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An Expansion of Christian Holiness Using the Work of Dallas Willard

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Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

AN EXPANSION OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS
USING THE WORK OF DALLAS WILLARD

Written by

GREG LEDBETTER

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:


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AN EXPANSION OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS
USING THE WORK OF DALLAS WILLARD

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

GREG LEDBETTER
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ABSTRACT

An Expansion of Christian Holiness

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2016

The purpose of this project is to empower the Nazarene Church to build upon its current representation of Christian holiness into an understanding of transformation as understood by Dallas Willard so that a process of formation emerges. This project has been written in order to further stem a new conversation for the Nazarene Church regarding Christian holiness. The current dialogue can enable a guise of spiritual empowerment without bringing about the means needed for real transformation. The Church uses terms like “entire sanctification,” “growth in grace,” and “Christlikeness of Character” which lack explanation and a process of implementation.

This project hopes to create Godly encounters through a revolution of character and a renovation of the heart so that development through grace and character can practically materialize. This project will examine the founding and history of the Nazarene Church and, specific attention will be given to the current wording in the denominational Article of Faith concerning Christian holiness and how spiritual transformation is represented within the Nazarene Church. The paper will explore the positive contributions and the barriers associated with the current discourse within Christian holiness, so that the doctrine of sanctification can be stripped of some seemingly stagnant and ill-founded misconceptions.

Once the various assertions have been described, the project will examine how the thoughts of Willard interact with Christian holiness in regards to spiritual training as development instead of decision. So much of church life can find its identity in a single decision with little process. The study concludes on how to implement this conversation into a practice and the response of a local congregation. While further research will be unavoidable, it serves to leave a lasting impact for the immediate future upon the thoughts of holy living for those who identify as Nazarene.

Content Reader: Keith Matthews, DMin

Words: 295

To my parents, Claude and Rhonda Ledbetter, who always modeled and encouraged me to follow God with a passion

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT	
INTRODUCTION	2
Chapter 1. THE HISTORY OF THE NAZARENE CHURCH AND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS	11
PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION	
Chapter 2. WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS ABOUT CHRISTIAN HOLINESS AND THE WORKS OF DALLAS WILLARD	28
Chapter 3. FINDING A NEW WAY TO JOURNEY INTO SPIRITUAL FORMATION	53
PART THREE: PRACTICE	
Chapter 4. THE EMERGING PRACTICES FOUND WITHIN THIS TYPE OF FORMATION	80
Chapter 5. IMPLEMENTATION, PROCESS, AND EVALUATION	97
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	112
APPENDICES	115
BIBLIOGRAPHY	129

PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

“’Tis a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle / washed in the blood of the lamb. ’Tis a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle / washed in the blood of the lamb.”¹ These are the words of a people who believed in the work of Jesus within His Church. These were the words of Christians who assembled in Pilot Point, Texas a few years after the twentieth century began. Their purpose was to band together for the sake of broadcasting Christian holiness. Their heart’s cry was to proclaim the work of Jesus within the grace found through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Those who gathered were the pioneers and charter members of a community within the boundaries of Christianity.

Whereas these words still find inspiration from historical preferences, they also embolden the process that was once achieved to form such an optimal community of faith. The central understanding of this new endeavor was: “A simple, primitive church, a church of the people and for the people... That seeks to discard all superfluous forms and ecclesiasticism and go back to the plain simple words of Christ.”² The term “holiness” is one that is considered by many to be ambiguous. The word itself carries with it hundreds of years of description and potential baggage. When asked to describe the meaning, one could give a plethora of definitions. When asked what it practically implies or how to live in such a state, one is usually forced to

¹ *Sing to the Lord: Hymnal* (Kansas City, MO: Lillenas, 1993), 672.

² Timothy Lawrence Smith, and W. T. Purkiser. *Called Unto Holiness; the Story of the Nazarenes* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Pub. House, 1962), 111.

fall back to doctrinal presuppositions in order to try and adequately give some type of response. This is the dilemma the Nazarene Church is facing today.

If the message of holiness is to survive in future generations, it must be renovated from doctrinal ascension to practical application. The Nazarene Church has spent many years trying to describe the work of holiness within the Christian life. The Church has employed various methods in order to try and connect this central message in concrete ways. The current question facing the Church is how disciples are able to bring holy living to fruition. At some point, the Nazarene Church journeyed from living holiness, as Wesley would institute, to mainly teaching it. The Church has allowed heart knowledge and experience to become an intellectual pursuit. Simply stated, the Church moved from living holiness to just talking about it.

As this project will convey, the original conception of holiness was spurned by the training of disciples and not strictly a conversion decision. This current trend of discipleship was definitely not what John Wesley had in mind nor was this the practice when the methods of holiness were originally brought forward from other historical figures in the Church. Wesley envisioned a complete working of the person as a new creation in Christ. Sin was not hidden, community was not forsaken, and discipleship of the believer was found both individually and collectively. His vantage point was never expecting holiness to be anything other than a lifetime achievement of looking like Jesus. The disciple always had more steps that could be taken on their journey towards God.

If Christian holiness is reduced to a one-time decision, it deviates from the foundation laid by the original creators. It is something more than being Spiritually

empowered. This is a very well known fact within Nazarene circles. The work of Christ in the life of a believer is something that is continual. The goal of the journey is to become more Christlike until that final promotion to glory. Historical figures within the church spoke with conviction when it pertained to holiness. The noticeable difference from historical literature and modern applications is how one is encouraged to engage in becoming holy.

These historical engagements were fueled by something more than mere words. These historic writings had wisdom because they were founded in a spirit of revival: revival as empowerment by the Holy Spirit that led to action. The Bible reminds us that if followers of Christ want wisdom, they are to ask the Lord (James 1:5).³ The spirit of revival was not based on theological differences but a Godly orientation of life. This kind of life requires study, time, and discipline. The current understanding of holiness is pervaded with various terms, some confusing, others understandable, but many lack an infusion of modern practicality. They lack the means to accomplish such a life. The Nazarene Church uses phrases like growth in grace and Christlikeness of character without further explanation. It can be inferred that these terms do imply something more than a spiritual yearning for God to work, but what is not clear is how one is able to walk in such a way. There are practices needed to help disciples' transition from a cognitive language into heart guidance. There are other exercises that enable one to demonstrate growth. Transformation can become reality.

³ *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

In recent years, the Western Church has lacked the basic necessities to equip disciples to do more than change some of their outward behavior and hide where they may fall short. The church has struggled to implement many of the fundamental truths of practice in regards to what it truly means to live in Christian holiness. Surrender is key. Freedom is foundational. There are realistic ways in which one is able to work through being sanctified. But there is something to this thought of transformation. As Dallas Willard would state, we need to once more begin “connecting intellectual to moral and spiritual realities.”⁴ Without such a connection, we find ourselves in a quandary. We find stagnation. We find nothing.

As a result of such little movement the church must learn once more to be in the pursuit of holiness. In order for God to captivate the hearts of people, the way in which one speaks of holiness needs renewal. The way in which one lives holiness needs revival. Ultimately, the way in which the Church walks in the kingdom needs revitalization. She needs to be retrained, refocused, and have new life breathed within. This is where the work of Dallas Willard plays a pivotal role. Willard is fundamentally able to stay between the lines of orthodoxy while providing a greater level of authenticity in practice so that one can have a closer walk with God. In essence, he is able to connect the dots where some dots may be missing. The brilliance of such work is remarkable and in greater need today more than ever.

The three primary Willard sources for this discussion are *Renovation of the Heart*, *Revolution of Character*, and *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*. These three books coincide with one another to produce daily practice with a devotional and

⁴ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998), 5.

spiritual emphasis. The brilliance of Willard is found within the way in which discipleship is presented. The VIM model will be presented in later chapters. Instead of emphasizing one portion of holy living, Willard provides a three-sided triangle that creates a holistic understanding of how one is able to discover their hidden life in God. As A.W. Tozer once stated, “The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people.”⁵ In other words, spiritual transformation is for everyone. And whether people are willing to admit it or not, everyone is being spiritually formed, inside and outside of the church. The transformative process is something that occurs in all walks of life.

The three parts, mentioned above, of this disciple-led life rely on something more than just spirit empowerment, letting God have control, or total surrender. While these statements are correct, God is far more interested in the process or practices of placing action behind belief for holy living. God expects something more than attending a service and reading a few words each morning in a devotional. If one only reads words and does not practically apply them, they are only a shell of what could be a new creation. This is one of the problems we find in the Western Nazarene Church today. And it surfaces a tension we find in the Bible between the dualism of faith and works, or within spirit and action.

Thus we must bring more to the conversation than the above statements. This is where the Willard triangle and writings of Willard really begin takes on meaning. The three pieces of the triangle are: personal disciplines, commitment to Jesus within

⁵ A. W. Tozer, *How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 18-19.

the work of the Holy Spirit, and the daily events of life.⁶ From these three parts, believers can infer that God will work according to His will and purposes. But from these three parts disciples can also infer that they have a responsibility to be proactive in this process. Connecting the three pieces create a new dynamic for the church. The disciple is now infused with greater capacity and responsibility to allow each day to be a new expression of Christ's work.

Willard brings all three of these pieces forward in much of his writings. He alludes to them primarily in Kingdom language but does so practically. If spiritual transformation is to occur rightly, practices are to be included. This project has been written in order to help those who want to be more like Jesus and cooperate with God to draw closer. If one is just expecting to be empowered by God with little or no effort, readers of this project need to know that the type of discipleship established from these writings will require too much. As was often quoted in a summer class at Fuller, "Grace is opposed to earning but not effort."⁷ If one is apathetic about their spiritual journey, this project will only become exhausting. If one truly seeks the work of God and believes that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:14-26), this project is an attempt to change the persona that has hindered the original understanding taught over holiness. If one truly embraces the ongoing work of sanctification/ spiritual formation, this project only serves as a way to deepen the understanding and inner working of the renovated heart for a disciple.

⁶ Class notes from Spirituality and Ministry in conjunction with Fuller Seminary, Summer of 2014, with Keith Matthews and Todd Hunter.

⁷ Class notes from Spirituality and Ministry in conjunction with Fuller Seminary, Summer of 2014, with Keith Matthews and Todd Hunter.

The terms character and heart are both brought forward in this project. These two aspects of human ambition are inseparable when it comes to drive and motive. Both encompass action, both require honesty, and both can be easily hidden. When both are brought into the spotlight, along with the work of the Spirit of God, a person can be transformed through being inwardly formed. In order for either attribute to be significantly altered, practice is required. Our spiritual journey is just like learning to play the piano: practice makes perfect. The hedges of holiness are evident but through the writing of Willard, the shape of the shrub is being adapted.

The modification only takes root when new practices of formation are made. The encouraging thing for many holiness camps is that Wesley understood this. Wesley was not afraid to put together bands of people in order to create a new outcome. He had a direct response to the questions posed a few years earlier about the lack of formation in his own culture; “At the very time when intellectual basis of Christianity was strongest, its moral influence was weakest; when attendance on public worship was, if one may use the expression, *de rigor*, many so-call worshippers were living lives in glaring defiance of the laws of Christianity.”⁸ We, like Wesley, can change the outcome and invoke a great awakening through our transformative process.

Fortunately the journey of spiritual formation maintains solidarity in God and seeks diversity in practice. This is where the word of Willard is particularly engaging. This is also where the person meets the Kingdom. Short sightedness is replaced with kingdom perspectives. Apathy is replaced with a clear vision. One-time decisions are

⁸ William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life: Adapted to the State and Condition of All Orders of Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), xi.

replaced with a journey. The heart, mind, soul, and spirit are captured by grace and moved by each new step. The outcome changes from being motivated by death to every dimension being motivated into life. The disciple soon finds himself or herself trying to be more like Jesus each day. Every waking moment, whether through prayer, disciplines, circumstances, or through intentionality they are given new rhythm by which the creation strives to become more like the Creator.

To conclude, these few paragraphs incorporate the various facets one finds when they begin to dissect how formation can actually occur. The final two chapters of this project are the practices, outcomes, and interactions of believers when confronted with something different than what has been previously taught. The work of God is not necessarily dependent on the work of humanity, but the work of God is dependent on willingness to participate with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The work of discipleship is not executed like an assembly line. It takes real people, dealing with real circumstances, in order for a real God to make a real difference.

In order to facilitate this process, surveys and classes will be implemented for renewal to emerge. The purpose of the questionnaire is to better bring forward the needs of renewal to the congregation. The perspective change arises from within the Sunday sermon. The message will be fixated on renovation, renewal and transformation. In order to faithfully administer transformation through the heart and character, they must be simultaneously stimulated. If only one side is established, the disciple is at a disadvantage when it comes to holistic living.

The process of transformation finds itself in peril if the disciple is unwilling to daily submit, physically, emotionally, and soulfully to the promptings of the Holy

Spirit. Willard will later identify six dimensions in need of formation. The disciples in this project represent the multiplication process that manifests itself when life exists. The primary priority of this project is to open a new line of communication regarding how transformation plays out in Christian holiness so that God will be glorified through the ongoing revolution of His bride. If the church loses sight of spiritual formation as renovation, it is only a form of godliness without the power. It is my prayer that God would continue to bless His church and those who bear His name. As we all know, a true disciple has unlimited power. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit falls upon you...” (Acts 1:8).

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORY OF THE NAZARENE CHURCH AND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

The History of the Church of the Nazarene

The Nazarene church is part of a movement of the Wesleyan-holiness undertaking, spanning over the past three centuries, just before the civil war holiness preaching heightened in the United States, which spurred revival in 1858. As Parrott duly noted, “There is one fact about the Church of the Nazarene which cannot be denied: we were born in a spirit of revival. Furthermore, the mission of the church has ever been to perpetuate holiness.”¹ This call to holiness would be the beacon and cry of the church from its founding, and to this very day. The spirit of revival would not only sweep hearts but also begin a chain of events which would eventually lead to the camp meeting in Pilot Point, Texas in the early twentieth century.

It was in this movement we find an unwavering commitment to holiness, heart purity, and the work of Entire Sanctification. There was a push for consecration, and there was also an urging for spirit-filled living. The Nazarene people were unwilling

¹ Leslie Parrott, *Renewing the Spirit of Revival: A Call for Evangelism to Meet Our Times* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 1978), 15.

to be mediocre with their walk in God. There was an unwavering sensitivity that spiritual formation must be primary in the lives of those who claim the name of Jesus Christ. This movement began in the United States and would soon see its way across the waters to Europe.² Some of these pioneers led a revolution that began the Texas Holiness Association. “They made their constitution the Bible and Wesley’s *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* and agreed to receive none who were not members in good standing of the M.E. church.”³ The movement, founded shortly after the Second Great Awakening, had begun to take shape.

The undertaking sought reconciliation with its Methodist birthing but did not succeed in the endeavor. The holiness movement developed into a large family of various religious associations and churches. The words of M. E. Redford help one better understand historic time:

To understand the origin of the Church of the Nazarene it is necessary to examine the history of different holiness groups, which emerged in various sections and ultimately united to form the denomination now known as the Church of the Nazarene. These groups include: the Church of the Nazarene in the west, the Central Evangelical Holiness Association and the Pentecostal Churches of America in the East, the New Testament Church of Christ, the independent Holiness Church and the Pentecostal Mission in the South, the Laymen’s Holiness Association in the Northwest, and the Pentecostal Church of Scotland in the British Isles.⁴

The conglomeration of multiple associations formed the one great movement that was at one point known as the “Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene.” Although this movement was far from being solidified, as it took many meetings in the following

² William Kostlevy, and Gari-Anne Patzwald, *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2001), 9-12.

³ Smith, *Called Unto Holiness; the Story of the Nazarenes*, 31.

