

A METHODICAL-PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP:
RETRIEVING WESLEY'S METHOD OF DISCIPLESHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
AMERICAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

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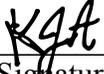
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ABSTRACT

As the Pentecostal church continues to develop its unique theology separate from a mere charismatic Christianity, a theology of discipleship and practical application will prove necessary to maintain the original spirit of early Pentecostalism and sustain the continued growth of the church. Examining the Wesleyan theological roots of Pentecostalism provides a crucial understanding of the practices and discipleship methods leading to the Latter Rain outpouring. Understanding the educational, immersive, and experiential component of discipleship during Jesus' time helps to frame the importance of prescribing certain practices and disciplines as means of cultivating holiness of heart. Retrieving some of the principles and practices of Methodism for the Pentecostal church offers a method of discipleship that aids disciples in developing a sensitivity and closeness to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This paper submits for consideration what the author calls a *methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship* along with a proposal of a limited number of disciplines to be instituted in a local church as a means of making disciples who make disciples.

Dedication

The following pages are dedicated to the Methodists who raised me, disciplined me, and encouraged me. I am grateful to my parents who were faithful in getting me to Sunday School and fostered my theological curiosities through open conversations. I want to thank the pastors, evangelists, professors, and friends who have spurred me on in my faith and encouraged me to refine the ideas that are laid out in the following thesis. Lastly, this thesis is dedicated to those who desire to cultivate a holiness of heart and see a move of the Holy Spirit in their church.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Thesis and the Task

It has been more than 100 years since William Seymour embarked on a pursuit of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with a concern for the manifestation of the Bible sign of speaking in tongues. Seymour, having been locked out of a holiness meeting because of his fervent advocacy of speaking in tongues, started a nightly prayer meeting located at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. Those nightly meetings quickly grew in attendance, requiring the need for a larger space.¹ It was those prayer meetings of the Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California that caused the golden bowls of Heaven to tip over showering the ragtag group of faithful believers with what was considered a *Latter Rain* outpouring.²

Pentecostalism can find its roots in the faithful gathering of believers for prayer meetings, like the one held on New Year's Eve 1899 in great anticipation and with expectation of what God would do on the Earth in the new millennia.³ As Christians began to experience this "latter rain" of the Holy Spirit, the formal development of Pentecostalism began. The Pentecostal understanding of the Latter Rain outpouring was directly associated with the Joel 2 prophecy as repeated by Peter in Acts 2:17– "And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams."⁴ Pentecostal theology grew rapidly as

¹ Benjamin Pugh, "The Wesleyan Way Entire Sanctification and Its Spin-Offs -- a Recurring Theme in Evangelical Devotion," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 38, no. 1 (January 2014), 16-17.

² Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 26-28.

³ University of Nottingham, "Why study the history of Pentecostalism with William Kay," June 23, 2015, 10:33, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40ey8mxRCCU>.

⁴ *HCSB Study Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible: God's Word for Life* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010). For the importance of Latter Rain imagery and influence upon Pentecostal identity, see Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009), chapter four.

doctrine emerged from several leaders outlining the points that defined Pentecostalism and its divergence from other Protestant theologies.⁵

Despite the relative infancy of Pentecostalism, this movement has quickly spread as a global renewal of the pentecostal spirit found in Acts 2.⁶ In practice, Pentecostalism is a deeply personal and experiential expression of the Christian faith. It calls the Church at large to the Great Commission: go to all peoples, preach the gospel, and heal the sick. The challenge facing the larger American church, including Pentecostals, is that knowledge and understanding of The Great Commission has become increasingly less common among churchgoers over the last two generations.⁷ Discipleship was one of Jesus' last concerns and lessons to His disciples as He instructed them to "make disciples" and promised to leave them with a teacher, the Holy Spirit.⁸ Yet, among U.S. Christians there is a serious lack of discipleship with only roughly one in four actively participating in being discipled and discipling someone else.⁹ Making disciples is not simply adding to Sunday's attendance numbers or enlarging a church's financial partners portfolio. Discipleship will include bringing people into community to become part of the body of Christ and the mission of His Church. However, discipleship is more than ensuring new attendees get "plugged in" to the outreach projects or the culture of the church. Discipleship is not just meeting for coffee or getting together for a pancake breakfast. Although, all of these activities support the faithful teaching and ministry commission found in Matthew 28. Discipleship necessarily happens in the context of community, just as it did with Jesus' disciples.

⁵ Dayton, 21.

⁶ Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 43.

⁷ Barna Group, "51% Of Churchgoers Don't Know of the Great Commission," Barna Group, March 27, 2018, <https://www.barna.com/research/half-churchgoers-not-heard-great-commission/>.

⁸ Matt. 28:16-20; Jn. 14:26

⁹ Barna Group, "Two in Five Christians Are Not Engaged in Discipleship," Barna Group, January 26, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/christians-discipleship-community/>.

A Christian disciple is one who pursues being made more like Christ and thereby is equipped to impact the world. Discipleship includes teaching others the Gospel through instruction, as well as by modeling obedience to Jesus' commandments by walking in accordance with the way He established for His followers.

Pentecostalism is still developing its unique theology rather than existing as merely an experiential, charismatic subset of evangelical Protestantism. Further study of its theological roots may continue to give a pathos and praxis to Pentecostalism that truly sets it apart from its theological siblings. Much like the First and Second Great Awakenings and the Latter Rain outpouring at Azusa Street, the Pentecostal church is in need of a revival, a reclamation, of a theology of discipleship that retrieves the original co-mission Christ gave His disciples, infuses it with the essential holiness theology necessary to effectively empower the church, and establishes a new method for teaching, training, equipping, and sending out followers of Jesus Christ. Pentecostalism sets itself up as the fulfillment of the promised Latter Rain outpouring while continuing the mission and experience of the New Testament Church.¹⁰ For this reason, it should give attention to the theological developments before it so as to find the roots of biblical truth that ground the theology in orthodoxy, orthopathos, and orthopraxis.¹¹

Kenneth Archer states: "Doing Pentecostal theology involves more than simply retrieving and restating or employing a revisionist historiography; it involves faithfully re-visioning our tradition in light of the Spirit and the Word."¹² Even a cursory look at the history of Pentecostalism will lead a person back to Methodism and John Wesley's holiness emphasis as some of the foundational and formative elements of the movement. Pentecostalism must retain

¹⁰ Kenneth J. Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness* (Eugene, OR: PICKWICK Publications, 2011), 32.

¹¹ Archer, 11-13.

¹² Archer, 5.

its experiential, everyperson aspect while establishing a clear theology of discipleship that emphasizes a holiness of heart. Given the historically evident influence of John Wesley and his “Methodism” on the development of the Pentecostal movement and its theological inception, what are the essential components of Pentecostal discipleship? Wesley’s method was effective in shaping believers’ affections and transforming their hearts. Pentecostalism, because of its emphasis on Spirit-baptism, necessarily requires a pneumatologically grounded theology of discipleship that operates under a foundation of discipline in order to continue advancing the message of the Full Gospel.¹³ Pentecostalism’s experiential faith requires a deeply experiential and intentional development of discipleship praxis. However, sound practice only really emerges out of holiness of heart, without it the motivation behind the action is not from changed affections, but from a deontological approach to Christianity. What the Pentecostal church needs is a *methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship* informed by Wesleyan soteriology and ecclesiology in order to make disciples who make disciples rather than a church that merely “saves souls” and increases their membership rolls.¹⁴

¹³ This thesis will operate under the presumption that the Full Gospel is fivefold with Jesus as Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit-Baptizer, Healer, and Soon Coming King. For the importance on retaining sanctification separate from Spirit-baptism, see Kenneth J. Archer, “The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church: Ecclesiastical Implications and Opportunities,” in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 7-43.

¹⁴ A “methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship” is a term used by this author to name a theology of discipleship which is informed by the Methodist idea of discipline as seen in “The Rules of The United Societies” and “Rules of the Bands” (see John Wesley, *John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1964), 177-181) and the pneumatologically grounded theology and emphasis on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit found in the well-spring of Pentecostalism. Therefore, a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship is one which offers a balance between strict adherence to discipline with the experiential leading of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of spiritual formation and sanctification unto Christlikeness.

Structure and Flow of the Argument

A methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship will aim to shape the affections of the heart in order to develop a sound and right way of talking about God and right actions that bear the evidence of salvation in their lives through intentional spiritual formation. This thesis will offer a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship for the American Pentecostal church through a Wesleyan lens. The objective is to trace the development of Methodism and American Holiness theology and retrieve the potency that remains in this theology for the American Pentecostal church in order to advance a theology of discipleship for a post-modern twenty-first century ecclesial body. Specifically, the value of Wesleyan theological concepts, practices, and contributions to the notion of sanctification will serve as the criteria for exploring a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship.

In order to present this theology of discipleship an overview of historical Methodism, including an examination of John Wesley's soteriology and ecclesiology, as well as some of the historical developments of Wesleyan theology in regard to Spirit-baptism and sanctification will first be addressed. A Pentecostal theology of discipleship requires a certain set of theological beliefs and practices. It must consider Scripture with special attention given to the New Testament's meaning and model for discipleship as presented by the life and ministry of Christ and His Apostles. Discipleship necessarily includes committing to follow the Teacher and so review will be given on the cost of being a disciple and making disciples. John Wesley's sermons regarding the teaching, training, and equipping of the saints will be examined. Wesley's method of discipleship will be reviewed, offering a kind of reframing and advancing of his emphasis and approach to Christian perfection. This will include examining Wesley's model of class meetings and bands for the purposes of discipleship. Lastly, this thesis will offer a

methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship by proposing the purpose of such a theology for the twenty-first century American Pentecostal church and a proposal of methodical-pentecostal disciplines for implementation in the church. Essential elements of discipleship and a practical ministry application will be offered, as well. Pentecostalism has operated as a kind of theological maverick for more than a century. It is time for a developed and intentional theology of discipleship that excites, encourages, and empowers Pentecostals for the works of mercy set before us in the twenty-first century. This thesis desires to contribute to the development of Pentecostal discipleship.

CHAPTER TWO

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE HOLINESS ENTHUSIASTS KNOWN AS METHODISTS

Introduction

The Pentecostal Latter Rain outpouring at the turn of the twentieth century emerged out of the Holiness Movement that had evolved from Wesley's Methodism. John Wesley's pietistic leanings provoked a passion, a fire in his heart, to see scriptural holiness ignited in his Methodist societies and spread abroad, thereby awakening hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the missional purpose of the Church. A methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship should include Wesley's vision for such an authentic community that trains, equips, and sends out believers empowered for service in the Kingdom of God.

John Wesley preached a "faith of assurance" that reframed an understanding of salvation as a present grace of God on the soul of a believer to effectuate justification and sanctification.¹ Wesley's soteriology was expounded upon later regarding entire sanctification, the role of the Holy Spirit in it, and the effect of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on it. With the spread of Methodism to America, Wesley's vision and theology began to take shape under the Wesleyan-Holiness movement.² As Methodists began to commit themselves in love to one another through weekly meetings, a Holiness revival emerged later giving way to Pentecostalism.³

For these reasons, a brief history of Methodism is essential to understanding how Wesley's theology crossed the ocean and eventually became the theological foundation of the early Pentecostal movement in America. It was Methodists who called for a renewal of Spirit Baptism in the Church and connected it to the notion of sanctification as a process. Wesley's

¹ John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 372-375.

² Dayton, 54.

³ Dayton, 65.

soteriology and ecclesiology offered a renewed Christian hope in the empowerment of Spirit-Baptism for Kingdom purposes.

The Wesleyan Heritage

The roots of the Pentecostal movement are firmly planted in the soil of Wesleyan theology.

Henry Knight argues that Pentecostalism sprang forth from Wesley's theology, claiming: "John Wesley developed a uniquely Protestant understanding of holiness and a dynamic view of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit which is taken up by all wings of the Holiness movement and from these continues Pentecostalism."⁴ One would be remiss to discuss Wesleyan theology without first discussing John's Wesley upbringing or his Christian experience. The son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, John and his siblings were raised firmly Anglican, but it was Susanna who had the greater influence on John's thinking about our God and his methodism more than his ordained father. Both John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, received intentional Christian discipleship from their mother, Susanna. Her faith and faithfulness in raising her children, as well as her enduring relationship and influence on John clearly shaped the trajectory of John's life and ministry.

Susanna Wesley famously bore nineteen children and she ran the Wesley home at Epworth with strict discipline. John was among the youngest of the family born Susanna's fifteenth in June of 1703.⁵ John's father, Samuel, although the actual rector of the Epworth parish, was often absent and in his stead, Susanna provided pastoral care to the congregation. Kenneth J. Collins describes Susanna's efforts as responding to the people's needs by providing

⁴Henry H. Knight, "From Aldersgate to Azusa: Wesley and the Renewal of Pentecostal Spirituality," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, no. 8 (1996), 83.

⁵ Kenneth J. Collins, *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 10-11.

kitchen prayer services at night. These common gatherings offered fellowship, prayer, singing, and Scripture.⁶ The events of these services surely had an impact on the young Wesley children, especially John and Charles as these same activities were initially adopted by “The Holy Club” the brothers founded at Christ Church in Oxford.⁷

While Susanna provided education in the home, by the age of ten John was off to London to receive a more formal academic education.⁸ He excelled in his studies and began to pursue ordination in the Church of England at the age of twenty-two.⁹ In 1725, John became convicted of the need for something more than nominal Christianity. His experiences at Charterhouse in London and Christ Church led to the longing for a transformation of his heart in respect to religion rather than simply practicing the rote outward works he observed.¹⁰ A holy dissatisfaction arose in John Wesley toward the emphasis on deontological expressions of religiosity. John began to understand the teleological purpose of the Christian religion as developing Christlikeness in the believer through the transformation of one’s appetites and affections. For Wesley, this required a self-sacrifice of the will. He saw Christianity as a disciplined life wholly devoted to the unbidden will of God, which can only come about through right affections toward the Holy One.¹¹ The challenge for John was the development of right affections—there was a disconnect between the ideal of holiness John believed and the outward evidence of its effect on his heart.¹²

⁶ Collins, 15.

⁷ Collins, 30.

⁸ Collins, 16.

⁹ Collins, 21.

¹⁰ Collins, 22-23.

¹¹ Collins, 24.

¹² Collins, 51.

John's Anglican sensibilities gave him an appreciation for the spiritual disciplines and, along with his friends at Christ Church, he intentionally pursued holiness.¹³ The group once known at Oxford as The Holy Club would later develop into what would be known as Oxford Methodism. While the group of friends held to a disciplined and methodical rigor of attention to holiness, its simple purpose was to uphold scriptural Christianity and cultivate right affections through works of piety such as prayer, Bible study, and receiving the Eucharist.¹⁴ Although he was convinced of the need for holiness, John still needed a revelation of his own salvation, an assurance of faith. This became obvious to him in 1735 while on his missionary assignment to the Georgia colony in America. John encountered a group of Moravians aboard the *Simmonds* during his voyage whose response to storms they faced had a profound impact on his faith.¹⁵ Once John reached Georgia, the Moravian pastor August Spangenberg provoked John to examine his faith, his confidence in and assurance of his salvation. Spangenberg inquired of the young Anglican priest: "Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?"¹⁶ These questions remained with John as he developed a desire for a faith defined by "a sure trust and confidence in God."¹⁷

Wesley returned to England a little over two years later with the recognition that while he had gone to make disciples of the Georgian Indians, he was himself unconverted in some way.¹⁸ Whatever Wesley meant by this observation, whether actual conversion or not, it is clear throughout his self-examination in his journaling that this missionary journey offered a second crisis of faith—the first being in 1725 upon his revelation of a need for holiness. John's

¹³ Knight, "From Aldersgate to Azusa: Wesley and the Renewal of Pentecostal Spirituality," 83.

