different perspectives from individuals with direct ties to the ministry. In this context, mentoring will be employed as a valuable instrument to augment the training process for the upcoming cohort of spiritual leaders within the church. By utilizing mentoring, the church aims to provide guidance, support, and knowledge transfer to the next generation ensuring their development and growth in their spiritual leadership roles. This approach recognizes the significance of mentorship in nurturing and empowering future leaders enabling them to effectively carry out their responsibilities within the church community.

The importance of discipleship for followers of Christ is emphasized in the Scriptures highlighting the necessity for individuals to engage in this process. The local church serves as an ideal environment for long-term mentoring opportunities providing a supportive and nurturing setting for discipleship to take place. From a theological perspective, Erickson writes: “The church is the manifestation of the kingdom or reign of God, the form it takes on earth in time. The church is the manifestation of God’s rule in all believer’s hearts.”<sup>18</sup> Within the context of the local church, individuals can receive guidance, support, and accountability as they grow in their faith and develop a deeper understanding of their relationship with Christ. This setting allows for a comprehensive and holistic approach to discipleship ensuring that individuals are equipped to

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<sup>18</sup> Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 964.

live out their faith in a meaningful and impactful way. Throughout its history, GBBC has encountered instances of unsuccessful discipleship caused by a lack of wholeness within the church. On wholeness in the church, Todd Wilson writes, “Wholeness of character and mind are Christlike qualities. But so, too, is wholeness in relationships. Real Christians are not tribal nor cliquish, do not show favoritism, nor associate with only certain types of people. Those are marks of one who does not know Christ.”<sup>19</sup> Wholeness serves as a clear indication of the transformative power of the Spirit’s presence in the church. Mentoring plays a crucial role in fostering the spiritual development of the local church and guiding its members to embody the teachings and emulate the exemplary life of Christ. The lack of success experienced by the local church can be directly linked to the inadequacies of its discipleship and/or mentoring program. These failures, rather than being discouraging, present valuable lessons and opportunities for reflection enabling the church to identify areas for improvement and develop more effective discipleship strategies. By learning from these past experiences, GBBC can foster a culture of mentorship that empowers individuals to deepen their faith and actively participate in the mission of the church.

The successful implementation of Christian mentoring necessitates a profound level of commitment and unwavering dedication from both mentors and mentees, as they strive to fulfill their divine purpose. This sacred undertaking involves the leaders, who possess wisdom and experience, guiding and supporting the aspiring individuals who are eager to serve the Lord. The primary goal of a Christian mentor is to honor God by cultivating meaningful connections with others. Williard directs one’s attention back to Jesus as he writes: “Believers may be very sure that if they have a sincere intent to glorify God and bless others in their efforts, and are not

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<sup>19</sup> Todd Wilson, *Real Christian: Bearing the Marks of Authentic Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 117.

motivated by unloving attitudes, they will see the hand of God move as they expectantly do their work.”<sup>20</sup> Emulating the teachings and actions of Jesus Christ serves as the fundamental core of every Christian mentoring initiative.

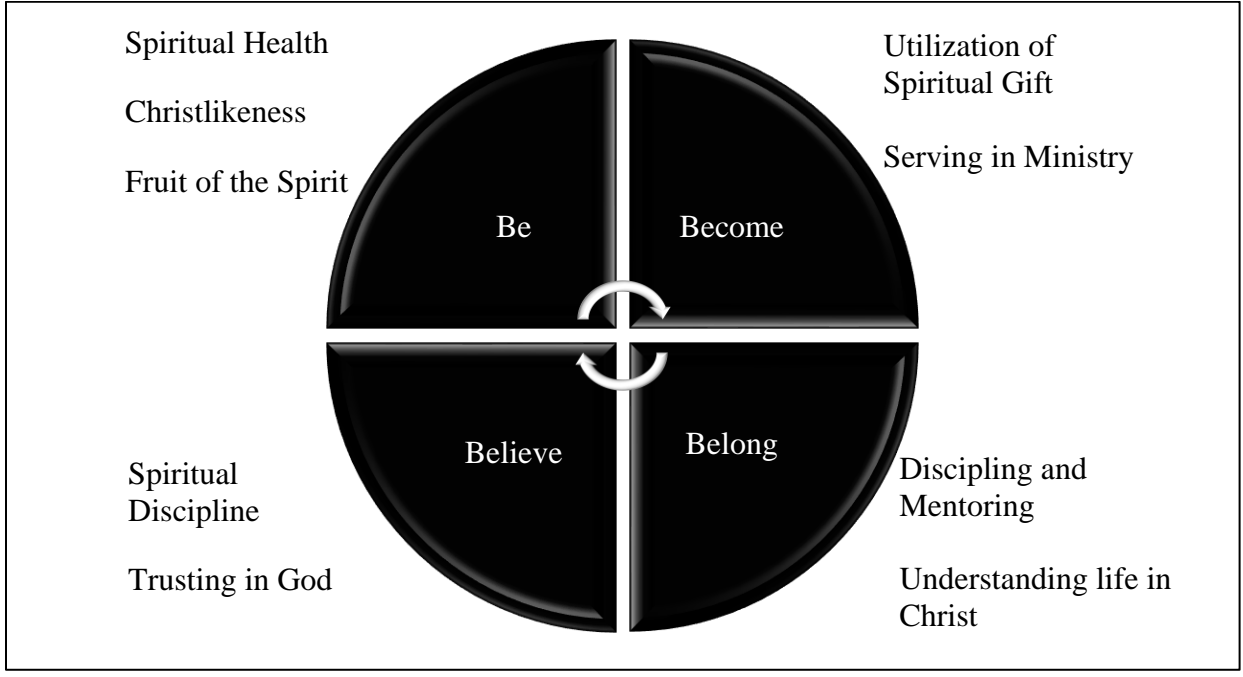


Figure 2. Platforms of Discipleship

### Weekly Training

The primary focus of the nine-week Bible-based course revolves around the comprehensive exploration and practical application of various concepts and principles that are integral to mentoring prospective leaders within the church. The course content is meticulously designed to provide a clear understanding of these concepts, the significance, and how each aspect can be effectively implemented in the context of nurturing and guiding future leaders. Throughout the duration of the nine-week course, participants plunged into an in-depth analysis of the fundamental aspects of mentoring within a biblical framework. By engaging with a diverse

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<sup>20</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2006), 22.

range of topics, participants gain a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of mentoring enabling them to effectively guide and support future leaders in their spiritual growth and development. The five participants were urged to accept the biblical truths and demonstrate faith and obedience through action.

The course outlined in Appendix E, spanning a duration of nine weeks, underscores the significance of spiritual discipline and dedication to serving the Lord. Through a comprehensive analysis of survey and interview responses, the course aims to shed light on the specific areas within the church that require attention to enhance spiritual well-being and promote growth in discipleship. During the inaugural week of the program, the primary emphasis will be on exploring the various avenues of discipleship and understanding the process of personal growth within the realm of discipleship. Within the context of discipleship, the foundation for fostering mentorship connections aims at nurturing and equipping spiritual leaders within the church community.

The comprehensive and primary emphasis provides the essential foundation for linking the theological concept (discipleship) with the pragmatic advantages (mentoring). By starting with a broad perspective, one can establish a solid framework for understanding the relationship between biblical principles and real-world applications in the context of discipleship and mentoring. The diagram presented in Figure 3 provides an illustrative view of the curriculum design concerning the use of mentoring for Christian discipling and spiritual growth. The educational program has been carefully crafted to encompass a wide range of subjects and methodologies aimed at fostering positive mentoring connections. These connections play a crucial role in linking an individual's life experiences with the teachings of Christ and the salvation He provided through His sacrifice on the cross.

The instructor-led learning technique provides the value of real-time feedback for questions that arise during the delivery of the classroom curriculum. Relationships are built and provide an opportunity for monitoring the learner's progress. Additionally, Interactive training offers a valuable platform for showcasing various techniques in adapted scenarios thereby offering valuable insights into real-life situations. By presenting these techniques dynamically and engagingly, participants gain a deeper understanding of how each aspect can be applied in practical settings. This approach allows individuals to explore different perspectives and develop problem-solving skills that can be directly applied to real-world challenges. Through interactive training, participants can bridge the gap between theory and practice enhancing individual ability to navigate complex situations with confidence and competence.