⁴ M. E. Redford, *The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Pub. House, 1948), 43.

years to consummate and organize the Nazarene Church. “One outstanding characteristic of the Church of the Nazarene is the very marked tendency toward union with other holiness groups of the right wing despite the fact that they took form in widely separated regions.”⁵

The spurring of holiness would find itself in line with the Apostolic Fathers and other historical figures from the pages of church antiquity. It is not only a Biblical mandate for each believer, nor is it the primary work of just John Wesley. The influence of Wesley provided the framework by which the Nazarene Church currently understand much about holiness, but the path was lined with other historical authors. According to Bounds, “Christian perfection first entails a perfection of love, explicitly and implicitly summarized in two great commandments... Christian love is the dominant rubric by which perfection is understood. Bounds also strongly asserts that the apostolic fathers clearly believed that Christian perfection is possible in this life.”⁶

Influential Leaders of the Church

No movement would happen without the inspiration of gifted and spirit-led leaders. Even though the Nazarene Church was a collective movement with various degrees of leadership, it is still difficult to list of all the dedicated individuals who helped form the community. The most well known leader is Dr. P.F. Bresee. It is known that Dr. Bresee was a Californian preacher who had a passion and zeal for the

⁵ Redford, *The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene*, 45.

⁶ Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 2010), 81.

word of God. He had spent over thirty years in the Methodist Episcopal Church before accepting an invitation to pastor the Penial Mission in Los Angeles.⁷ From this acceptance, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in the year of 1895, “Eighty-six men and women united to form the organization of the Church of the Nazarene with the declared purpose of preaching holiness and of carrying the gospel to the poor.”⁸

Bresee knew how to preach. He met people with a different style and it attracted many. According to Parrott, “There were only 86 who signed the original charter of the Church of the Nazarene... the charter members were told why a new denomination was needed. It was because the machinery and the methods of the older churches had proved a hindrance to the work of evangelizing the poor.”⁹ The Nazarene Church was well on its way. Although we see Bresee at the helm, there were other leaders who brought the faction together. These leaders were: “C.B. Jernigan, J.B. Chapman, H.F. Reynolds, E.E. Angell, and C.W. Ruth. Their unflagging efforts united these many holiness denominations and portions.”¹⁰

The Diversity of Holiness

The Nazarene church may have varied in background, but were united for the cause of holiness. Compromise was something that was integral in forming the church in the early years. There were six primary tenants that created harmony within the church:

⁷ Redford, *The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene*, 46.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹ Parrott, *Renewing the Spirit of Revival: A Call for Evangelism to Meet Our Times*, 18.

¹⁰ Stan Ingersol, and Wesley Tracy. *Here We Stand: Where Nazarenes Fit in the Religious Marketplace* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1999), 23.

1. Women joined men in its ministry. Women were eligible for every office in the church. The ordination of women was practiced in three of the original parent bodies and occurred at both uniting general assemblies.
2. The new church stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the poor and broken. Orphanages in North America and India, homes for unwed mothers, rescue missions for alcoholics- these were visible expressions of inward holiness.
3. The early Nazarenes were energized by a vision of worldwide ministry.
4. The Christian college was regarded as an important ingredient of a Wesleyan-Holiness Church.
5. Entire Sanctification was central. The uniting core was the ideas of a believers; church in which God's grace was real in human lives. Entire sanctification represented a real cleansing- a real grace in this life.
6. Commitment to righteous living. Early Nazarenes agreed that holy living was an important part of Christian living and witness.¹¹

The Nazarene Church found itself formally amalgamated after three major Assembly gatherings. These three meetings were mergers with the “New England Association of Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1907, with the Holiness Churches of Christ in Texas in 1908, and with a group from Tennessee, the Pentecostal Mission, in 1914.”¹² The most prominent merger recognized that served as the formal founding of the denomination took place in Pilot Point in 1908. These mergers were only possible because of the leadership and keen mediation of Bresee. For the sake of unity, the church negotiated on things not essential to the basic tenants of Christianity. To this very day, there are multiple grey areas within the doctrines of the church concerning eschatology, infant baptism, and various descriptors of theology.

Since these formative years, the church has grown to around 29,000 churches in 159 countries, consisting of 2.3 million members.¹³ The central doctrine of Entire

¹¹ Ingersol, *Here We Stand: Where Nazarenes Fit in the Religious Marketplace*, 24-25.

¹² Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, 123.

¹³ Church of the Nazarene, *Church of the Nazarene*. n.d. Web. (accessed May 23, 2015).

Sanctification made the Church definitive in religious and cultural circles. From the earliest conceptual years, this doctrine became the rallying cry of a group of people in love with God and wanting to experience the abundant life promised by Jesus himself. It also carried with it many other negative connotations that somewhat marginalized the movement from mainstream evangelicalism. The universal Church had lost its way in proclaiming this poignant scriptural doctrine of sanctification. In these early years, even the Methodist Church had become resistant to the emphasis of holiness.¹⁴ The young, newly founded Nazarene Church would carry the mantle forward from then to present day.

The Beginnings of Entire Sanctification

This one conclusive Wesleyan purpose would serve as a catalyst for the mission of the Nazarene Church. From its earliest years, Entire Sanctification, a doctrine synonymous with Christian Holiness and perfected love would captivate those who felt called unto holy living. Even in the earliest years, the church had a well-composed, thorough, and culturally relevant doctrinal disposition regarding Sanctification. This statement was even in place before the formal organization of the denominational structure, this one doctrine was highly prevalent. From the earliest charter, before the formal meetings, in 1898 we read:

We believe in the doctrine of Christian Perfection, or Entire Sanctification. This is a second definitive work of grace in the heart, whereby we are thoroughly cleansed from all sin. That only those who are justified and walking in the favor of God can receive this grace. That is not absolute

¹⁴ J. Kenneth Grider, *Entire Sanctification: The Distinctive Doctrine of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 1980), 13.

perfection; that belongs to God alone. It does not make a man infallible. It is perfect love- the pure love God filling a clean heart. It is capable of increase.¹⁵

In latter years, the 1948 manual stated a similar perspective. It is indeed a powerful inclination found within the Church of the Nazarene. It is the one dominant distinction within the church and the fire that continues to burn with intensity to this very age.

Throughout the past century, the Nazarene Church experienced growth and more flexibility with the work of Entire Sanctification. The wording and expressions found within the sanctification doctrine, like any other written text has seen numerous renovations in order to keep it consistent with current cultural objections and preferences. The current understanding of this doctrine happens to be the tenth Article of Faith out of sixteen in existence today. The wording is similar but not as compulsive and a little more explanatory as previous renditions. The article can be found in appendices section of this project.¹⁶

This lengthy explanation has been adapted from the most current General Assembly, a meeting with elected members that represent local regions from all over the world, and meet every four years within the Nazarene Church. The wording of the Article itself explains the complexity surrounding the doctrine of sanctification and just a snapshot of how one might go about explaining it when asked about what it means. And while this explanation may be exhaustive, there are still other descriptors within the Wesleyan world that enhance and even complicate this core doctrinal

¹⁵ Redford, *The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene*, 55.

¹⁶ See Appendix A.

disposition. Just for example Kostlevy would describe entire sanctification as, “a religious experience that completes the process of salvation begun.”¹⁷

Further Descriptions of Holiness

But as Leclerc would describe:

Holiness, or perfect love, is a work of grace that is both progressive and instantaneous. Wesleyan scholars speak of sanctification in four stages: (a) initial sanctification, which is equivalent to being born again; (b) progressive sanctification, which is the daily growth in Christ that happens both before and after entire sanctification; (c) entire sanctification, which cleanses the heart and enables perfect love; and (d) final sanctification, also known as glorification, which transpires after we die.¹⁸

It is often the case that when describing Entire Sanctification it has the ability to strip away from the work of process.

The doctrine has had many positive effects on the church and also the world. Freedom has been proclaimed through the constant process of surrender. The “Just the way I am”¹⁹ complex has been melted away. In many ways, holiness has become and continues to be, the heartbeat of the universal Church. Throughout the years, consecrated Christians have strived towards being perfected in love. They have begun a pilgrimage with God and continue on that journey. Because of their effort, each step paved the way for God to bless His people through the growth of His kingdom. Christians were and are no longer held in the bondage of sin; there is freedom. Faithful disciples are no longer at the mercy of the prince of this world. They have

¹⁷ Kostlevy, *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement*, 94.

¹⁸ Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, 106-107.

¹⁹ Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson. *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Transformation* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 61.

been empowered by the Holy Spirit to continually grow in grace. They have been blessed and have prospered. They have been held up by the righteous right hand of God. They have strived to “be holy as He is holy” (Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:16).

They have experienced the living God in fresh and encountering ways, with grace and passion. It is something many in our world still find remarkable. Some have the spiritual fervor of being so empowered that one could charge Hell with a water pistol. The work of the sanctification has paved the way in the past to practically live in the Kingdom of God from moment to moment. Disciples have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the light. They have exonerated the words of Paul, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who called you, and He also will bring it to pass” (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

God is faithful to complete the work of being entirely cleansed from the pull of inbred sin. This cleansing leads to being “pure of heart so that that one may see God” (Matthew 5:8). The most profound part of Entire Sanctification is the aspect that a disciple of Jesus, through this baptism of the Holy Spirit, can receive a “cleansing away of original sin.”²⁰ Entire Sanctification allows a disciple to have victory. Much of scripture points to living in such a victorious life with God. Yet, some theological structures tend to subvert the struggle over the triumph. This project will spend some time in order to further dive into the work of Wesley regarding Entire Sanctification in latter pages. At its roots Entire Sanctification provides a clear

²⁰ Grider, *Entire Sanctification: The Distinctive Doctrine of Wesleyanism*, 43.

connection with God, whereas the sinner is freed to fully devote their life to Jesus Christ if they so choose.

The Thought of Entire Sanctification

The Wesleyan heritage is rich with the wonderful certainty that God can and will bring about purity through a renovation of heart. Praise God that He loves His followers enough to walk beside us. However, there are some misconceptions surrounding Entire Sanctification and a tension between the instantaneous work and the process of holiness. The first negative connotation is typically found in using the word entire. If one is entirely sanctified, it could imply that God no longer has work to do in the heart of the disciple. As pointed out earlier, the use of the word entire does not mean made complete with no further work or lacking nothing. It is however simply a statement of the conditional change of ones heart whereas God points out, and washes the inherited bent of original sin. Instead of continuing to live within the sway of sin and not being affected by the pull God, the disciple is shown just how God sees sin in their life. This thought is reminiscent of what happened to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). It is from this new vision that the inclination of heart changes and the disciple no longer wants to remain dead in sin. The disciple longs to find restoration through the grace of Christ. Thus, when cleansing occurs, the disciple is empowered with the Holy Spirit to despise sin, to overcome the reign of sin through the power of Jesus Christ in every decision made. In that moment, when God has changed the inclination of the heart, the disciple is entirely sanctified.

This state of entirety, as the Article reinforced, and Wesley will point out later does not negate the progression found in our pilgrimage with the Lord. It, at times,

can be confused as such. It is within this ill-founded understanding that the altar becomes a finish line instead of a starting point. Wesleyan scholars are often scrutinized as preaching a gospel of being sinless. The term sinless can be confused in a variety of ways. But Entire Sanctification provides the opportunity to be sinless, as it refers to being cleansed from “Adamic depravity, the racial sin, cleansed away through the second work of grace.”²¹ In short, the cure to original sin is wrought through Entire Sanctification.

The Problem of Syntax

The confusion found within the term entire opens the door to a further pursuit of the true expression of becoming an apprentice of Jesus Christ. If entire signifies an opening of a door for the will of God to be further expressed in the life of the disciple, the works of Willard lay the bricks for the process of sanctification. The significance of this term weighs heavily upon understanding that a definitive moment transpires, with a lifetime of progression or a consecration of life to retain entire sanctification.²² If this is the case, the work of Christ can be an establishment of grace and development of character. Sinlessness is no longer the focus, but walking with Jesus becomes the central focus. Allowing God to create spiritual transformation daily becomes the new motivation.

²¹ J. Kenneth Grider, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 1994), 295.

²² J. Kenneth Grider, *Entire Sanctification: The Distinctive Doctrine of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 1980), 114.

This leads us further into the thesis of the project. The Nazarene Church uses two explanations to further speak about progressive sanctification. The first is growth in grace. In general, this term is self-explanatory, but the purpose of this project is to dig into how one is able to cooperate with God in order to grow in grace. As Parrot stated, “After new birth, the yielded Christian is led by the Holy Spirit into the experience of entire sanctification. The experience happens in a moment, bestowed on man by sanctifying faith. Growth in grace is not entire sanctification. But preceding and following the instantaneous experience of sanctification, there is development and growth.”²³ And Wesley would further insist in a sermon that, “there is no perfection which does not admit of continual increase.”²⁴

Since this type of sanctification is plausible, the thrust of this thesis is to better explicate the work of consecration so that entire sanctification is retained and progressive sanctification aligns to the original precepts of Christian holiness. God gives Grace, but growth requires cooperation. One is not able to grow if being sanctified is just one decision. Growth is not singular. One is not able to stay within the second blessing if they are unable to partake with God. If participation is lacking, growth can only be stunted from commencement. This is my fear of the false hope portrayed in my church. There are many who have gone to find this life in God and sought empowerment instead of a pilgrimage. Holiness is not a pastime but it is a pursuit. Growth is one step in front of the other, not feet planted. Growth is the fruitful factor that identifies one as a true follower and disciple of Jesus.

²³ Parrott, *Renewing the Spirit of Revival: A Call for Evangelism to Meet Our Times*, 107.

²⁴ John Wesley, Albert Cook Outler, and Richard P. Heitzenrater. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 69.

As confessors of Jesus, many long for development. In the Nazarene Church disciples are often confronted with lack of growth due to misunderstanding the work of Entire Sanctification. While this misunderstanding could be clarified with a shift in language, in order to retain the term's history, an explanation of the word entire is necessary to encourage people to continually grow in grace. Traditionally, four practices are relied upon for growth: reading the Bible, praying, tithing and attendance. If one is truly pious, they may include a daily devotional. These disciplines are needed but do not exhaust the meaning of growth in grace. Given that salvation and holy living are implemented in God and worked through His divine providence, some feel that in order to grow in grace, they must only be empowered by the Holy Spirit. While this is true, it is only half of the truth.

The phrase growth in grace can only be given new life if other practices are implemented. As Willard will further explain in coalition with the Nazarene Church, these practices are brought about by the Holy Spirit and embedded into reality in daily living. When one lives within the freedom that Christ provides, life abounds. Life is produced to the fullest extent when transformation is taken seriously through practice and Christ enablement. It is almost as if growth can only occur once we prop the door open after Jesus knocks. An open door policy allows the Holy Spirit to freely fall upon a cultivated heart. Growth happens through unmerited favor but is also dependent upon collaboration.

Which leads to one last thought about such growth. The current trend in the Nazarene Church is to further analyze how process sanctification reveals itself within the shaping of a disciple and not implement the practices involved. The original

precept of sanctification within the Nazarene tradition incorporated this practical understanding but through the years, Entire Sanctification was emphasized at the detriment of the process of holy living. Thus holy living became a holy decision. The progression of holy living is evident not only in scripture but in the lives of those who have gone before and have allowed God to build His Kingdom through them.

The second phrase partnering with growth in grace is the development of Christlikeness of character. This is another reference to how every disciple should be exhibiting progress throughout their journey with God. But this phrase is once more left without explanation. Holy living to a degree is self-explanatory, but the process of developing character needs further expansion. Instead of another study, the Church should be asking how we participate with God so that His character is revealed in us. Which would lead us into the depths of becoming a disciple. The question of spiritual maturity should not exist without also the development character. In many of our churches, believers claim spiritual renewal without growth of Christlikeness. This may be the ploy the Church finds itself in. As Smiles once stated, “Good character is human nature in its best form. It is moral order embodied in the individual.”²⁵ And as Christians know and profess, it is the ordering of ones steps to become more like Jesus with each decision.