¹⁴ Collins, 30-33.

¹⁵ Collins, 40-41.

¹⁶ John Wesley, *A Longing for Holiness: Selected Writings of John Wesley*, ed. Keith Beasley-Topliffe (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1997), 21.

¹⁷ John Wesley, *John Wesley*, 49.

¹⁸ Wesley, *A Longing for Holiness*, 28.

encounters with Spangenberg and later with Peter Böhler inspired him to pursue an experience of faith, an encounter with God beyond what Wesley knew through Scripture, Anglican tradition, or his rational education.¹⁹ In January 1738, John journaled that he desired a confident assurance of faith freed from doubt.²⁰

John Wesley had the experience he was looking for on Aldersgate Street, May 24, 1738.

It is clear in the way about which John writes of his experience that this moment was a significant turning point for the young preacher. He wrote the following in his journal:

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change that God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation. And an assurance was given to me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.²¹

The initial impact of John's Aldersgate experience was significant in his understanding of the assurance which his Moravian friends had emphasized. Wesley's involvement with the Moravians had a deep impact on the development of his theology on assurance of faith, the doctrine of sanctification, and Methodism's commitment to holiness. John visited the Moravians in Germany in the autumn of 1738 as he continued his attempts to understand for himself the meaning of his encounter on May 24th.²² However, his relationship with the Moravians and the influence of their reformed theology faded quickly after his visit to Hernhut as he became disillusioned with their absolutism.²³

While there is scholarly debate on Aldersgate's importance as a conversion experience for Wesley, it takes its place of significance in the assurance it brought to Wesley of his faith in

¹⁹ Wesley, *A Longing for Holiness*, 35.

²⁰ Wesley, *John Wesley*, 49-50.

²¹ Wesley, *John Wesley*, 66.

²² Richard P. Heitzenrater, "Great Expectations: Aldersgate and the Evidences of Genuine Christianity," in *Aldersgate Reconsidered*, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1990), 66-69.

²³ Heitzenrater, "Great Expectations: Aldersgate and the Evidences of Genuine Christianity," 69-71.

Christ.²⁴ Moreover, it marks the beginning of Wesley's development of a definitive Methodist theology. Richard Heitzenrater offers that Aldersgate's significance for Wesley is found not just in the place in time along his spiritual journey and formation, but in its impact on his understanding of faith and salvation.²⁵ He summarizes the importance of Aldersgate for John Wesley in one way as this:

It is the point in his spiritual pilgrimage at which he experiences the power of the Holy Spirit and at which his theology is confronted by a dynamic pneumatology. From that point on, the Holy Spirit has a central role in Wesley's definition of the "true Christian," his understanding of how one becomes a Christian, and his explanation of how one knows he or she is a Christian.²⁶

The experience of May 24, 1738 introduced a fourth dimension for Wesley in understanding the Christian faith—experience itself. That remains one of the defining aspects of Wesleyan-Holiness theology: Christianity is an experiential faith.²⁷

Wesleyan Soteriology

Wesley remained consistent with his Anglican sensibilities in affirming the primacy of Scripture in that it should be the ruling authority by which doctrine is governed.²⁸ Wesley, truly a product of his upbringing and his place in history, maintained reason and tradition as additional criteria for judging doctrinal claims.²⁹ However, it was Wesley's emphasis on experience that made his theology different in judging doctrine. He gave place to the value of daily experience in

²⁴ Randy L. Maddox, "Aldersgate: A Tradition History," in *Aldersgate Reconsidered*, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1990), 146.

²⁵ Wesley, *John Wesley*, 52.

²⁶ Heitzenrater, "Great Expectations: Aldersgate and the Evidences of Genuine Christianity," 90.

²⁷ W. Stephen Gunter, "Aldersgate, the Holiness Movement, and Experiential Religion," in *Aldersgate Reconsidered*, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1990), 123.

²⁸ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1994), 36-37.

²⁹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 40-44.

confirming doctrines.³⁰ Wesley employed experience as evidence in places where he offered a new understanding of certain doctrines. He also took experience to be a way of testing interpretations or traditional understandings. For Wesley, experience quickens a reexamination of preconceptions about Christian doctrines.³¹

Among the defining doctrines of Methodism is his practical approach to soteriology and the presence of *Prevenient Grace*. Prevenient Grace involves an initial, preventative removal of inherited guilt through Christ for the purposes of healing the human soul's ability to properly sense and respond to the Almighty as God Himself invites humanity back into the relationship He intended at Creation.³² The separation from God that occurred in the Garden effectuated an inherited trauma on humanity introducing a crippling disease of the soul that has corrupted our moral compass.³³ Prevenient Grace resolves this problem.

Prevenient Grace is available to all because Jesus made atonement for sin and the Holy Spirit is at work to prepare what is void for the presence of God. The Holy Spirit was present to bring about Creation from the formless and dark emptiness which was void of the presence of God.³⁴ He came alighting upon the surface of the endless void to foster the work of God and to redeem the space that would resist God's presence, but instead received creative life as it had been prepared in advance by the Spirit's brooding. God redeems what is dark and void of His presence in order to bring about life. This is Prevenient Grace; it redeems and restores life to humanity, enabling us to be sensitive again to the presence of God in our lives as He works to

³⁰ John Wesley, "Original Sin," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 329.

³¹ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 46.

³² Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 90.

³³ "The moral shock suffered by us through our mighty break with the high will of heaven has left us all with a permanent trauma affecting every part of our nature. There is disease both in ourselves and in our environment." A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 1961), 103.

³⁴ "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." Gen. 1:2 HCSB

transform and heal our sin sick soul.³⁵ Prevenient Grace works as a healing salve on the spiritual eyes of humanity. It awakens our spiritual senses, delivers us from the bondage of sin, and makes possible the transformation of our affections through the work of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ Humanity's ability to respond to God is because Prevenient Grace reintroduced God's Presence to our spirit's senses.³⁷ For Wesley, God's grace and the offer of salvation is indeed resistible because the human will has been healed through Prevenient Grace and can now choose to receive or resist rather than be held in bondage to inbred sin continuing to rebel against God.³⁸

Wesley defined salvation as "the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory."³⁹ The "instantaneous and gradual" nature of salvation for Wesley is attributable to the two inseparable components which he identified as: justification and sanctification.⁴⁰ Salvation itself is a grace, but justification requires faith in order to be received.⁴¹ It is the initial instantaneous forgiveness of sins received by faith. Justification is the effectuation of the atonement.⁴² Sanctification is the post-justification work that begins immediately to transform the believer's tempers and affections to make them more like Christ. The impartation of sanctification occurs in an instant and simultaneously requires maturation to see the full realization of it fulfilled in the life of a Christian believer. It includes a process of an

³⁵ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 82.

³⁶ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 87.

³⁷ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 107.

³⁸ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 93.

³⁹ John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 372.

⁴⁰ John Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 488-489.

⁴¹ "Faith therefore is the *necessary* condition of justification. Yea, and the *only necessary* condition thereof." John Wesley, "Justification By Faith," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 119.

⁴² "The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he 'showeth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of the sins that are past.'" John Wesley, "Justification By Faith," 115.

“already, not-yet” nature whereby there is a reality that is true, but not yet fully manifest.⁴³ The Wesleyan notion of sanctification involves a second work of grace by the Spirit to release us from inward sins and replace them with right affections.⁴⁴

Wesley refined his doctrine of “entire sanctification” over his life, eventually conceiving of it as something which at first could be fleeting, but over time could become more consistent as one became transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ In other words, one becomes increasingly quicker to respond in a perfect Christ-like manner until the moment when it is the natural response. The availability of entire sanctification encourages believers to allow and partner with the work of the Spirit to be holy and perfect like their heavenly Father. For Wesley, there was no separation of salvation from holiness. To be “saved” would be to be made holy as our heavenly Father is holy. That holiness or movement toward Christian perfection is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

This is Wesley’s notion of *Christian perfection*. Christian perfection is the transformative power of the Holy Spirit working in the heart of the believer, not the sanctimonious efforts of so-called pious people.⁴⁶ Wesley defined and refined his definition throughout his life, finally offering this definition:

By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbour, ruling our tempers, words, and actions. I do not include an impossibility of falling from it, either in part or in whole... And I do not contend for the term *sinless*, though I do not object against it.⁴⁷

⁴³ Knight, 87.

⁴⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 176

⁴⁵ E. Dale Dunlap, “Tuesday Meetings, Camp Meetings, and Cabinet Meetings: A Perspective on the Holiness Movement in the Methodist Church in the US in 19th Century,” *Methodist History* XIII, no. 3 (April 1975), 103, <https://archives.gcah.org/handle/10516/3020>.

⁴⁶ Knight, 84-85.

⁴⁷ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, (Orlando, FL: Relevant Books, 2006), 149.

Ultimately, Wesley's theology of sanctification is about the possibility and the assurance of faith that people can be made like Christ, being restored to the *imago Dei*, having consistent, persistent, and perfect victory over the sin-sick nature.⁴⁸ For Wesley, the ongoing work of sanctification, Christian perfection, was a separate work of grace through the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹

Wesleyan Ecclesiology

John Wesley established a method of discipleship intended to advance holiness and Christian perfection. His ecclesiology can be seen through his commitment to works of piety and the methodical approach he established in his Methodist societies. These were the result of Wesley's theology on Christian perfection. Wesley believed that grace was essential to holiness and that it is a believer's responsive participation that welcomes God's sanctifying work.⁵⁰ He believed practicing works of piety were a way for Christians to participate in and respond to the sanctifying work of the Spirit.⁵¹ "Wesley understood the means of grace to be practices through which God's pardoning and empowering Presence is truly communicated to us for the healing of our sin-diseased nature, as well as exercises that co-operantly nurture this healing."⁵² The sanctifying means of grace included the Eucharist, corporate worship, communal support, accountability, personal disciplines, and works of mercy.⁵³

Our affections and tempers are tested by the presence of one another in community since Christian perfection is marked by love for neighbor, such that "all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love."⁵⁴ Christians mature and are perfected through sanctification,

⁴⁸ Pugh, 21.

⁴⁹ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 141-143.

⁵⁰ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 148.

⁵¹ Knight, 86.

⁵² Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 201-202.

⁵³ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 202-216.

⁵⁴ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 49.

and it is often due to encounters with others who are themselves in their own process of sanctification. The friction between two believers in community provides essential material for the Spirit to refine each person. Wesley encouraged membership in his Methodist societies and participation in smaller groups both for Christian fellowship and for accountability. He understood sanctification as a second work of grace and believed growing in this grace was best cultivated by the means of genuine relationships.⁵⁵ The Fruit of the Spirit bears witness of the sanctifying work of the Spirit, but it is truly made evident within the context of community. All the Fruits (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control) will be tested for their genuineness by the presence of other people. Sanctification cannot take place in a vacuum void of real human connection and the sometimes messy relationships that result.

In order to assist in the development of the right affections, or *orthopathy* as it has come to be known, Wesley established Methodist societies committed to spiritual disciplines.⁵⁶ In 1739, John Wesley wrote the rules of his Methodist societies and defined them in this way: “Such a society is no other than a company of persons having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love that they may help each other to work out their salvation.”⁵⁷ Within a Methodist society Wesley created *class meetings* to aid in the intentional discipleship of society members. Class meetings consisted of leadership from a spiritually mature member and roughly twelve individuals in need of discipleship and spiritual formation. Leaders assisted the preachers

⁵⁵ Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 61.

⁵⁶ For more on the term “orthopathy”, see Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010).

⁵⁷ Wesley, *John Wesley*, 178.

in caring for the spiritual needs of the members through weekly visits and offering counsel as appropriate.⁵⁸

Wesley also established what he called *bands*, which practiced certain disciplines and fostered opportunities for experience and encounter with the Holy Spirit leading to assurance of faith and sanctification.⁵⁹ The bands were an essential component of Methodism. What took place in those meetings cultivated a culture of confession and encouragement thereby directing others toward a holiness of heart and the Christian perfection Wesley espoused.⁶⁰ These bands were built around members who shared a certain degree of “assurance of God’s pardoning Presence” and since there was no hierarchy of leadership they developed mutual accountability among themselves.⁶¹ Wesley encouraged his fellow Methodists to be faithful attendees of society, class, and band meetings stating the importance of community: “the private weekly meetings for prayer, examination, and particular exhortation, has been the greatest means of deepening and confirming every blessing that was received by the word preached, and of diffusing it to others, who could not attend the public ministry.”⁶² Methodist discipleship was most certainly about teaching and instructions but it was also about experience and participation with one another in partnership with God to see each other go on to Christian perfection.

Methodism Matures

As Wesleyan theology continued to grow through the faithful study of Scripture by Methodist men and women engaging the text through the Anglican concepts of tradition and reason along

⁵⁸ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 212-213.

⁵⁹ Kevin M. Watson, “Forerunners of the Early Methodist Band Meeting,” *Methodist Review: A Journal of Wesleyan and Methodist Studies* 2 (December 10, 2010): 30-31, <https://www.methodistreview.org/index.php/mr/article/view/34>.

⁶⁰ Watson, 31.

⁶¹ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 213.

⁶² John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 49.

with Wesley's incorporation of experience, a Holiness movement sprang up. This ideology provoked further thought on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and its place within the lives of Christians by Wesley's followers, including John Fletcher and Phoebe Palmer. Holiness leaders began anticipating the blessing of a Holy Spirit renewal—a new Pentecost. They developed Wesley's theology of sanctification and began to incorporate an understanding of Holy Spirit Baptism as essential to the transformative work of entire sanctification. With the spread of Methodism to America, Wesley's vision and theology began to take shape under the Wesleyan-Holiness movement.⁶³ As Methodists began to commit themselves in love to one another through weekly meetings, a Holiness revival emerged later giving way to Pentecostalism.⁶⁴

The Holiness movement focused on Christian perfection as accomplished through the transformative experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Holiness teachers after Wesley expounded upon Christian perfection by identifying entire sanctification with Spirit Baptism.⁶⁵ This was initially the work of John Fletcher, whom Wesley himself endorsed in his use of the phrase “baptism with the Holy Spirit” as synonymous with the notion of entire sanctification.⁶⁶ Fletcher was one of the earliest theologians to connect the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost with the doctrine of entire sanctification.⁶⁷ John Fletcher also spoke of the idea of multiple infillings of the Holy Spirit and this kind of understanding of Spirit Baptism lends itself nicely to the

⁶³ Dayton, 54.

⁶⁴ Dayton, 65.

⁶⁵ Samuel Morgan Powell, “The Theological Significance of the Holiness Movement,” *Quarterly Review* 25, no. 2 (2005): 129.

⁶⁶ Laurence W. Wood, “Pentecostal Sanctification in Wesley and Early Methodism,” *Pneuma* 21, no. 1 (1999): 274.

⁶⁷ Jennifer A. Miskov, “Missing Links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and Holiness Roots within Pentecostalism,” *PentecoStudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* 10, no. 1 (2010): 13.

ongoing, continual process of Christian perfection.⁶⁸ The Holiness Movement shifted entire sanctification as the penultimate moment of Christian maturity to the foundation for it.⁶⁹

The Holiness movement continued to mature throughout the 1800s. Since it initially maintained Wesley's theology on holiness and piety, the Holiness movement was received well by Methodists as a renewal of this disciplined heart religion. The Holiness Revival of the mid-1800s marked a turn in religious experience and expression. Most notably the influence of Phoebe Palmer and her Tuesday meetings changed Methodism and the doctrine of sanctification significantly. Palmer's work on sanctification and her influence on Holiness theology is critical to understanding American Holiness history and by extension, Pentecostalism. She connected the grace of sanctification with Holy Spirit Baptism and insisted on this pneumatological theology of sanctification as fully Methodist.⁷⁰ Palmer is described as "the missing link between Methodist and Pentecostal spirituality."⁷¹

Sarah Langford and her sister, Phoebe Palmer, began their Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness in August 1835 joining together two women's prayer groups out of the New York City revival from 1832.⁷² The Tuesday meetings spread and such gatherings became the seedbed for further revival.⁷³ The sisters had the unique distinction as legacy converts of John Wesley—their father, Henry Worrall, was converted and became a Methodist under the preaching of John Wesley.⁷⁴ True to the methodical and disciplined nature of Methodism, these Holiness meetings went on for 40 years in the Palmer home.⁷⁵ The meetings, originally held for

⁶⁸ Henry H. Knight, "Shapers of Early Methodism: John Fletcher," accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.catalystresources.org/shapers-of-early-methodism-john-fletcher/>.