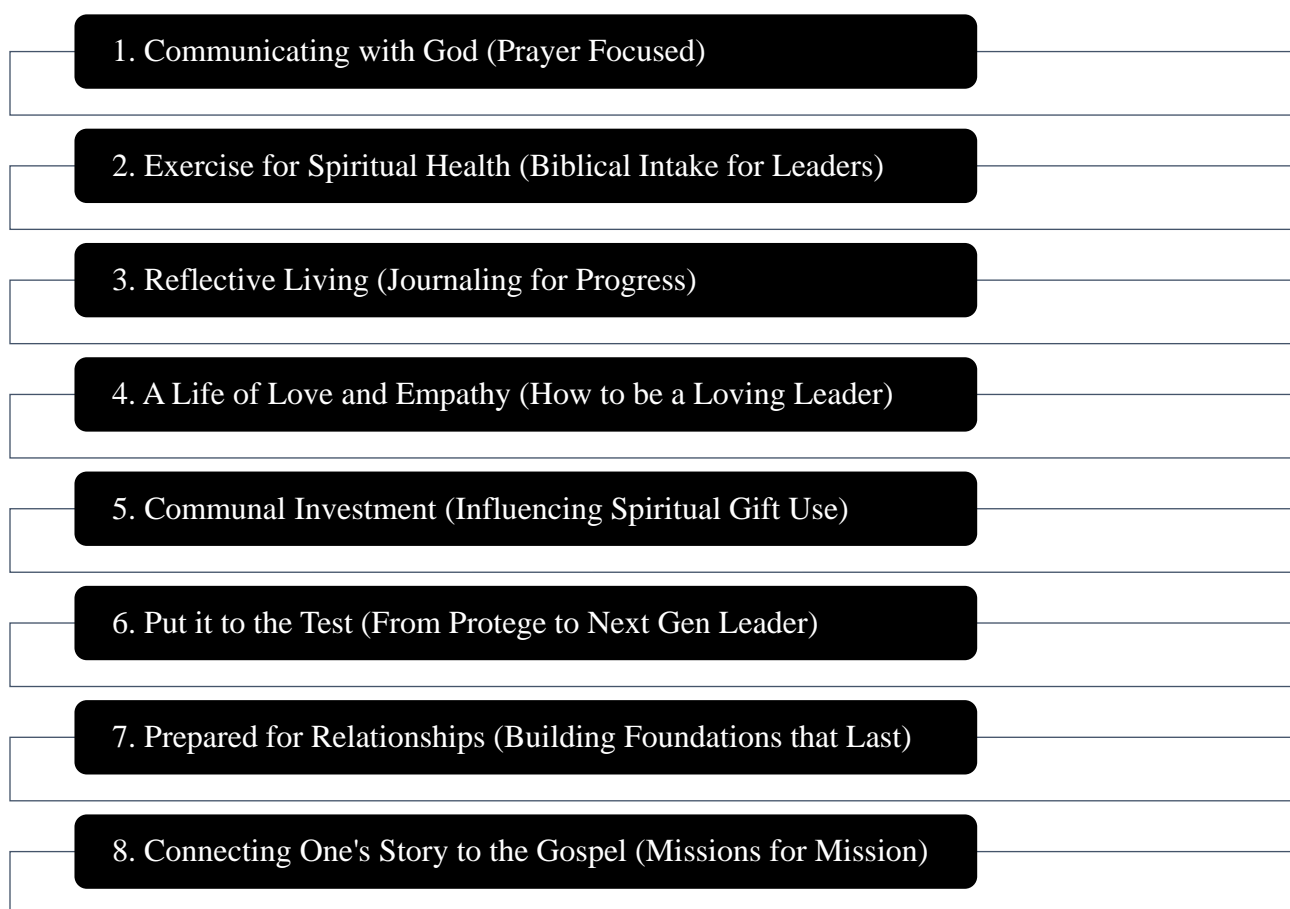


Figure 3. Weekly Overview of Instructional Lessons

The assessment of effectiveness will be conducted by considering multiple factors. Initially, effectiveness will be gauged by the quantity of individuals who have engaged in this process from the beginning until the end. The assessment of progress cannot be limited to attendance but must also consider the noticeable transformative nature by which participants' disciplines and knowledgeability improve. Confidence and enthusiasm toward actively pursuing relationships and assisting the next generation serve as another marker. Numerical data collected by attendance and surveys alone cannot fully capture the essence of success. In addition to the quantitative measures, critical consideration must be given to the recognition of the Spirit's work within the doors of GBBC. These intangible factors are still valuable indicators of the level of accomplishment resulting from mentorship through formative training. The culmination of the comprehensive nine-week examination on the methods to become a proficient mentor to amplify the impact of guiding the upcoming generation will be marked by conducting interviews and surveys. These assessments aim to evaluate the extent to which the participants' lives and perspectives have transformed throughout the duration of the study. During the concluding interviews, the focus will be on gauging the participants' perception of success and documenting the milestones that have been reached. The gathered data will be compiled and analyzed to assess the efficacy of the training in cultivating individuals who will assume leadership roles and mentor the next wave of leaders and disciples.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has the authority to grant approval, reject, oversee, and request modifications to research proposals that are under its purview as outlined by federal regulations and university guidelines. The researcher and faculty mentor will first submit an application to the IRB for the evaluation of this study before any actions are taken to recruit participants or gather data. The study will commence as per the planned timeline solely upon

obtaining approval from the IRB (See the final page for IRB approval.).

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

The current section of the project provides an overview of the execution of the intervention design to encompass the engagement of key participants, the educational platform, and a concise summary of the procedural steps involved. The data presented here has been documented in a sequential order detailing the execution and development of the intervention. Assessing key stakeholders involved necessitated an analysis of GBBC's approach and organizational framework to ascertain the most suitable match for introducing a mentoring initiative with lasting advantages. The project participants underwent an assessment to determine their level of reluctance or willingness to engage in the different phases of the project. Additionally, the evaluation aimed to ascertain if individual attitudes toward participation shifted because of spiritual growth and progress throughout the journey. By utilizing a survey and questionnaire, a fundamental understanding of knowledge and spiritual health was established for every participant. Evaluation of the skill and knowledge gaps aided the creation of a goal-oriented mentoring curriculum that sought to improve the skills of those closest to the organizational change need.<sup>21</sup> In addition, this approach provided an opportunity to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the project's effectiveness on an individual level while also allowing for a comprehensive assessment of its overall achievements. Following an initial assessment of the church's well-being and the necessary conditions for establishing a theological and theoretical foundation for the project's execution, the lead researcher commenced by issuing a sincere and explicit invitation specifically targeting male participants. The recruitment flyer appears in Appendix B with the project criteria. The promotional material was affixed to a pair of bulletin

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<sup>21</sup> Sharlyn Lauby, *The Recruiter's Handbook: A Complete Guide for Sourcing, Selecting, and Engaging the Best Talent* (Alexandria, VA: Society For Human Resource Management, 2018), 70.

boards situated between the dual entryways of the sanctuary, and an announcement was made on two consecutive Sundays leading up to the scheduled timeframe for the commencement and coordination of the discreet interview phase. Each church attendee was greeted by an usher who notified the individual(s) of the project's information allowing for an opportunity to read through the flyer at the individual(s) leisure. Every effort was made to encourage participation in the project for those who fit the criteria.

### Confidential Interviews

The commencement of the interview process took place after the acquisition of informed consent from all participants involved in the study. This crucial step was essential in ensuring that the participants were fully aware of the purpose and procedures of the research project before proceeding with the interviews. The primary objective of the interviews was to gather baseline information that would serve as the foundation for the entire project. By conducting these interviews, the researcher aimed to establish a starting point from which collected data could be further analyzed and interpreted throughout the study. The process of obtaining informed consent before the interviews was not only a necessary ethical requirement but also a means of establishing trust and transparency between the researcher and the participants. This consent ensured that all individuals involved in the study were fully aware of their rights and responsibilities thus upholding the principles of research ethics and integrity. The target of the individual interviews included ensuring privacy and isolation during the collection of relevant and personal information regarding the issue at GBBC and the familiarization with mentoring.

The project's narrow focus and restriction of participants to leadership positions effectively ensured confidentiality. The design of the study guaranteed that only male individuals



would take part to reduce the likelihood of uncomfortable or sensitive privacy issues arising during interviews. The interviews were held on several days during both weeks and held within regular office hours with restricted interactions with other church members and attendees. The church's generational composition led to a preference for conducting interviews in person among many participants, with only one exception, an interview was conducted over the telephone due to illness. To maintain the precision and confidentiality of all participants, the information gathered during the interviews was carefully collected and securely stored in a designated, confidential location.

### Spiritual Assessment Surveys

The announcement regarding the availability of the spiritual assessment surveys was made on the initial Sunday following the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process ensured that the congregants were informed about the surveys as they entered the Sunday service to provide an opportunity for everyone to receive a survey. The congregation was duly notified about the precise location of a locked box that had been designated to collect the surveys. This box was strategically chosen to ensure the utmost security and confidentiality of the gathered data. By explicitly sharing this information with the congregation, the aim was to instill a sense of trust and reassurance among the participants highlighting their commitment to maintaining the privacy and anonymity of the completed surveys. The establishment of a strong sense of confidentiality and trust among the participants resulted in the successful completion and return of twenty-five surveys within a span of just five weeks. This commitment to maintaining the privacy and trustworthiness of the participants played a crucial role in ensuring their willingness to actively engage in the survey process and provide valuable feedback. The participants felt secure in the knowledge that their responses would be treated with utmost

confidentiality, which ultimately contributed to the high response rate achieved within the initial five-week period. The timely response of the completed surveys enabled the prompt analysis of the data. By ensuring that the surveys were completed promptly, the data analysis was able to provide valuable insights and contribute effectively to the discussions held in the classroom setting. The local church's ministry field directly influenced and facilitated these discussions as a direct result of the survey response.

### Learning and Development

The course subjects for the nine-week course were meticulously selected to ensure maximum participant benefit. After the consent and approval process was completed, enthusiastic participants were able to begin their educational journey as soon as the course commencement date was made available. Consideration of the intergenerational ages of participants was measured as participants fell into three generational divisions. All courses were crafted by the researcher, as the pastor of the church, drawing from the knowledge, expertise, and interpretation of biblical principles associated with mentoring learning and development. The group of five individuals was exposed to a series of weekly lectures, actively participated in a small group discussion every week engaged in periodic one-on-one phone calls with the researcher, and dedicated time to personal Bible study routinely. The content presented in each of these activities remained consistent throughout the course of the week ensuring a cohesive learning experience for all participants. Following the completion of the nine-week intervention, the researcher proceeded to distribute post-project surveys and questionnaires to gather valuable feedback.

While protecting the identities of the participants, the researcher documented relevant details such as age, years in church leadership, and the duration of membership at GBBC. This

data allowed for a systematic categorization of the participants into different subsets to facilitate a comprehensive analysis. Additionally, an inferential statistical evaluation was employed to draw meaningful conclusions from the collected data. The researcher's nine-week intervention yielded a favorable result because the study led participants to internalize convictions and exhibit behavioral changes. The evaluation of this outcome was conducted by assessing the cognitive understanding, attitudinal alignment, and behavioral transformation of the five participants who underwent the intervention. This comprehensive evaluation allowed for a thorough examination of the impact of the intervention on the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and actions. The anticipation of cognitive outcomes related to experiencing the fruit of the spirit and evaluating the progress and enhancement of spiritual discipline was a significant aspect of the study. Individuals also expressed a desire to enhance self-assurance in guiding and supporting others by discovering a sense of confidence through connection with Christ. The researcher highlighted the necessity for participants to work actively toward behavioral modifications in every instructional method utilized.

### **Conclusion**

The primary objective of the intervention project included empowering individuals who took part in the program to embrace personal identities in Christ with confidence and become inspired to engage with opportunities to mentor others in church leadership. Through a combination of teachings, discussions, and personal study, participants were encouraged to internalize principles of faith and personal application by fostering a deeper connection to spiritual beliefs and values. Specifically, the individuals were tasked with observing the gradual emergence of a strong sense of self-assurance in the context of mentorship. The goal for the participants encompassed observing the transformation of a mere interest in mentoring into a

deep-rooted confidence and belief in the ability to impact others positively through mentorship.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

The fundamental aim of this project was to augment the spiritual development of the church by employing mentoring relationships to nurture the upcoming generation of leaders at GBBC. The hypothesis suggests that the advancement of spiritual maturity plays a pivotal role in the expansion and continuity of the church, and this expansion and continuity can be best achieved through the establishment of mentoring connections. To achieve this objective, a comprehensive nine-week classroom study method was developed and implemented with a specific emphasis on nurturing the understanding and application of spiritual discipline and character traits that play a crucial role in mentoring relationships. The intention was to empower spiritually mature men with the required tools to develop a mentoring program that would consistently strive for godly character and maturity to mentor future leaders.

### **Collective Results**

At the commencement and conclusion of the trial period, an interview was conducted to assess the participants' comprehension of mentoring relationships, their level of engagement in church ministry, and their attributes. The interview served to evaluate the individual's understanding of the dynamics involved in mentoring, their active participation in various church activities, and their overall character. During the initial interview, the participants' understanding of mentoring relationships was probed to ascertain their knowledge and awareness of the responsibilities and expectations associated with this form of guidance. The interviewers sought to gauge the extent to which the individual comprehended the importance of mentorship in personal and professional development. The goal also included gauging their ability to articulate

the qualities and skills required to be an effective mentor. The interview delved into the participants' involvement with church ministry by aiming to assess their level of engagement and commitment to the various activities and initiatives within the religious community. The researcher sought to understand the extent to which the individual actively participated in church programs such as volunteering, leading small groups, or engaging in outreach activities. This evaluation aimed to determine the participants' dedication to their faith and their willingness to contribute to the growth and well-being of the church community. Lastly, the interview explored the personal character of the participant. This aspect aimed to assess the individual's values, ethics, and overall demeanor. The interviewers sought to gain insights into the participant's integrity, empathy, and ability to build meaningful relationships. By examining their character, the interview aimed to determine whether the participant possessed the qualities necessary to be an effective mentor and contribute positively to the mentoring relationship.

A comprehensive survey was administered to all individuals involved to evaluate four key quality attributes that define the essence of being a disciple. The survey was designed to gather insights and feedback from participants regarding their understanding and embodiment of these characteristics. By conducting this survey, the researcher aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how individuals perceive and embody the qualities associated with being a disciple. The survey included questions that delved into various aspects of discipleship such as commitment, obedience, humility, and service. Participants were asked to provide their perspectives on these qualities and reflect on how they manifest in their own lives. Through this survey, the researcher was able to gather valuable data on the participants' perceptions of discipleship and gain insights into how these qualities are understood and practiced within the context of their lives.