To close, the process of Christian holiness is profoundly shaped by the way in which one chooses to put into action the grace given by God. Unfortunately, this is missing in much of the discussion in the church today. Subversively, this project is an attempt to place holiness as the central call and discussion within the church once

²⁵ Samuel Smiles, Goodreads.
http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/94528.Samuel_Smiles (accessed May 25, 2015)

more. If this pursuit is able to take flight, it will overwhelmingly impact the way by which the Christian encounters a holy and living God. In the words of Wesley, “Desire not to live but to praise His name; let your thoughts, words, and works, tend to his glory. Set your heart firm on him, and on other things only as they are in and from him. Let your soul be filled with so entire a love of Him that you may love nothing but for His sake.”²⁶

The Nazarene Church has created a system that has become so complicated that the Church seldom sees victory because disciples are not able to achieve any practical application of holiness. If followers learn the true meaning of entire and apply our current language of growth and character, we are given a potential formula as how to reach such a level of achievement. The progression of the project will be just that. It will Begin with the historical values of the Nazarene church, and then move back into the Wesleyan heritage, and then add the work of Dallas Willard.

If our pursuit of holiness is initiated in pilgrimage and sin has been dealt with through the blood of Jesus, we are truly beginning to walk with God. The Wesleyan movement would find Spiritual fervor again if development were instituted as growth and character development. The abundant life of Jesus would be fully evident if such renovation were to occur. If such a conversation were to transpire, it would again draw our world into the blessedness found within Christianity as a whole. But as Wesley would further explain as he was preaching on the inefficacy of Christianity, it must first find itself as a daily exercise and a duly attended matter of those willing to take up their cross and follow the call of God. Any work of God begins with the

²⁶ John Wesley, Albert Cook Outler, and Richard P. Heitzenrater. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 31.

denial of a presupposed ideology and an embracing of another way of thinking. These were the words of Wesley:

Among them that hear and receive the whole Christian doctrine, and that have Christian discipline added thereto, in the most essential parts of it? Plainly because we have forgot, or at least not duly attended to those solemn words of our Lord, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.’ It was the remark of a holy man several years ago, ‘Never was there before a people in the Christian church who had so much of the power of God among them, with so little self-denial.’ Indeed the word of God does go on, and in a surprising manner, notwithstanding this capital defect.²⁷

²⁷ John Wesley, Albert Cook Outler, and Richard P. Heitzenrater. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 555.

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 2

WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS ABOUT CHRISTIAN HOLINESS AND THE WORKS OF DALLAS WILLARD

The Reflections of Wesley

When one begins to research the inner workings of Christian holiness, it does not take long to find a something authored by John Wesley. Undoubtedly, Wesley is the foremost known theologian within this category. As Lawson stated, “John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, probably had a greater influence than any other man since the days of the apostles in deepening the spiritual life of the present time.”¹ He is credited for many formative movements in history that are still practiced to this day. His understanding of Christian holiness led to numerous inquiries as to how such a life was possible. These inquests led Wesley to hold conferences in order to clarify his view of holy living.

There are a plethora of books available regarding this pursuit of holiness. The most prominent of these composed by Wesley, other than his recorded sermons and his personal journal was *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Within these writings, one is able to read about a question and answer dialog between Wesley and

¹ J. Gilchrist Lawson, *Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians: Gleaned from Their Biographies, Autobiographies and Writings* (Chicago: Glad Tidings, 1911), 56.

others regarding the process of sanctification. This is prevalent in order to better understand the development of the doctrine foregoing the practical application. This is one of the many things that Wesley had to say about the way of salvation and the work of sanctification,

Neither dare we affirm, as some have done that all this salvation is given at once. There is indeed an instantaneous as well as gradual work of God in his children; and there wants not, we know, a cloud of witnesses who have received in one moment either a clear sense of the forgiveness of their sins or the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit. But we do not know a single instance in any place of a person receiving, in one and at the same moment, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a clean heart.²

Wesley understood the work of initial sanctification, but he also believed in the work of the Holy Spirit advancing discipleship as a journey towards receiving a clean heart. What can also be seen here is a clear consideration that no one single decision can completely encompass the full work of God within a believer. The words of Paul best articulate the process of change that Wesley was referring to: “He (Jesus) must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30).

Wesley embraces the proper tension between the immediate and ongoing work of God, as he would expound on the “instantaneous and gradual work of God.”³ In order for the process, or the pursuit of holiness to take shape, it must be comprised of both the movement of God in an instance to wipe away sin and the continual movement of God to purify the heart. In this paradigm, one part of sanctification does not supersede another. Both works are needed in order for the process of formation to occur. In order for transformation to emerge Wesley would connect this illustration,

² John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth, 1952), 8.

³ *Ibid.*

“Just as repentance and faith were necessary to instill the Christian life, so another repentance and another faith are necessary to its retention and growth.”⁴

To further drive this point, Wesley would write in a correspondence, “In the order of salvation sanctification has its place between justification and final salvation. It turns the Christian life into a process of change.”⁵ Here is an example of the principle of development. This type of maturation is grounded in God but requires a level of participation from the believer. This manner of development can only happen if there is conscious effort of repentance grounded in faith towards purity of heart. Within this clarification we find the two parts of sanctification; which are responsibility of the believer through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the response of God through His establishment of grace for growth in grace.

When asked what is it to be sanctified, Wesley responded, “To be renewed in the image of God, in “righteousness and true holiness.”⁶ The term renewed could imply to a past tense expression without a present response. This could also be similarly understood when the word entire is used to describe sanctification. But conversely, Wesley would encourage ministers to only preach sanctification to those who were pressing forward towards purity of heart, “always by way of promise; always drawing rather than driving.”⁷ It is important to see this work of being renewed as an instantaneous moment, in entirety, within the process of pressing

⁴ John Wesley, Albert Cook Outler, and Richard P. Heitzenrater. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 405.

⁵ Harald Gustaf Åke Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation* (Stockholm: Nya Bokförlags Aktiebolaget, 1946), 123.

⁶ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 10.

⁷ Ibid.

forward. However, to have a proper view of Wesley, one must bring forth the distinctiveness of Entire Sanctification, and this is one of many observations,

A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying from sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin, till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love... so the change wrought, when the soul dies to sin, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any before and than can conceive till he experiences it. Yet he still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but also to all eternity.⁸

The process of Christian holiness was not something created in order to set a goal of being sinless from one particular choice. Christian holiness materializes because of the distinct work of God, through obedience, and of the consecration to the will of God. This process was not something to be ignored. There are thousands of steps towards this growth in grace before one is able to cross the finish line. As Wesley reminded others even in being sanctified, still yet, “The best of men still need Christ in his priestly office to atone for their shortcomings.”⁹ The work of entire sanctification is seen more clearly and correctly understood as, “a distinct stage, higher and different from that of new birth, when we turn to perfection as liberation from sin. Entire sanctification involves a love incompatible with sin.”¹⁰ And the difference between new birth and perfect sanctification is found in the fact that deliverance is available.

⁸ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 402.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

From the Church Founders

Moving from Wesley to some of the Nazarene founders we discover the how the doctrine was further carried forward and developed. J.B. Chapman was integral in the founding of the Nazarene Church and an important proponent to the work of holiness as being at the heart of the Christian experience. According to Chapman the prerequisites of Holiness, or the process of sanctification, were “a clean, definite condition of regeneration, and a heart that is willing to go all the way with God in all His revealed will.”¹¹ When these two are portions are together they become so closely united that they are almost one.

Chapman defined holiness as “soul health.”¹² The original word for holiness and health are derived from the same Anglo-Saxon root. “Holiness is to the soul what health is to the body. Health is that state of the body in which there is freedom from disease and in which there is general and complete soundness of organs and tissues.”¹³ Chapman esteems holiness with the same conceptualization. If one were to advance this outcome it could be concluded that in order to have a healthy life, one must give their soul the continual nourishment needed to remain in such a state. If the body is not given proper nourishment, it does not remain healthy. When one is in the pursuit of holiness, the same sustenance is needed to keep one sustained during the lifetime experience. One is not able to walk upon the highway of holiness without continual nourishing.

¹¹ J. B. Chapman, *Holiness, the Heart of Christian Experience* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene, 1943), 17.

¹² Chapman, *Holiness, the Heart of Christian Experience*, 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

This illustration further depicts the need for participation in such a walk. When the children of Israel were in the desert for all those years, they would get hungry. The Bible tells us that God would send down Manna to feed them, but they had to get it (Exodus 16). They had to make the effort to pick up the food in order to be nourished. Our walk in holiness is no different. God has sent us the Holy Spirit, but we are still required to make an effort.

Within the same year, Chapman also authored a book entitled *Holiness Triumphant*. From just the title one can sense how Chapman felt about the power of holy living. He too, like Grider, proclaimed that holiness is more a matter of consecration than surrender. One statement stood out regarding this topic: “Consecration is the limit of the human power in the thus becoming wholly the Lord’s. Therefore, full consecration is a prerequisite of sanctification.”¹⁴ The meaning of consecration has rarely been better described than in the stirring words of Frances Ridley Havergal:

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.

¹⁴ J. B. Chapman, *Holiness Triumphant: And Other Sermons on Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1946), 74.

Take my will and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own!
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself and I will be,
Ever, only, all for thee.¹⁵

These words portray a proper understanding of holy living as formation. The life of holiness is always shaped and molded by the heart of God through the consecration of the disciple. Whereas commitment is the first step and consecration a continual movement, there are still no concrete practices. This is where Dallas Willard can develop the walk of holiness. It is one thing to tell God that He can have your life, or pray for him to have it, and yet another to live your life for God. The words of Havergal illustrate how one should pray about such living, but still lack pointing the disciple to a specific formative process that engages one in holy living.

In further reading, Chapman completed a section over the process of holiness. It was subsequent to the language of crisis, where one enters into the process of being sanctified because of a crisis moment. Chapman outlines a few thoughts on how holy living continues to manifest itself in the life of the believer. He states that the process of holiness, “Preserves in sound doctrine, keeps the heart in love, makes worship a delight, sustains in Christian service, and, finally, insures fruit for Christ”¹⁶ It is in this last phase that Chapman instigates the process of spiritual transformation.

¹⁵ *Sing to the Lord: Hymnal* (Kansas City, MO: Lillenas, 1993), 455.

¹⁶ Chapman, *Holiness Triumphant*, 111-118.

According to Chapman, the finality of process sanctification is winning others to Jesus. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was intended to help the believer live for God by bringing others to the journey. This again is one of the byproducts of holiness but remains as a conversion centric model instead of a discipleship paradigm. The final section speaks of holiness as being triumphant. This manner of living embodies the process of becoming like Jesus. Chapman concludes with this, “Some people grow gentler and sweeter with the passing years, and none can see them without realizing that, although their hair is turning silver, their inner lives are turning to gold.”¹⁷

From C.B. Jernigan

Jernigan was another founder that played a major role in forming the Nazarene Church. He produced a small booklet in 1929 to bring further explanation concerning the doctrine of entire sanctification. Within this dialogue Jernigan produces a dictionary format and explains the numerous understandings of what is meant by the doctrine of sanctification. He also uses Biblical, scholarly, and historical church traditions to trace Entire Sanctification throughout the centuries. Jernigan understands there to be two distinct blessings in the life of the disciple. While it is true that believers may have multiple blessings from God, according to Jernigan,

God’s children have numerous blessings daily, all through life. But there are two distinct works of grace to be wrought in the heart by the power of God, and each is separate from the other—each a complete work of itself. The first is regeneration, which is new birth, which blots out all of our past sins and plants a new life in the heart. The second is entire sanctification,

¹⁷ Chapman, *Holiness Triumphant*, 125.

which cleanses the heart from moral corruption and frees us from all sin, and prepares us for a more rapid growth in grace.¹⁸

This is an acceptable portrayal of what is meant by this distinctive doctrine, but this understanding of sanctification does not employ the believer to put into practice growth in grace. Instead of bringing forth the practices of holiness, the purpose of the book was a further explanation of just the doctrine. The writings of Jernigan fall short in clarifying how growth in grace is displayed in the life of a disciple. Once again, the disciple is left with an explanation of doctrine and not a practical application of development.

From The Contemporaries

Mildred Wynkoop was one of the first authors to look at the Wesleyan faith in more practical considerations. Of course this does not discount the practicality found within the Methodist movement itself. At some point the Church had forgotten how to walk in the formation of holy living and began the process of proclamation. Wynkoop uncovered that the way in which holiness found life was when it was embroiled as love. She was able to help a disciple find love as the primary motivating force for holiness. At the beginning of her writings she states,

No matter which door one enters into their thinking—holiness, sanctification, perfection, cleansing, faith, man, God, salvation, or any other—not only does each of these begin to flow together and intertwine with the others, but the whole is channeled inevitably into love. Rather than Wesley representing a theology of holiness it would be more faithful to his major emphasis to call it a theology of love.¹⁹

¹⁸ C.B. Jernigan, *Entire Sanctification* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Pub. House, n.d.), 20.

¹⁹ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 1972), 21.

Holy living, at this point, transforms itself from a doctrinal consideration to a participatory act of love. Holiness then becomes an act of love from God to the disciple, as the disciple cooperates with the Father. Followers of Christ have now been directed, once more, to uphold the Great Commandment on their journey towards becoming more like Jesus. Purity of heart cannot occur without love (1 Cor. 13:2).

Her proclamation of sanctification centered upon something a little different than previously mentioned. Sanctification had become more than just doctrinal assent and more than furthering a study. It was given another breath of life. It drew together the heart cry of many within the Nazarene tradition who longed for holiness to be described relationally instead of intellectually. Her work placed activity over scholarship. Wynkoop wrote how disciples were to respond to God, she wrote about character development, and the continual work of how purity of heart is accurately recognized. She wrote this:

1. “God requires men to love Him wholly. Sanctification is the **moral** atmosphere of that love. It has two movements, a total renunciation of the self-centered life and a total commitment to God. Everything sanctification requires is in keeping with wholesome personality.
2. God accepts this living sacrifice and fills the “heart” with the Holy Spirit. As *religion*, this is loving God with the whole heart, soul, mind, and strength; in *psychology*, it is an integrated personality; in *theology*, it is cleansing. Both crisis and process are recognized—crisis at crucial moments, process as a continuing life both before and after the more formative moments of decision.²⁰

Wynkoop postulates a study that comprises the whole person. These three attributes are religion, psychology, and theology. The disciple can then be found within the

²⁰ Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*, 208.

formative process of relationship, emotional capacity, and study of God, surrounded, and motivated with love.

Before her work, Wesley and founders weighed heavily upon theological precepts and not necessarily practice and personality. It is true that Wesley himself often stated that the perfect disposition of a Christian was “The loving of God with all your heart, and mind, and soul.”²¹ This statement is in line with the scriptural mandate of both the Old and New Testament. But Wynkoop moves the disciple from just a study of holiness and integrates holy living further into the forming of a person.

She does this by incorporating religion, as practice and psychology, as development. This is a practical portrayal of Christian perfection. According to Wynkoop, “Christian perfection is moral to the core. Instead of abrogating law, it is thoroughgoing obedience to the law. Instead of reference to excellence of the self, it rests wholly upon God and love Him with the whole heart, mind soul, and strength. It desire to please God in all things.”²²

Holiness now becomes more tangible. It is no longer bound in the chains of syntax or description but takes on new life. Love is a feeling but it is also the root of compassion, hope, and kind-heartedness. For we do know that God is Love (1 John 4:8). This understanding of holiness better illuminates the earlier thoughts from the founders of the Nazarene Church and it continues to propel the work of Wesley. But it still lacks expression. It brings holy living down from the clouds but leaves it in the air. Love is an ambiguous term. Wynkoop propitiates holiness as a clean heart within

²¹ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 10.

²² Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*, 282-283.

purity and moral conceptions but would stop just short of giving practical steps to what is meant by growth in grace and Christlikeness of Character. Wynkoop does, however, need credit for taking doctrine of holiness out of the spectating realm and bringing it into a standard of living through the ceaseless work of love.

From Frank Moore

Recently, some within the Nazarene Church began the journey of realigning the talk of holiness to a walk with Christ. Frank Moore authored a book *The Power To Be Free*, forwarded by a General Superintendent in regards to the practicality of holiness. This book is similar to *Renovation of The Heart in Daily Practice*, but is not as elaborate. The book has been brought into this project to further illustrate the need within the Nazarene Church to better specify the responsibility of a disciple to exert their own effort if they are going to grow in grace or put on the character of Christ.

Each chapter begins with a weekly memory verse, emphasizing central values found within holiness. As each day progresses the disciple is challenged to memorize scripture, read a devotional thought, and then apply this work. Each day offers a new opportunity to guide the disciple in daily training unto the Lord. For example, day twenty-nine reminds the believer that, “God offers power to give us victory over sinful habits and self-preference.”²³ There is a higher power at work within the heart of the Christian and it is a timeless truth that God gives His disciples victory.

The book itself is broken into multiple categories concerning the freedom that is only found in Christ. One can read throughout the book about the empowerment of

²³ Frank Moore, *The Power to Be Free: Discovering Life in the Spirit of Christ* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 2005), 134.

the Holy Spirit. Each holiness author spends much, if not all of their time speaking about the power of the Holy Spirit. As Moore specified, “Jesus set the bar of anticipation high as He talked about such things as power being interlay filled with the Spirit, and being witnesses of Christ around the world.”²⁴ It is within this power, within this cleansing, within this purity the disciple finds fulfillment and purpose in the life God has placed before them.

This talk of empowerment is also where the book did not necessarily represent the totality of being a disciple. If one were reading this work, they would grow in grace and potentially Christlikeness of character. Through their reading, they would continue to be sanctified. What is missing is the practicality of walking. Some effort was applied because one chose to read about holiness. But practice was not in place for training. This is where we find the work of Willard to be so stimulating in regards for formation to emerge.

While writings of Moore are a positive illustration of how holy living is possible through God, it does lack practice. It does allow the disciple to move one step closer to daily living but is deficient in providing particular exercises to give space for holy living. The work of God is something He must do. And at some point in this project, it should be clearly stated that our works do not save us. Our merit does not give us any standing before the God of the universe. However, our role of consecration should also be met with action. We should not only be intellectually challenged but also confronted with how the Kingdom can become reality through my life.

²⁴ Moore, *The Power to Be Free: Discovering Life in the Spirit of Christ*, 150.

In summation, the doctrine of Entire Sanctification is important for the transformative process as it delivers disciples from the bent of original inbred sin. This is an important part to walking with God. The implications of not being fully delivered could be destructive to the development of grace. It could also alienate the conception that a disciple can be transformed. This victory produced by the grace of God frees the believer into the future process of having an opportunity to become more like Jesus as each new day emerges. The work of holiness is an example of the life God fully intended for humanity from Genesis to the present. It is made possible through the resurrection of Christ and has visible fruit. These attributes of God's character have been clearly reiterated from the works of Wesley and many of the Church founders.

The Latest Attempts

Within the past few years there have been a couple noteworthy attempts at looking for better ways to speak of holiness for our current culture. I hope this project reinforces the heritage of holiness but places new life in it. The Church is guilty of using the past, and only the past, to describe this invaluable contribution to the Christian heritage. Once more, instead of living spiritual transformation, followers are just transcribing more books to further clarify how the doctrine is described. Our best contribution would be real life expressions of how disciples are formed in God through purity of heart. Instead of evoking a colorful display of words in an attempt to prod others, this would help others engage in such a life. The way disciples live for Jesus would enhance the impact and draw of holiness today more than another word on a page.

The most recent documents available from the Nazarene holiness perspective have only been attempts at talking about holiness. One such work edited by Thomas Oord is *Renovating Holiness*.²⁵ This 500-page book is a creative outlet thinking and talking about engaging culture, reaching generations, and ways that the doctrine of holiness can be more than what it has become. As vast as these writings are, it is more academic than an actualization of the process of spiritual formation for the disciple. The way Wesley incorporated relationship in small groups is written about the steps of practice are lacking. The purpose of this collective essay book is to reform many of the current misconceptions of holiness within the Nazarene Church. In clearing the misconceptions, it is the hope of the editors that those within the holiness camp would better grasp the fullness that can be brought with conversation. This is probably the most authoritative manuscript for learning the heritage and future discussions found within Nazarene Church.

Alas, it is one thing to say all the right things and have all the right terminology and still miss the transformation that Christ wants to provide. This is not to diminish the attempt of reading such material because the Holy Spirit is still at work. Keith Davenport edited a book within the Nazarene Church entitled *Conversations on Holiness*, which further placed responsibility on the believer. At the end of each section, specific questions were asked in order to better comprehend the fullness of sanctification. Davenport even engages the reader by saying: “Holiness is not a static principle but a living, moving, breathing relationship with God that’s lived

²⁵ Josh Broward, and Thomas Jay Oord, *Renovating Holiness* (Nampa, ID: Sacrasage), 2015.

out in our world. May God’s kingdom come and His will be done on earth in us, as it is in heaven.”²⁶

Holiness is not a static principle and it is moving. And since it is moving, we have a role within it. Our role is something more than just a commitment, or consecration, or dedication. But it will require that followers of Christ, within the Nazarene Church garner a vision for God to still form our hearts, to grow in grace. This vision will spurn a new understanding of practices that help disciples grow in Christlikeness of character. These practices are initiated and sustained by God. To use the phrase that Davenport imparted in each chapter, “How does sanctification change the way people live?”²⁷ To help this progress with another step, there are daily practices that help one on their journey of holiness so that a process of transformation emerges.

Introduction of Willard

The insight provided by the works of Dallas Willard help move the disciple from a passive or purely doctrinal understanding of holiness to an active role. As pointed out, much of what has been taught about holiness can create passivity towards what God actually wants to accomplish. It can seem that believers only need to make a single decision and leave it with God. The belief, then, is that when followers of Christ do this, God will magically, without their own effort, give them the ability to achieve spiritual transformation. God reaches, disciples respond twice and hope that transformation occurs. While there is much talk about what this should look like

²⁶ Davenport, Keith M. *Conversations on Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2013), 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

behaviorally, there is little done with the actuality of embodying the holy work of God from within, purity of heart.

Willard is able to take these complicated conversations and bring them back into the fold of what God originally intended. To be fully formed the believer must have a better grasp of how they are able to grow in grace and develop in Christlikeness of character. Without this understanding, the Church begins to lose itself in the chaos of a non-relational world. The Church begins to mimic a worldly approach to people instead of bringing those who bear the image of God to the throne of a transformation and true devotion.

Three books will help broaden this project. The first, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, is an attempt by Willard to help disciples discover the patterns of Christ that lead one towards spiritual transformation. The second is *Revolution of Character*. And the third is *Renovation of Heart in Daily Practice*. The first two titles better define the way Willard depicts transformation, while the third moves this new knowledge past questions and towards practice. Within all three titles one gains a better grasp of the intellectual, purposeful, and spiritual implications of transformation. These pages share an opportunity for Godly vigor that can transpire within the life of a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ. These pages move the disciple from thinking of God to allowing God to form them from within.

Renovation of Heart

There is always something God can whisper to a disciple when their heart is central in the conversation. The motives, inclinations, and secrets of the heart are easily hidden from the outward appearance. At times the heart can be overwhelmed

with so much, that disciples are not able to quite themselves enough to hear the “Still, small whisper of God” (1 Kings 19:12). *Renovation of Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* is the primary source when speaking of the transformation that made the writings of Willard so important. Without a clear and concise understanding of how God wants to lead a disciple, the effort exerted would become pointless.

Wesley himself had much to say about the perfection of Christianity within the realm of heart purity. Scripture, along with Wesley and many other Church Fathers, devotes much to this topic. But Willard brings this scriptural and historical precedent to a more simplistic understanding for the culture of our world today. Willard states, “Accordingly, the greatest need you and I have—the greatest need of collective humanity—is the *renovation of our heart*. That spiritual place within us from which outlook, choices, and actions come has been formed by a world away from God. Now it must be transformed.”²⁸ Without this understanding of how God wants to accomplish this task, those who claim the name will never truly begin the journey.

To further expand this statement is to advance the pursuit that so many in the Nazarene tradition have sought after. The Nazarene Church fully understands sanctification as the working grace from God, but lacks the quintessential reality that formation is an undertaking of both God and man. Spiritual transformation is more than being empowered by the gift of grace. Growth in grace is something that, “We human beings can and must undertake—as individuals and in fellowship with other apprentices of Jesus... it is also something we are responsible for before God and can

²⁸ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 14.

set about achieving in a sensible, systematic manner.”²⁹ The key word in this statement is undertake.

If we do not partner with God, we do not prosper spiritually. If we choose not to train our heart we will not be one who is “prepared for and capable of responding to the situations of life in ways that are good and right.”³⁰ Only those with a well-kept heart are capable of such a response. Only those who allow the grace of God to captivate their heart are capable of such a response. It is the heart that directs holiness. This is why there is such an emphasis on the state of the heart within the corporate Church body. It is in this moment of daily participation that one “is a person whose soul is in order, under the direction of a well kept heart, in turn under the direction of God.”³¹ The pursuit of holiness is being under the direction of God.

Revolution of Character

The beginning statement from this masterpiece is something that should precede this project and other holy living endeavors. As Wesley and many other scholars will allude, the outside is not what should be watched. It is the heart. Any spiritual transformative process involves the believer totally in love with Jesus. Willard shapes it like this: “We cannot manifest Christlikeness through a primary focus on external behavior. When externals are the main emphasis, spiritual formation doesn’t really happen. The process (of spiritual transformation) fall into

²⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, 25.

³⁰Ibid., 29.

³¹Ibid., 32.

deadening legalism.”³² This statement is of course within concurrence of scripture, history, and the previous Willard book cited in the project.

It could be potentially asserted by reading this project that I am advocating the notion of legalism within the Nazarene Church. This is simply not the case. Sanctification first deals with the heart and then becomes evident through the patterns and character displayed from such life. This attentiveness to holiness is not for another Christian to pacify or provide judgment. The way of grace, the way Willard suggests is, “Well-informed human effort as indispensable, of course, because spiritual formation is not a passive process.”³³ So there is a fine line between works-righteousness, legalism, and passivity that plague the church today.

In respect to our revolution of character, Willard is quick to remind the disciple that “character is that internal, overall structure of our self that reveals our long-running patterns of behavior.”³⁴ It is within our character development that we see the recurring currents of our life being transformed through obedience to the Holy Spirit. Jesus is more interested in forming the whole person and not just one part of us. The forming of our character consists of: “Our will, our duplicity, deceitfulness, and darkness, our heart, our need for surrender, and participation.”³⁵ The process of transformation, even according to the Nazarene Article of Faith speaks to Christlike transformation.

³² Dallas Willard and Don Simpson. *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), 16-17.

³³ Willard, *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation*, 17.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 116-123.

Each section of this book brings disciples to a point of searching the soul each week. The overarching focus is how the character development of humanity does not particularly line up with the character of Christ. It then proceeds to challenge the disciple with a goal of not misleading people into thinking they are more than they have actually become. Another endeavor set forth from within this book is to place God first by choosing a desire and systematically denying it. The genius of Willard is the practicality that is found when trying to put into practice these forming processes. For example, Willard writes “if you love to get to places quickly, drive in the slow lane at the speed limit, stopping at yellow lights you would normally have sped through.”³⁶ This is the simple step in demonstrating how one is able to redefine and expose the true nature of their character. This is a primary example of taking something simple and using it in an illustrative purpose to place the responsibility of this revolution of character upon believer.

This is the first step in the process is allowing God to help us see ourselves differently. This is the first step of becoming like Christ, to take note of where we really are (the radical evil of the ruined soul)³⁷ so that transformation can occur. There are simple practices that we could we put into place that would better our walk with God. That would help us to put on Christlikeness of character. This type of formation pulls disciples to take steps in repurposing character in order to become more like Jesus.

Within these pages, Willard places questions and exercises before disciples that help them begin the simple steps of advancement into Christlikeness. Again,

³⁶ Willard, *Revolution of Character*, 128-129.

³⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 45.

often the mistake in the church is to assume that disciples know how to achieve this without intentional discipleship or training. Willard gives four statements about this type of movement: “We must actually release our body to God. We are not to idolize our body. We must not misuse our body. And the body is to be properly honored and cared for.”³⁸ He then moves the disciple to further examples as to how we are able to achieve these goals through daily practices.

Renovation of Heart in Daily Practice

In *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, Willard follows a similar format as mentioned above but continually strives to point to the scriptural and devotional end of being formed spiritually, transformed into a renewed image of God. This book provides a fresh take on this type of spiritual development, with Willard communicating in a necessary, helpful and understandable way. In this particular book, Willard had partnered with Jan Johnson so that the cognitive component is available along with the practical.

An example of this is found midway through the book. Often times the Church will speak about dying to self. It will proclaim that this death to self enables God to do work within the individual. It speaks to something without giving the patterns, disciplines or practices to make it happen. The disciple is left powerless within the realm of practicality. Willard begins this chapter by taking discipleship away from being lofty and bringing it home. He begins with how “our personality

³⁸ Willard, *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation*, 138-140.

becomes reorganized around God.”³⁹ Even this statement in and of itself is a reflection of some of the language missing in Nazarene syntax. It is followed with scripture reinforcement and then established as more than a seed with the practices brought forward by Johnson. An illustration of this: “As you ask God to enable you to learn “death to self,” you might consider how using disciple of service, silence, prayer, and meditation may help.”⁴⁰

These practices help shape the believer. Not only do they help Christlikeness of character, but they also create a system by which God can lead the disciple into a deeper relationship with Jesus as the believer grows in grace. This is also one example, and a short example, of how Willard has been able to meet people in simple tasks in order to help them develop. The barriers associated with syntax have been removed. The stoic nature that has taken root in the church has been removed. The overflow of God is evident in a life of practice, a life of training, and a life that theologically views God a little different.

To conclude this second chapter, this brief survey of holiness paves a new trajectory within the Nazarene Church which is not adequately producing disciples because of an incomplete understanding of the meaning of holiness. It has become so talked about that Nazarenes are not really sure how to completely implement it. Sanctification has begun to lean so much on God that the responsibility of living with God becomes obsolete. As this project continues to strive forward, it is my hope that it creates a middle ground of God reaching and our continual response. It is my hope

³⁹ Dallas Willard, and Jan Johnson. *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Transformation* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 49.

⁴⁰ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Transformation*, 50.

that the doctrine of holiness would once more become a message of hope and not just another doctrinal emphasis that is so far in the clouds that no one on earth can walk within it.

CHAPTER 3

FINDING A NEW WAY TO JOURNEY INTO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Integration of Dallas Willard

From this point forward the project will focus on integrating the writings of Dallas Willard from the three sources mentioned above. The first two chapters examined the historical categories of spiritual formation within the Wesleyan-Nazarene tradition and engaged the current syntax associated with how sanctification is described. They reintroduced process sanctification and formation to those within the Nazarene tradition. The new trajectory, with the help of Willard, will take the doctrine of Entire Sanctification and modernize it in approach and practice. The Church has historically articulated the doctrine so that it could bear fruit, and it is in need of a fruit-bearing renovation for today. Hopefully, this conversation about renovation will create a renewed and formative journey in Christ.