⁶⁹ Powell, 131.

⁷⁰ Dayton, 88.

⁷¹ Knight, 88.

⁷² Dunlap, 86.

⁷³ Miskov, 10.

⁷⁴ Dunlap, 87.

⁷⁵ Miskov, 10.

women only, quickly opened to include men and extended beyond Methodist congregants.⁷⁶

Despite being raised a Methodist, it was not until 1837 that Phoebe Palmer accepted the doctrine of entire sanctification and another two years until what is described as her own “experience of entire sanctification.”⁷⁷

Palmer taught a theology of claiming and appropriating the gifts of salvation and sanctification by grace to initiate instantaneous sanctification.⁷⁸ She expressed it succinctly in *Entire Devotion to God*: “If you seek it by faith, seek it as *you are*; and if as *you are*, then expect it *now!*”⁷⁹ Palmer taught this “now” doctrine of sanctification as one of essential immediacy for Christian living.⁸⁰ She found this way to be quicker or, rather, “the shorter way” whereby one could commit to a life of holiness and obtain Christian perfection through the appropriation of faith and consecration.⁸¹ Palmer also moved Wesley’s notion of perfection from literal complete fulfillment to more of a heart matter involving “‘right willing’, right motives, and holiness.”⁸² She introduced what is known as *altar theology* wherein the Christian believer is sanctified in three stages: the commitment of setting oneself apart, faith, and testimony.⁸³ In *The Way of Holiness*, she described it in a moment of revelation when she realized that the consecration and the beginning of sanctification is about the faithfulness of God to His promises.⁸⁴ So for Palmer holiness, sanctification, and perfect love all become connected with the altar experience of

⁷⁶ Miskov, 10.

⁷⁷ Dunlap, 87.

⁷⁸ Melvin E. Dieter, “The Wesleyan/Holiness and Pentecostal Movements: Commonalities, Confrontation, and Dialogue,” *Pneuma* 12, no. 1 (1990): 13.

⁷⁹ Amy G. Oden, ed., *In Her Words: Women's Writings in the History of Christian Thought* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 285.

⁸⁰ Miskov, 14.

⁸¹ Powell, 127.

⁸² Miskov, 11-12.

⁸³ Miskov, 12.

⁸⁴ Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness, With Notes by the Way* (Charleston, SC: BiblioLife, 2009), 22.

salvation and describe any believer who has so prostrated themselves before the altar of the Lord.⁸⁵

Christian perfection became about a second work of grace in the believer's life that Palmer identified with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁶ Although initially Palmer taught a more Christologically centered theology of sanctification, by 1857 she was using a pneumatologically informed sanctification known as "baptism by the Holy Ghost."⁸⁷ Palmer's efforts to connect sanctification with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit necessarily led to the notion that Spirit Baptism is for Christian empowerment.⁸⁸ For her, as Christians seek holiness in their lives the response from Heaven is empowerment through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Palmer believed this is what happened during the first Pentecost and what happened during the Revival of 1857.⁸⁹ She is described as increasingly using Pentecostal language in connection with sanctification, clearly paving the way for a Spirit-renewal and Pentecostal latter rain.⁹⁰ With sanctification through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit came not just power itself, but a useful empowerment for Christian service.⁹¹

Palmer's understanding of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for transformative power clearly led to the Pentecostal idea on empowerment for service and connects it to the Pentecostal understanding of the purpose of sanctification.⁹² Samuel Powell explains the shift of the second work of grace well: "Justification brought one into a saving relationship with God, but

⁸⁵ Palmer, 23.

⁸⁶ Knight, 88-89.

⁸⁷ Dunlap, 88.

⁸⁸ Miskov, 13.

⁸⁹ Miskov, 13.

⁹⁰ Miskov, 14.

⁹¹ Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 30.

⁹² Miskov, 13.

sanctification was a distinct and instantaneous work of God's grace subsequent to justification.”⁹³ Holiness theology continued to develop an understanding of some of the limitations that mercy and grace placed on the demand for Christian perfection. Namely, entire sanctification and Palmer's instantaneous appropriation still required both grace and mercy be applied when a Christian with deeply formed sin patterns still wrestled with such actions.⁹⁴

Those from the Holiness movement began to separate themselves from Methodism, but it was Methodists who continued to preach and publish teachings on the Holy Spirit. William H. Boole proclaimed, “the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a positive, specific, conscious instantaneous experience. Here we stand or fall—Methodism stands or falls. Our church has taught no other doctrine from the beginning.”⁹⁵ Although Holiness Pentecostals began to shift the identifying language of their theology from Methodist to Pentecostal, they remained inherently Wesleyan. As discussions continued around a renewal of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, anticipation and excitement built around Christ's own promise that the disciples would be equipped with power.

As the United States entered the Civil War, the nuanced differences widened the gap and it became obvious that those of the Holiness movement were no longer wholly in alignment with the Methodists.⁹⁶ “There is a sense, then, in which the turn to a more experiential and ‘spiritual’ mood of Holiness prepared the way for the more Pentecostal style, and the latter may well be viewed as an extension and radicalization of that earlier shift, perhaps accentuated by the apocalyptic experience of the Civil War.”⁹⁷ Due to Palmer's influence, the Holiness movement largely lost Wesley's “already, not yet” theory of entire sanctification, but maintained a desire

⁹³ Powell, 137.

⁹⁴ Powell, 136.

⁹⁵ Dayton, 90.

⁹⁶ Dunlap, 102.

⁹⁷ Dayton, 76.

for holiness both in heart and living in addition to a doctrine of the Holy Spirit's transformative power.⁹⁸

Summary

John Wesley's soteriology became trinitarian as he introduced the notion that salvation as a free gift from God the Father was characterized by two separate works of grace: Justification through Jesus and Sanctification through the Holy Spirit. The Methodist ecclesiology, however, is formed around the methodical, disciplined, intentional pursuit of holiness of heart within a community. Since Wesley saw holiness as regarding the right affections of the heart, he connected it to the Spirit's work of sanctification to cleanse, heal, and transform the heart so as to become holy. The Wesleyan idea of Christian perfection necessarily involves the work of the Holy Spirit to be made perfect. As such, Wesley's method involved orthopathy. The spiritual formation Wesley hoped to accomplish in his Methodist societies needed to include right talking and thinking about God and the right missional, obedient action, but that would first require a change of heart, Christian perfection, that would transform the appetites and affections of the soul.⁹⁹

Wesley laid the foundation for a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship through his soteriology and the structure of his Methodist societies. Spiritual formation through class meetings and bands needed to include the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; it had to be pneumatological because it required the work of the Spirit to accomplish entire sanctification. What began in John Wesley's life as the simple pursuit of an assurance of faith led him to

⁹⁸ Knight, 88.

⁹⁹ Laurence W. Wood, *Pentecost & Sanctification in the Writings of John Wesley and Charles Wesley with a Proposal for Today* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2018), 255.

Aldersgate Street where he experienced the Holy Spirit's presence at work in his heart as it was so strangely warmed even in the face of his begrudging attendance that night. Through Wesley's teaching on holiness a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship emerges.

CHAPTER THREE

SCRIPTURAL CALL OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

“Go, therefore, and make disciples...” this is the Great Commission and what is commonly thought of when Christians speak about discipleship.¹ While the fulfillment of the Great Commission is an essential part of Christian discipleship, it is not where discipleship first begins for believers. Instead, discipleship begins with Christ’s call to “Follow Me.”² It continues with Jesus’ later instructions to “Take up My yoke, and learn from Me.”³ Discipleship will necessarily include the cost of laying down other aspects of one’s previous life before committing to the teacher and submitting to the mission and the path established. Disciples adopt the mantle of their teacher as their own and follow in the teacher’s footsteps. Jesus’ disciples are encouraged to embrace Jesus’ way of life and in doing so learn from him.⁴ Discipleship is costly. It involves counting the cost and paying the price of sacrifice. It involves personal discipline and labor.

As we see in Jesus’ ministry, discipleship is not about scholarship, it’s about sonship—it’s about becoming children of God who look like the heavenly Father. Becoming a Christian disciple is far less about head knowledge than heart knowledge and the changing of one’s affections. Discipleship is the pursuit of Christian perfection to be renewed in the *imago Dei* in which humanity was created. Discipleship in Jesus’ ministry displayed Christ’s concerns with the inward condition of people’s hearts more than the outward displays of piety according to customs and the Law. John Wesley wrote, “...outward religion is nothing worth without the

¹ Matt. 28:19 HCSB

² See Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20

³ Matt. 11:29 HCSB

⁴ M. J. Wilkins, “Disciples and Discipleship,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 203.

religion of the heart...that, therefore, external worship is lost labour without a heart devoted to God.”⁵ Christian discipleship includes the separating of oneself unto God to worship Him only, not with outward acts, but in spirit and truth. Jesus called all His disciples to action, imitation, and transformation. What we find in the New Testament is that discipleship includes *a posteriori* knowledge of learning by experience. It is not enough to simply follow Jesus around. His disciples were required to take up His life and do as they saw Him do, just as He imitated the Father; so too, we are called to be sons and daughters who walk in the likeness of Christ.

Jesus' Method of Discipleship

One of the most distinguishing marks of Jesus' discipleship process in the New Testament is His personal call of His disciples to follow Him. The Gospel accounts tell us it is Jesus who encourages His first disciples to take on the new life of learning from Him. While Jesus is identified as a teacher, *rabbi*, this dynamic between a teacher and pupil typically involved the student choosing under whom they would like to study. However, the most progressive of teachers were known to personally choose who would be their disciple(s).⁶ This is Jesus—the revolutionary Rabbi who teaches a new way.

Jesus' call to “Follow Me” was a literal call to discipleship. The Greek word associated with the idea of discipleship is a verb, *μανθάνω* (*manthánō*), meaning “learn; find out, discover; learn by experience; attend a rabbinic school.”⁷ A participant of such an experience, the student, would be considered a disciple of that teacher, a *μαθητής* (*mathētēs*).⁸ This dynamic between

⁵ John Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 159.

⁶ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament. Vol. Second Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 55.

⁷ *The Greek New Testament*, Fifth Revised Edition with Dictionary (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014), 113.

⁸ *The Greek New Testament*, 112.

student and teacher was common in the ancient world during Jesus' time. The original structure of discipleship was formal scholarship. Ancient Greek philosophers were some of the first initiators of institutional education whereby a master teacher "imparted virtue and knowledge to the disciple through a paid educational process."⁹ These disciples would learn by believing in and practicing the way of the teacher in the strictest sense.¹⁰ To put it another way: "A disciple is an apprentice, an understudy to one who shows by precept and example the art of a life which corresponds to the truth. A disciple is an understudy in the art of life."¹¹ A disciple was understood to be one who totally imitated their master-teacher; they were to fully imitate the life of the rabbi. A Christian disciple is one who follows in the way of truth and life. To be a disciple of Jesus is to acknowledge He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life by whom all become children of God, following their Father's likeness in the fullness of His ministry.¹²

Jewish disciples of a rabbi would not just follow in a philosophical or theological sense, but literally follow by mimicking the rabbi. Interestingly, to imitate the master's teaching of Torah was understood as following the rabbi as he imitated Moses who was imitating God to the Israelites.¹³ As Jesus stood on the shores of Galilee calling His first disciples He was doing so as a new Moses who brought a new understanding of Torah. Jesus asserted the authority of a new, radical presenter of Torah. The Gospel of Matthew continually depicts Jesus taking the posture of a teacher and presenting to Israel, much like Moses, the instructions of God.¹⁴ Having taken the posture of teacher, Jesus became a rabbi instructing His disciples on a new covenant, a new

⁹ M. J. Wilkins, 203.

¹⁰ M. J. Wilkins, 202-203.

¹¹ Theodore W. Jennings, "The Meaning of Discipleship in Wesley and the New Testament," *Quarterly Review* 13, no. 1 (1993), 11.

¹² See John 14:6

¹³ M. J. Wilkins, 205.

¹⁴ Richard A. Burrige, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 71-75.

way of sacrifice, a new way of living. A disciple was known to hear the instructions of his rabbi and then do as his rabbi did. Jesus intentionally did this with His closest named disciples throughout the Gospel accounts as He modeled and then empowered them to imitate Him. They did as He instructed believing in the rabbi's way of life. For example, in the accounts of the feeding of the 5000, He instructed His disciples: "You give them something to eat."¹⁵ They responded by setting in front of the people what Jesus had blessed. They in fact did give the people something to eat and the multiplication was activated by the disciples' following Jesus and imitating Him.

Jesus' disciples were given specific instructions, but they also observed his counter cultural responses and social navigation in a way that as they mimicked their master they came into a revelation of the true meaning of the laws of Torah. His disciples learned both by hearing and doing.¹⁶ Later James encouraged the disciples of Jesus to "be doers of the word and not hearers only."¹⁷ The right understanding results in the right action, but for Jesus' followers it begins with right affections and the eagerness to follow Him. They were willing to literally drop what they were doing, lay down their personal lives and aspirations to obey the call of the Rabbi, Jesus Christ.¹⁸ Bringing this model forward, "To be a disciple of Christ in this way is therefore not only a matter of 'inner' qualities like faith and convictions. It concerns our whole life in word and deed."¹⁹ Jesus' disciples offer themselves wholly as living sacrifices to obey the voice and word of the Lord.²⁰ They allow their affections to be transformed by the power of the Word and

¹⁵ See Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15

¹⁶ Hans Kvalbein, "Go Therefore and Make Disciples: The Concept of Discipleship in the New Testament," *Themelios* 13, no. 2 (1988), 49.

¹⁷ James 1:22-25 HCSB

¹⁸ Hans Kvalbein, 52.

¹⁹ Hans Kvalbein, 50.

²⁰ "Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the

to go out and do as Jesus did. A true believer will proselytize others to become followers and adherents of the same way. If one is truly convinced that their master has revealed the right path, they will go out to gather disciples to the same teaching.

The idea of discipleship is necessarily the call of the Great Commission. It inherently implies that the follower will go on to make more followers. Contrary to the example of great student-teacher duos, these disciples did not themselves become rabbis. Rather, Jesus remains the Teacher, most notably perhaps because He is not dead but alive, and as such His disciples have simply been tasked as co-participants of the mission to gather people to the Way.²¹ Jesus' disciples go out, bringing others in, and teach them how to be disciples of Him. The Great Commission is the joint mission as co-heirs of the Kingdom to make disciples.²² In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke repeatedly refers to what we know as Christianity and salvation through Jesus as "the Way." To follow Jesus, to be a disciple of Jesus, is to follow the Way—that is Him—and to follow in the Way that leads to Him, which is a holiness of heart and right affections toward the God of Israel. Jesus' disciples remained on the path, on the way in which He first directed them because a disciple remains following in the footsteps of the rabbi.²³

To be one of Jesus' disciples is to do as He did, following Him on the Way that leads to life eternal. He makes this clear: "If anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me."²⁴ To be one of Jesus' disciples is not a career move, some kind of political allegiance, or even identification with a particular religious movement. To be a disciple of Jesus is a disciplined choice about eternity versus present comforts. To be a disciple of Jesus

renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1-2 HCSB

²¹ Hans Kvalbein, 49-52.