The objective of this process was to instill a sense of revitalization and optimism within the church, as it embarks on a transformative journey toward creating a more compassionate and genuine atmosphere that reflects the teachings of Christ. By undergoing this process, the church aims to redefine its purpose and values by ultimately fostering a renewed hope and vision for its members. By embracing this process, the church seeks to exemplify the principles of Christ and to serve as a shining example for others to follow. Dean Thompson and Cameron Murchison conclude, “The Christian tradition offers models of what it means to be a good and virtuous person. The mentoring process should reflect on these models. In addition, the mentor should strive to exemplify these virtues for the protégé, and both should be growing together in grace and virtue.”<sup>1</sup> Through introspection and deliberate action, the church endeavors to create a space where individuals can experience a renewed sense of hope and purpose while also fostering a deep connection with their faith and community. GBBC has recognized the need for a significant transition in the leadership technique as well as the importance of having capable leaders to initiate this process effectively. To prepare these leaders for the task at hand an essential need existed to train spiritually mature individuals who could understand the changes required and implement them successfully. This training involved equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge through a specialized course and providing them with the opportunity to develop and shape the future generation of Christian leaders. The process of training these leaders not only focused on imparting technical skills but also emphasized the importance of spiritual maturity and a deep understanding of Christian principles. By investing in the development of these individuals, GBBC aimed to ensure that they were well-equipped to lead the organization through the transition period and beyond. The goal was to empower these leaders to not only

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<sup>1</sup> Dean K. Thompson and Cameron D. Murchison, *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 86.

bring about necessary changes within the organization but also to mentor and guide the next wave of Christian leaders thereby ensuring the continued growth and success of GBBC in the future.

The expected result was that the church congregation would start to view the alterations in a positive light once they witnessed the dedication of the leaders toward implementing these changes. By providing training and resources for the present male members, the church should experience growth and improvement through effective leadership. The equipping of these men, in turn, would have a direct influence on the development and progress of the upcoming generation of leaders within the church community. The strategy centered around the idea that, by demonstrating a strong commitment to change, the church leaders could inspire confidence and support from the members. Moreover, investing in the training and development of current male leaders would not only benefit the church in the short term but also lay a solid foundation for the future leadership pipeline. Ultimately, the belief was that by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and investing in leadership development, the church would be better equipped to navigate challenges and thrive in the long run.

#### Compilation Procedures and Metrics

The data collection process for this project was carried out in several distinct phases. Ernest Stringer and Alfredo Aragon emphasize, “All researchers have a duty of care concerning all people engaged within processes of investigation . . . in planning a study, researchers usually need to take specific steps to ensure no harm comes to participants in the research project.”<sup>2</sup> These phases encompassed obtaining approvals from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), securing the cooperation and dedication of the church stakeholders, obtaining

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<sup>2</sup> Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2021), 106.



consent from key stakeholders to partake in the study, administering questionnaires and surveys relevant to the research topic, and receiving valuable feedback following the completion of the project. Each stage was crucial in ensuring the successful compilation of data that would contribute to the overall objectives of the project. The meticulous approach taken in each stage of the data collection process highlights the importance of ethical considerations, stakeholder engagement, and methodological rigor. By obtaining the necessary approvals and permissions, ensuring the willingness and commitment of stakeholders, obtaining informed consent, administering surveys and questionnaires effectively, and soliciting feedback for improvement, the project gathered comprehensive and reliable data. This systematic and thorough approach not only enhances the credibility and validity of the data collected but also demonstrates a commitment to upholding ethical standards and ensuring the success of the whole project.

The project's credibility heavily relied on the integrity of the research conducted. The researcher accepted the obligation for responsible data collection and analysis in a thorough and unbiased manner to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings. Without maintaining a high level of integrity throughout the research process, the entire project could be called into question leading to doubts about the accuracy and reliability of the results. In the ethnography process, the role of observation participation played a crucial part in gaining a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Tim Sensing writes, “Sometimes great insights can emerge during a hallway conversation, waiting in line for coffee, or afterward in the parking lot. People may express opinions during unstructured times that they would not during a program even if asked directly.”<sup>3</sup> By immersing himself in the environment being studied, the pastor-researcher observed firsthand the behaviors, interactions, and cultural nuances of the community. This

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<sup>3</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 98.

direct involvement allowed for a more authentic and comprehensive analysis of the data leading to richer insights and a more nuanced interpretation of the findings.

### **Data Analysis**

All participants underwent theological development using the nine-week curriculum as a framework. The review of the training had both identifiable and scalable aspects through the construction of data created by questionnaires and surveys. Upon reviewing the submissions of the questionnaires and surveys, a collection of data was established to identify areas of increasing strengths and/or weaknesses. Data collection was also checked throughout the process. Stringer and Aragon refer to this as member checking: “Those responsible for recording data or writing reports should report back to relevant stakeholders at each stage of the process, checking whether they have accurately represented people’s perspectives and experiences.”<sup>4</sup> The researcher periodically checked with participants to ensure that the information recorded was accurate with special interest in the classroom training sessions.

The data collected from the survey and questionnaire was recorded after being distributed among the members of GBBC to tackle the subject of mentoring within the church deliberately. Sensing references the following ways to analyze the data: “A literal reading will highlight particular words, phrases, language, interruptions, and gestures. An interpretive reading of the data allows you to select and organize the document according to ‘implied or inferred meanings.’ Finally, she suggests a reflexive reading that brings to bear your personal feelings and understandings of the data.”<sup>5</sup> Having a method of processing the information was of critical importance that aided in organizing the results to understand better the data.

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<sup>4</sup> Stringer and Aragón, *Action Research*, 176.

<sup>5</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 196.

The project aimed to inspire church leaders to adopt effective mentoring strategies by understanding and applying the mentoring principles outlined in Scripture. This effort was made to foster spiritual growth and development across different generations. By disseminating the survey and questionnaire to the congregants of GBBC, the church sought to address the crucial topic of mentoring. The primary objective included encouraging church leaders to embrace and employ effective mentoring techniques. This process involved a comprehensive study of the mentoring principles that can be derived from Scripture. The summit of the project facilitated spiritual growth and development that transcends generational boundaries.

### Results from the Surveys

The surveys were made available at the commencement of the project for all church members who were interested in participating through a collection of baseline data that impacts all Christian men and women in ministry. The project's summit included focusing on men in leadership, but providing a biblical discipleship outline was necessary to evaluate the spiritual health of the church and its leaders. Mentoring and discipleship are intertwined in practice although distinctions exist; as such, principles of discipleship are generally effective for mentoring and vice versa. The function of a disciple can be recognized as pertaining to someone who serves as a learner or apprentice under the guidance of a teacher, expert, or leader. Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington write, "A disciple is a person who is following Christ, is being changed by Christ, and is committed to the mission of Christ."<sup>6</sup> A biblical understanding still accounts for those who were not Christian. A disciple serves as someone who follows and adheres to the teachings of a particular instructor. John the Baptist is renowned for mentoring disciples (Matt 9:14, John 1:35; 3:25) and eventually directing them to follow Jesus (John 3:22-

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<sup>6</sup> Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *DiscipleShift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 51.

30). John continued to lead followers despite the evidence presented. Christian mentoring aligns with the model of discipleship. Jesus served as the teacher, and those following Him were considered disciples indicating a deep personal connection and dedication beyond just being students. Discipleship involves actively engaging with teaching as compared to passive learning. Therefore, the command in Matthew 28:18-20 to make disciples goes beyond mere acquisition of knowledge and emphasizes the importance of applying and obeying the teachings in daily life. Robert S. Rayburn summarizes, "He (Jesus) was the teacher or master; they were his disciples (mathētai), a term involving too much personal attachment and commitment to be adequately rendered by 'pupil.'"<sup>7</sup> Engaging in a relationship with a strong desire to learn and apply the teachings of a doctrine requires mental effort. Merely learning the teachings is not enough because obedience to the teachings proves crucial. Jesus emphasized the importance of obedience to His commandments and stated that love for Him is demonstrated through keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in the process of Christian mentoring and serves as a helper and catalyst for both being a mentor and training mentors. The work of the Spirit within believers exemplifies what it truly means to be a disciple of Christ, as seen in the transformative living, serving, knowledge of the Word, and love, that characterize true discipleship. Paul's exhortation to imitate him as he imitates Christ underscores the significance of the Spirit's work in the life of a believer in exemplifying true discipleship. This call toward discipleship addresses the specific needs found in the process of Christian mentorship with mentoring being narrower in focus.

The survey on spiritual health evaluated the congregants with a focus on four essential

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<sup>7</sup> Robert S. Rayburn, "Christians, Names of. Christian," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 235.

characteristics of being a follower of Christ found within the Scriptures. The spiritual health survey found in Appendix C evaluated the knowledge and adherence to the characteristics of service, biblical literacy and comprehension, obedient submission, and love. The survey was conducted as a Likert assessment which was drafted on a five-point scale of adherence to the statements concerning each characteristic. The results were tabulated and averaged among the participants and recorded for the establishment of the present health in the church.

During the initial three weeks, a total of twenty-five surveys were filled out by both the members of the congregation and the visitors. This figure indicates a significant proportion of survey completion because the average attendance over this period was thirty-three individuals. Attendance statistics include a weekly average of three visitors. The data suggests a commendable level of engagement in survey participation among the active members and attendees of GBBC.

The completion rate of the surveys within the first three weeks reflects a high level of commitment and interest from the individuals associated with GBBC. The fact that a substantial number of surveys were completed, concerning the attendance figures, highlights the dedication of the congregation and visitors to providing feedback and contributing to the survey process. This strong completion percentage underscores the value placed on the survey initiative by the active members and attendees of GBBC indicating a positive level of engagement and involvement within the church community.

During the interview process, the survey data previously submitted by participants was divided into two distinct groups: the general congregants and the male leaders of the church who were to undergo mentoring training. To gather more specific data, these male leaders were asked to retake the survey. The results of this data collection process can be seen in Figure 4, which

provides a visual representation of the findings. By segregating the survey data in this manner, the researcher was able to analyze the responses of the general congregants separately from those of the male leaders who had received mentoring training to indicate areas of similarity and difference. This separation allowed for a more in-depth examination of the specific insights and perspectives provided by each group. The data displayed in Figure 4 serves as a valuable resource for understanding the differences and similarities in responses between these two distinct groups within the church community. The data additionally provided a means of evaluating the growth potential for those involved in the mentoring training by the end of the project.