Willard is able to serve as a catalyst for such an expedition. Growing up in the Nazarene Church has taught many to think within a potential antiquated holiness framework that needs to be reconditioned. This project will use the writings from Willard to create a new path forged by a fresh vision, paved with intention, and constructed by means of partnership with the disciple and the Holy Spirit.

Willard on Growth in Grace and Christlikeness of Character

Two phrases were brought forward within the Nazarene Article of Faith. The first of these two phrases was growth in grace. To be clear, growth in grace is not to be misinterpreted as the prevalent thought in our culture that focuses on being just a sinner saved by grace. In the *Divine Conspiracy*, Willard calls this sinner saved by grace mentality the gospel of sin management, which is in direct opposition to growing in grace or the work of spiritual formation. Rightfully so, the doctrine of sanctification would be in direct contrast to this thought process. Willard reminds readers that this mentality is not something new. He states that “history has brought us to the point where the Christian message is thought to be essentially concerned only with how to deal with sin: with wrongdoing or wrong-being and its effects. Life, our actual existence, is not included (or is included marginally) in what is now presented as the heart of the Christian messages.”¹

The paradigm shift occurs with one of these two motivating factors, sin and life. Paul reminds disciples that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 3:23). Jesus reminds us that He came so that we would have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). Jesus did not come so that we could learn to sin a little less or feel helpless due to the weight of sin. He came so that He could breathe in us, once again, the breath of life. This is where growing in grace and Christlikeness of character should reflect the inner drive of each disciple trying to attain and even obtain the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian holiness through practice. This is at the heart of Christian

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper, San Francisco, 1998), 41.

holiness. This is why the Nazarene Church was founded. It is here that the writings of Willard can breathe life into a Biblically founded doctrine, taught by Christ Himself.

In *Renovation of the Heart*, Willard provides additional thoughts about grace that are pertinent to life and a life about formation. The first has to do with how some within the Church view grace. If the mentality of the Church centers upon sin, the gospel is left powerless and incomplete. There are multiple places in scripture where even Jesus himself testifies on behalf of a life empowered by God and not by sin. If sin were the only natural outcome, victory would never be an assured extension of the Christian walk nor would the precepts of Christian holiness ever really be relevant. Therefore, grace must be viewed differently. Grace has to be something more than “having only to do with guilt” and more to do with being “transformed to increasingly take on the character of Christ.”²

The use of grace stems from a practical application by which one experiences personal growth through and within God Himself. Willard would best clarify it this way: “to utilize more and more grace to live by, until everything we do is assisted by grace. Then, whatever we do in word or deed will all be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.”³ This is further proof that sin management is a distorted viewpoint from the actuality of what the Gospel can and will do if believers choose to fully surrender and live for Jesus Christ. In fact, “we consume the most grace when we attempt to lead a holy life and so are constantly upheld by grace. The other option, so often taken

² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 82.

³ *Ibid.*, 93.

today, is to continue in sin and simply seek or count on repeated forgiveness.”⁴ This clarification is first needed to encourage believers in their pursuit of transformation. Change is possible. It is secondly needed to better explain the practical implications for one to grow. Something that is dying cannot grow. Something that has vitality, through His grace, is able to grow.

If one chooses to participate in growth, they will be accepting of the wonderful grace of Jesus but also the receiving of His character. Both grace and character are necessary traits in followers who want to be more like Jesus each passing day. To have the character of Christ is to take on his revolution of character. This revolution “proceeds by changing people from the inside through ongoing personal relationship with God and one another. It is a revolution that changes people’s ideas, beliefs, feelings, and habits of choice, as well as their bodily tendencies and social relations.”⁵ This upheaval of old tendencies and old processes of living make way for a new creation. A new way to train or become an apprentice of Jesus so that His character is able to “penetrate the deepest levels of their soul.”⁶

Continual growth in grace is the vehicle of formation and putting on His character is the goal. This observation is distinct from a conversion centric notion that a prayerful decision is the vehicle and heaven is the purpose. It also places more emphasis on process formation. In short, it places more prominence on discipleship. This is the objective of spiritual formation. It is a gift of grace from God and willfully enacted by a believer. Growth is not something that just happens due to a single

⁴ Willard, *Revolution of Character*, 71.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*

decision, but it happens because of a daily covenantal life with God. As Willard would convey, “the transformation of the inner being is as much a gift of God’s grace as is our justification... Of course, neither justification nor transformation is completely passive.”⁷

Willard on Sanctification

This project has brought forward the various descriptions found when one looks into what has developed Christian holiness from the Nazarene perspective. I believe the greatest witness regarding sanctification is found in how Willard describes the transformative process within the heart. This is the foundation by which Biblical and Wesleyan authors have written about for centuries. The heart has been defined as being the emotional seat of one’s being. Therefore, when Jesus enters the heart, inclinations are changed, processes are altered, and the believer responds to life differently. The only problem found with this definition of the heart is how purity relates.

It has to be something more than one prayer at an altar. It is more than trying to change outward behavior and classifying said behavior as truly Christian. It is something more than a docile response to a salvific moment. It is more like a condition of the soul, “established in imparted (not just imputed) righteousness.”⁸ And sanctification is something that “requires both God’s effort and ours.”⁹ Willard goes on to quote another striking illustration from an unknown author:

⁷ Willard, *Revolution of Character*, 71.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁹ *Ibid.*

The steamship whose machinery is broken may be brought into port and made fast to the dock. She is safe, but not sound. Repairs may last a long time. Christ designs to make us both safe and sound. Justification gives the first—safety; sanctification gives the second—soundness.”¹⁰

In order for Christ to make us both safe and sound, the disciple must be in a “chosen and sustained relationship of interaction between the Lord as an apprentice.”¹¹ It is from this sustained collaboration that “the apprentice is increasingly able to do what he or she knows to be right before God because all aspects of his or her person have been substantially transformed.”¹²

Since this type of transformation takes place in the heart, it must be inclined to such a renovation. It has to be open and susceptible for change. The heart must be ready for training. The disciple must remember, as not previously disclosed, that “there are no formulas-no definitive how-tos- for growth in the inner character of Jesus. Such growth is a way of relentless seeking. But there are many things we can do to place ourselves at the disposal of God, and if with all our hearts we truly seek him, we shall surely find Him.”¹³ This pursuit is the central focus found in the holiness movement, and disciples can rest assured that “if you seek Him, He will let you find Him” (2 Chronicles 15:2; 15:4). The believer can count on God. These observations are worthy but leave the disciples still wondering how formation will materialize.

¹⁰ Willard, *Revolution of Character*, 181.

¹¹ Ibid., 182.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 94.

The VIM Model

If one is going to be in such a pursuit with their formation, after justification, it necessitates a fresh vision of the character of God. Just as justification and sanctification are a gift from God, so is a fresh vision. The VIM model is a fresh vision. It is a process by which a believer can breakdown the practical ways in which God brings about formation. The three components of this model are vision, intention, and means. The acronym VIM is a derivative from the Latin language that means, “direction, strength, force, vigor, power, energy, or virtue; and sometimes meaning sense, import, nature, or essence.”¹⁴ It is through this ongoing VIM outline that Christ can be formed within us. “If this VIM pattern is not put in place properly and held there, Christ simply will not be formed in us.”¹⁵ As was previously discussed in a formation class at Fuller Seminary, there are two reasons why someone will seek change. The first is the amount of pain in their life and the second is an overwhelming new vision of who God is and what His expectations are.¹⁶

Vision

From the historical context, Godly vision has primarily been cast from the pulpit during a sermon. The nuance of the proposed vision is much larger than just a single sermon or decision. The vision capitulated here is one that stirs from within the inner heart and compels the disciple to participate in their walk with God, under the

¹⁴ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 85.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Notes from GM720: Spirituality and Ministry (Summer 2014), Fuller Theological Seminary, Keith Matthews and Todd Hunter.

grace of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit. It was once said that without vision individuals are not able to go anywhere. Organizations, as well as people, remain where they have been because a fresh vision has not occurred. The same result occurs in the spiritual life of the believer. If there is not a vision from God, the believer will remain stagnant in their walk. Growth in grace and putting on the character of Christ will not become reality.

Willard contends that the reason why many who profess Christ fail is that they have never been led into the VIM model for discipleship.¹⁷ A vision in and of itself is not sufficient. It must be a vision that is Kingdom oriented. If this is not the case, the disciple will potentially “circle back to nonChristian sources to resolve the problems of their inner life.”¹⁸ Instead the disciple should take hold of the vision that calls them to “live with Jesus as his student or apprentice in His Kingdom. By contrast, for Him and for His Father, the heart is what matters, and everything else will then come along. And the process of inward renovation starts from the stark vision of lie in the Kingdom of God.”¹⁹

If we are truly concerned for our own spiritual formation and that of others, the vision of the Kingdom must be the starting point. “The Kingdom of God is the range of God’s effective will, where what God wants done is done.”²⁰ This vision is more than an altar call. It is more than hoping for the Spiritual empowerment typically used to describe transformation. If one were to look into the life of Jesus,

¹⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 57.

they would see this is exactly where Jesus began his ministry. He came announcing that the “Kingdom of God was near” and that it was proper for one to “Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). That good news is that the Kingdom of God is now and will come. That good news is where the old can be transformed into the new. “Change can happen.”²¹

This vision must be the starting point. “The vision that underlies spiritual transformation into Christlikeness is, then, the vision of life now and forever in the range of God’s effective will, that is *partaking* of the divine nature through a birth “from above” and *participating* by our actions in what God is doing now in our lifetime on earth.”²² The outcome of this formation is not hinged upon a single decision to try and make it to heaven. The vision has placed heaven as the destination and becoming like Jesus as the goal of life. Eternal life is “that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

Intention

The second portion of the VIM pattern is intention. “The vision of life in the Kingdom through reliance upon Jesus makes it possible for us to *intend* to live in the Kingdom as He did. We can actually *decide to do it*.”²³ This can only happen if a disciple really receives a vision from the Father that they themselves are willing to partake in. The disciple must be willing to place worth to being transformed and follow through with it. As Willard states, “the problem is that it is not intended.

²¹ Willard, *Revolution of Character*, 69.

²² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 57.

²³ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 87.

People do not see the value of transformation and decide to carry through with it. They do not decide to carry through with it.”²⁴

Willard does allow leeway for those plagued with good intention but warped due to the hold of sin. But even in the softening of his tone, the reason why intention is not manifested to product is due to the lack of finding the proper means to enact the practice of discipleship. “External circumstances may prevent them from carrying out the action. And habits deeply rooted in their lives can, for a while, thwart even a sincere intention.”²⁵ This is where the power of the Holy Spirit can aide one in overcoming adversity. But that empowerment is not bestowed unless the disciple truly intends on training to be a follower of Christ.

There are many factors that keep one from actually trusting God enough to truly be obedient and faithfully follow. Willard identifies procrastination as a “common way in which intention is aborted.”²⁶ To be clear, this intention is an ongoing decision to fully follow Christ. This is where being a sold out follower of Christ, through the work of being “sanctified through and through” (1 Thess. 5:22), and the original intent of Christian holiness align. This kind of obedience moves one past the current cultural trend, setting in action their belief in Christ so that the disciple can actually trust Christ, “[providing] an adequate basis for the steadfast intention to obey Christ.”²⁷

²⁴ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 60.

²⁵ Willard, *Revolution of Character*, 77.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 88-89.

One last comment regarding intention is that intention involves continual decision, or to actually continually decide to obey Christ. This does not remove the work of the Holy Spirit but gives the Holy Spirit room to work. It is similar to preparing for a sermon. Some would contend that if the preacher was really Spirit led, they would just pray, open the Word, and preach. There is no preparation really needed. This notion could be true but when the minister prepares, they are giving themselves to the work of the Holy Spirit. A call to ministry is a call to prepare. The same is true for followers of Christ. Disciples must choose to follow Christ through daily preparation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As Willard would convey,

Some may have *wished* that what they supposedly intend would happen, and perhaps they even *wanted* to do it (or for it to be done); but they did not decide to do it, their intention—which well may have *begun* to develop—aborted and never really formed.²⁸

Means

The way in which a disciple moves from vision and intention is to put into place the means. To put into place an action plan of practices that help disciples in their new journey with God. This is where the Church has probably failed the most. Vision has been cast many times and stirred the heart of followers. Believers then take the first few steps towards intention at a place of prayer, and then they are left to try and navigate their own spiritual formation. For many this navigation is filled with perils and failure. As much as they may try, they have not been equipped to tread this path. If they are fortunate, another believer helped them within those first formative

²⁸ Ibid., 88.

years. Past that, at least in many Nazarene Churches, formation is left to sermonizing and attending weekly studies.

“The vision and solid intention to obey Christ will naturally lead to seeking out and applying the means to that end.”²⁹ This is the, “replacing of the inner character of the “lost” with the inner character of Jesus: His vision, understanding, feelings, decisions, and character.”³⁰ This replacing of the inner character is first the work of grace through God and secondly a consecration of the believer to conform to Christ. This narrative is standard in the New Testament as it relates to being filled with the Spirit. If the goal is to be like Jesus, then the disciple must put into practice that which Jesus Himself taught and practiced.

This type of practice happens through daily encounters with God. This is growing in grace and putting on the character of Christ. One of the best illustrations of where it seems holiness churches stand in regard to the actuality of living within sanctification is found in the eighth chapter of Mark. There is a story of healing sandwiched between Jesus feeding a multitude and the first time that He foretold His death. Jesus and His followers were walking to Bethsaida and Jesus heals a blind man. Jesus asked him, “Do you see anything?” He looked up and said, “I see people; they look like trees walking around” (Mark 8:23-24). The reader is then told that Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes once more and that “he saw everything clearly” (Mark 8:25-26).

This passage corresponds to a previous question that Jesus had asked his disciples about being able to understand what was really happening. This is where it

²⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 89.

³⁰ Ibid.

seems the Nazarene Church stands today. The hand of God was placed on the movement many years ago and His Church was birthed. The Holy Spirit has been active in leading the Church to Christ and it has seen many blessings. But Jesus is walking by today with healing hands and the Church is stuck with an unclear vision. The vision is not as crisp as it once was. The intention and the belief is there, but the original concept has been clouded and needs another touch from God. This is where I believe that Willard brings clarity to the holiness doctrine.

Looking Like Jesus

The original concept of Wesley has been obscured in recent years. The initial survey given to the local congregation is an indicator of such. What was once a foundational doctrine in the church has been lost in translation. The many years of compounded theories and syntax shifts has caused confusion from the original intent. The doctrine of sanctification has become something that a disciple would like to aspire to instead of a dynamic Kingdom-oriented lifestyle. But there is hope. There is a voice concurrent with scripture, sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and in love with Jesus, that could guide the Nazarene Church further into the original conception of holiness. That is the voice of Dallas Willard. As he would suggest, “we now turn to some of the things that can be done with God’s assistance in *each* of the dimensions of our life and being to renovate the human heart and progressively form the inner, hidden world of the person so that “the tree is good” to the farthest reaches of the root and branch.”³¹

³¹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 91.

Jesus relays that “a good tree cannot bear bad fruit” (Matthew 7:18).

Traditionally the way by which followers of Christ are challenged to be a disciple, to bear good fruit, falls solely in the spiritual realm. Previous generations of holiness preachers would tell those seeking Christ that this transformation is “participation of the Divine nature which excludes all original depravity or inbred sin from the heart, and fills it with perfect love to God and man—perfect love, the unction of the Holy One, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”³² This type of teaching would focus primarily on the carnality of behavior, willpower, and the empowerment or baptism of the Holy Ghost. But little is left to where the Spirit of God can be empowered for inner formational purposes. This is where Willard further breaks down holiness on an elementary level, so that believers can find each part of their life being formed.