²² Keener, 125.

²³ M. J. Wilkins, 210.

²⁴ Mark 8:34 HCSB

is to choose to set one's affections on Him even above personal prosperity, family, culture, or any other idol that would arrest one's affections.²⁵ The life of a Christian disciple is not simply focused on the right thoughts, or even the right actions, because the life of a Christian disciple is ordered according to right passions or orthopathy. The Greek word *πάθημα* (*pathēma*) means "suffering; passion, desire."²⁶ The right passions, the right affections, the right sufferings are the mark of a true disciple of Jesus. This orthopathy is what leads Jesus' disciples to fulfill the Great Commission. They are convinced that Jesus, the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, has not only made His righteousness available to them through His suffering, but also that becoming holy as He is holy includes the transformation of their affections through receiving His promised Spirit, sanctification through Him, and walking in His Way to participate in the co-mission of Matthew 28.²⁷

Jesus' Instructions for His Disciples

Jesus' own method of discipleship became direct instructions for His disciples to follow, imitate, and propagate. Self-denial, taking up one's own cross, and following in His Way is at the core of Christian discipleship. The act of self-denial includes the kind of reckless obedience seen in the Gospels by the Twelve, immediately dropping what they were doing in faith and conviction that the rabbi calling them was the Messiah. In fact, the Gospels provide us with two alternative accounts of responding to Jesus' call: the rich young ruler and the scribe who are both ultimately preoccupied with earthly concerns.²⁸ Self-denial as a disciple means following without

²⁵ M. J. Wilkins, 210.

²⁶ *The Greek New Testament*, 133.

²⁷ Dale M. Coulter, "The Wesleyan Middle Way," *Firebrand*, August 17, 2021, <https://firebrandmag.com/articles/the-wesleyan-middle-way>.

²⁸ For the accounts on the rich young ruler, see Matt. 19:16–23; 10:17–22; Luke 18:18–23. For the accounts on the scribe, see Matt. 8:18–22; Luke 9:57–60.

reservation. To then take up one's cross is a reflection of this self-denial and the right ordering of one's passions. Jesus told His disciples they will be persecuted for following Him.²⁹ Not soon after He called His first disciples, He gave the Sermon on the Mount replete with teaching and instructions on living this new way. Jesus provided His disciples with a roadmap to counter-cultural living and called them into a new covenant with Him. Discipleship for Jesus requires more than duty, ethics, or piety; it is a turning of one's affections to follow after Him and return to the Father as children of God made in His image.

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He called His disciples to be priests of a new covenant and established them as purveyors of wisdom and truth who are to be seen and known by others. It is those who are pure in heart, who have a holiness of heart, that will see God.³⁰ Jesus' Beatitudes introduced His disciples to both an educational experience in an academic sense, and to a lifestyle, to the fruits of sanctification, and the set apart character of the saints as the holy ones of God. Jesus called His disciples "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."³¹ He connected purity, holiness, sanctification, with being His disciples. It is not enough that they should physically follow Jesus, but that they should portray to the world stained by sin and lost in darkness the hope that is found in Christ.

Jesus' instructions for His disciples were for putting into practice what the Law of Moses was meant to guide the children of God towards.³² It was to be written on their hearts to guide their understanding of God's sovereignty, their faith in Him, and their actions. Moses declared to the people: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your

²⁹ See Matt. 5:11; 10:22

³⁰ "The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God." Matt. 5:8 HCSB

³¹ See Matt. 5:13-14

³² Jennings, 13.

strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart.”³³ The Law was intended to shape God’s people in their affections. Jesus later expounded upon this with the second greatest commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”³⁴ What Jesus introduced to His disciples is a communal and social understanding of their faith. The Way is not a way which can be followed solely by oneself. It must include fellow sojourners, other disciples, with whom fellowship must be had and shared. The Gospel of John offers Jesus’ instructions to abide in Him, remain in His love, and to love others out of the love received.³⁵ Disciples of Jesus will go on to multiply, to produce fruit, to produce a harvest, to bring into the fold the lost sheep. Christianity is a social religion—it cannot continue producing without engaging with the world. Christian disciples are produced and formed by social interaction.³⁶ A true disciple of Jesus will love God, love others, and operate under the faith-filled trust and confidence in salvation in Christ to become witnesses to all.³⁷

All of Christ’s teachings lead His followers to a lifestyle of imitation as His disciples, as learners and students of the Way. He concluded His earthly ministry to them, in part, with His directions given in Matthew 28: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.”³⁸ The commission of disciples is to make more disciples, that much is clear from Jesus’ ministry. Part of discipleship is to convey to others the way which one is personally convinced is the true way. So, Jesus’ disciples are to “go” and in going they

³³ Deut. 6:5-6 HCSB

³⁴ See Mark 12:31

³⁵ See John 15:9-17

³⁶ John Wesley, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Discourse IV,” in *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 195-199.

³⁷ John Wesley, “The Almost Christian,” in *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 65-67.

³⁸ Matt. 28:19-20 HCSB

become active participants in the teachings of the master. To “make disciples” is to go out, inviting others to become learners of the same master, the same rabbi. To make disciples is to offer convincing testimony and evidence of the right school, the right teacher, and the right path. This part of the commission is the evangelization of the world to the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The instructions to baptize others in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is about participation in the likeness of Christ. To be baptized in water is to imitate the Rabbi Himself as Jesus was baptized in water by John.³⁹ Water baptism is a sign of participation in the Way—that one has denied themselves, died to themselves, and risen to take up their cross to follow in the way of Christ.⁴⁰ It is associated with a new disciple’s public confession of their faith and entrance into the community of believers.⁴¹ As water covers the new believer, immersing them symbolically into the death of Jesus, it is an outward sign of what has already occurred in the heart—death to self. The believer emerges from the water participating in resurrected life, with new affections, under a new covenant, having experienced a circumcision of the heart. It becomes a “sign and seal of the new covenant and new birth.”⁴² It joins the spiritual with a symbolic sign to convey the grace of salvation to those participating and observing, reminding them of their justification and sanctification. Water baptism initiates a disciple into the Kingdom of God and the community of Christ’s disciples.

This commission is about the glory of the Father: “My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.”⁴³ For Jesus’ own disciples to go out and teach

³⁹ See Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22

⁴⁰ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 76.

⁴¹ Amos Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 157.

⁴² Yong, 139.

⁴³ John 15:8 HCSB

these new converts the Way is the act of discipleship, which can only be born out of having themselves been discipled. New disciples are to be instructed “to observe *everything* I [Jesus] have commanded you.”⁴⁴ The purpose of teaching new followers is not just to relay information, but also to equip, train, and send them out to participate in building the Kingdom of God through the Great Commission. There is action attached to the information—disciples only become real disciples by the doing, the following, and the observing of the teachings of the master. Disciples become real disciples when they experience a circumcision of the heart, when they choose to deny themselves, follow and obey the Way of Jesus, and fulfill the Great Commission. To teach others to serve and obey Jesus, to become disciples, includes training and disciplining the affections, such that the “habitual disposition of soul” becomes that of holiness.⁴⁵ To make disciples by teaching them to obey God’s instructions, is to participate in the purpose and calling of a Christian disciple.

The Cost of Discipleship

Discipleship is costly; that much is certain through the Gospel accounts and the Acts of the Apostles. A life of following the commandments of God has always come at the cost of self-denial. To follow Jesus, His disciples must take up their cross daily, commit to life as a living sacrifice, and crucify the flesh.⁴⁶ Christ’s disciples submit themselves to the sanctifying and purifying work of the Spirit that is the circumcision of the heart. The covenant that is made as a disciple of Jesus Christ comes at the expense of self, at the cost as a living sacrifice. It will include the circumcision, sanctification, cleansing of the heart, its affections, and the outpouring

⁴⁴ Matt. 28:20 HCSB (emphasis mine)

⁴⁵ John Wesley, “The Circumcision of the Heart,” in *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 25.

⁴⁶ See Gal. 5:24-25

of worship on Him. The cost of discipleship is found in the weight of the sacrifice. Jesus told His disciples that they must say “good-bye” to the things of this world, family ties, possessions, even their own lives to be His disciples. Disciples must count the cost of discipleship.⁴⁷ In the sacrificial system God gave to Moses, the real value of the sacrifice was found in what it truly cost the person. One gave the best they had to offer, even if it was meager, and what it required of them in measurement of expense or loss was what revealed a broken and contrite heart.

It is the affections of the heart that matter most to God. David considered this in Psalm 51: “You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart.”⁴⁸ When David sinned against the Lord in his military census, the Lord brought a plague upon the Israelites. David’s response was one that understood the cost of following the Lord and obeying all His commandments. To stop the plague David went up to the threshing floor of Ornan at the direction of one of his prophetic advisors, Gad. Although Ornan was willing to give the threshing floor to David, along with all that would be needed to make the offering, David was the one from whom the sacrifice was required, and a sacrifice necessarily has a cost.⁴⁹ David responded to Ornan, “No, I insist on paying the full price, for I will not take for the Lord what belongs to you or offer burnt offerings that *cost me nothing*.”⁵⁰ Salvation is free, but the covenant relationship we have with Jesus comes through genuine discipleship.

Whatever we are willing to do or to give as disciples of Jesus, it will cost us, if not in possessions, in the sacrifice of self. Like the woman with the costly perfume, we must be willing to break open the alabaster jar of our hearts and pour out every last drop of the spikenard oil of

⁴⁷ See Matt. 8:18-22; Luke 14:25-33

⁴⁸ Ps. 51:16-17 HCSB

⁴⁹ See 1 Chron. 21:1-24

⁵⁰ 1 Chron. 21:24 HCSB (emphasis mine)

our affections on Jesus.⁵¹ The cost of discipleship is found in the rending of one's old affections and fixating one's heart toward holiness. Joel wrote to the children of God, "Even now—this is the Lord's declaration—turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Tear your hearts, not just your clothes..."⁵² The cost of discipleship is the breaking open, the tearing apart, the cleansing of our hearts to reveal a clean, heart of flesh, pure before the Lord. Jesus desires a holiness of heart from His disciples. He chastised the Pharisees for obeying the letter of the Law rather than the Spirit.⁵³ It is the inward parts of a Christian disciple that must be clean to produce the right outward acts of righteousness. Orthopathy precedes orthopraxis. It is the affection of the heart turned toward Christ through sanctification, through the circumcision of the heart, that leads to orthopathy. Jesus reminded His disciples of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the hearts of the people toward their God.⁵⁴ Discipleship is about understanding with one's heart the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Paul wrote about this holiness of heart when he explained to the church in Rome, "circumcision is of the heart—by the Spirit, not the letter."⁵⁵ It is the broken and contrite heart that is the cost and sacrifice of becoming a disciple of Jesus.

The proof of Christian discipleship can be found in where one's affections are directed toward and whether one is willing to pay the cost of the sacrifice. To love one another is fruit of Christian discipleship because it involves the sacrifice of the love of self. Jesus said, "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."⁵⁶ Christian discipleship includes the cost of self-denial by joining together in a community and loving others as oneself. Peter wrote to the persecuted disciples, "By obedience to the truth, having purified

⁵¹ See Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9

⁵² Joel 2:13 HCSB

⁵³ See Matt. 23:25-28

⁵⁴ See Matt. 13:10-17

⁵⁵ See Rom. 2:25-29

⁵⁶ John 13:35 HCSB

yourselves for sincere love of the brothers, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again...”⁵⁷ This sincere love of others is costly. It risks much in the place of one’s personal security, trusting one another in kinship and brotherhood as joint heirs. Peter connected the love of others to a holiness of heart and the work of sanctification through salvation. In Acts, Luke recounted that as disciples were added to the 120 of them on the day of Pentecost, they committed themselves to the teaching, the community, and prayers.⁵⁸ More specifically, “Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need.”⁵⁹ One of the marks of a disciple is that the affections are geared toward the Kingdom of God rather than toward personal kingdoms, possessions, and families. Jesus addressed that one must be willing to give up earthly attachments to pursue the Way.

Continuing in the Way and in the Word is evidence of being Jesus’ disciple.⁶⁰ Right affections are directed toward obeying all that Jesus commanded and in committing to such personal disciplines, hearts are cleansed and sanctified to continue in discipleship. Christians’ lives should produce the fruit of the Spirit, having subdued the affections and appetites not in alignment with a holiness of heart, and live according to the leading of the Holy Spirit.⁶¹ Discipleship begins with acknowledging Jesus as the Christ, the One who has made propitiation for sins, offering justification, and it is deepened by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to produce an orthopathos that leads believers to develop fruit that remains. Rather than following the broad way to destruction, disciples take a narrow approach that requires a trimming, a

⁵⁷ 1 Pet. 1:22-23 HCSB

⁵⁸ See Acts 2:41-47

⁵⁹ Acts 2:44-45 HCSB

⁶⁰ John 8:31 HCSB

⁶¹ “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, we must also follow the Spirit.” Gal. 5:22-25 HCSB

circumcision, a pruning. The cost is the shaping of affections to produce the fruit worthy of Jesus' disciples.⁶² The cost is discipline. It is a commitment to pursue holiness of heart, not out of striving, but out of a relentless pursuit of a deeper relationship with Jesus and the enduring work of sanctification by the Spirit.

The Way of Discipleship

The Way of Discipleship is to follow fully after the Way. The various epistles encourage Christ's disciples to be followers, imitating Christ.⁶³ It is not simply to be ethical or pious; after all, the Pharisees observed the letter of the Law and were chastised by Christ as whitewashed tombs.⁶⁴ Disciples of Christ must allow the Holy Spirit to work sanctification, a holiness of heart, making them more like Christ. Paul exhorted the Corinthians: "Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ."⁶⁵ The Twelve literally followed in Christ's footsteps, going wherever He went. His subsequent disciples are to imitate His example and "follow in His steps."⁶⁶ To imitate Christ includes a sensitivity to the Spirit of God, allowing Him to work both in and through them. Christ's disciples do this through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and His empowerment to walk in accordance with the commandments of God. Jon Ruthven points out that to imitate Jesus necessarily includes a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, specifically the release of charismatic gifts to minister the Gospel. He explains, "If New Testament discipleship depends upon replicating the life of the exemplar, then miracles represent a significant part of 'imitating Christ'."⁶⁷ The Way of Discipleship for Christians must include a response to the Holy Spirit, a

⁶² See John 15:1-8

⁶³ Jon Ruthven, "The 'Imitation of Christ' in Christian Tradition: Its Missing Charismatic Emphasis," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8, no. 16 (April 2000), 70.

⁶⁴ See Matt. 23:27-28

⁶⁵ 1 Cor. 11:1 HCSB

⁶⁶ See 1 Pet. 2:21

⁶⁷ Ruthven, 72.

renewed desire for Spirit-baptism, and a Pentecostal attitude emphasizing the place and purpose for the outpoured Spirit of God.