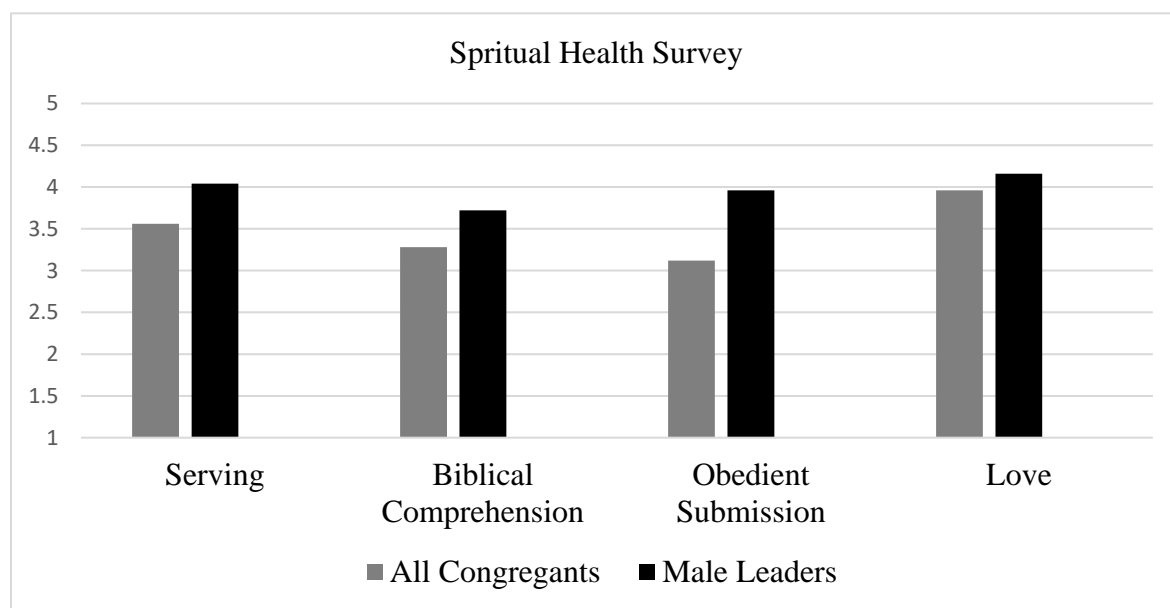


Figure 4. Spiritual Health Survey Pre-Results

The results of the study provide insights into the average proportion of compliance among participants in different discipleship categories, such as serving, biblical comprehension, obedient submission, and love. Concerning the collection of ordinal data from a survey, Robert Johnson and Grant Morgan clarify: “One who reports strongly agreeing with a statement has a

more positive perception than someone who reports disagreeing. This illustrates the ordered nature of ordinal data. Yet, the difference in perceptions between agreeing and strongly agreeing is not necessarily the same as the difference in perceptions between agreeing and disagreeing.”<sup>8</sup>

The importance of triangulation of data sets serves to provide a level of developmental assessment which may reflect the varying degrees unable to be obtained by the survey alone. The quantitative data was obtained from survey responses, while the qualitative data was derived from the relevance of statements, comments, and active participation during interviews and classroom sessions. The results reveal that the overall pre-training of the group in adhering to biblical principles of discipleship averaged 3.56 for the congregation (4.04 for the male leaders) in serving, 3.28 congregation (3.72 male leaders) in biblical comprehension, 3.12 congregation (3.96 male leaders) in obedient submission, and 3.96 congregation (4.16 male leaders) in love. The area of greatest disparity between the congregation was within the mark of obedient submission; whereas, the narrowest gap was in the mark of love. A note must be added to acknowledge that the ordinal data collected was not equal between responses. The analysis conducted among members of the church reveals a specific area that warrants additional investigation and holds significance from a broader perspective. The broader emphasis occurred despite the primary emphasis being on preparing male leaders to mentor effectively upcoming leaders and experience spiritual growth simultaneously.

For the post-study data, the data was collected, analyzed, and reported in a manner that mirrored the methodology employed for the pre-study data for the male participants in the training. The data collected provided a representative sample of qualitative improvements associated with increased adherence to biblical statements associated with discipleship

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<sup>8</sup> Robert L. Johnson and Grant B. Morgan, *Survey Scales: A Guide to Development, Analysis, and Reporting* (New York, NY: Guilford, 2016), 101.

characteristics. The results of the pre-training survey and post-training survey are displayed in Figure 5. The findings of the study indicated that the male participants experienced an improvement in their spiritual health, and they demonstrated better adherence to the marks of biblical discipleship in various aspects. The various categories analyzed in the study exhibited positive progress with improvements ranging from 0.08 to 3.20. Notably, the category that displayed the most significant advancement included biblical comprehension. This category shed light on the practicality and effectiveness of the biblical teachings imparted throughout the intensive nine-week training program. A neutral perspective would evaluate that more potential existed for enhancement in biblical comprehension as compared to other categories. Evidentiary room for growth and development in the comprehension of biblical teachings and principles was a pre-project acceptance at GBBC. A primary concern included the limited familiarity of leaders with the concepts of mentoring and the relationship to biblical principles.

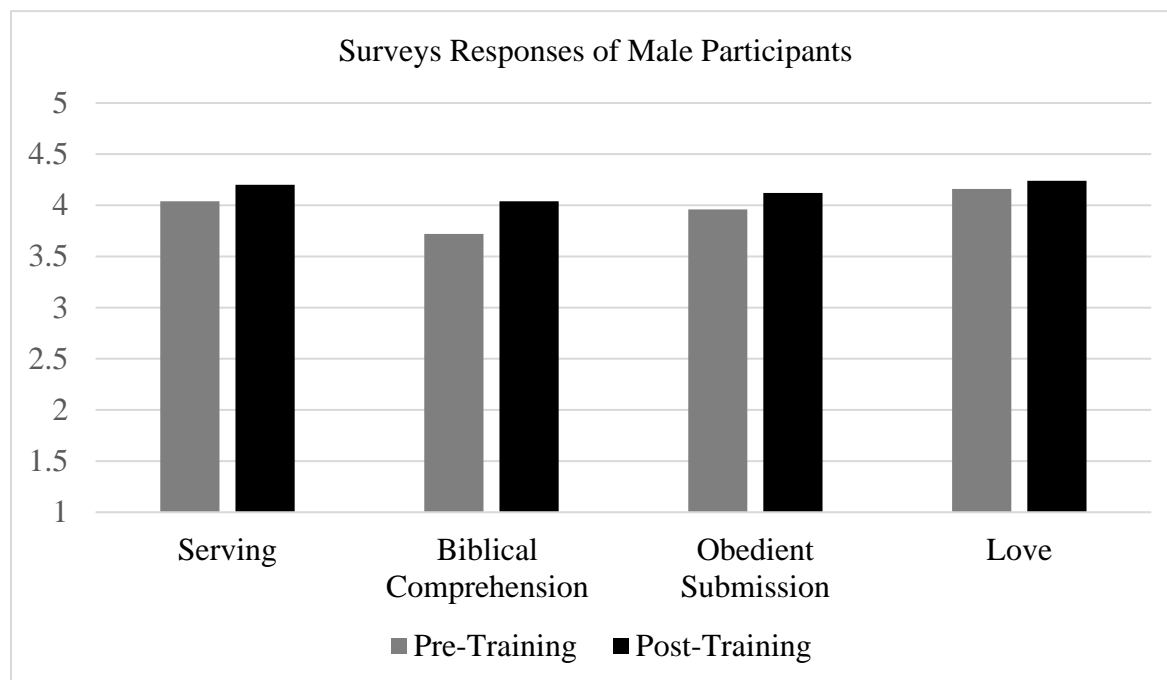


Figure 5. Pre-Training and Post-Training Comparison

Data collected from surveys indicated a significant amount of growth and advancement



among male leaders. The transformation could be seen as a form of progress capable of directly impacting those around them. The survey findings highlighted the notable progress and advancement experienced by male leaders and showcased a level of development that has the potential to influence others directly in the future.

Surveys were not the exclusive method of assessment utilized to examine the connection between mentoring and the participant's interaction with the content, as well as their development in ways that extended beyond basic statistical analysis. To achieve this objective, the data needed to represent the questionnaires and training room discussions. These two components played a vital role in gathering valuable insights and fostering meaningful discussions among participants. Training room discussions provided a platform for participants to share experiences, perspectives, and ideas to allow a deeper understanding of the topic.

#### Results from the Questionnaires and Classroom

Participants who completed the pre-training survey and fulfilled the specified criteria mentioned in Appendix B were then included in an open-ended questionnaire. This questionnaire aimed to gather insights into individual understanding and familiarity with spiritual life and the principles of mentoring relationships. Participants were provided with an open-ended questionnaire that allowed these individuals to showcase a personal understanding of the subject matter and elaborate on experiences and insights gained from previous encounters with the concept. In addition to fostering spiritual well-being and development, the questionnaire underscored the importance of mentoring in enhancing the church's effectiveness and furthering the mission.

At the onset of the intervention, the five participants exhibited a certain level of ambiguity when describing the comprehension of principles associated with the concept of

mentoring and recognizing its inherent personal benefits in supporting the mission of GBBC.

The assessment of the open-ended questions followed a process of evaluation and coding. Robert Peterson summarizes, “Analyzing answers to open-ended questions consists of a multistage process. In the first stage, answers are reviewed and grouped based on some criteria. The second stage consists of combining answers into subgroups. The third stage consists of developing a coding scheme.”<sup>9</sup> Several misunderstandings regarding mentoring were identified such as the belief that mentoring only involves senior staff members and newcomers, the assumption that extensive experience automatically translates to effective mentorship, and the misconception that only mentees benefit from the mentor-mentee relationship.

The responses obtained from the exit interviews conducted after the intervention were significantly distinct from these previous understandings. The five individuals who took part in the interview expressed specific elements of mentoring and how individual ministries can benefit from its employment. Some participants elaborated on the fact that they felt the confidence to mentor others in ministry and acknowledged gaining a deeper appreciation for the call to make disciples and lead others toward maturing in the faith. The individuals emphasized an appreciation for the training curriculum and how each point associated with mentorship was rooted within the Scriptures. They acknowledged that participation in Christ had been facilitated by God resulting in a profound sense of unity with Him and how mentorship correlates with a call of obedience to God and being disciplined in practice. The visual assessment of the conduct of these ministry leaders revealed a strong sense of self-assurance and competence throughout the project and confidence in carrying out personal duties at GBBC.

At the onset of the project, a clear problem was evident regarding the state of discipleship within the church. All five individuals involved in the project acknowledged the importance of

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<sup>9</sup> Robert A. Peterson, *Constructing Effective Questionnaires* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2000), 39.

discipleship in general, and each responded indicating a certain level of apprehension but a lack of comprehension of how to address effectively the issue. A considerable portion of the participants were actively relying on the pastor/researcher to present a viable solution. The assembly at GBBC previously experienced a prolonged period of decline due to the prevailing belief that the pastor alone held the solution to all problems. This mindset became deeply ingrained within the church community leading to a sense of complacency among the members. As a result, the church had been steadily declining for nearly ten years with no signs of improvement in sight.

The reliance on the pastor as the sole source of resolution hindered the congregation from taking proactive steps to address the issues at hand and ultimately contributed to the church's downward trajectory. Stringer wrote about cycles of investigation: "Participants, both individually and collectively, ask themselves to be aware of the actions they are taking as part of the work in which they are engaged, questioning themselves about the adequacy of their activities, being aware of the knowledge they are acquiring, and using that enhanced understanding to enrich the processes of investigation."<sup>10</sup> Following the post-training interviews, the participants expressed a newfound sense of purpose that was not solely dependent on the pastors but rather stemmed from a collaborative effort guided by the pastor for spiritual well-being. The participants recognized an enhanced level of accountability across various church ministries as well as a commitment to partnering with the pastor to effectively nurture and develop future leaders within the congregation. The participants' newfound interest in engaging with other congregants reflected a shift toward a more collaborative and supportive approach to spiritual development. By actively seeking out opportunities to interact with others, individuals demonstrated a willingness to learn from one another and create a sense of community within the

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<sup>10</sup> Stringer and Aragón, *Action Research*, 83.

congregation. This emphasis on mutual support and mentorship highlighted a desire for collective growth and empowerment among the participants.