The Whole Picture

There are six dimensions, as mentioned earlier, that Willard presents as the whole being that needs formation. He is able to take the disciple past saying they want to give all or be consecrated. These six attributes are: “thought/mind, feeling, will, body, social context, soul.”³³ Within each of these features, one finds that each part of their inner being can be changed through the grace of Jesus Christ. It is from these aspects that the doctrine of holiness can benefit. The historical doctrine of holiness, along with the VIM model, coupled with these characteristics of our being, comprises a total transformation. It speaks to something more than one decision, a matter of will, or of spiritual empowerment. Using all dimensions of our being gives

³² William S. Deal, *Problems of the Spirit-filled Life* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1961), 27.

³³ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 32-38.

wings to the actual work of consecration. As Willard writes, “what we do is not an outcome of deliberate choice and a mere act of will, but is more of a *relenting* to pressure on the will from one or more of the dimensions of the self.”³⁴ The understanding of this is necessary for the understanding and practice of spiritual formation, which is bound to fail if it focuses upon the will or spiritual empowerment alone.

In all respect to historical spiritual formation, it must not be forgotten that our whole being can only be caught up in the grace of Jesus in order for any formation to occur. “Those who are not genuinely convinced that the only real bargain in life is surrendering ourselves to Jesus and his cause, abandoning all that we love to him and for him, *cannot* learn the other lessons Jesus has to teach us.”³⁵ This is the journey: “whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily can follow me” (Luke 9:23). Without this taking of our cross daily, we are not able to journey towards “anything like total spiritual transformation” or the process of being sanctified.”³⁶

Thought/Mind

Our thoughts are the place where we can and must begin the process of changing to be more like Christ. To further break down this portion of transformation Willard gives us four places where our realm of thought transpire: “ideas, images, information, and our ability to think.”³⁷ It is through our thoughts that we mainly

³⁴ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 39.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

perceive Divine revelation. It is through our thoughts that we make up our mind, or captivate our inner ideas and images to conform to the character of Jesus. As Stan Toler writes:

The fact is that, in most cases, we cannot prevent a specific thought from entering our mind. All we can do is to manage it once it's in there. If it's negative, sinful, destructive thought, we can clamp down on it, reject it, and eject it from our minds. If it's positive, holy, and productive thought, we can clamp down on it, meditate on it, and apply it to our lives.³⁸

Our mind is the first place where formation is able to occur. If we have not placed our mind to be ready, the other aspects will not follow suit.

We can experience deliverance in our lives from destructive ideas and images by building on a simple statement. “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so—is the only complete answer to the false and destructive images and ideas that control the life of those away from God.”³⁹ The process of being transformed is one of, “progressively replacing those destructive images and ideas with the images and ideas that filled the mind of Jesus himself.”⁴⁰ Disciples are able in this capacity to take the words of Paul literally and apply them to their formation, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Willard has more to say on this topic, which could be expounded in greater depth for future formational purposes. The way forward is to replace the old habit of thought and give it over to the words of Jesus. If our mind is filled with scripture, we

³⁸ Stan Toler, *Rethink Your Life: Inspirational Journal* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Pub. House, 2010), 56.

³⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 101.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

are able from the get-go to test and approve the will of God. We are able to meet the old self with new processes of depth. One may think that their mind is unable to handle such memorization, but God is faithful and will help you “hide his word in your heart so that you might not sin against God” (Psalm 119:11). As Willard contends, “as you choose to give your time and energy to, and plan your life around, the renovation of your mind, *it will happen!* But you must choose to do it and learn how—just like learning to program and live with your VCR.”⁴¹

To conclude, the mind is the first defense and deterrent to opening oneself to total transformation. This is the first and key step to placing effort under the grace of God. The Spirit will help and prod at the right times, but one must be willing to turn their thoughts to the Savior, Teacher, and Lord. Neglecting to do as such will leave one unchanged and without a “realistic understanding and utilization of the powers of thought”⁴² in Christ Jesus. For it is true that “you will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you” (Isaiah 26:3).

Feeling

Much of what is found today in the evangelical church is based on feeling. Some scholars would be quick to dismiss this portion of development but Willard is not one of those. One issue with the current trend in spiritual formation is that the Church has cast aside the whole being for just a portion. Our feelings matter and they must be transformed as well. As Willard would bring forth, “feelings too must be renovated: old ones removed in many cases, or at least thoroughly modified, and new

⁴¹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 113.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 115.

ones installed or at least heightened into a new prominence.”⁴³ They must be transformed because it is within our feelings that “we really know that something is “there,” and solidly so.”⁴⁴

Willard defines our feelings “as a range of things that are felt: specifically, sensations, desires, and emotions.”⁴⁵ They include “dizziness and thirst, sleepiness, and weariness, sexual interest and desire, pain and pleasure, loneliness and homesickness, anger and jealousy; but also comfort and satisfaction.”⁴⁶ Our feelings motivate us in a variety of ways. At times our feelings are what move our lives. If disciples of Christ choose to dismiss this portion of formation, they potentially miss the one aspect that can bring victory in their life.

The truth is that many are driven by their feelings. This is true inside and outside the church. It is also true from the worst case of depression, the pull of addiction, and to the best case of being solidly formed in Christ. “People want to feel strongly, and in the very nature of life they need to do so.”⁴⁷ The key is deciphering between how God is leading, our feelings, and what is true logical reasoning. One answer in conjecture of being led by feelings is that of self-control. This is one term that is Biblically emphasized, historically relevant to the disciplines of the Church, and still brought forward in the writings of Willard. “Self-control means that you, with steady hand, do what you don’t want to do (or what you want not to) when that

⁴³ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 117.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 125.

is needed and do not do what you want to do (what you “feel like” doing) when that is needed.”⁴⁸

Learning to have our feelings formed helps in the overall process of what Wesley would term as perfect love. In the Nazarene Church this term is used in describing how one’s heart can be moved to perfectly love God and neighbor. This can occur because Christ’s love is awakened in our hearts when we surrender to that moment of salvation. As Willard would remind disciples, “we are loved by God who is love, and in turn we love him and others through him, who in turn love us through him. Thus is love made perfect or complete.”⁴⁹ And as Wesley would quote scripture, “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). This formation of feelings past addiction, destruction, fear, moves the disciple into the place where “pride and fear and their dreadful offspring no longer rule our life as love becomes completed in us.”⁵⁰

Will

The will (heart, spirit)⁵¹ is something that must be formed and conformed in order for any formation to have lasting holistic affects. The will must be honed, trained, and consistently kept in check just like the other five dimensions. If one chooses to train as a disciple, their will or character is also in need of transformation. Character is a term used to define how a person responds to the circumstances of life. “Our character is that internal structure of the self that is revealed by our longtime

⁴⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 127.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

patterns of behavior.”⁵² This shift in character to being Christlike is not something believers can do by just trying hard enough or resolving to do something different. Instead change occurs when one chooses to modify, through continual training, their “thoughts and feelings that can result in becoming the kind of person that doesn’t do such things anymore.”⁵³ Our will is not by itself. Our whole being influences it. Thus our transformation is more than willing to do something different.

Transformation of character occurs by first identifying our will as it stands in contrast to the will of God. Scripture repeatedly reminds disciples that they are to seek the will of God in their lives. John Calvin stated “the only haven of safety is to have no other will, no other wisdom, than to follow the Lord wherever he leads. Let this, then, be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God.”⁵⁴ Paul would remind the Roman Church that “our reasonable act of worship” (Romans 12:1-2) would be found in the transformative process. “This outcome becomes our character when it has become the governing response of every dimension of our being. Then we can truly be said to have “put on Christ.”⁵⁵ This portion of our development is highly contingent upon the use of the disciplines. Our practices help us to conform the will and grow in Christlikeness of character. These practices will be later discussed in the upcoming chapter.

Conclusively, Willard also brings a differing voice in the matter of the will. It is often said by many preachers today that to be in the will of God is to have no will

⁵² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 99.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 143.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

of your own. In essence this is true, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit is to conform to the will of God but not to give necessarily not have a will of your own. Instead:

Rather, it is for the first time to have a will that is fully functional, not at war with itself, and capable of directing all the parts of the self in harmony with one another under the direction of God. Now we do not hesitate to do what is right; and to do wrong we would have to work against ourselves.⁵⁶

This description is exactly in line with the thoughts of Wesley regarding the walk of the disciple in sanctification. Perfect love is wrought when disciples are able to truly love God and without the bent of original sin in their life. “The will of God is not foreign to our will. It is sweetness, life, and strength to us.”⁵⁷

Body

The body is at the center of spiritual formation and the outward expression of an inward work of grace. Much of spiritual formation takes place within the inner aspect of the person, but not all of it. Without this inner transformation, outward expressions are typically false or legalistic. The body is a good creation that is also in need of the conformity found within Christ. For most people, “their body governs their life.”⁵⁸ Many professing Christians do not take time to cherish or take care of their body. Much of their spiritual formation is not focused on the body. I would interject here that we are comprised of three essential parts: body, heart, and mind. If one of these three are out of line, the other two suffer. Our body is important to our formation.

⁵⁶ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 156.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 160.

The current trend of spiritual formation typically focuses on the outward behavior of the body but not the body itself, the conversation negates the way in which sin settles into the normalcy of the body. “The old programs are still running contrary to our new heart, and for the most part they are running in our body and its parts or members.”⁵⁹ The body like all other dimensions has been placed in a fallen state of sin, or the ruined soul, and is in need of renewal. Disciples must choose to “release their body to God.”⁶⁰ This is a major component to formation. Without a continual consecration of the body, a believer may fall into the old habitual practices that have allowed their body to control their formation.

This is a practical step that allows God to take control of different parts of our bodies. Those seeking holiness must “recognize the tendencies present in our bodily parts—hands, feet, shoulders, eyebrows, loins, tongue, overall posture—and how they can play upon those tendencies that trap us, ensnare us, use us, destroy us.”⁶¹ Our body can help us stay caught up in things that are not becoming of Christlikeness of character or growth in grace. The body can stop believers from being formed. A body given to God is “released to God, no longer idolized, and not misused, and properly honored and cared for.”⁶²

To complete this section, “The real power of life lies in who we are as redeemed people and how our behavior is caught up in that.”⁶³ Our body is not caught

⁵⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 166.

⁶⁰ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 116.

⁶¹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 166.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 172-174.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 176.

in legalistic understandings of adornment, or even just willing that we might try to ignore it. The body is central to helping the disciple become who God is calling them to be. The spiritually empowered life is comprised of a life that comes from the “incredible grace that lies in the spiritual transformation of the body.”⁶⁴ Without the body, we would not fully identify with the God that incarnated himself to redeem humanity from the clutches of sin.

Social Context

This is the one aspect of formation the church has been able to perfect, in good and bad ways, over the years. Jesus would state it best: “we are not of the world” (John 17:16) but in it. He would also remind his followers that we are “His bride” (Matthew 25:1-46). Relationships are a very important piece of our formation. Some disciples today have been so wounded by relationships they struggle to move forward in life. Some become so jaded they have become numb to the movement of God. This is a real problem facing the Church today. Authenticity is something missing. Transparency is lacking do to the hurt one finds within the Church. But this is not a reason to disregard the social context of formation.

The family of Christ is important, even today, in the formation of disciples. Many things have happened that have stripped the church from the original concept of community. John Wesley was able to bring this family context into a formidable and extensive method that produced a movement that still has a great impact on our world today. But it seems the church is far removed from this. The world has crept into the church and changed the social context. It is more difficult to trust other

⁶⁴ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 176.

believers. Of course, believers are constantly bombarded with how they are different instead of what they are for. The church needs more than two hours a week to fix this issue.

To close, there is much more to this discussion. The disciple of Christ must enact what their Savior did. The church has to move within the social context to nourish others, to do for others above themselves, and allow God to enter into all social arenas. As Willard would write, “spiritual formation in Christ obviously requires that we increasingly be happily reconciled to living in and by the direct upholding of the hand of God... Only from within this gospel outlook on life can we begin to approach the godly reformation of the self in its social world.”⁶⁵

Soul

This last dimension is the totality of the other five. If the soul is broken down into these categories, it is helpful in better understanding how one is to walk in holiness. The soul is such a broad term and hard to adequately define. This is where much confusion is found in the church. Disciples are not sure how to consecrate their entire being. When the word soul is used, it only convolutes the true intention of what needs to be formed. “The soul is “deep” in the sense of being basic or foundational and also in the sense that it lies almost totally beyond conscious awareness.”⁶⁶

Thus, “failure of good intentions is the outcome of the underlying disconnects or “wrong connects” between thoughts, feelings, and actions, permitted or enforced

⁶⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 196-197.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

by their disordered soul.”⁶⁷ As previously brought forward if any of these dimensions are not aligned with the working of God, failure is imminent. This is completely different than asking God, in a prayer moment, to empower the spirit within to do better. It is the way by which disciples take charge of their life and place their effort within the grace of Jesus Christ. The individual is under grace, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and their soul becomes the “deepest level of life and power.”⁶⁸ All dimensions are working together to form a life fully devoted to God and His redemptive will from here into eternity.

Devotion to God is a daily practice and process by which “we must never forget that the indispensable first step in caring for the soul is to place it under God.”⁶⁹ This is the process of sanctification. This is how a disciple is continually renewed, restored, and reordered. It is here that the disciple finds “rest to our soul”⁷⁰ because we have brought ourselves to God once more. The opposite is also true. If we choose to give in to the inclinations of temptation, sin “alienates the life in us (the soul) from the life that is in God and leaves us in the turmoil of a soul struggling with life on its own.”⁷¹ Transformation of the soul is important and is upheld by the grace of God.

Conclusion

In short, it is not difficult to see how Willard has been able to further expand the dialogue regarding sanctification. The way of holiness has been lost due to syntax

⁶⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 201.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

baggage and antiquated thoughts that need renovation. As will be pointed out further in Chapter 4, the greatest concern of holiness in the Nazarene Church is not the language but the understanding of the doctrine within the practice of it. The writings of Willard have further broken down the barriers associated with holiness in order to forge a new path to revive an old truth. The next section will focus on taking thoughts from some who are apart of the Nazarene Church and bringing in the words of Willard. From these surveys and his writings, a new proposed facilitation of holiness will emerge.

PART THREE

PRACTICE

CHAPTER 4

THE EMERGING PRACTICES FOUND WITHIN THIS TYPE OF FORMATION

The Merging of Two Great Minds

Many years ago there was a song written by a band that was once popular at various holiness camp meetings. The lyrics of this song were: “Take my heart and form it, take my mind transform it, take my will conform it, to yours, to yours, oh Lord.”¹ In order for an emerging practice to form, it must be held in high regard and implemented within daily practice. It is a repeated effort under the grace of God to have the heart, mind, and will conformed to the heart of God. This type of formation is much like any other renovation one might experience in life. There are many steps when remodeling a room. The old materials need to be stripped away, removed from the surface, and primed for a fresh update. This is not new construction, with all new material. This is taking the Nazarene, Wesleyan heritage and melding it with the practicality of Dallas Willard.

The first important part of this renovation takes place with identifying some of the bones that can be built upon for renovation to occur. One of the most valued practices that Wesley incorporated in discipleship was differing level of small groups.

¹ Micah Stampley, *Holiness Lyrics*, LyricsMode, http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/m/micah_stampley/holiness.html (accessed July 15, 2015).

These groups met for community, formation, and discipleship. Many conversations were centered on the ways in which participants wanted to grow. The groups would meet and formation would occur. The second important structural piece of the Nazarene heritage is the orthodox understanding of the Wesleyan concept of Entire Sanctification. Without adherence to this doctrine, the Nazarene Church would cease to uphold what makes it distinct. To step further, without the ability to be entirely sanctified, renovation could not occur.