Before Christ ascended to Heaven, He instructed His disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they received the promised power for service from Heaven.⁶⁸ Jesus promised His disciples a baptism with the Holy Spirit that would empower them as witnesses.⁶⁹ Luke's accounts of these last words from Jesus offer an understanding that Jesus' disciples were to remain still, to wait, or to tarry. The disciples were instructed to continue abiding in the shadow of their rabbi by staying in Jerusalem.⁷⁰ These instructions are simply a continuation of the instructions He gave His disciples during His three years of earthly ministry. Ruthven asserts that subsequent generations of Christian disciples are enlisted to "replicate the charismatic ministry of the apostles, e.g., to 'seek', 'desire earnestly', 'rekindle' and 'employ' certain 'miraculous' charismata."⁷¹ To the Twelve, Jesus instructed and empowered them to preach the Kingdom, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, drive out demons."⁷² To the Seventy, they were instructed and anointed to heal those with whom they had come in contact.⁷³ To any who believe in the message of the Gospel is promised these signs: "In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; they will pick up snakes; if they should drink anything deadly, it will never harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well."⁷⁴ What stood as instructive for Jesus' accompanying followers remains as the way of discipleship for all of Christ's followers. They are to continue following in the charismatic, miraculous work that

⁶⁸ See Luke 24:49

⁶⁹ See Acts 1:4-8

⁷⁰ For more on the connection between discipleship and abiding, see Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 1-2.

⁷¹ Ruthven, 76.

⁷² Matt. 10:6-8 HCSB

⁷³ See Luke 10:1-9

⁷⁴ Mark 16:17-18 HCSB

Christ began.

A disciple of Jesus has a faith filled, active response to the promised empowerment of the Holy Spirit from Christ. Paul encouraged the Thessalonians in how they welcomed the Gospel as an effective message at work in their hearts to become imitators of Christ.⁷⁵ The purpose of the outpoured Holy Spirit in Acts 2, while producing nine unique *charismata* or gifts, is not for the exhibition of power, but rather empowerment for sanctification and service in the Kingdom of God. John Wesley declared that the indwelling of the Holy Ghost was “for a more excellent purpose” than the extraordinary gifts.⁷⁶ The extraordinary gifts, Paul explained, are both for the building up of the Church and for ministering the Gospel to unbelievers.⁷⁷ However, the receipt and operation of these gifts are themselves an essential part of Christian discipleship. It is the way of discipleship that a believer, a follower, of Jesus Christ should earnestly seek the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and its initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues along with accompanying gifts. An emphasis on the Pentecostal nature of discipleship is evident through Acts and the epistles. J. Ayodeji Adewuya explains that the nine spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 are given specifically to each believer, as Paul stated in verses 6 and 11, for the greater good. He wrote, “These gifts are perfectly suited to each believer’s situation in life and, when exercised in the context of community, will contribute to the nurture and edification of the body. Thus, the gifts are a vital part of spiritual formation.”⁷⁸ Spirit Baptism is about service to one another as a community of believers and to the broader globe in fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Christian discipleship does not happen in isolation, not least of which is because “Iron

⁷⁵ See 1 Thess. 2:13-14

⁷⁶ John Wesley, “Scriptural Christianity,” in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 98.

⁷⁷ See 1 Cor. 14:1-24

⁷⁸ J. Ayodeji Adewuya, “The Spirit in 1 Corinthians: Spiritual Formation and Giftedness,” *Pneuma* 43, no. 3-4 (2021): 492.

sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”⁷⁹ The friction of community relations aids in the refining of one’s heart. Christian disciples need one another; the way of Christian discipleship is not to go it alone, but to do it as members of one body. Individual disciples are united by a shared identity as adopted sons and daughters of God and joint heirs with Christ. Paul encouraged the church in Galatia to “carry one another’s burdens.”⁸⁰ Once someone is baptized into the Christian faith they are baptized into the body of Christ, they become part of a larger whole.⁸¹ When Paul addressed the Corinthians he spoke to them of being God’s temple, but Adewuya points out that the “you” in the original Greek is plural, meaning that the community as a whole is the dwelling place of the Spirit.⁸² Just as God established the temple in the Old Testament as the dwelling place of His presence, the Church, the collective body of believers, has become the dwelling place of the Spirit and so Christian discipleship necessarily involves the other members in order to experience the fullness of the Spirit.

The work of the Spirit is done in individuals, but it is developed through community, and then expressed through community as a missional church. The way of discipleship is unity in the body of believers. Holy Spirit Baptism joins the body together in unity of purpose. The full work of the Holy Spirit is found in the context of community. On the days leading up to Pentecost, the 120 disciples gathered together in the Upper Room and were “continually united in prayer.”⁸³ They remained united together in that place until the day of Pentecost when they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴ The community of disciples is a means through which the mission of Christ—the Great Commission—will be continued and fulfilled as these disciples gather more

⁷⁹ Prov. 27:17 HCSB

⁸⁰ Gal. 6:2 HCSB

⁸¹ Adewuya, 490.

⁸² Adewuya, 489.

⁸³ Acts 1:14 HCSB

⁸⁴ See Acts 2:1-4

disciples into the unity of the body of Christ. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit gifts believers with an endowment of power functioning together for the building up of the Church. The Holy Spirit is the uniting one; “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”⁸⁵ Adewuya claims, “The baptism of the Spirit is a corporate formation; the baptism in the Spirit of the Corinthians initiated them into one body.”⁸⁶

Summary

When we talk of Christian discipleship it is not merely in reference to those who have voiced some type of agreement with the Christian religion. True Christianity is a heart religion whereby the Holy Spirit does a sanctifying work to transform one’s affections toward Christ. Discipleship is a matter of the circumcision of the heart, a holiness of heart as John Wesley put it. For disciples of Christ those affections must be turned toward Him and the building up of His Kingdom. Rather than looking to ease one’s condition in this life, Christ’s disciples are called to self-denial and Kingdom pursuits. After all, Jesus told them: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.”⁸⁷ Christian discipleship certainly includes a confession of the faith and participation in certain rites, such as water baptism, but it also must include fellowship with other Christian disciples. Inclusion in such a community is critical to spiritual formation and the development of discipleship. Moreover, Christian discipleship is the ongoing spiritual formation into the likeness of Christ, carrying on His miraculous ministry to testify that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Christian disciples have

⁸⁵ 1 Cor. 12:13 HCSB

⁸⁶ Adewuya, 491.

⁸⁷ Matt. 6:33 HCSB

access to Holy Spirit empowerment to reach a lost and hurting world through the ministry of charismatic gifts that unify the body of Christ and testify of His goodness, mercy, and salvation. True Christian discipleship includes a discipline of the affections, but it must also include the charismatic ministry to as many as will receive the message.

CHAPTER FOUR

A “NEW” METHODISM

Introduction

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ will require a methodical approach to learning and doing as Jesus Himself instructed and modeled. This will naturally include discipline and study, but it must also include a yieldedness to the unbidden will of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that His disciples, those who were born again of water and Spirit, were led by the Spirit.¹ Salvation leads to Christlikeness by justification through Jesus and sanctification through the Holy Spirit. A pneumatological foundation is essential to a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship because Christian discipleship requires both the indwelling and the immersion of the Holy Spirit to walk in the likeness of God. With that pneumatology comes an emphasis on Spirit Baptism and its explicit purpose of empowerment to witness and fulfill the Great Commission.²

J.C. Ryle explained Luke 14:25-35 in this way: “It costs something to be a true Christian. Let that never be forgotten. To be a mere nominal Christian, and go to church, is cheap and easy work.”³ Discipleship includes the stripping away of certain affections and the formation or reshaping of right affections in accordance with a holiness of heart. In a way, the modern American Pentecostal Church needs to disciple individuals to become more of what we were originally created to be, perhaps more fully human in the sense that we begin to walk more completely in the image in which we were formed.⁴ This will require a disciplined method and

¹ “The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” John 3:8 HCSB

² “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 HCSB

³ J. C. Ryle, *Luke*, ed. Alister McGrath and J. I. Packer (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 210.

⁴ M. J. Wilkins, “Disciples and Discipleship,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 212.

structure of learning that includes and incorporates Pentecostal practices and experiences. In other words, it requires a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship.

The Role of Formal Discipleship Practices

The nature of discipleship necessitates discipline. Discipline develops appetites, forms habits, and shapes affections. Our pursuit of discipline reveals what we value. The willingness to discipline ourselves exposes the condition of our heart. A heart that upholds the two Great Commandments of loving God and neighbor is truly the circumcised heart of a disciple of Christ. Genuine Christian discipleship involves the transformation of one's affections, turning from self-love toward a love of God and others. It is through a methodical cultivation of our tempers in partnership with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that we become more like Christ—we become disciples of Jesus. The formation and development of our inner spiritual lives must begin with a transformation of the heart, appetites of the will, and affections of the soul.

John Wesley established in “The Rules of the United Societies” that Methodists could be known in their commitment to Christian discipleship “by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded, the Supper of the Lord; private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting, or abstinence.”⁵ It is not enough to do these practices, but to actually experience them and allow them to arrest our affections. Christianity is a heart religion. Our likeness to God reveals love, the affections of our heart, as what drives our spiritual formation. Discipleship is not only a pursuit of knowing God's precepts intellectually, but knowing them intimately and experientially with the heart, as well. Our hearts are educated by experiencing the transformational Gospel, the justifying work of

⁵ John Wesley, *John Wesley*, 179.

Christ and the sanctifying work of the Spirit. We develop habits around certain disciplines or practices that remind us what is truly worthy of our heart's affections. When we examine our heart, we will determine that our affections are ultimately directed toward some final end.

Christian discipleship remains focused on capturing our heart and shaping our affections such that we become more inclined to follow Christ as a natural result of a love that has been directed away from the self toward God through discipleship practices.⁶

Formal discipleship practices will fashion and form Christians into mature, Spirit-empowered individuals who are equipped to fulfill Jesus' missional appointments to His disciples. The Gospel of Mark provides the following direction:

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; they will pick up snakes; if they should drink anything deadly, it will never harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well.⁷

While these are Jesus' promised signs and works of His disciples, they include an authority that comes from Holy Spirit empowerment and spiritual maturity. Earlier in Mark 6, Jesus commissioned the Twelve with authority over unclean spirits and they successfully drove out demons and healed the sick.⁸ Yet, in Mark 9 a man brings his son plagued by a spirit to Jesus' disciples and they are unable to drive it out. Jesus clarified that some unclean spirits only come out by the discipline of prayer and fasting.⁹ Partnered with the anointing and appointing of Jesus' disciples is the continued commitment to follow Christ in spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and fasting. Practicing the ordinances laid out by Jesus throughout the Gospels helps to incline the heart toward a sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit. Fostering the habits of certain Christian

⁶ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation (Cultural Liturgies)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2009), 136.

⁷ Mark 16:17-18 HCSB

⁸ See Mark 6:7-13

⁹ See Mark 9:17-29

disciplines and ordinances laid out by Him is indicative of a disciple of Jesus. Adopting and developing certain practices is a matter of truly following in the footsteps of the rabbi. Disciples adopt the disciplines of their master-teacher. Christian disciples likewise will follow the methods of Jesus in forming a habit of communion with God.

True spiritual formation takes place through consistent, methodical practices and not one-time epiphanies or events. James K. A. Smith writes, “There must be a rhythm and a regularity to formative practices in order for them to sink in—in order for them to seep into our *kardia* and begin to be effectively inscribed in who we are, directing our passion to the kingdom of God and thus disposing us to action that reflects such a desire.”¹⁰ A formal observance and participation in church ordinances and practices must be partnered with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit so that Christians have the inward evidence of holiness and not merely outward piety. The Pentecostal church was birthed out of prayer meetings. Such disciplines are essential to cultivating habits and affections toward the Kingdom of God. Reviving certain essential discipleship practices will lead the twenty-first century Pentecostal church into a fuller experience of holiness of heart and the Spirit-empowered life that leads to fulfilling the Great Commission and not merely proselytizing others to simply become church goers. For Pentecostals, these disciplines and others should not be viewed as rote observances, but as energized and enjoyable habits of a Spirit-filled disciple.

The need for corporate participation cannot be ignored. Discipleship cannot be done in a vacuum. It must be done in community and because it must be done in community it will cost us our own autonomy and pride. Participation in corporate charismatic practices, such as Paul discussed in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, in addition to exuberant worship through song and dance,

¹⁰ Smith, 226.

leads Christians to experience God more fully and live out the beliefs more faithfully. By practicing the ordinances Christ established, together as the Body of Christ, Christian orthopathy turns to orthopraxis. It is no longer merely doing as Jesus did but being as Jesus is. An experiential transformation takes place and believers enter into the Gospel story as more than spectators—they become participants. The love of God received is what captures our affections. We build a consistent response to His love through the disciplined, methodical practices that continually remind us of His justifying and sanctifying work in our lives. What begins as a methodical participation becomes a desired, joy-filled, life-giving habit. When we engage the Holy Spirit, become immersed in the reality of the Pentecostal outpouring which empowers us for service to the Kingdom of God, our discipleship connects us more deeply to our identity and purpose as Christ followers.

However, participation in certain practices must extend beyond the walls of a church building or even the gathering together with other Christians. A true circumcision of the heart will yield evidence of personal holiness even in the marketplace. Discipleship develops an orthopathy that evidences itself in the orthopraxis empowered by the Holy Spirit that changes the world. To fulfill the Great Commission requires the cultivation of a holiness of heart both in and through the Christian community, but it must burst forth in testimonial, right living shining through good works that lead people to glorify God.¹¹ Certain practices aid in developing and cultivating holiness as a witness that invites others to become disciples of Jesus, as well as themselves by developing discipleship in the believer.¹² John Wesley identified certain ordinances as *means of grace* whereby God “might convey to men preventing, justifying, or

¹¹ See Matt. 5:16

¹² Lacey Warner, “Making Disciples in the Wesleyan Tradition: Practicing the Means of Grace,” *Quarterly Review* 23, no. 2 (2003), 170.

sanctifying grace.”¹³ These means include such Christian disciplines as prayer, the examination of Scripture, and receiving the Lord’s Supper. It is through a formal and methodical observance of such ordinances that disciples are made. Christian disciples are not merely converts; they emulate their master-teacher, Jesus. Formal discipleship practices cultivate Christlikeness in the believer. A methodical-pentecostal discipleship will include practicing a holiness of heart through the ordinances of God.

A Return to Methodical Discipleship

A reworking of the methodical discipleship developed by John Wesley through his societies, class meetings, and bands will enhance and embolden the charismatic experience and witness of the church. Wesley’s idea of becoming more like Christ was to continue to turn and develop our affections toward God and others. Love toward others is fostered in the community. Community challenges us in our relationships with one another. Small, intimate gatherings cultivate the kind of companionship that nourishes and strengthens our spiritual lives. Close relationships are not immune to offenses or hurts, however, even within a Christian community. A methodical discipleship involves the support, challenge, and love from the Body of Christ that testifies to His working in and through His Church. “True Wesleyan spirituality is not a private matter, a once-for-all experience of ‘being saved.’ Instead, it has to do with Christian life as a journey, a pilgrimage, a dynamic process of *perfecting*, of maturing faith, hope, and love.”¹⁴ Personal discipleship cannot ever be truly separated from corporate discipleship. Personal piety or holiness of heart must be expressed and born out in the context of community, such that a

¹³ John Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” 160.

¹⁴ Jean Miller Schmidt, “‘Strangely Warmed’: The Place of Aldersgate in the Methodist Canon,” in *Aldersgate Reconsidered*, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1990), 119.

methodical-pentecostal discipleship bears the evidence of a collective, communal holiness. This is well accomplished through Wesley's idea of societies. The Methodist society was established as "*a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.*"¹⁵

True Christian discipleship will always include a counter-cultural aspect just as it did with Jesus' disciples. Methodical-pentecostal discipleship practices are intended to emphasize sanctification, a holiness of heart, that is brought about by the Holy Spirit through certain disciplines that are soaked in a Spirit-filled, Spirit-led motivation rather than a self-righteous, self-achieved piety. Discipleship will require an involvement in the community of a local church willing to address the social, cultural, and humanistic ideologies plaguing our twenty-first century post-modern society. A methodical discipleship, and a Pentecostal one at that, demands a quality and a depth to disciple-making that extends beyond increasing the tally count of hands raised at an altar call or number of water baptisms for the year. A methodical-pentecostal discipleship for the twenty-first century Pentecostal church requires an authenticity of the salvific experience, spiritual growth, and spiritual health of disciples over the course of many years in a way that produces a personal and communal holiness.¹⁶ Discipleship practices work in tandem with the Holy Spirit to make converts to Christianity into real Christians and followers of Jesus. When these practices are both methodical and Pentecostal by emphasizing Spirit-empowerment through the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, they develop the habits indicative of holiness. The witness of such disciples testifies to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the missional life of these believers fulfills the Great Commission. Jesus' encouragement to His disciples in the Sermon on

¹⁵ John Wesley, *John Wesley*, 178.