The responses gathered after the training sessions offered valuable insights into the effectiveness of the training program in terms of how well it was received by the participants. These responses also served as a gauge of the level of understanding and practical application of the knowledge gained during the training with particular emphasis concerning the goal of preparing individuals to mentor future leaders. Additionally, the feedback helped to bridge the gap between the current spiritual landscape within the church community and the envisioned future state acting as a foundational step toward achieving this desired transformation.

In addition to the importance of discipleship and mentoring within the church for fostering spiritual growth, the concept of formative discipline introduced a distinctive element to the existing practices of discipline among the members. Specifically, the practice of journaling, which may not have a direct basis in Scripture, was recognized for the role in facilitating a deeper understanding of God's Word and aiding individuals in reaching spiritual goals. The emphasis on formative discipline through journaling highlights the significance of personal reflection and introspection in one's spiritual journey. By engaging in the practice of journaling, individuals are encouraged to delve deeper into thoughts, emotions, and experiences related to personal faith thereby fostering a more profound connection with God and a greater sense of spiritual growth. Donald Whitney describes journaling as: "A place to document the works and ways of God in one's life that can include an account of daily events, a record of personal relationships, a notebook of insights into Scripture, and/or a list of prayer requests."<sup>11</sup> The act of journaling serves as a tool for individuals to track progress, set spiritual goals, and reflect on a

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<sup>11</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 249.

relationship with God over time. This intentional practice of self-examination and goal setting can lead to a more disciplined and purposeful approach to one's spiritual life ultimately contributing to a more meaningful and transformative experience within the church community.

The act of journaling was an unusual idea for the individuals involved as journaling was presented as a discipline within the church to further the goal of evangelism and disciple-making, which was unfamiliar to the participants' prior experiences. Among the small number of participants who incorporated journaling into a personal routine during the training sessions, a notable trend of positive outcomes resulted in achieving immediate objectives related to the discipline and personal disposition as a Christian. In times of stress or when overwhelmed by negative thoughts, a challenge exists to maintain an objective perspective on one's circumstances. The act of journaling can provide a valuable tool to create a sense of space and distance enabling the individual to reflect on past events, evaluate the current situation, and contemplate what lies ahead. Whitney writes, "One of the ways the 'progress or decline of the inner man' can be noted through journaling is by the observation of previously undetected patterns in your life."<sup>12</sup> By putting personal thoughts and emotions onto paper, a clearer understanding of experiences may be gained, allowing for insight, and finding potential solutions to the challenges faced. A notable trend emerged with the participants as the general mood improved during the project with an emphasis on ministry satisfaction indicated during weekly sessions.

At the core, mentorship involves a profound connection between an experienced believer, acting as a mentor, who generously imparts time, wisdom, and guidance to a less experienced believer, known as the mentee. This intentional and supportive relationship plays a pivotal role in shaping and equipping individuals as they navigate the journey of discipleship. The church

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<sup>12</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 189.

participants came to recognize the immense value of mentorship, because the practice serves as a cornerstone for fostering discipleship. A growth of mentoring awareness was observed during the training and verbally acknowledged by participants. Those who previously were unfamiliar with mentorship began to articulate the benefits of mentoring and areas of ability to implement mentoring in individual ministries. An unscripted discussion on using the formation of small groups to provide mentorship opportunities became a promising goal as an opportunity for future growth and development.

One of the primary areas of research in this project’s Christian-based mentoring training was to emphasize the scriptural call for an active prayer life. The qualitative significance of prayer in the life of a Christian cannot be denied; however, the challenge lies in the fact that prayer proves challenging to track measurable or quantifiable markers which can sometimes lead to misleading interpretations or assessments. In the obedient submission section of the survey, one question asked the participants to quantify their prayer life on a scale of being “active,” and the results of Figure 6 indicate that the vast majority agree that they actively pray.

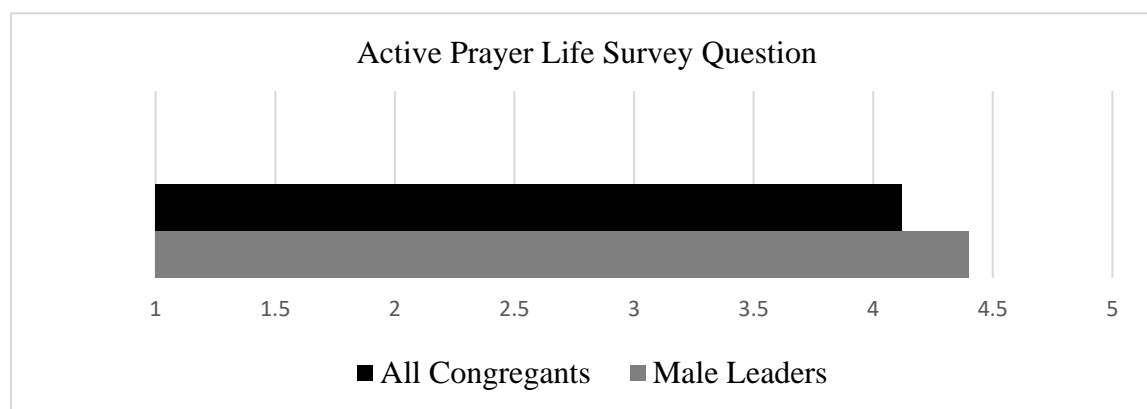


Figure 6. Obedient Submission in Prayer Survey

The questionnaire did not include explicit inquiries about prayer but instead focused on the involvement in spiritual practices. Intriguingly, out of the five individuals who took part in

the study, only one participant mentioned prayer in the initial responses before the training. Prayer proves crucial to the Christian life. Phil Newton writes of Paul: “Pastoral instruction for corporate worship addressed various facets of prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-2)”<sup>13</sup> Prayer serves as a critical avenue of communication with God concerning the events of today, and God expects this communication from His chosen people. Scripture shares that the early church put a priority on this communication with God. Newton also added, “The regularity in prayer that Paul showed for his beloved trainees staggers the mind.”<sup>14</sup> Personal and corporate prayer holds significant importance as a fundamental practice within the Christian faith. Whitney writes, “By the Scriptures about prayer and by His Spirit, God does lead His people to pray, not to frustrate believers but to experience the joy of answered prayer.”<sup>15</sup> The significance of incorporating prayer as a discipline and the direct correlation with training was highlighted, which ultimately influenced the evaluation conducted after the training, resulting in a biased assessment that placed great emphasis on prayer.

### **Summary of Results**

The phase of triangulation in this study on mentoring directed its attention toward the attitudes, excitement, enthusiasm, and quest to uncover the aspirations of individuals within the church community. An imperative to address any misunderstandings and motivations was evident, which led to the need to align with the church's overarching vision, requiring open discussions and a thoughtful approach to overcome these obstacles. The project's design was meticulously crafted to uphold a commitment to maintaining a foundation rooted in biblical

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<sup>13</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2017), 61.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>15</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 96.

principles while also embracing a mentorship framework. By exploring the nuances of mentorship, the research emphasized the importance of fostering supportive relationships between seasoned and emerging church leaders and ultimately contributed to the growth and development of both parties involved. The focus was on empowering current leaders through targeted training enabling them to effectively mentor individuals within the various ministries of the church. Drawing inspiration from a biblically based mentorship model, the research findings highlight three key focal points in the mentoring dynamic: spiritual growth, leadership enhancement, and organizational proficiency. Inexperienced leaders, such as were examined in this research, require a well-rounded strategy to acquire the necessary skills for steering a thriving ministry.

The training was designed with careful consideration of the mentorship goal. The initial stage aimed to introduce the topic of discipleship, establish a foundation of data related to mentoring, and to provide a starting point for further exploration. As the training program advanced, the focus shifted toward assessing individual competencies and understanding, identifying any misconceptions that needed to be addressed, along with biblical principles to support the competency. The training aimed to foster an environment of optimism and inspiration for the future of GBBC and to instill a sense of hope and a clear vision. Throughout the process, discussions centered around spiritual maturity and discipline and gradually transitioned toward aptitude-based instruction envisioning the potential outcomes throughout the various ministries of GBBC. As the research project unfolded, participation steadily increased, and the growing enthusiasm among participants reflected the shared aspiration for a promising future at GBBC.

The implementation strategy produced outcomes particularly among the primary



participants who were present for the training sessions. The objective of the training included individuals recognizing the present strengths and weaknesses of discipleship at GBBC, to emphasize the importance of mentorship in discipling future generations of leaders, and to instill hope and passion within present leaders to make a difference in the congregation. To achieve this goal, a comprehensive study on mentoring techniques for leaders had to be presented with procedures that led to spiritual growth and maturity. The aforementioned serves as an antecedent to and a collaborator in the church's obedience to biblical practices of discipleship and leadership development.

The actionable recommendations stemming from the outcomes of this study are expounded upon in Chapter Five: Conclusion. This section delves into practical steps and strategies that can be implemented to address the identified areas of concern within the mentoring relationship. By following these suggestions, inexperienced leaders can enhance personal capabilities and effectiveness in ministry leadership.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Educating the upcoming cohort of church leaders necessitates recognizing the significance of mentorship to amplify the principles outlined in the Bible for fostering spiritual growth and development. By engaging in a mentoring relationship, individuals can benefit from the wisdom, guidance, and support of more experienced leaders who can help them to navigate the complexities of ministry and deepen an understanding of biblical teachings. This intentional investment in mentorship not only equips emerging leaders with practical skills and knowledge but also cultivates a sense of community and accountability within the church body. Establishing a meaningful relationship between the protégé and the mentor necessitates a mutual commitment from both parties. This commitment entails actively engaging in activities that enhance skills and discipline in following the teachings of Christ. Within the context of a church community like GBBC, the issue of spiritual apathy emerged because of inadequate leadership and management practices. These practices, unfortunately, demonstrated a drastic need for change that still impacts the local church image in the community to this present day.

Overcoming spiritual apathy poses a formidable challenge, yet the problem is not indomitable. The initial step toward conquering this triviality lies in the hands of the church leaders. In recognition of the problem of spiritual apathy, GBBC embarked on a quest to identify and appoint individuals who could assume vacant positions and collectively reestablish the church's focus on scriptural practices as the bedrock of ministry. The church adopted an imperative policy to appoint leaders possessing spiritual maturity; additionally, leaders should be individuals with an advanced understanding of faith and commitment to living out the principles of God's Word. The effectiveness of these individuals in leading the various ministries of the

church hinged not only on personal growth but also on the support received from the church community.

To ensure success, the church rallied behind these spiritually mature leaders and provided the necessary resources and tools to lead effectively. This support encompassed equipping them with the knowledge and skills required to navigate the complexities of ministry. By investing in overall development, the church aimed to empower these leaders to guide the congregation toward a renewed spiritual fervor and a stronger connection with Christian doctrine and faith. In essence, the process of overcoming spiritual apathy demanded a collective effort with the leaders taking the initiative and the church community offering unwavering support. By prioritizing scriptural practices and investing in the growth of spiritually mature leaders, GBBC sought to revitalize the church and reignite the passion for spirituality among the members with a short-term approach toward the longevity of the church. By building these leaders in the faith, GBBC empowers the mentoring process to continue to take effect among leaders with those who hold the potential to lead the church in the future.