To emphasize once more, a Wesleyan understanding of being entirely sanctified is that moment in the life of the disciple where God cleanses the bent towards original sin. Life takes a different meaning. Instead of looking at how one can live in the world and do the things of the world and still be considered a Christian, the follower of Christ no longer wants to do those things that cause sin and has been given clarity of thought to realize the difference; the reason for living changes. It is from this deliverance, this new vision, past the initial salvation/sanctification of God that the disciple is able to further pursue Willard's dimensional formation. Of course this formation is wrought from grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Anything short of God's grace and our effort will not accomplish the redemptive plan that God put in place.

Renovation in Daily Practice

With these staples in mind, individual participation is of much value on this new journey. Fortunately, Willard with some coauthors created some books that are the key to this type of journey. Growth in grace is not just something that sounds

good for the disciple, but it becomes reality through practice. God not only establishes a threshold for grace but also provides avenues by which the disciple can effectively guide the formation through real-world expressions. It is from these daily encounters that Christlikeness of character is given life.

As one gazes into the historical propensities of the Wesleyan tradition, it is a tradition formulated on the use of individual practices and communal assemblies to further proliferate the support needed for disciples to become who they were meant to be. This working of faith and learning to trust God in each new day was common with the methods spurned by many historical Church Fathers and the discipleship methods of John Wesley. At some point within the Wesleyan formation process, these steps, over the years, have been marginalized or completely lost.

Part of the reason why disciples have missed out on being formed is due to the lack of placing their heart or another dimension for God to work. The primary truth may be that they do not know how. Some have pigeon holed transformation into one category of experiencing God and not sought to find God in new ways. Others have only talked about spiritual formation as if it is only something that God does through grace without any effort or training on their part. A profound life in Christ relies on a vibrant vision from God, which is intentional about formation, and seeks adequate methods to incorporate the necessities for life change to occur. A radical life formed by God must move past the basic notions of reciting doctrine and allow God to be the daily participant, in order to transform all dimensions.

The first step towards such renewal begins in community. An army is not comprised from one individual. The Bible has many examples of how communities

organized, with the guidance of God, to do something better together than apart. And as stated earlier, throughout Wesleyan history, small groups met for the same reasons.

According to Henderson:

The members of a class often stayed together for years, cultivating the most intimate and helpful of friendships. In this circle of companionship, it was difficult to be evasive or hypocritical. Deep levels of trust and affection were engendered: an optimum environment for the cultivation of personal character. Hearty thanksgiving and praise to God accompanied and affirmed every step of progress; loving and understanding sympathy and encouragement bolstered personal failures. These Methodists were people who believed that the real joy of human life was spiritual fellowship and moral growth.²

This aspect is not something that has been lost over the years, as it has been reflected in the Sunday school model and other types of life groups that continue to meet. The basic tenant of small groups needs to be reinforced in this project because without such groups, support to change ceases to exist. It is much easier to be formed when surrounded by other like-minded people, in like-minded doctrine, with the same motivation. And if one were to read the words of Paul, our driving force in spiritual formation is “to be conformed to the likeness of the Son” (Romans 8:29).

Church Surveys

In order to further analyze the local Nazarene congregation, a group of surveys were given to a local Nazarene Church in 2015. These surveys were presented to the congregation in order to better understand how the congregation understands the central tenant of sanctification and spiritual formation. (The survey as it was presented can be found in Appendix B.) This survey also interchanges old and

² D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Pub. House, 1997), 102.

new vocabulary regarding spiritual formation to better grasp how the congregation describes their pursuit of God. The surveys shed many positives about the ideology of process sanctification, a general hunger for God, but also exposed the way in which syntax has hampered the original intent of what Wesley had in mind for transformation to occur. The word entire played into this syntax issue.

As stated above, it was evident through the surveys that a hunger for God was important. There were many statements regarding, surrender, dedication, consecration, being sold out, and being submissive. Out of all the terms listed in the second question, the most popular was about being spiritually formed. Some even went so far as to write that their journey was a continual consciousness of being like Christ. Oddly, renovation was not used at all to describe being spiritually formed. Everyone agreed that they were being spiritually formed, in a positive or negative way. Many were very emphatic about being on a journey with God and in a constant state of formation.

Some had concrete evidence of a time in their life when they remembered being sanctified. They recalled a time when a second work of grace did happen. It typically presented itself through some type of cognitive or emotional expression towards God in a moment of prayer. Sadly, only a very small percentage (4 percent) of those when asked about the meaning of Entire Sanctification could give a right response. Many attempted to answer but would respond with some form of process sanctification instead. As stated in the previous section, an important factor of formation is to be with like-minded people who choose to walk in community together. It is also important because it is the one doctrine that makes the Nazarene

Church unique. Without proper understanding of this one tenant, confusion happens, and the identity of the Nazarene Church has been lost. Even worse, the pathway by which the church professes formation to become more like Jesus has been lost.

The last question was always partially answered. No one really attempted to answer how he or she was being formed. As expected, much of what was written centered upon spiritual renewal or empowerment from God, but not the effort needed by the person to be a disciple. The answers given lacked the practical reinforcement of patterns and examples of how formation can become actuality. In my opinion, these surveys helped solidify what has been previously written in this project about the issue plaguing the branding of holiness in general, and maybe even the greater Church. It is not an issue of being hungry or seeking after God, as much as it is an issue of finding a better way to describe such a life. The surveys also helped solidify the need to use the writings of Dallas Willard to create something that would help guide the Nazarene church to practically apply, or renovate, this spiritually formed life that the Church still rightfully professes.

The calling of God to perseverance is something that applies to this kind of retooling. It is easier to pick a devotion booklet and think that alone is spiritually forming. To a degree, it is. It is also fairly easy to make it to church once a week. Things begin to get more complicated when praying and reading scripture consistently are added. Fortunately, many currently in the Nazarene tradition do these practices. But these practices only really scratch the surface of the effort that could be applied, and this effort exerted does not provide the merit to gain heaven or grant spiritual elitism. It only serves to equip the disciple in order to work out one's

salvation through perseverance.

It is a moving towards God with all of one's being. It is finding the practical ways by which revival and renewal of self are prevalent through being renovated. The disciple will find himself or herself departing from the richness of Christ without seeking new endeavors through life to allow God to extend grace. This departure is best summed up within the words of William Booth of the Salvation Army; from such a departure we will find "Christianity without Christ; forgiveness without repentance; salvation without regeneration; religion without the Holy Spirit; politics without God; Heaven without hell."³ This is truly where we find much of the Western Church today. Thus, a new awakening must ensue.

Some New Practices

These findings and observations require a search for the rhythms needed for formation to occur. Not all practices can be listed but some practices that help disciples look more like Jesus, will be listed to help the disciple move past the altar of surrender. The new practices are experiments that cause renovation, character development, and growth in grace to happen daily. They will allow believers to shift from superficiality and become a disciple from hunger and not routine, fear, guilt or obligation. They allow for Kingdom possibilities today and help one to be truly changed from the inside out. The hunger will be satisfied for a short while, until God lays on the heart of the believer to engage in further participation. The starting step is allowing God to make the inner change. To be more specific within Wesleyan terms, this step is the one that helps a new journey of process sanctification to begin.

³ Stan Toler, *Devotions for Pastors* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Pub. House, 2008), 11.

Granted, this is after and even during the gift of entire sanctification brought by the work of the Holy Spirit. The motivation for seeking Christ fully is manifested. The motivation for consecration is enabled.

Christ Within-On Purpose

How we live life is a result of what we have become within the depths of who we really are. Some refer to this as our character; Willard would refer to this as “our spirit, will, or heart.”⁴ A revolution of being more like Jesus involves how a disciple sees their world and how they respond to it. It is from this depth that disciples “make choices, break forth into action and try to change the world.”⁵ It is also how outward behavior is rightly modified. When Jesus is purposely pursued, He has a way of changing first “ideas, beliefs, feelings, habits of choice, bodily tendencies, and social relations... Spiritual formation for the Christian refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self so that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.”⁶ This would be an indicator of process sanctification at work but also an expression that entire sanctification occurred because the bent towards original sin has been removed in order to faithfully pursue Jesus Christ.

Life now shifts from phrases like “”He caught me off guard,” or, “That bad word just slipped out,”⁷ to beginning the task of Jesus being formed within.

Disciples no longer make excuses for personal sin, or habitual sin and begin to,

⁴ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 15.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 16.

“cooperate with God in being changed on the inside so that they take on the personality of Christ.”⁸ The personality of Christ is that we would be “thoroughly good and godly persons purged of arrogance, insensitivity, and self-sufficiency.”⁹ As we let ourselves be transformed, on purpose, we will begin to behave like Jesus and act like Jesus. When we are being renovated, “what comes out of us will bring about peace and righteousness.”¹⁰

The practical application for this type of formation is simple. There is no place for excuses; there is place for improvement. The task is to prayerfully ask God what sort of heart you would like to have. “Dream big: patient, kind, not self-seeking, not easily angered or irritated (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-5).”¹¹ If you had such a heart, what would flow from it? It is from here that character begins to be developed. These desires and dreams should be focused into a conversation with God and reflected upon, fears and all, until He establishes a new creation from within.

A Foundation Laid

Once the inner aspect has been softened and the pursuit of God has been further initiated, a new foundation for formation needs to be laid. This second practice is about self-denial. It is conforming the will and heart to the will of the Father. To pray just as Jesus did, “Not my will by your will be done” (Luke 22:42). This is one way where grace is established and can continually mature. It is essential

⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 16.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

in regards to reordering all six dimensions. “Christian spiritual formation rests on this indispensable foundation of death to self and cannot proceed except insofar as that foundation is being firmly laid and sustained.”¹² Again, according to the Nazarene tradition, one is not able to truly die to self without first being regenerated/initially sanctified, then to allow the Holy Spirit to entirely sanctify the heart (remove the seed of sin), to then enter into process sanctification. This laying of the foundation is spiritual formation taking place in the process sanctification.

It is from this foundation of self-denial that a disciple gains the selfless life. They “do not consider equality with God something to be grasped but make themselves nothing” (Philippians 2:6). This selfless life enables disciples to do for the first time what they really long to do: “be truthful, transparent, helpful, and sacrificially loving, with joy.”¹³ This self-denial is not only comprised upon our effort. It is found within Jesus Himself and the Kingdom reality He represents. It is imparted to us because:

Jesus abundantly supplies giving and forgiving through the reality of the kingdom of God that he brings into our lives. He makes this available to us in response to our confidence in Him. It is love of God, admiration and confidence in his greatness and goodness, and the regular experience of his care that free us from the burden of looking out for ourselves.¹⁴

The foundation laid is upon Christ himself. Disciples may participate, the Holy Spirit may cleanse, but the model is still the life of Jesus.

“The idea of “death to self” is radical in a culture that tells us it’s normal to beef up our resume, exaggerate our successes, and put forward the foot that impresses

¹² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 46.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 47.

others most.”¹⁵ The picture of actually using this foundation of Christ is to be able to quiet oneself and try to truly believe the ideas in Psalm 23:1-3. Disciples are not their own. They have been purchased by the blood and can be led if willing. The practice is to “picture a sheep who is surrounded by green pastures yet isn’t on its feet munching away. The sheep is so full and satisfied that it contentedly lies down without needing even a bite. Move through the verses in a way such as this (fill in the blanks with details from your life): Maybe the Lord really is your shepherd today.”¹⁶ I do not need to worry about myself but focus on Him. “God is restoring my broken soul today. It is healthier than ever.”¹⁷

The New Plan

Through well-directed and prayerful intentions, a deeper walk with God is revealed. This type of formation could be summed up from the words of Micah in the Old Testament, “To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). If a disciple is to be formed in Christ, they must understand and implement a plan. If a plan is not in place, the vision to become has to marker point. Thus, the disciple is lost tossing back and forth with no real development. That is why “appropriate vision, intention, and means,”¹⁸ should be properly placed and held at the forefront of formation.

This is where one must be intentional with small groups. Many disciples find

¹⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 47.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 56.

themselves in a place where they later regret something they had said or done. When the habit or issue is found out in some way, they “often forge great intentions to change.”¹⁹ And at times disciples find themselves asking for forgiveness or help changing for the one-hundredth time. “But what if that disciple met with some folks who loved them, and together they devised some simple disciplines to help”²⁰ manage their world differently? This is God bringing vision, a disciple implementing a new plan and finding the means to achieve what has been placed on the heart.

The practical application is found by reflecting on the things that one would like to see changed. Especially those things that have to do with “feelings decisions, and character of Christ.”²¹ Then the disciple is to ask God for wisdom while they ask themselves, “What does each item tell me about who I have been all along? What has my inner life been like? How have I suffered for this? And then tell God what kind of person they would like to be on the inside and what they would like their relationship with him to be like.”²²

There are many more practices, like these three listed as examples that can be implemented in order to guide the follower of Christ to a fuller understanding of who He is and what God is capable of doing. Along with these practices are certain disciplines that help the disciple to be a light in their world. These disciplines are also available for use through the entirety of the day and help one meditate on the work that Christ wants to accomplish. These also require effort and continual attention.

¹⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, 56.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

The Disciplines

As stated at one point in the project, in order to be like Jesus, disciples must be willing to do the things that he did. The examples from above help the actuality of character to develop into something tangible. The disciplines provide supplemental resources for devoted time with God and listening to His direction. This is not an exhaustive list but a fairly comprehensive list of some that were brought forward from reading Willard and attending the Spiritual formation class that he once taught. Some of these disciplines are: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, sacrifice, study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission. A completed list with comprehensive definitions can be found in Appendix C.²³

Many pages could be written about these disciplines, how they are enacted, scriptural foundation, and historical prayers that were written for each practice. The disciplines along with others are to allow the movement of God to pass freely. As Thibodeaux stated:

As a matter of fact, I won't be moving anywhere; God will be moving me. He will do so in his own (eternal) time, and sometimes in ways unknown to me. So I should not worry about what stage I'm presently in. I should not worry about what stage I'm presently in. I should relax and let God do his mighty work within me.²⁴

At times the disciplines or other practices regarding formation have been accused of being works righteousness. This quote reinforces the fact that these practices allow

²³ These observations were taken from the GM 720 Spirituality and Ministry class presented on behalf of Fuller Seminary by Keith Matthews and Todd Hunter in the summer of 2014.

²⁴ Mark E. Thibodeaux and Mark J. Link. *Armchair Mystic: Easing into Contemplative Prayer* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press: n.p., 2001), 30.

the disciple to quiet themselves enough to relax and allow God to establish the grace He sees fit. As Wesley would bring forward such disciplines are just “helpful practices to be maintained, which were known as the “means of grace.””²⁵

Finding Accountability

In order to get the most from spiritual formation, one must seek out individuals to do life with. Even within the surveys that were given to the local congregation, sanctification seemed to come across as a strictly, almost monastic, individual pursuit. Whereas, the pursuit of being spiritually formed is time alone with God, it is also time spent in fellowship and accountability to another. Without such a partnership, some may remain at a complete standstill regarding their formation.

Spiritual formation, “Good or bad, is always profoundly social. You cannot keep it to yourself. Anyone who says, “It’s just between me and God” has misunderstood God as well as ‘me.’”²⁶ Formation is only possible through relationships; it is not a private endeavor. Interaction with others picks up on the social dimension of our person and is also in need of a renovation. Disciples can learn more about themselves from others than many hours alone in solitude. Accountability is helpful and helping. As Willard would write, “With such a Jesus-based way of life, we become one who nourishes and cherishes the person next to us.”²⁷ Jesus, Himself said, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man to lay his life down for their

²⁵ Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*, 97.

²⁶ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 122.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

friends” (John 15:13).