¹⁶ Warner, 168.

the Mount was: “let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”¹⁷ Personal holiness and the kind of corporate social holiness Christ encouraged are a witness to the world.

A return to methodical discipleship does not necessitate an abandonment of sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit or the sometimes impromptu charismatic elements indicative of Pentecostalism. Retrieving Wesley’s original intent and valuation of methodical discipleship would prove beneficial to Pentecostalism in breeding a greater discernment and sensitivity to the Spirit’s movement and direction for the Church. Jesus’ instructions were to teach others to obey the commandments. Methodical discipleship is intentional in the teaching, training, and equipping of Christian disciples. Randy Maddox explains Wesley’s thoughts on discipleship:

Wesley came to value participation in the Methodist society for its contribution to *kindling* responsive life in the Spirit, not just for nurturing greater growth in that life. Indeed, the mature Wesley would insist that awakening folk to their spiritual need, without joining them into classes for training in the ways of God, was simply begetting children for the murderer.¹⁸

Methodical discipleship calls for holiness, but Wesley was clear to prescribe the development of certain habits rather than only a prohibition against certain practices. Training disciples in obedience helps cultivate a discernment of right habits and practices. The lived-out holiness of Spirit-baptized disciples is both methodical and Pentecostal because it gives space to the leading of the Holy Spirit while testing the spirit that is leading. Pentecostal people are people of the Spirit and as people of the Spirit they are inherently spontaneous.¹⁹ The Spirit-filled life draws

¹⁷ Matt. 5:16 HCSB

¹⁸ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 219.

¹⁹ For a more thorough treatment of the connection between holiness and the spontaneous nature of a Spirit-filled life, see Daniel Castelo, “The Improvisational Quality of Ecclesial Holiness,” in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), pp. 87-104.

the attention of the disciple to the holiness of God and works the sanctification that develops the appetite for practices that are in following with the likeness of Christ.

The Methodists' emphasis on the means of grace that connect disciples to the Lord through disciplined observance and practice demands a reexamination from Pentecostals. After all, it was the likes of such Methodists as Phoebe Palmer and William Seymour whose commitments to prayer, studying Scripture, holiness, and the pursuit of Spirit Baptism that eventually led to the Pentecostal movement in the early 1900s. A modern reimagining of the methods and small group structure of the Methodists is important for the American Pentecostal Church operating in a post-modern, post-Christian society. People are looking for an encounter with God, their own personal Aldersgate experience, whether they recognize it or not.²⁰ Those moments of encounter, while spontaneous, occur in atmospheres where the veil between Heaven and Earth is thin. This happens when faithful disciples have committed themselves to the practices and disciplines ordained for them by Christ—the most consistently notable of which is prayer. Charismatic moments may be spontaneous, but they are the clearly anticipated expectation of Pentecostals and moments for which they have prepared if only in the sense that they have fostered their affections in an openness to experience the Spirit and to be led by Him in unplanned ways.

The elements of discipleship implemented by Wesley and observed by others throughout the history of Pentecostalism bear their own testimony to cultivating a discerning and a Spirit-sensitive disciple. Returning to practicing these means of grace fosters the spirit of Pentecostalism that tore down religious barriers based on sex and race, among other socio-economic structures. Lacey Warner explains:

²⁰ Barna Group, "Five Trends Defining Americans' Relationship to Churches," Barna Group, February 19, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/current-perceptions/>.

The embodiment and nurture of holiness through practices of the means of grace result in an invitational witness to discipleship as well as in provision of practices of disciple-making...By participating in weekly communal worship, including the proclamation of the Scriptures and administration of the sacraments, participants and observers experience the salvation narrative and the community's response.²¹

Reviving the means of grace enumerated by Wesley is a revival of social holiness that offers genuine experience to all people that invites them to hear and receive the message of the Gospel that they may become disciples themselves, baptized, and obeying God's commandments.

Methodical faith formation through intentional education in the means of grace is the seedbed of the transformation of one's heart and the turning of affections through sanctification. However, it requires the pneumatological aspect of Pentecostalism for institutionalized faith formation to yield Spirit-birthing transformation.²² A return to methodical discipleship for the Pentecostal church will produce disciples firmly rooted and grounded in Christlike disciplines with a Christlike reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Essential Methodical-Pentecostal Elements of Discipleship

Wesley described a Methodist as one who attends to certain acts of piety having received the love of God and loving Him with all their being. He published a tract titled "The Character of a Methodist," wherein he enumerated several practices that are "the marks of a true Methodist." He acknowledged that these practices are nothing more than those which should be followed by any and all real Christians.²³ Methodism as a way of discipleship and not merely a denomination of certain doctrine is truly the way of a Christian disciple: "And whoever are what I preach (let them be called what they will, for names do not change the nature of things) are Christians, not

²¹ Warner, 170.

²² Cheryl Bridges John, "From Strength to Strength: Neglected Role of Crisis in Wesleyan and Pentecostal Discipleship," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39 (2004), 143.

²³ Wesley, *A Longing for Holiness*, 39-44.

in name only, but in heart and in life.”²⁴ Christian discipleship is concerned with having a life changing encounter with Jesus and becoming like Him by imitating Him. Mimicry or imitation is an intentional, disciplined attempt to be like another. As a conscious response to “What Would Jesus Do?” mimicry becomes habit-forming over time. “Mimesis affects not only a person’s outward behavior but also one’s inner thoughts and feelings, one’s desire and aversions.”²⁵ The more disciples choose obedience to God’s commandments, the more the soul responds openly to an invitation of partnership with the Holy Spirit to the work of sanctification.

The methodical practices of a Christian disciple are initiated by the response to salvation, but they are the outworking of sanctification. The disciplines of the disciple are best paired with the Spirit-empowerment received during a personal Pentecost. The total salvific work is given to us as a gift from God and therefore no one is capable of true imitation of Christ on their own. If it is not the work of the Holy Spirit through Spirit Baptism that leads to a genuine imitation of Christ, then such mimicry is an act of self-righteousness. Holy Spirit Baptism is essential to a methodical-pentecostal discipleship. It leads the disciple into a fuller experience of the life of Christ and empowers them to imitate Him not just in character, but in ministry to reach all peoples of all situations just as the Great Commission calls. Spirit Baptism is not merely circumstantial to Christian discipleship. It is an essential part of Christ’s own command to receive the empowerment to become disciple-makers ourselves.²⁶ Spirit Baptism is necessary for all disciples because it is the Holy Spirit that activates believers to a life immersed in the Spirit of God. To imitate Christ would include a desire and openness to Spirit Baptism. It was upon

²⁴ Wesley, *A Longing for Holiness*, 44.

²⁵ Mark A Maddix, “Moral Exemplarity and Relational Atonement: Toward a Wesleyan Approach to Discipleship,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 50, no. 1 (2015), 76.

²⁶ “While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father’s promise. “This,” He said, “is what you heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”” Acts 1:4-5 HCSB

Christ's own water baptism that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him to empower Him for His earthly ministry.²⁷

Discipleship includes an educational component, a formality of teaching, training, and exercising lessons. Christ incorporated in the Great Commission a teaching component that follows baptism. His disciples are to *teach* others to obey Jesus' commandments. A twenty-first century post-Christian era American Pentecostal church needs disciples who *know* the commandments to even first be able to obey or teach others to obey all that Christ commanded. Johnathan Alvarado stresses the importance of a pneumatologically grounded education for Christian disciples:

Pentecostals affirm that it is the Spirit of God, who teaches, nurtures, and transforms one into a faithful life in Christ. As a matter of fact, it is this 'life in the Spirit' that informs the reading of Scripture, the singing of songs, the observance of the sacraments, the preaching of the gospel, and the prayers of the saints in the Pentecostal context of worship.²⁸

There must be intentional instruction and practice of Christian disciplines that direct our affections toward God. These lessons, however, must invite the Holy Spirit to bring purpose, meaning, and life to these practices so that an institutionalized, lifeless religious ritualization of these practices can be avoided. Being well-taught, having examined closely the Scriptures and the other liturgical aspects Alvarado lists, allows Pentecostals the freedom to move more confidently in the direction of the Spirit. Having committed to observing Christ, such Methodical-Pentecostals are able to improvise within a service more freely.

Following in the Way of Jesus is preparation for moments of the Spirit's spontaneous in-breaking and direction. There are traditional liturgies that when void of the Spirit's involvement become dead rites, but when given life by the breath of the Holy Spirit connect disciples more

²⁷ See Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22

²⁸ Alvarado, 148.

fully to the life of Christ and to participate in His victory. Liturgy helps to draw the attention of the worshipers to the Lord. The order of a service should be structured in a way that leads people deeper into the presence of God, metaphorically into the Holy of Holies, like in the Temple, to experience the manifest glory of God. A Pentecostal liturgy is a conduit for the Holy Spirit to move in a service with the expectation of a divine encounter. The Liturgy functions as steps toward God, steps leading the worshiper to praise God and experience Him. Liturgies join experience and language to convey orthodoxy in ministry.²⁹ A Pentecostal liturgy unifies the community with the Spirit and with one another. Paul makes this explicit when he speaks about the order of the service and the purpose of the manifestation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians.³⁰ A Pentecostal liturgy will be experiential, incorporating and inviting participation from a person's whole being, which "can draw the worshipers together toward divine encounter and with each other, so that the reality of unity becomes engrained through the practices of the church."³¹ Liturgy helps to build the essential communal aspect so valued in Pentecostalism. The Spirit-drenched experience is one so highly valued by Pentecostals that it brings to life the liturgy in a way that leads to deeper discipleship.

The pneumatological facet in the journey of salvation for Pentecostals infuses the more traditional practices with renewed meaning and purpose. The ordinances of the church, when practiced with a responsiveness to the Spirit, invite Heaven to meet Earth where what is already true in the Spirit is experienced in tangible ways through certain elements. Ken Archer submits that certain Pentecostal practices be recognized as "sacramental ordinances," which he describes

²⁹ Yoon Shin, "Radical Orthodoxy, Pentecostalism, and Embodiment in Exodus 20: Re-Envisioning a Pentecostal Hermeneutic for a Formative Liturgy," in *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 128.

³⁰ See 1 Cor. 12-14

³¹ Shin, 136.

as ordained by Christ to be observed by His disciples and which convey the grace of God experientially through certain elements.³² These sacramental ordinances—water baptism, footwashing, speaking in tongues, anointing with oil and laying on of hands, and the Lord’s Supper—can be directly connected to a fivefold defined Full Gospel.³³ Each of these invites the disciple to participate in the manifest presence of God. Anchoring five sacramental ordinances to each of the five themes of the Full Gospel establishes the sacramental ordinances as having a deeply “spiritual-metaphorical-narrative nature” that aids Pentecostals in their salvific journey by continually impressing upon them Christ’s character and His commission to all disciples that they go and make disciples.³⁴ Communal participation in the sacramental ordinances serve as “prophetic narrative signs” that remind Pentecostal believers of the Gospel and invite participation in the life of Christ.³⁵ The methodical corporate participation in sacramental ordinances works with the Holy Spirit to minister Christ to all people. When Pentecostals understand these practices as sacramental ordinances, they experience a holy moment—the manifest presence of God meeting with humanity where seemingly ordinary religious traditions become sublime. When these sacramental ordinances are practiced with intentionality and in relationship with Christ, they powerfully convey God’s grace to the world. These practices unite the body of Christ. They strengthen faith, reassure us of God’s promises, and build unity in the church community. Sacramental ordinances communicate God’s grace in a tangible way through a physical medium. God’s grace is experienced by the people through these acts, but the people

³² Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 68-70.

³³ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 73-80.

³⁴ Archer, “The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church: Ecclesiastical Implications and Opportunities,” 37.

³⁵ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 71.

also participate in the life and mission of God as they convey Him and His salvific grace to the world through them.³⁶

Methodical-Pentecostal Practices for Discipleship

Discipleship is the journey of a lifetime. It is an expedition into the love of God that we as Christ's disciples may find ourselves strengthened and sanctified by His Spirit breathing life into us. The discipleship journey in the context of a Spirit-filled community should be an experience that provokes the affections and warms the heart. Salvation is the initial call and response to the adventure of discipleship. That moment is free, what follows requires some intentionality and labor. The journey follows the Way of Christ and with it comes the practice and participation in the signs and sacramental ordinances Christ performed. Methodists established an adherence to certain means of grace and membership in communities of accountability to cultivate both a personal holiness of heart and a corporate holiness. Pentecostals established communities of belonging and welcome where the table was set for any who would come and experience the presence of God. A "new" Methodism—a methodical-pentecostal discipleship—helps foster the strangely warmed hearts of new believers, shaping and reforming their appetites to desire to eat the Bread of Life and drink the Living Water. What is needed is not mandated rites and rituals, but rather an invitation to sit at the Lamb's banquet table where people can "taste and see that the Lord is good."³⁷ It is in the tasting of the well-seasoned harvest and the seeing of the burning lamps in the hearts of other disciples that new disciples are drawn to a life of following Christ.

³⁶ Johnathan E. Alvarado, "Worship in the Spirit: Pentecostal Perspectives on Liturgical Theology and Praxis," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21, no. 1 (April 1, 2012): 143, <https://doi.org/10.1163/174552512x633330>.

³⁷ Ps. 34:8a HCSB

The Church does not need to place burdensome demands of action and behavior on new disciples.³⁸ In fact, the early Church addressed this issue of placing an unbearable yoke on disciples' necks, determining that the Holy Spirit would only be concerned with essential issues of holiness.³⁹ The orthopraxis that must eventually follow as fruit or evidence of Christian discipleship comes from a circumcised heart. The practices and habits indicative of a follower of Christ are the outworking of God's grace that has taken hold of a person's affections. However, to follow Christ does require essential participation in biblically prescriptive practices, some such as the sacramental ordinances listed above, but others that further shape and form the affections. Jesus overcame the Devil's temptations in the desert by being intimately acquainted with God's instructions. These temptations addressed sustenance, worship, and the authority of petition. Disciples of Jesus must follow Him in knowing the Scriptures so as to obey all that the Lord God taught. In knowing the Scriptures, they must also follow the practices of daily Bible reading, worship, and prayer. With each of these comes an expectation of meeting with God. In the discipline, the Holy Spirit occupies the heart and broods over the encounter.

Perhaps the most essential methodical-pentecostal practice should be the daily reading of the Bible. Jesus was deeply familiar with the Scriptures, which prepared Him to do the Father's will. For disciples to make disciples and teach them to obey Christ's commandments would require reading and studying His Word as a personal discipleship practice. A Bible reading and study plan requires discipline, intentionality, and the conscious development of one's spiritual appetite for the "daily bread" of God's Word. The prescriptive and methodical nature of a Bible

³⁸ "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father also loves the one born of Him. This is how we know that we love God's children when we love God and obey His commands. For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands. Now His commands are not a burden, because whatever has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith." 1 John 5:1-4 HCSB

³⁹ See Acts 15

plan does not depose the Holy Spirit of His role. Pentecostals must remain mindful to invite the Holy Spirit to come breathe on the text of the Scriptures. Interpretation and understanding of the Word of God comes for Christians through a revelation brought by the wind of the Holy Spirit—the breath behind the words. The Word of God is referred to as the “Sword of the Spirit” in Ephesians 6 and it is useful for many things in discerning and developing a holiness of heart.⁴⁰ The encouragement and provision of corporate reading plans invites disciples into a communal conversation that develops the orthodoxy and orthopraxis of faithful followers of Jesus. It invites others to share in the same feasting on daily bread and welcomes one another to the banquet table.