To carry out effectively the Great Commission as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20, a church must be firmly rooted in biblical principles. As Robby Gallaty concludes, making disciples of Jesus is: “intentionally equipping believers with the Word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> This foundation ensures that the mission of spreading the gospel continues to be carried out in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Bible. In addition, leaders within the church must meet certain qualifications as detailed in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. These qualifications ensure that those in positions of authority within the church are equipped to lead and guide the

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<sup>1</sup> Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2022), 20.

congregation in a manner consistent with biblical standards. Mentoring can play a crucial role in the development of leaders within the church including those who may not hold formal church offices as defined in Scripture. Titus 2:1-8 underscores the significance of seasoned leaders providing guidance and mentorship to younger leaders. Paul intends to communicate the value of mentoring relationships in enabling effective church service. These mentoring relationships play a crucial role in maintaining the overall vitality of the ministry by adhering to essential principles. Ministries that focus on equipping individuals within the church are indispensable resources. According to Ephesians 4:11-12, mentors are crucial in providing the church with the necessary tools and skills to function effectively as outlined in Acts 2:42-47. These ministries are part of God's ordained design to help combat the dangers of spiritual apathy, which can lead to division and destruction within a church community. By actively engaging with these ministries, individuals work toward achieving spiritual maturity, which serves as a powerful antidote to complacency and indifference toward matters of faith. Through the practice of spiritual disciplines and the guidance of mentors, individuals can cultivate a deeper sense of godliness and align themselves more closely with God's will. Additionally, mentoring the next generation serves as a key aspect of these equipping ministries because it ensures that the church remains well-prepared for future challenges and successes in ministry.

### **Research Implications**

The implications of the Doctor of Ministry action research indicate that a Christian mentorship program must be both biblical and practical in application. The program should encompass both theoretical and practical aspects, which instruct participants on how to navigate a sinful world from a biblical foundation. While teaching scriptural truth is the starting point for Christian mentorship practices, a crucial demand exists for these truths to have practical

application as to engage properly the next generation to remain biblical and effective. The process establishes an essential role for the spiritual development of believers, rather than a mere recommendation, and the effectiveness lies in reinforcement and practical application. Engaging with a Christian mentor provides potential to impact significantly one's life by providing encouragement, direction, and responsibility as individuals progress and mature in personal and spiritual journeys. Whether one connects with a mentor within their church community, online platforms, or through personal relationships, the advantages of mentorship far outweigh the initial investment; however, the leadership of a mentor in a local church provides the most beneficial relationship.

Christian mentoring extends beyond self-improvement and personal growth by focusing on guiding individuals to emulate the character of Jesus. Biblical models of mentoring indicate details about the process. Phil Newton summarizes, “The only way that the figure can emerge, or the cup shaped, will be by putting your hands to the work. It will not happen by staring at them.”<sup>2</sup> The research project yielded encouraging results on the prospect of spiritual growth and development of the leaders involved. The shaping of individuals starts with the required determination to become involved and a willingness to take subsequent action.

Christian mentoring at GBBC may begin at any time and should receive consideration when intentional engagement wanes in the church. Theodore Wardlaw points to the relationship between Eli and Samuel: “Mentoring in this sense is a holy thing, not always neatly plotted out in advance; and that what is often at stake in our conversations with our own Elis is an encounter with our own destiny and vocation in the eyes of God.”<sup>3</sup> God's involvement in the Christian

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<sup>2</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017), 166.

<sup>3</sup> Dean K. Thompson and Cameron D. Murchison, *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 212.

mentoring process transcends human constraints of time and methodology so believers should seek divine guidance through prayer and remain receptive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The outcomes are also contingent on the fortuitous timing that operates within the church. Thomas Backer writes, “wise people pay attention to design, timing, and opportunity. In many ways, pastoral wisdom—the wisdom that pastors need for fruitful ministry—is no different than the wisdom needed by any leader.”<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this project was to align with the principles of wisdom and reliance on God's will and timing; moreover, the project emphasized the importance of training ministry leaders who support the spiritual health of the church.

### **Research Applications**

The research application emphasizes the importance of forging meaningful relationships between individuals of different age because mentorship fosters an environment that nurtures spiritual socialization and facilitates the thriving of biblical discipline. This sector accentuates the fostering of strong relationships within the church community through biblical education and a faith-based fellowship providing a resolution to the need of enhancing Christian leadership of the church. Promoting the involvement of people from different age groups to connect in mentorship cultivates an environment that benefits personal spiritual health and the longevity of the church.

The spiritual longevity of the church depends upon the willingness of the congregation to follow the commands of God's Word. The problem with dying churches lies in an unwillingness to turn from selfish ambitions (James 3:16) and die to the flesh (Rom 8:13). Andrew Davis writes, “There will be opposition, and there will be suffering. Dying churches have gotten to the sad state they are in because they selfishly loved their lives in this world and refused to take up

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew D. Kim, ed., *No Program but Time No Book but the Bible: Reflections on Mentoring and Discipleship in Honor of Scott M. Gibson* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018), 120.

their cross daily and follow Christ.”<sup>5</sup> The motive behind the mentorship program seeks to address this issue and lead all parties into becoming more effective imitators of Christ.

Christian mentoring provides the basis for building meaningful relationship that edify the body of Christ and create a culture that connects intergenerationally. Rod Dempsey and Dave Earley write, “Our ultimate goal in life is, of course, to glorify God. But how is this done? Jesus said God is glorified as we are producing fruit, and in producing fruit we prove to be his disciples. In bearing fruit, we live the lives God intended. Bearing spiritual fruit is evidence of spiritual formation.”<sup>6</sup> The goal of spiritual formation resonates with any true New Testament church and proves critical to the health of the church especially as spiritual formation presents in the leadership of the church. Effective mentorship and discipleship programs begin with qualified and trustworthy leaders who evidence the production of spiritual fruit in their lives and exemplify the goal for those they teach.

Effective churches should emphasize the significance of intergenerational relationships and the unity of the church in fulfilling God's will. The biblical narratives featuring Moses and Jethro, Elijah and Elisha, Eli and Samuel, and Paul and Timothy, and others offer valuable insights into the importance of intergenerational relationships. Intergenerational relationships serve as the catalyst for uniting the church for a common spiritual purpose and indicate the focal point of Christian mentoring ministry. By observing the collaboration and unity displayed by scriptural examples, the imperative shines forth that different generations can work together harmoniously within the Christian faith. Dave Sanders writes, “Mentoring as a means of intergenerational discipleship and passing on of the faith has been a hallmark of the people of

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew M. Davis, *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2017), 113.

<sup>6</sup> Rod Dempsey and Dave Earley, *Spiritual Formation Is . . . : How to Grow in Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2018), 20.

Israel in the Old Testament as well as the church from its very beginning in the book of Acts.”<sup>7</sup>

A comprehensive outlook on discipleship demands the establishment of significant intergenerational connections to foster purposeful conversations for understanding the significance of mentorship, actively participating in spiritual community, spreading the message of the gospel, and carrying out these endeavors with the aim of glorifying Christ. This project aimed to rekindle a fire inside the men of the church to engage again in meaningful relationships that exemplified this intergenerational relationship standard. The relational nature of spiritual development within faith communities proves evident through the numerous examples found in Scripture. Overcoming the impact of generational disagreements on the church's discipleship process has been challenging, but mentoring could potentially help heal the divide over time. The process must begin somewhere, and a lack of intergenerational emphasis provides one possible cause for the lack of confidence in the spiritually mature men of the church to engage the next generation.

Within the GBBC community, the development of Christian mentors was predicated on adult developmental theory and Christian formation. Gregory Carlson offers insights on adult development: “The Christian educator would be well-served to have a ministry design which focuses on the three essentials of discipleship as proposed with a balance of Instruction . . . Fellowship . . . and Service.”<sup>8</sup> All three aspects took root in the smaller group setting of this action research and has the potential to be replicated by a church of any size through smaller group implementation. The personal setting helped each participant connect with additional familiarity for establishing a camaraderie important to the brotherhood. Open discussions,

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<sup>7</sup> Holly Catterton Allen, ed., *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press), 130.

<sup>8</sup> James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, eds., *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2010), 223.



praying together, and sharing personal successes and struggles served a pivotal role in developing fellowship. Individuals who initially struggled with leading and mentoring others experienced a noticeable transformation in confidence and abilities after completing the training program. The participants became noticeably bolder week by week in confidence and began to serve more actively in church functions beyond the scope of individual ministries.

Churches with a desire to grow spiritually should find a way to implement such a program as the benefits prove tremendous, and the potential for meaningful application exists for churches struggling to achieve an adequate number of active men for ministry. The full extent of the impact of mentoring will unfold over time, but the immediate effects on relational dynamics are already proving to be significant. The fact that the church presently remains small in size bears no weight on the value already realized. As of the conclusion of the training, two of the participants actively sought to begin building relationships intergenerationally and pursued this connection with two younger men in the church. A benefit of the training includes additional conversations which enhanced the children's ministry to pursue a new program. At the time of this writing, the start of a children's ministry called the GBBC Kidz Club formally begun a summer camp program open to the community. High expectations and hopes already exist for the new ministry with promising engagement in the community.

### **Research Limitations**

Initially, a concern regarding the time constraint faced by the researcher in completing the data analysis existed. An uncertainty was present in assessing whether there would be sufficient time post-training to compile all the data. As stated in Chapter One of the research, a longitudinal study best serves to assess the data and determine the effectiveness of a mentoring program, but this mentoring project started without any participants and a limited view on

outcomes. A wealth of data characteristics existed during the extent of the project which were represented by more than numerical statistics. Critical information was shared through the weekly interactions with the participants and included personal testimony of comprehension of material and engagement with techniques. Engaging in daily data analysis proved advantageous and efficient for the collection and documenting of data. By analyzing the data daily, the researcher successfully devoted adequate time to invest alongside normal clerical duties. This approach allowed the researcher to establish a systematic method for coding, as well as formulating codes and themes, making the entire process comprehensible and manageable. Anyone seeking to engage in this research should allocate the time and space to collect, process, and store the data.

A selection bias existed with the purposeful nature of intending to impact the male leadership dynamic of the church, even though mentorship may include a basis for women serving in various roles of ministry that can benefit the church. Scripture makes clear the command for women to engage in mentorship (Titus 2:3-5), and as believers in Christ, these women are called (Rom 8:30). Priscilla serves as an admirable example of a woman in ministry in the early church with her husband. Priscilla and Aquila instruct Apollos (Acts 18:26) and hold a place for the church to gather and worship out of their own home (1 Cor 16:19). Although limited in scope, the activity of Phoebe (Rom 16:1) lends support to the value of women serving in the church and their worth to functional and effective ministries. The inclusion of women in certain church settings can bring significant benefits and enhance the overall effectiveness of their ministry. By incorporating women, churches may include a unique perspective and skill set to potentially complement and enrich existing dynamics. Women may offer fresh insights, nurturing qualities, and a different approach to leadership and service, which can contribute to a

more holistic and inclusive ministry experience for all members of the congregation. Susan Hunt writes, “Paul was smart enough to know that women need women to train them how to apply God’s Word to areas of our lives that are uniquely feminine.”<sup>9</sup> This intentional inclusion of women can foster a more diverse and balanced environment to promote a greater sense of unity and understanding within the church community. The decision to include male participants exclusively at GBBC was rationalized based on the necessity to enhance male engagement within the church community. The intentional restriction imposed on the study resulted in a challenge concerning the number of total participants included in the sample.