Worship is intentional and active participation in expressions of adoration toward God. In a church service it is experienced through the liturgy and in private it is lived out in moments of devotion that acknowledges God’s sovereignty, holiness, and grace. It is an enduring practice for the sons and daughters of God. We are to worship and serve Him only.⁴¹ The practice and participation in worship for a Christian disciple is an act of sacrifice. Worship is not simply the doing of the sacrifice but the becoming of the sacrifice. The disciple lays bare their soul on the altar of Heaven with the expectation that the fire of the Holy Spirit will fall upon them, refining them as a living sacrifice. Worship is itself methodical, capturing the attention of the worshiper through his or her senses and imagination, leading them into deeper experiences of God’s power and presence. Worship shapes and reforms the affections of the soul by setting the attention on the object of worship. When worship is directed toward the Holy One of Israel, idols of every other form and fashion are cast aside. It becomes an instrument of circumcision. Worship arrests

⁴⁰ “For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.” Heb. 4:12 HCSB

⁴¹ See Deut. 6:16; Luke 4:8

our hearts. It feeds our appetite for His presence and starves the self-gratifying appetites that lead our affections to be set on something other than God. A methodical-pentecostal disciple approaches worship with the expectation of a divine encounter. Certain accompanying practices such as raised hands, kneeling, or even dancing are embodied expressions of worship that reflect the posture of the heart toward God. Where there is unified corporate participation in such expressions the expectation of divine encounter increases exponentially as the company of disciples go together to the place of God's manifest presence. This corporate experience shapes affections individually so that in between corporate gatherings the individual goes on to continue sacrificing. Discipleship is costly. Worship is one of the prices paid for a deeper relationship with Christ.

In the final temptation Jesus responded that we are not to test God with our petitions. James wrote to the Twelve Tribes, "You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your evil desires."⁴² To ask rightly would be to petition God with a circumcised heart, one whose affections are turned toward His glory and Kingdom. There are many different types of prayer, but they have the same purpose of meeting with God, to commune with Him, to know Him and be known by Him through the relationship of prayer. Prayer is a fundamental practice of discipleship. Jesus prayed often. Personal prayer develops faith and trust in God. The intentional, methodical discipline of prayer should be done with an expectation of meeting with God just like in the reading of Scripture or in acts of worship. In prayer, humanity goes beyond itself to reach God. Corporate prayer develops the unity of the community and the shared pursuit of an encounter with God. Corporate prayer becomes a discipleship practice as prayer is both modeled for and used to encourage others. For

⁴² James 4:3 HCSB

Pentecostals, praying in tongues does this in a way unmatched by intelligible human language and therefore becomes a language directly related to the in-breaking presence of God. Prayer is transcendent. It invades Heaven as Heaven invades the prayer. Prayer acknowledges the sovereignty of God and our need for Him. Prayer not only is discipleship as imitating Christ, but it also refines our desires to meet the sometimes unbidden will of God.

Summary

A methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship is intent upon cultivating a holiness of heart through disciplined practices and habits that create space for the Holy Spirit to move and work to sanctify Christian disciples. Methodical-pentecostal disciples pursue a lifestyle of Spirit-integrated discipline as a method of following Jesus—it is a “new” Methodism. This kind of discipleship is not the rigid, legalistic discipleship Jesus encountered with the Pharisees. It does not propose outward holiness as the ultimate expression of Christian discipleship, but rather provokes the inward affections and invites the cleansing, sanctifying work of the Spirit to be done first. A methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship aims to take captive the affections of the soul and direct them toward the saving, sanctifying, Spirit-baptizing, healing, reigning Christ.

A methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship invites new believers to the banquet table of the Lamb that they may come, taste, and be changed by the feast. The methodical focus on a limited number of habits and sacramental ordinances maintains a discipline of studying, learning, practicing, and participating in Christlikeness. The observance of such habits and ordinances refines the affections of the heart, cultivating a deeper desire for the presence of God, and a response to the Spirit’s movement among believers. Knowledge of the Word, a heart of

love toward God and neighbor, and communion with God truly develops believers into effective disciples who go out and make disciples of Jesus. These are the disciples who will be known by their love and right affections evidenced by right actions toward those around them.

CHAPTER FIVE
METHODICAL-PENTECOSTAL DISCIPLINES

Introduction

The pneumatological foundation of a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship demands a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and the changing winds of the seasons in the Church. As such we should be wary of codifying disciplines as though they are mandatory for participation or membership in a society of Methodical-Pentecostals. It is the nature of the Holy Spirit to move about and hover as He wills to stir up the works of God in the spirits and lives of humanity. So, while He remains immutable, the Spirit continues to be the brooding force that brings creative refinement to God's people. This means that as the Church anticipates the return of Jesus, the Spirit is at work to get the Church ready through His guidance.

However, it is clear from the life of Jesus and His disciples in the First Century that some disciplines are genuinely essential to a life of loving, obeying, and worshiping God. These disciplines are the essence of a Christian disciple. It is important for a methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship to provide a limited number of certain habits as examples of biblically prescriptive disciplines. Some disciplines remain timeless in spite of changing cultures. The following three examples are not intended as an exhaustive list of methodical-pentecostal disciplines. They are meant to offer a broad proposal of biblically based disciplines that cultivate a holiness of heart and lead to a deeper revelation of what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Each of these disciplines finds its origin in an encounter with the immanent God of Scripture.

Community Groups

The value of community cannot be overstated for Methodical-Pentecostals. What John Wesley established in his societies, class meetings, and bands is the joining together of Christians for the purposes of friendship, discipleship, and accountability. The early Pentecostal movement of the Twentieth Century likewise emphasized the community aspect of Christian discipleship with the inclusivity and in-gathering regardless of race, gender, or class. Community Groups may be simply a reimagining of Wesley's idea of class meetings and bands; however, the origins of such types of gatherings can be found in Acts 2. After Peter's sermon on Pentecost, Scripture describes the lifestyle of new disciples: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers."¹ Community Groups offer the discipline of gathering and sharing life with one another. They provide the welcoming, belonging support of other believers to instruct and encourage one another in the Word of God and prayer. Community Groups cultivate an inclusivity and belonging into the larger community of faith in the local church. These groups can even serve as non-threatening social gatherings that are inviting to non-believers, questioning or curious individuals, and new disciples.

Community Groups should include an expressed intention to study the Bible, just as the early Church committed itself to studying the apostles' teachings together. Paul wrote to Timothy encouraging him in his study of the Scriptures, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."² As Pentecostals believe they are empowered by Spirit-baptism to reach the world with the message of the Gospel, it is also important that disciples commit themselves to study so that they may be trained and equipped to

¹ Acts 2:42 HCSB

² 2 Tim. 3:16-17 HCSB

wield that power effectively. The methodical-pentecostal discipline of participation in a community Bible study is important to prepare disciples to faithfully preach and teach the Gospel to others. Studying together invites the testimony and experience of others to be shared. Community study of Scripture helps to shape and form our understanding through different perspectives. However, a methodical-pentecostal community will ultimately invite the Holy Spirit to be the teacher. Jesus said, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit—the Father will send Him in My name—will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”³ Welcoming the presence, instruction, and influence of the Holy Spirit into the Bible study aspect of these groups will teach disciples the experience of the Spirit guiding believers in the truth.⁴ Inviting the Holy Spirit into the meeting creates an expectation and anticipation that God will speak through His Word to those in attendance. This introduces people to believe for divine encounters outside of regular worship services.

The purpose of such a gathering is to build the essential relational component valued by the early Church as seen throughout the book of Acts. The purpose is to gather faithfully and consistently to encourage one another in the faith. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing...And we exhort you, brothers: warn those who are irresponsible, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all.⁵

As relationships are built within these groups comes a trust to be honest about one’s sins, temptations, failures, uncertainties, and wounds. James instructed the disciples to “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.”⁶ This confession aspect

³ John 14:26 HCSB

⁴ See John 16:13

⁵ 1 Thess. 5:11, 14-15 HCSB

⁶ James 5:16a HCSB

of community was essential for Wesley in the formation of his bands too.⁷ Confession is an important part of Christian discipleship and the building up of the body of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit Christian disciples have been granted the authority to forgive sins.⁸ Confession and forgiveness within the bonds of a Community Group edifies, exhorts, and encourages the church. Richard Foster writes, “Confession is a corporate Discipline because the sin both offends God and creates a wound in the Christian fellowship.”⁹ Even what may seem like a personal sin or even the temptation of a trespass will have a wider impact than simply the individual confessing. Confession also opens the group to discuss Scripture’s treatment of temptations, sins, and trespasses.

Community Groups help disciples to shape their lives and their affections in a way that produces personal and social holiness. This is why the aspect of studying the Bible and confession are important elements to the discipline of meeting together in this way. Elements of song singing could be incorporated as Paul writes to the disciples, “...be filled by the Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music from your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.”¹⁰ The harmony of singing together meets with the harmony of being one in Christ and individuals grow together in community to know and experience Jesus in deeper ways through building one another up in love.¹¹ David wrote a song of ascent for going up the mountain to meet with God:

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony! It is like fine oil on the head, running down on the beard, running down Aaron’s beard onto his

⁷ John Wesley, *John Wesley*, 180-181.

⁸ “After saying this, He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’” John 20:22-23 HCSB

⁹ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2008), 193.

¹⁰ Eph. 5:18-21 HCSB

¹¹ See Eph. 4:15-16

robes. It is like the dew of Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord has appointed the blessing — life forevermore.¹²

Community Groups foster a love of God and one another in harmony both through literal song and through the unity of submitting to one another. It is in that unity that we can experience the anointing presence and blessings of God.

In order to be an effective habit for discipleship, Community Groups should meet regularly once a week. They can be built around a desire to learn more about a specific biblical topic or book of the Bible, shared season of life, or geographical location. These groups become a support network for its members as life changes and individuals face tragedy or triumphs. These are the people that will celebrate or grieve with one another. Paul encouraged the Romans, “Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.”¹³ Community Groups offer a connection to the larger church body. As churches emphasize spiritual formation, they should provide discipleship resources to Community Groups. Churches can help facilitate Community Groups administratively by maintaining a directory of groups that meet with information such as when, how frequently, the focus, location, and leader contact information. Churches can help provide curriculum or other Bible study materials that will help Community Groups stay focused on the expressed intent of encouraging one another in the faith. Wesley’s class meetings were centered around a shared aspect of the lives of disciples. Community Groups can be created for married couples, single people, young parents, seasoned saints, divorcees, new disciples, or exclusive men’s and women’s groups. While Wesley ensured that his class meetings were led by a more spiritually mature individual, Community Groups do not necessarily need to follow that example as long as the leader is of good Christian character. Community Groups could be more

¹² Ps. 133 HCSB

¹³ Rom. 12:15 HCSB

discussion based rather than instructional if there is proper guidance from church leadership on the topic to ensure sound doctrine is being affirmed.

A church interested in developing Community Groups for the development of personal and social holiness, a methodical structure with a reliance on and invitation to the Holy Spirit will produce disciples who themselves are equipped to make disciples. The following are group types with specific discipleship goals for churches to consider:

- Exploring Faith - allows non-believers or those questioning faith to ask questions and be introduced to the simple Gospel.
- New Disciples - for newly confessing, baptized Christians to learn the fundamentals of the Christian faith, orthodoxy, and doctrinal beliefs of the church.
- Emerging Adults - for young adults ages 18-23 yrs. old to take personal ownership and experience of their faith, explore their calling and purpose in the body of Christ.
- Care Groups - these would include areas of life that require a type of healing ministry such as grief, divorce, addiction, trauma, etc.

Additionally, the invitation to participate is important as it helps to foster the welcoming and belonging message that faith is not done alone. Churches should feature or promote groups during regular worship services and through social media platforms. The discipline of gathering will feel less like a religious obligation if the time together involves lighthearted fellowship. Members of Community Groups should get together socially, as well, throughout the week. Creating a faith community that is centered around encountering God through fellowship with one another is an invitation for the Holy Spirit to dwell among and move in the community through Spiritual Gifts and the manifest presence of God.

Private and Corporate Prayer

It is significant for Methodical-Pentecostals to note and understand that the first time Scripture tells us about Jesus' own prayer life is at His baptism. It was while He was praying that Heaven opened up, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and the Father's voice came down from Heaven.¹⁴ This moment initiated Jesus' earthly ministry and it began with prayer. The Gospels repeatedly reveal Jesus' reliance on prayer personally and His encouragement to His disciples to pray. This communion with God keeps us connected to His voice and His will. The Son of God was empowered for His service to the Kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit on this Earth in a moment of prayer. Prayer transcends the confines of this carnal world and invites Heaven to breach our natural existence with supernatural power. Prayer sets our attention, our affections, and our trust in God. It develops an openness in our hearts for our will to be transformed to meet with the perfect will of God. David prayed, "God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not banish me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me."¹⁵ Prayer gives language to the desires of our heart. We are spiritually shaped, formed, and changed by prayer.

Jesus modeled a disciplined life of prayer to His disciples, as well as gave instructions on prayer. Among them, two are uniquely positioned to provide clarity for the parameters of a methodical-pentecostal discipline of Prayer. The first is this: pray intentionally. Jesus said, "But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you pray, don't babble like the idolaters, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words."¹⁶ He then famously

¹⁴ See Luke 3:21-22

¹⁵ Ps. 51:10-11 HCSB

¹⁶ Matt. 6:6-7 HCSB

prescribed The Lord's Prayer as a method and model for praying to God.¹⁷ Prayer should be specific and directed with a righteous and clean heart. James reminded the disciples, "The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect."¹⁸ John's book of Revelation speaks twice to the idea that the prayers of the saints, God's holy ones, are like incense to be poured out.¹⁹ Paul wrote to the church in Rome, "In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings. And He who searches the hearts knows the Spirit's mind-set, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."²⁰ Effective prayer is sanctified prayer led by the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals understand that there is a way to pray in accordance with the leading of the Holy Spirit that does not rely on the natural mind to petition and intercede. Instead, through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, a disciple may pray in the Spirit with Tongues. Speaking or praying in Tongues is a transcendent experience of divine encounter. Praying in tongues, available only with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, unlocks a new relationship with the Lord. Paul wrote, "For if I pray in another language, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful."²¹ Praying in Tongues works to edify and shape your spirit; it works with the Spirit to transform your heart. It is an active and disciplined participation in your own spiritual formation. While our natural mind may be directed toward certain answers to prayer, the Holy Spirit working in you knows the effective direction in which to pray. When you pray in Tongues, your spirit is strengthened over your natural being's spirit and your limited understanding of how to pray. In building up your

¹⁷ See Matt. 6:9-13

¹⁸ James 5:16b HCSB

¹⁹ See Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4

²⁰ Rom. 8:26-27 HCSB

²¹ 1 Cor. 14:14 HCSB

spirit, shaping and strengthening it, you become more sensitive to the things and the direction of the Holy Spirit. Paul directed Christians to “Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.”²² By yielding the use of our physical tongue we enter into a spiritual place where we respond to a partnership with the Holy Spirit to fulfill Jesus’ appointment to His disciples in casting out demons, healing the sick, and raising the dead.²³

There is a discipline of the affections that takes place in the willingness to tarry and press on in prayer. The second instruction on prayer is this: persist in prayer. Luke wrote that Jesus told a parable on the persistence of prayer so that the disciples would know “the need for them to pray always and not become discouraged.”²⁴ This theme of persistent prayer remains throughout Jesus’ time with His disciples. When He instructed them to “ask, seek, knock” He spoke in a present, continuous verb tense: “Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you.”²⁵ Jesus addressed the disciples with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Stay awake and pray, so that you won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”²⁶ Before Christ ascended to Heaven He gave His disciples the instruction to wait in Jerusalem and in obedience Luke recorded that they went to an upstairs room and “were continually united in prayer.”²⁷ It is the consistent and persistent petitions of prayer that break through into Heaven and effect change on the Earth. Daniel persisted twenty-one days to see break through.²⁸

²² Eph. 6:18 HCSB

²³ See Matt. 10:8

²⁴ Luke 18:1 HCSB

²⁵ Matt. 7:7 HCSB

²⁶ Matt. 26:41 HCSB

²⁷ Acts 1:14 HCSB

²⁸ See Daniel 10

To aid in the development of the personal discipline of Prayer, it would be beneficial to the spiritual formation of a church's congregation to make corporate times of prayer available outside of the regular worship service. Rather than instituting the practice of prayer, these meetings would serve as providing the place and opportunity for the gathering together of disciples much like the meeting place of the upper room in Acts 2. Corporate Prayer is essential to a methodical-pentecostal discipleship as it unites believers and invites others to be instruments of ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are called to bear one another's burdens and certainly those who carried their friends and family to Jesus for a touch from Heaven were honored in their petitions. Jesus said to His disciples, "Again, I assure you: If two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by My Father in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them."²⁹

Prayer meetings should be regularly scheduled, welcoming all to receive from God, experience His presence, and be joined by others in unity for their requests before God. Corporate Prayer gives space for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to move as members of the prayer meeting having received certain gifts may minister in healings, miracles, prophecy, words of wisdom, and words of knowledge. These prayer meetings should remain orderly per Paul's instructions for the operation of the Gifts.³⁰ These meetings must remain intentional so as to avoid disorder or disruption to the unity of the gathering. However, they should also be less formal than a standard worship service so as to cultivate an openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Corporate Prayer meetings help to foster the discipline of tarrying or waiting on the Lord and regularly scheduled meetings with specific agendas of prayer help to cultivate persistent prayer regarding specific needs. Corporate Prayer functions in discipleship of the

²⁹ Matt. 18:19-20 HCSB

³⁰ See 1 Cor. 14:26-40

congregation as disciples learn how to pray and are joined with the affirming “amens” of other believers in their prayers.

A church interested in implementing a methodical-pentecostal discipline of Prayer should offer the following opportunities for practicing this discipline:

- Provide resources on types of prayer and what Scripture says about prayer.
- Offer workshops or classes on the topic of prayer to inform and encourage disciples to pray.
- Develop and disciple a prayer team who can minister praying for others during times of corporate gatherings.
- Schedule prayer meetings regularly, including a weekly corporate prayer time, as well as other meetings focused on things such as healing, freedom and deliverance from oppression, times of community crisis or need, and intercession for specific needs in the church.

Prescribing the discipline of Prayer for spiritual formation will produce methodical-pentecostal disciples who are dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide their spiritual lives, intentional and persistent in the place of prayer to see Heaven meet Earth. After all, the disciples are called to specifically pray: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”³¹

Developing a habit of Prayer will lead the Church to seek the wisdom of Heaven above the wisdom of people. This will produce disciples who trust in the Lord with a circumcised heart and petition Him rightly in accordance with His will. Corporate Prayer will lead to a unified church.

Acts of Service

Acts of Service as a spiritual discipline fit within Wesley’s notion of “works of mercy,” which are an integral part in the circumcision of the heart and the shaping or reshaping of our

³¹ Matt. 6:10 HCSB

affections.³² Randy Maddox explains, “works of mercy would deepen one’s relationship with God’s empowering Presence. Given the ability for tempers to be patterned, imitation of Christ’s model of servanthood would help reshape our moral nature into the image of Christ.”³³ Service was modeled and taught clearly by Jesus to His disciples. To see those in need and to care for them is to love them as Jesus loves them. Serving others’ needs is an act of self-denial that disciplines our affections toward the affections of Christ. We do not serve to get, only to give and believe that God is going to work through us to minister to others. James depicted service as evidence for holiness of heart: “Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”³⁴ Service, as a methodical-pentecostal discipline, is something that offers the opportunity for disciples to be formed into the likeness of Christ both in the act of self-denial and in imitating His own actions. To do this as a Spirit-baptized believer means anticipating that the Holy Spirit will be present to minister grace, love, and His sanctifying work.

Service involves humility. It is the willingness to go unnoticed while caring for the needs of others. We are to serve in the quiet, in the hidden, and not to seek accolades for our serving.³⁵ In fact, service is quite frequently a ministry of the small things. Service goes low in order to lift up. It is not thinking too little of the thing that needs to be done, nor too highly of yourself, but rather valuing the person that it serves enough to share the love of God with them through the act. Greatness is not found in power or position, but in service. Jesus explained to His disciples the importance of service in His Kingdom:

³² For more on Wesley’s idea of “works of mercy”, see Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 163-168.

³³ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 215.

³⁴ James 1:27 HCSB

³⁵ See Matt. 6:1-4

It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life — a ransom for many.³⁶

The commitment of a Methodical-Pentecostal to participate in the discipline of service is a choice, it is the intentional turning of one's affections toward God and others. Paul wrote, "I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people."³⁷ Service is a faithful response to the Great Commission. Service is choosing to reach out and touch others with the faith filled expectation of a divine encounter. The discipline of service is not temporary or momentary—it is a lifestyle.

We are called to serve one another within our Christian community. Paul encouraged the Roman church: "Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lack diligence; be fervent in spirit; serve the Lord...Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality."³⁸ When we serve, we are participating in God's grace both in giving and receiving from one another. Serving cultivates a tender heart toward those we are serving and the capacity to love others is increased through the selflessness of choosing to serve rather than be served. Serving each other develops love in our hearts for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. This love fuels our desire to continue to serve and encourage others. It helps in forming an attitude of humility and fosters meekness in us. It is the meek that gain the inheritance of the Earth.³⁹ Service can also include acts of charity toward the lowly, forgotten, and marginalized of society. Throughout Scripture God's people are given instructions to care for the immigrants, widows, and orphans. Service is not only toward those we favor or who favor

³⁶ Matt. 20:26-28 HCSB

³⁷ 1 Cor. 9:19 HCSB

³⁸ Rom. 12:10-11, 13 HCSB

³⁹ See Ps. 37:11 and Matt. 5:5

us. Oftentimes service risks rejection and a lack of appreciation or recognition. Christ Himself was actually despised by the very crowds He served; He was denied and betrayed by the disciples whose feet He washed. Serving is a discipline of wants. It sacrifices our personal comforts to meet the needs of others. Doing so welcomes the Holy Spirit to change both our hearts and the hearts of those we are serving. As Spirit-baptism is empowerment for service, Acts of Service as a methodical-pentecostal discipline anticipates the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the church to those in need. The Church demonstrates through service that salvation unites people, broken and hurting people, who have received redemption through Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

Service to one another in the Christian community at-large and within the local church is service to God. We serve Him by serving His body—His Church. Local churches that want to cultivate the methodical-pentecostal discipline of Acts of Service need to teach this discipline by providing opportunities of participation. Rather than providing direct instruction, this discipline should be cultivated through imitating and following a model of service that trickles down from leadership. Just as Jesus' servant-leadership was greatly displayed at His disciples' feet with a towel wrapped around His waist, the leaders of our local churches must be found serving first rather than being served. As much as serving is self-denial and the giving of ourselves in service to others, as members of Christ's body it is giving ourselves to the work of the Lord, which is never in vain.⁴⁰ The anticipation that the labor is not in vain is an anticipation of divine encounter. Serving the body of Christ should not be drudgery; it should be our joy to serve. We follow Christ by serving and in serving find that we become more like Him and are re-formed

⁴⁰ See 1 Cor. 15:58

into more of who we were originally created to be—children of God who share with one another in the inheritance granted to us.

Acts of Service can be developed in the lives of Methodical-Pentecostals through various types of service and serving projects made available by the community of a local church, including to the local church body and the local surrounding community. Sometimes these opportunities or projects may have a joint serving purpose. While service to widows, orphans, and the poor is clearly prescribed by God throughout Scripture, a Methodical-Pentecostal should be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit for the type of service that uniquely invites the presence of God into that specific community in that specific season. If Acts of Service becomes a conventional routine that does not engage the heart of a disciple, then it is not a methodical-pentecostal discipline, it is a mundane religious custom. We serve because we are called to serve and so we should, but it must be an orthopraxis with a pneumatological orthopathy grounding it. Although planned Acts of Service are important for the local church to create, spontaneous Acts of Service should naturally result from this discipleship practice being implemented in the church. In other words, Acts of Service disciple members of the community in following after Jesus' example to serve.

A church would do well to consider developing service opportunities and projects that cultivate a methodical-pentecostal discipleship model. Service within the local church should be regular with weekly, monthly, quarterly, and seasonally scheduled opportunities or projects within the body, as well as opportunities that are responsive to an immediate need. A church could offer some of the following options in order to help develop the discipline of Acts of Service within its members:

- Weekly Sunday service serve teams that work to welcome, invite, and host those attending.

- Weekly ministry serve teams such as children, youth, or Community Group leaders.
- Quarterly or Seasonal projects in and around the church property to steward the facility and make it clean, inviting, and festive according to the Church calendar.
- Serve opportunities to families that are members of the church who are in need such as providing meals or caring for their homes or children in times of crisis.

Additionally, Acts of Service should be done within the geographical community of the church.

Serving those in need who do not attend the local congregation is a way to go and share the Gospel with those around us. A local church could provide the following Acts of Service to guide their members in caring for the community:

- Community outreaches to provide food, lightly used clothing, and new school supplies to those in need.
- Service opportunities at local shelters or food kitchens.
- Community events such as block parties, Christmas and Easter parties, or other fun events to share the love of Jesus with the community.
- Providing addiction recovery or financial literacy classes free of charge.

These types of serving opportunities help to further cultivate the love for others and spread the Gospel message through action.

Summary

Methodical-pentecostal disciplines serve as an instrument for discipleship as they help to shape and form the affections of the heart. The disciplines of gathering in Community Groups, attending to Prayer, and participating in Acts of Service will provide disciples with the opportunity to cultivate a holiness of heart. These three disciplines specifically respond to biblical instruction and principles of discipleship found in the life of Jesus and His early church disciples. An intentional commitment to adhere to these disciplines should breed an appetite of

love for God and others as is the intention of Christian discipleship. These specific disciplines have been discussed in fairly broad terms so as to avoid codifying practices in a demanding and legalistic way. The local church merely offers an avenue of discipleship and spiritual formation through the availability and integration of these disciplines in the life of the church community. While there are other Christian disciplines and practices that are beneficial to spiritual formation, these three are disciplines which Jesus Himself practiced. Moreover, each of these is energized and emboldened by the Holy Spirit for ministry both to those within the local church and the broader community. Practicing these disciplines strengthens the affections for service in fulfilling the Great Commission.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

John Wesley published the following “Thoughts on Methodism” in the *Arminian Magazine* dated 1787:

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.¹

I will make no commentary on the life of the Methodist Church here. However, I believe there can still be a people rightly called “Methodists” in the same spirit John Wesley envisioned. The Pentecostal church can and should once again take up the mantle of Methodism with which it was once fashioned. To pursue a holiness of heart by the power of the Holy Spirit would be holding fast to the “doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.” It would be an homage to the great Methodists whose pursuit of Holy Spirit Baptism brought on a Latter Rain outpouring at Azusa Street. Those who take up this mantle do so as committed disciples of Jesus who anticipate a divine encounter through pneumatologically charged disciplines and practices. I call these people *Methodical-Pentecostals* because their theology of discipleship is rooted in Christian disciplines that shape the affections of the heart and are brought to life through the Holy Spirit.

John Wesley’s theological work on soteriology presented a religion of response to grace, one that acknowledges the necessary presence of the Holy Spirit in salvation while bidding the believer to draw closer to Jesus and follow Him. Wesley’s ecclesiology examined the affections

¹ John Wesley, *Selections From The Writings Of The Rev. John Wesley, M.A. Sometime Fellow Of Lincoln College, Oxford* (New York, NY: Eaton & Mains, 1901), <http://divinityarchive.com/bitstream/handle/11258/4679/04416403.pdf>, 134.

of the heart as seen in works not as unto salvation but rather as fruit or evidence of a circumcised heart. The devotion to holiness for the Methodists was pietistic but not self-righteous. The commitment to seek the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work and respond to it yielded a people with a holy discontentment for a Christianity without an experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit as promised in Scripture. Wesley's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christian disciples undergirded the disciplined pursuits of those committed to experience a Latter Rain outpouring. Pentecostalism finds its roots in the methodical, disciplined lives of the holiness enthusiasts known as Methodists. Retrieving Wesley's method and model for Christian discipleship in the Pentecostal church will produce disciples with a holiness of heart whose affections are set toward the glory of God and whose response to the Spirit has empowered them to go, teach, deliver, heal, and disciple the lost.

The biblical model of discipleship laid out in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles teaches discipleship is more than an education, it is a transformation. Jesus' teachings offer a path of discipleship that involves doing, mimicking, as He did and becoming more like Him in the process. Scripture is clear that to be a follower of God requires self-denial. Many of the disciplines that help cultivate a holiness of heart are then habits of desire that evidence a circumcision of the heart. They begin as acts of self-denial. So, while salvation in Jesus is most certainly a free gift of grace to any who believe, discipleship itself is actually quite costly. Discipleship in the Bible is done in community, not isolation. The Scriptural call to discipleship is an invitation to participate in building the Kingdom of God and with Jesus' departure He promised the Helper to empower the disciples for service to the Great Commission. The Bible's instructions for Christian discipleship are about following Jesus in a way that changes the whole person. Discipleship comes at the expense of self. It trades the corrupted false identity acquired

in a post-Fall relationship with God for the true identity of kinship with Jesus acquired at the cross.

Retrieving Wesley's model of discipleship through the implementation of disciplines and practices within the local church will foster disciple making in a way that releases disciples who have personally cultivated a holiness of heart and are empowered by the Holy Spirit for service. A limited focus on the disciplines of Community Groups, Prayer, and Acts of Services maintains the spirit of Methodism in cultivating personal piety while instituting accountability and encouraging social holiness. I hope to see a revival of holiness in the Pentecostal church that raises up disciples who will walk in the holiness that testifies to the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the lives of Christians. Methodical-Pentecostals are those whose affections lead them to walk worthy of the calling received—namely, humility, gentleness, patience, enduring with others in love, and remaining unified in Christ.² This type of discipleship model invites the Holy Spirit to move in and through the unified body of believers to minister to one another, testify of the mystery of the Gospel, and go out making disciples. This methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship creates a church environment for all to be invited, find belonging and purpose, and be encouraged and equipped for the work of the Gospel.

This theology of discipleship hopes to develop an orthopathy that lends itself to a faithful orthopraxis of works of mercy. What began at Oxford College by the Wesley brothers is a method of discipleship that offers a Spirit-responsive development of holiness. Discipleship must include some level of Christian education, accountability, and implementation as evidenced in their lives. A methodical-pentecostal theology of discipleship offers a model for circumcision of the heart. The holiness of heart developed through methodical-pentecostal disciplines and habits

² See Eph. 4:1-3

is what will lead the Pentecostal church into effective evangelism and disciple making in this next century. There is an authenticity to the piety developed in a Methodical-Pentecostal; one that will provoke others to taste and see the salt and light of these disciples. Discipleship is costly, but it is worth the sacrifice.

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