In addition to the issue of gender restriction, the project also faced a demographic challenge in terms of its generalizability. Specifically, the representation of certain ethnic and racial dynamics among male participants was limited due to the lack of diversity within the church community. This underrepresentation highlighted the need for a more inclusive approach to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's findings and implications.

### **Further Research**

The problem presented rests in the fact that spiritually mature men at GBBC lack the necessary skills and knowledge to mentor young adult men effectively in Christian leadership roles. The adult ministry within the church consists of individuals who find it challenging to embody confidently a lifestyle rooted in biblical principles and faith. In response to this challenge, an action research project was initiated with the aim of equipping spiritually mature men to serve as mentors to the upcoming generation of leaders through the implementation of a weekly leadership class. This project sought to provide a structured framework that would enable

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<sup>9</sup> Susan Hunt, *Spiritual Mothering: The Titus 2 Model for Women Mentoring Women* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 40.

participants to engage in spiritual disciplines thereby strengthening personal beliefs and practices while relying on the grace of God through prayerful communion. Through this initiative, participants not only learned to connect personal narratives with the overarching story of God in His Word but also experienced the joy of communal living and mutual support within the church community. The ultimate objective of the project included instilling confidence in spiritually mature men and empowering them to impact positively the lives of others by engaging with and nurturing the next generation of church leaders. The cultivation of character and the establishment of meaningful relationships were deemed crucial components in fostering self-assurance and effective mentorship within the church community. The process of mentoring shares similarities with various empowering processes including counseling, coaching, supervision, discipleship, and pastoral care.

One potential avenue for enhancing the quality of research lies in the expansion of the survey question scale to a larger seven-point range. This broader scale would allow for a more nuanced understanding of the extent to which participants agree with various statements. Additionally, researchers could explore the possibility of incorporating evaluation methods like those used in Psychology for assessing patient health with a particular focus on spiritual well-being. By emphasizing spiritual health, researchers can gain insights into the current state of spiritual discipline and health in relation to a specific time frame providing valuable information for further analysis and understanding. Determining the regularity of the activities could offer a more precise representation of the significance of spiritual discipline in the mentor's life thereby adding depth to their spiritual growth and development. These disciplines are formative as the instruction comes from God's Word and serves to edify the believer. Donald Whitney writes, "These Disciplines are not intended only for Christians with lots of spare time on their hands

(where are they?). Rather they are *the* God-given means by which busy believers become like Christ.”<sup>10</sup> The process serves as an important dynamic for those who are being equipped to lead the body of Christ in functional ministry. David Bartlett writes, “Paul urges Timothy to imitate him in two ways. First, he urges him to remember and follow the teachings that Paul entrusted to him. Second and equally important, Paul urges Timothy to model his way of behavior after that of Paul— his aim in life, his patience, love, and steadfastness.”<sup>11</sup> A thorough evaluation of the discipline in the life of each participant, from the onset, aids in providing a critical assessment by the conclusion of the engagement. Phil Newton concludes, “Jesus set the pattern: Spiritual leaders working through community train leaders who will shepherd, plant, and revitalize discipling communities, who replicate the same work.”<sup>12</sup> The value of the data should reflect the degree to which the lives of the participants bear the fruit of Christian virtue.

An approach to address this issue may include evaluating and assigning ratings to both the significance and frequency of relational activities. By comparing these ratings, insights can be gained concerning the potential variations in outcomes when entering one variable compared to the other in regression analyses. This method allows researchers to explore the potential impact of these variables on the results and provides a comprehensive understanding of their individual contributions.

Numerous studies previously focused on the effectiveness of mentoring; however, Christian mentoring requires a unique approach that considers the spiritual growth and development of the individual. This aspect of mentoring may require a longer period to cultivate and nurture because spiritual development involves guiding individuals in the faith journey and

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<sup>10</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 289.

<sup>11</sup> Thompson and Murchison, *Mentoring*, 30

<sup>12</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 18.

helping to deepen personal relationships with God. Christian mentoring provides a holistic process that encompasses the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of an individual's life. Christian mentoring involves creating a safe and supportive environment where individuals can explore their beliefs, values, and relationship with God. This type of mentoring requires patience, empathy, and a deep understanding of the individual's spiritual needs to facilitate meaningful growth and transformation. Comprehending these intricate dynamics underscores the necessity for experienced mentors to transform these strategies into educational experiences for their mentees, as well as chances to exhibit the transferable confidence to instruct that was previously absent.

Mentoring can result in a profound influence, extending beyond a mere program, and should be embraced as a cultural practice within the church. Dempsey and Earley write, “The goal of the mentor is to reproduce his life in his students. The goal of students is to model the life of their mentor.”<sup>13</sup> Fostering this mindset across all generations proves challenging but rewarding, as it plays a vital role in nurturing the growth and spiritual development of young adults as followers of Christ. By recognizing the significance of mentoring and implementing the practice as a cultural norm, the church may create an environment that supports and guides young Christians on the journey toward maturity and faith. The primary objective of this action research project included providing training to mature men spiritually within the church and enabling men to become effective mentors. The project aimed to address the lack of confidence and hesitation among these individuals for connecting with different generations. An emphasis included the importance of mature church members showcasing the wisdom and lifestyle of Christianity as outlined in scriptural discipleship. Leading by example was identified as a crucial factor in fostering a healthy environment for discipleship and overall church ministry.

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<sup>13</sup> Dempsey and Earley, *Spiritual Formation Is*, 37.

The factor of confidence, and those male participants who required training to overcome personal hesitancy, expresses a common problem for human nature. Craig Groeschel points readers to the truth that the fear of failure serves as a justification to avoid acting. Groeschel writes, “The way to beat fear of failure is to learn to internalize *God’s Philosophy of Failure*. . . . Failing is a part of life. In fact, it is often one of the most important ingredients in the stew of success. *You will fail*. The Bible says, ‘We all stumble in many ways’ (James 3:2).”<sup>14</sup> Christian mentors must engage in the act of embracing vulnerability and take the initiative to share openly from personal struggles and experience. Mentors generally experience a degree of grappling with mistakes to perform the role, and being transparent about the struggles with each mentee sets an example to follow. By patterning a good example, a connection may result for enabling the protégé to feel comfortable in reciprocating honesty. In the process of training spiritually mature mentors to gain confidence, the data lacks a substantial extent of variable difference to indicate the specific advantages gained from the training. The expansion of the survey design could account for a portion of this need associated with variable change providing more clarity to the degree of progress in spiritual disciplines. A longitudinal study accounts for more data and variables impacting the participants individual confidence in engaging with training new proteges.

### **Conclusion**

Christian mentoring involves the capacity to yield significant benefits through the act of investing in the lives of the upcoming generation by providing guidance toward a life centered on the gospel and characterized by spiritual discipline. The formidable obstacle encountered by GBBC stemmed from the task of cultivating a sense of assurance in spiritually developed

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<sup>14</sup> Craig Groeschel, *Dare to Drop the Pose: Ten Things Christians Think but Are Afraid to Say* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2010), 183.

individuals by enabling them to serve as proficient mentors in key positions within the church's ministries. Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington use a beneficial analogy concerning football that may provide inspiration for mentoring the next generation. Putman and Harrington write, "If you are a high school football player and you play for one school, then transfer to another school, you still play the game of football, but you are going to encounter a different playbook."<sup>15</sup> The task at GBBC extended beyond simply acquiring knowledge of a new playbook; the task involved creating a fresh playbook or approach for effectively connecting the church across different generations. The meticulously crafted program boosted the self-assurance of the attendees by fostering familiarity. By providing opportunities for interaction with others, a belief exists that individuals can experience growth and development, especially when they receive adequate support. Effective Christian mentoring necessitates a comprehensive grasp of biblical principles harmonized with tangible strategies for connecting with individuals.

An effective Christian mentoring program should integrate the specific goals and objectives that have been carefully outlined and planned for the program. Clear definitions are essential for the success of the program and must be incorporated into the overall structure and framework of the mentoring initiative. By aligning the program with the intended goals and objectives, participants can work toward achieving the desired outcomes and maximizing the impact of the mentoring experience. The study presents compelling evidence that a well-defined and easily comprehensible pathway plays a crucial role in fostering complete dedication and active involvement among all individuals involved. The primary goal of a Christian mentorship initiative clearly focuses on developing the qualities and attributes of Christ. This central objective underscores the importance of guiding individuals toward embodying the values and virtues exemplified by Jesus Christ in daily lives. By emphasizing the cultivation of Christ-like

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<sup>15</sup> Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *DiscipleShift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 223.



characteristics, Christian mentoring programs aim to nurture spiritual growth and encourage individuals to live out their faith in a meaningful and impactful way. This study functions as a communication to fellow congregations that the practice of mentorship has been shown to be a successful method in the process of guiding others and emulating the teachings of Jesus. Projects generally include an inception point of extreme importance, and the commencement starts with leaders who skillfully manage and oversee the undertaking and with the goal of fostering unity and inspiring others. The church currently benefits greatly from the connections between different generations that shape future involvement based on the progress made in this project. The final remarks act as an invitation to prioritize relationships over strict adherence to programming. Christian mentoring emphasizes the importance of human connection and interaction which lasts, and the mission will continue.

## APPENDIX A

**Consent to Participate**

**Title of the Project:** Equipping Spiritually Mature Men to Mentor the Next Generation

**Principal Investigator:** Seth Carter, Doctoral Candidate, School of Divinity, Liberty University

<b>Invitation to be part of a Research Study</b>
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You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a man who is a member of Glens Bay Baptist Church in good standing and who holds a leadership position (Deacon, Chairman of Committee, Member of Church Council, or Trustee). Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

<b>What is the study about and why is it being done?</b>
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The purpose of the study is to equip spiritually mature men to engage in mentoring the next generation as a tool of functional discipleship.

<b>What will happen if you take part in this study?</b>
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If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an in-person interview that will take no more than one hour.
2. Participate in a weekly class of instruction that is approximately one hour in length for nine weeks.
3. Complete a spiritual health survey.
4. On the last week of the class complete a final interview

<b>How could you or others benefit from this study?</b>
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The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include receiving education on discipleship and mentoring, instruction on spiritual formation, and activities that enhance one's communication and expression of the gospel to those in need.

Benefits to society include better-equipped biblical mentors who engage with proteges to enhance their biblical worldview and promote exceptional moral character as they engage with social, political, economic, and spiritual concerns.

<b>What risks might you experience from being in this study?</b>
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The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm oneself or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked filing cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

### Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as the Pastor at Glens Bay Baptist Church. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, data collection will be confidential. The researcher will know who participated but their personally identifiable information will be safeguarded. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

### Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

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

**Your Consent**

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

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

---

Printed Subject Name

---

Signature & Date

## APPENDIX B

## Recruitment Flyer

# Research Participants Needed

## Equipping Spiritually Mature Men to Mentor the Next Generation of Leaders

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Are you a man who is or has served in a leadership role in the church?

If you answered **yes** to each of the questions listed above, you may be eligible to participate in a research study.

The purpose of this research study is to equip spiritually mature men to become effective mentors to the next generation of leaders through a nine-week leadership course.

Participants will be asked to participate in a weekly course for nine weeks, complete an entry and exit survey on spiritual health, and complete a one-on-one interview.

Participants will have the direct benefit of an increasing level of biblical literacy and comprehension, whilst increasing in spiritual formative disciplines that empower them to become effective ministry mentors.

If you would like to participate, contact the researcher at the phone number or email address provided below.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey and will be given to you one week before the interview.

Seth Carter, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Please contact Seth Carter at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]**

## APPENDIX C

**Spiritual Health Survey**

For each of the questions below, circle the response that best characterizes how you feel about the statement.

**Characteristic 1: Service**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1. I have eagerly sought to serve in a local church ministry.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. I have often put others ahead of myself.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. I offer solutions and not only suggestions in ministry.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. I serve through evangelism.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. I example humility.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. I enjoy serving others.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. I do not seek to be gratified.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. I am not quarrelsome.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Total Points</b>					

**Characteristic 2: Biblical Literacy and Comprehension**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1. I meditate on Scripture regularly</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. I seek to memorize parts of the Word.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. I read the Scriptures daily.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. I desire to have a reason-based defense for my faith.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. I strive to only use correction when it is scripturally evident.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. I study beyond what is offered through church services.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. I desire in my heart to know God's instruction so that I may be less inclined to sin.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. I take pleasure in the knowledge of God's Word.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Total Points</b>					

**Characteristic 3: Obedient Submission**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1. I am not a drunkard/alcoholic.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. I trust that the Lord has a plan for my life.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. I have an active prayer life.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. I do not question my faith.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. I have a strong desire to share the gospel with others.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. I have felt peace in sorrow/tribulation.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. I am not a lover of money.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. I am not a liar.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Total Points</b>					



**Characteristic 4: Love**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1. I make an effort to see how others are doing.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. I do not use the Lord's name flippantly.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. I am generally an easygoing person.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. I am open to doing things differently than I had originally planned.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. I do not have jealousy of others' successes.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. I love people by gently providing scriptural correction(s).</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. I am not quick to boast about my accomplishments.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. I am patient with others even when they may be wrong.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Total Points</b>					

## APPENDIX D

**Confidential Interview Questionnaire**

	Question	Response
Question #1	Describe your ministry life and the spiritual markers along the way.	
Question #2	How has God used adversity to mature you?	
Question #3	How you have discipled people over the last three years?	
Question #4	Describe the spiritual disciplines and practices you are engaged in.	
Question #5	What evidence in your life and ministry validates spiritual maturity?	
Question #6	Are there any areas of your life that could be considered out of step with biblical standards?	
Question #7	How do you handle disagreement or conflict with someone in the church?	
Question #8	How would you describe the state of discipleship currently in the church?	
Question #9	Have you ever been taught the value of mentoring in discipleship?	
Question #10	What changes would you like to see occur at GBBC in discipling?	

## APPENDIX E

**Nine-Week Training Course Overview****Week One Training Outline****Platforms of Discipleship**

- I. Be**
  - a. Spiritual Health (Acts 2:42)**
  - b. Christlikeness (Eph 5:1, 1 Cor 11:1)**
  - c. Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)**
  
- II. Become**
  - a. Utilization of Gifts and Talents (Rom 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:7-11)**
  - b. Ministry Service (Eph 4:11-13)**
  
- III. Believe**
  - a. Spiritual Discipline (Prov 25:28, 1 Tim 4:8)**
  - b. Trusting in God (John 6:29)**
  
- IV. Belong**
  - a. Discipling and Mentoring (Matt 28:18-20)**
  - b. Understanding life in Christ (2 Cor 5:19)**

## **Week Two Training Outline**

### **Communicating with God (Prayer Focused Ministers)**

#### **I. Examples of Prayer as a ministry**

**a. Anna (Luke 2:36-38)**

**b. Epaphras (Col 4:12)**

**c. Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-5)**

**d. Daniel (Dan 9:3-4)**

#### **II. Qualities of Prayer Ministry**

**a. Supportive (Jas 5:13-16, Rom 15:30)**

**b. Reciprocal (2 Cor 9:13-15)**

**c. Inclusive (1 Thess 5:25, 1 Tim 5:5)**

#### **III. Attitudes of Prayer Ministries**

**a. Submission to God (Matt 6:8)**

**b. Surrender to God (Luke 22:42)**

**c. Persistence (Luke 11:1-11; 18:1-8)**

**d. Trust in God (Jas 1:5-7)**

**e. Obedience (1 John 3:22)**

**f. Thanksgiving (Phil 4:6)**

## **Week Three Training Outline**

### **Exercise for Spiritual Health (Biblical Intake)**

#### **I. Biblical Examples of Leadership**

**a. Moses as an Organizational Leader (Exodus 18 Review)**

**b. Casting God's Vision in ministry**

**i. David and Solomon (1 Chr 28:2-21)**

**ii. Elisha's Prayer (2 Kings 6:16-17)**

**iii. Trusting the Spirit (1 Cor 2:14, 2 Cor 4:4)**

**c. Community Revitalization (Nehemiah Review)**

**d. Church Organization and Training (Review Pastoral Epistles)**

#### **II. The Bible is Prescriptive for Leadership**

**a. God is the ultimate leader and calls believers to lead others (Matt 28:18-20)**

**b. Jesus taught leadership is service to others (Mark 10:35-45)**

**c. Obedience to God is Quality leadership (Matt 5:13-16)**

#### **III. Motivations for All Christian Leaders to Know the Scriptures**

**a. Truth Sets One Free from Satan (John 8:32; 44)**

**b. God's Word Conveys Grace and Peace (2 Pet 1:2)**

**c. Scripture Communicates Hope (1 Cor 13:12)**

**d. Christians are Expected to Keep It (2 Tim 2:15)**

**e. It is Eternal Life (Matt 4:4, John 3:16)**

## **Week Four Training Outline**

### **Reflective Living (Journaling for Progress)**

#### **I. Questions to ask**

- a. What are my mistakes?**
- b. How Can I Improve?**
- c. What am I Grateful for?**
- d. What might God think?**

#### **II. Journaling Habits (Be Mindful of 2 Cor 4:8-9)**

- a. Setting Weekly Goals**
- b. Stick with it**
- c. Bring the Gospel**
- d. Do not “Catch Up”**
- e. Keep it Simple**

#### **III. Spiritual Entries**

- a. Remembering God’s centrality (Ps 142)**
- b. Communicating Things of Importance (Phil 4:8)**
- c. Encouragement toward Meditation (Ps 1:2)**
- d. Recording Prayer (Ps 102:1, Phil 4:6-7)**

## **Week Five Training Outline**

### **A Life of Love and Empathy**

#### **I. What is Biblical Love?**

- a. Agape, Storge, Philia*
- b. The Greatness of Love (1 Cor 13:13)**
- c. Love Originates with God (1 John 4:7-8)**
- d. Love Conquers Sin (John 3:16, Rom 5:8, 1 Pet 4:8)**

#### **II. Empathy (Being Sensitive Toward Others)**

- a. The Good Samaritan – How to Define Empathy (Luke 10:25-37)**
  - i. Identify personal examples of “neighbors”**
  - ii. What are personal barriers that may affect helping someone?**
- b. The Golden Rule (Matt 7:12)**
  - i. Challenges to following the Golden Rule**
  - ii. Sharing of Personal Examples**

#### **III. Kindness**

- a. Giving of What one has (1 John 3:17)**
  - i. Finding ways to share material wealth**
  - ii. Caring for the needy (Matt 25:34-40)**
  - iii. How has the Lord cared for you? (1 Pet 5:7)**

## **Week Six Training Outline**

### **Communal Investment (Influencing Gift Use)**

#### **I. (Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:1-11)**

- a. What are Spiritual Gifts?**
- b. Who Gets them?**
- c. When do you receive them?**
- d. Does everyone get one? Or two?**
- e. Do Spiritual Gifts Continue?**

#### **II. Spiritual Aptitude Test**

- a. What am I good at?**
- b. What comes naturally to me?**
- c. What areas of service excite me?**
- d. What do others see in me? (hint: ask their opinion)**
- e. Trial and Error will prove assumptions (Jump into serving)**

#### **III. Guiding Principles (Matt 25:14-30)**

- a. Were the gifts evenly distributed?**
- b. What was the cause of the reward and punishment?**
- c. Does God factor others into your giftedness?**
- d. How does mentoring edify the church?**



## **Week Seven Training Outline**

### **Put it to the Test (From Protege to Next Gen Leader)**

#### **I. Christian Mentoring Action Plan**

- a. The focus of Christian mentoring (Prov 27:17, Titus 2:3-4, 2 Tim 2:2)**
- b. Accountability (Phil 4:9, Heb 13:7, Rom 12:10)**
- c. Straining Toward the Goal (2 Thess 1:3, Heb 11:6)**
- d. What might God think? (2 Cor 13:5-6, Heb 3:13)**

#### **II. Establish a Mentoring Culture**

- a. The biblical ideal supports a setting that is more than a program, but a sharing of mutual love and encouragement as a value, goal, and practice which is characterized by the lives lead.**
- b. Intention (John 15:16a)**
- c. Purpose (John 15:16b)**
- d. Humility (John 15:9; 15a)**
- e. Joy (John 15:11)**

#### **III. Following Christ's Example**

- a. Love Like Him (John 13:35)**
- b. How can I improve my Christian Relationships?**
- c. What opportunities are there to mentor/disciple another?**
- d. What obstacles are present?**

## **Week Eight Training Outline**

### **Prepared for Relationships (Building Foundations That Last)**

#### **I. Define Goals and specific needs**

- a. What obstacles are in the way?**
- b. Focus on needs: Skill Development, expansion of ministry**
- c. How can I overcome gaps and enhance opportunities**

#### **II. Mentor and Protégé Connections**

- a. Be an active listener**
- b. Meet consistently but not excessively**
- c. Have a structured accountability process (SMART goals)**
- d. Be a brain to pick, shoulder to cry on, and kick in the pants**
- e. Communicate early and often**

#### **III. Willingness and Commitment to Grow**

- a. Initiate Dialogue that probes into the difficult areas of personal growth.**
- b. Openly Communicate What Works and What Does Not.**
- c. Learn to Mentor as Protégé's (Mentor while being Mentored)**
- d. Mentor at the right level (Seeker, Young Believer, Solid Believer, Mentors).**

## **Week Nine Training Outline**

### **Connecting One's Story to the Gospel (Missions for Mission)**

#### **I. Effectiveness in Gospel Mentoring (1 Thess 2:1-8)**

- a. Overcoming Conflict by Pressing on**
- b. Appeal from Authenticity, not Deception**
- c. Seeking God's approval over man's**
- d. Loving the Family**

#### **II. Keys to Gospel Instruction (Deut 6:4-9)**

- a. Know God as Truth (v.4)**
- b. Love God Fully and Deeply (v.5-6)**
- c. Share the Truth of God (v. 7)**
- d. Live for God (v. 7-8)**
- e. Let your life be Marked by God (v. 8-9)**

#### **III. Be Intentionally Communal**

- a. Put On a New Identity (Col 3:9-12)**
- b. Exercise as the Body (Eph 4:11-16, 1 Cor 14:26)**
- c. Engage in Discipline Together (Heb 10:24-25, James 5:16)**
- d. Seek Reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18)**

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# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 20, 2023

Seth Carter  
Garry Graves

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY23-24-852 Equipping Spiritually Mature Men to Mentor the Next Generation of Leaders

Dear Seth Carter and Garry Graves,

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

**Decision: No Human Subjects Research**

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46.102(l).

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

**For a PDF of your IRB letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page.**

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair*  
**Research Ethics Office**