This is simply practiced with findings ways to lay ourselves down, “as on an altar in order to nourish others.”²⁸ We can find ways to interact with others in order to lay our life down for them. Accountability is just that. From the discipleship side, it takes a surrender of pride. From a social aspect, formation transforms the disciple inwardly and outwardly. As Willard would further state, “What does laying down your life involve? Perhaps desires, thoughts, and habits, such as interrupting or insisting on your own way? What disciplines is God calling you to?”²⁹

Walking in the Light

Much of the project has focused upon the inward transformation that God provides to a consecrated, entirely sanctified life living within formation. But eventually this inward transformation will give way to outward expression. It is easy to already conceptualize how this could become reality as the disciple chooses to embrace the example of Christ as their own model for life. “Children of light are beyond the point where *mere talk*—no matter how sound it is—can make an impression. Demonstration is required.”³⁰ The disciple must live what they preach. “The children of light must be who and what they were called to be by Christ their Head. Mere reason and fact cannot effectively persuade.”³¹

This walk is easier said than done. It is where one finds out if the vision they

²⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 123.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 160.

³¹ Ibid.

received, and the intentional seeking sought, along with the means of formation actually aligns with the life of Jesus Christ. The outward expression of a spiritually formed individual should reflect the outward expression of Jesus Christ when confronted with the circumstances of the world. This is where others get to see what is actually going on in the inside.

The experiment that runs concurrently with this walk is fairly simple. The disciples has the choice to follow he mandate of Christ to go and make disciples (Matthew 28), or let their formation potentially wither due to lack of obedience. As Willard would write:

Think of one group you are a part of that is not explicitly Christian—maybe your condo group organization or neighborhood. Pick one person in that group and bring that person before God. Ask God to show you that person’s heart. What do he need? What is her soul crying out for? How might you rejoice with that person?³²

The grace-filled life begins to seek this type of duplication. This is taking formation and living it. This is being submissive to the will of the Father. This is the pursuit or process of being sanctified. This is obedience. This is how Willard enhances how one is truly able to live as an apprentice of Jesus Christ.

The next chapter of this project will focus on how these practices and disciplines have slowly made their way into the local setting. It is one thing to talk about a spiritual forming life and another to live it. The process by which the church implements new concepts is pivotal for acceptance and adequate change to be manifested. The current chapter seeks to provide a dialogue for the guidance and training of followers, in the hopes of explicating the way church practices transformation. Eventually this way to view sanctification will hopefully be replicated

³² Willard, *Renovation of Heart*, 160-161.

in this local community.

CHAPTER 5
IMPLEMENTATION, PROCESS, AND EVALUATION

Implementation

Execution of any leadership strategy has the potential of doing more harm than good. When contemplating about this project, it was evident, as it has been through many Nazarene Churches that discipleship needed some type of update. The three services as week, Sunday school before the main worship time, were not as prevalent as in days past. Fortunately in the Wesleyan heritage, small groups were used to help this portion of the church. It was also evident that the way services have been organized needed some form of renewal. The committed Christian would consistently be in attendance but the new family would shy away.

The Carrollton congregation, like many Nazarene Churches has a rich history of many milestones in the past. It was once thought to be on the forefront of the region in many ministerial areas. Thus it has a rich heritage bound in traditional methods and approaches to how ministry and discipleship should be accomplished. Some have stood the test of time, others need to be updated, and some if everyone was honest need to be done away with. So the challenge of implementation was balancing progressive notions with traditional stances.

The execution of this project started earlier in the fall of 2014. The primary objective was in sight, but no specific timeline or format was used for each new step. Sometimes it is difficult for a new leader within a church to judge how much change is able to occur at one time. It is also easy to become reactive instead of proactive. The first step of implementation was the communal formation aspect. This was used as a judge to give an idea as to where the congregation was and how they would respond to changing from a seeker-sensitive, attractive model to one of discipleship. This one step took the congregation from just hearing something, to trying to apply practical steps and their own intellect to hear the voice of God. It was an exercise of effort. It was met with both approval and disdain. In Dallas Texas, it is much easier to go to a church where one is able to not be noticed and just assimilate into the crowd. This forward approach to discipleship caught some off guard. On the other hand, when this portion was implemented, many were encouraged to experience God on a deeper level each Sunday morning, instead of just hearing about Him. There is more about how the process a few paragraphs down.

The second part was to implement a mid-week group. In the past few years, Carrollton Church stopped having a mid-week meeting during the summer months. There was renewed interest in this in 2015. The mid-week group is still something that is being shaped to meet the needs of the current discipleship attendance. There are now four divisions that meet: children, youth, and two adult classes. One adult class is taught by myself and is adapted from curriculum that was written by John Ortberg¹ and some supplementary reflections from Willard and myself. A retired

¹ John Ortberg, Laurie Pederson, and Judson Poling. *Growth: Training vs. Trying* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2000.

army chaplain using the traditional Bible study format has led the second adult class.

These classes will span different weekly spans. This was organized so that as the church grows and new families come in, they are able to more easily participate in a new class. One of the drawbacks from a continual class meeting is the forming of cliques and barriers that are not appealing to new people who would like to join. January of 2016 will begin new classes for each adult study. One will continue the traditional method of studying Romans and the other will tackle *Renovation of the Heart* by Willard. This spiritual formation study will include homework and journaling expectations. It will also find its way in the Sunday night group as they further cultivate such a hunger.

The most recent tool implemented from the mid-week group, to aid in the replication process was placing a new lay leader for the Sunday night small group. Launched in the fall of 2015, it started with ten people and has grown to an average of twenty-five or thirty. This small group, meeting in a home, is currently following a series about taking God seriously and following him. The future of this group, explained later in this chapter, will break into two or three smaller groups, using material from Willard and some other curriculum about spiritual formation.

The implementation of one-on-one discipleship began many years before my tenure as the Lead Pastor. Currently, pastors spend the most time leading in this endeavor although there are now some lay leaders who have taken it upon themselves, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to meet with others and encourage them. I am extremely grateful for those who have found this to be important. Part of the issue with mentoring is that many do not feel they have anything to offer someone

in need. They have not been equipped with the necessary tools to mentor another in the Church.

Before this project, a previous survey indicated that many wanted help in studying how to convert someone to Christ. This is an important endeavor but something that must become less prevalent to the actuality of discipleship. If one is a disciple of Christ, those around will inquire and want to know more about what makes life so different. Through this type of formation, the disciple is better equipped to give “the reason for the hope that is within them” (1 Peter 3:15). This is a way to bring others into the life-giving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It helps those seeking to encounter Kingdom-living first hand. It also has the potential to equip a disciple of Christ to replicate the transformation their life has encountered through the work of Jesus Christ.

In six months or more, some from within the mid-week group and the Sunday night small group will be asked to lead in future spiritual development. At the current phase, leadership is still looking into who those leaders will be and how it will be organized. As the Church is able to grow, it will bring in those who are able to captivate the hearts of those who long to walk closer with Christ. It will be through those who choose to invest in others that growth is really able to established and able to excel. “Growth really takes off, paradoxically, when we slide over the passenger seat of our lives.”²

From the Clouds Into the Process

In order for training to occur on the local level, these practices and disciplines

² Jud Wilhite, *Pursued: God's Divine Obsession with You* (New York: FaithWords, 2013), 147.

need to be introduced to the congregation cautiously and carefully. The first way to include this type of formation is through the Sunday morning sermon. The sermon still plays a central and vital role to the rhythm of formation the Carrollton community has already put in place. Along with a message that takes the words and thoughts of Willard to the congregation will be times of communal formation. This can look different from week to week. Below is a better description of how communal formation will become essential to the morning worship experience.

Communal Formation

Communal formation is taking the individual work of disciples and bringing it forward on a Sunday morning. One aspect in communal worship that is lacking is a clear social interaction between believers regarding their spiritual formation. This is a way of taking the various disciplines listed and enacting them during a service and adding communal response towards at the end. Communal formation is taking the traditional testimony time, the working of the individual, and small group elements and placing it as formation.

There are various tools to help with this endeavor. An example would be taking the discipline of prayer. Within prayer there are many potential steps. Instead of a typical fervent prayer around the altar, or pastoral prayer, it could become a time of formation. This could take place by a scriptural focus, individual people in prayer, or taking kingdom language and incorporating it in the prayer time. Often times prayer ends up being a list of petitions, or the hospital list. This does not play into formation, to the depth by which it has been brought forward in this project.

Prayer should be a time when the disciple speaks to God and they choose to listen to God as well. A helpful tool is *Lectio Divina*. Within this process, the congregation focuses upon a specific passage, meditate on it, pray, and contemplate. For a better understanding of this process, see Appendix D. After these few steps, the congregants are encouraged to stand and let the assembly know what God had spoken to their heart in that passage. Once the disciple has shared, the congregation is to respond with a hearty amen. This is one way for prayer to be formational.

Another example of communal formation would be to take a daily practice of formation and bring it into the Sunday service time. This practice could be at the very beginning of the service to set the tone for worship. It could also be a great way to bring focus to the congregation. An example would be creating a service that has to do with the peace and joy of God. Instead of just talking about it, or assigning homework, the leader would call the congregation to participate at that moment, together. The joy of Christ would become evident through this practice of release. As Willard would bring forward:

God, I long for you perfect peace that is beyond my understanding. I now release to you the habit of:

- Dwelling on certain past sins and failures, such as...
- Looking forward at what might happen to me if...
- Fixing my eyes inward at struggles with work, responsibilities, temptation, and deficiencies, such as...
- Putting trust in myself to work things out with...
- Having to make things come out right with...
- Being mad at... whose actions I've had to resist.

Thou wilt keep in perfect peace as my mind is stayed on thee, because I trust in thee (Isaiah 26:3).³

From this reflection, the congregation will be encouraged to share what they feel God

³ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 94-95.

is doing within them. Once a disciple shares what God is doing, the rest of the assembly commits to prayer and supports them with some form of encouragement.

It is within these deeper moments that a standard Sunday morning can become a place of transformation. The proclamation of the word can penetrate on a greater depth to allow the grace of God to form within the believer. Another practice that will be employed is that of using one's imagination. This practice is based on reading a story from the Bible, meditating on it, and then asking God to place each disciple as a specific character in the story. The communal formation portion takes places towards the end when each congregant is given the opportunity to stand and share about where they felt God was leading them. Similarly, this can also turn into an impromptu testimony time. But instead of it being whatever someone may feel they would like to share, it could lead in with the framework of spiritual formation. Statements like, "I feel God leading me..." "God is forming my heart..." "I think God is stretching me to do..." If the Church wants to be the Church, discipleship is a must and is key to development and future growth. This is the way that leaders form disciples to, "Think like Jesus thinks, behave as Jesus behaves, speak like Him, listen like Him, worship like Him, and pray like Him."⁴ This is how the fruit of the spirit is communally found.

The Mid-Week Group

Another initiation in the church will be in a small mid-week group that meets on Wednesday nights. The purpose of this group will be to target specific needs and long term accountability for present and future transformation. The format will be a

⁴ Woodie J. Stevens, *Beyond Sunday: Everyday Conversations in Disciple Making* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 2008), 77.

three-week rotation. The first week will consist of bringing the concept to study forward, presenting what is expected for the week, initial questions, and a time of prayer inviting God to speak clearly. The second week will consist of a discussion on how the formational concept played a pivotal role in the week of the disciple. The third week seeks to form the social dimension. The group will meet at a local restaurant, outside of the church, to talk with one another about life in general. Embedded within this conversation will be the previous two weeks of formation. This is a time to hear, in a more relaxed setting, what God is doing in all areas.

What sets this group apart from the Sunday morning routine and even the other small groups is the assigning of homework. Each disciple is encouraged to journal as they experience this instruction and encounter the living God. Instead of just hearing about something new, they are being asked to take it home and digest it for a week. Journaling is a good tool to help others track where they currently are with the Lord and also neat to revisit in the future, to see where God worked in the past.

The meeting place, for two of the weeks, of the mid-week group will be in the prayer chapel. This room in the Carrollton Church will seat about twenty people. The reason for this atmosphere is to create a more intimate and sincere setting for disciples. It is still within the institutional classroom setting so that instruction can be adequately given. It is also an attempt to get people comfortable sitting in a place designated for prayer. Much of this project has not centered on the importance of prayer. It is the one aspect that is needed through every part of formation. Without an adequate prayer life, formation will not take the proper roots needed or keep the

proper motivation in place. As Foster wrote, “if the key is prayer, the door is Jesus Christ. How good of God to provide us a way into His heart.”⁵ Prayer is further proof that formation is possible. For when a believer prays, God changes their heart. Appendix E is an example of the worksheets handed out in each new first week session.

The Sunday Evening Group

The last new group initiated will be a Sunday evening group that meets in a home. The Carrollton Church has not consistently embarked on this type of discipleship. The primary way by which disciples are mentored falls in the traditional Sunday school model. These groups meet at 9:30 on a Sunday morning and usually last about an hour. The new group will meet for a two-hour block, on the first and third week of the month, and begin with times of personal testimony, a song, and prayer. The testimony shared will be of the disciples life experience, their salvation moment, and if they can recall a time when they were sure that God was sanctifying their heart. From those moments, a lay leader will lead a study based on some form of spiritual formation. Once the group is established and this project is completed, the future group will work with Willard material to enhance the lives of others. This group will reflect from the Sunday morning message and apply the principles expressed to better put into place a practice of formation.

The future of this group will be determined by the size of the group. Once the group reaches a point past twenty or thirty in attendance, it will need to be replicated into another home. Once the initial group consistently meets, the groups will be

⁵ Richard J. Foster, *Prayer Finding the Heart's True Home* (New York: HarperOne, 1992), 2.

broken into groups of ten, with the same material at each home. As these groups individually pursue the inner working of Christ in their heart, once a month there will be a unity gathering in one home to host all who attend a small group. The unity event is another attempt to help form the social dimension of each believer.

This group has the greatest potential of being replicated within the greater church community. It does not have an established agenda or history within the local setting. It is something that can be molded to effectively cast a new vision, guide future intentions, and is a means of grace that will allow for future growth and stability in discipleship. It is a way, similar to Sunday school where Christians can, “Labor to reclaim others from their evil courses; that so God might defer His anger, and time might be redeemed from that terrible destruction which, when it should come, would put an end to the time of the divine patience.”⁶

The Sunday School Model

Renovating the Sunday school model has been another concept. The Nazarene Church actually has material published internally to help guide discipleship in this area. Renovation of this department into something like this project proposes may prove to be difficult due to the traditional way in which Sunday school has emerged over the last fifty to sixty years. The purpose of this renovation is to help all ages be on the same page when it comes to formation. In order to better translate the needs of each generation, it would be beneficial for each group to be on the same page as it pertains to discipleship. Unity of the church would also be solidified through working

⁶ Jonathan Edwards and T. M. Moore. *Pursuing Holiness in the Lord* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2005), 173.

in this direction.

Honestly, discipleship also transcends all walks of life. It is not something only relevant to one group or another. It is not something that is tied to only one generation. It is something that feeds the hunger of God that so many crave in the American culture today. It is something that needs to take first place in the life of each disciple. As Finney once stated:

If you find yourself losing your interest in being formed and in secret prayer, stop short, return to God, and give yourself no rest, till you enjoy the light of His countenance. If you feel disinclined to pray, or read your Bible, if when you pray and read your Bible, you have no heart in it, no enjoyment, if you are inclined to make your secret devotions short, or, are easily induced to neglect them, if your thoughts, affections and emotions wander, and your closet duties become a burden, you may know that you are a backslider in heart, and your first business is, to break down, and see that your love and zeal are renewed.⁷

The hope of this renovation would be further conversations between young and old about how God is working and what He would like to accomplish within each new stage of life. Wisdom is imparted by God and seen through those followers who finish well.

Although, it does requires something more than reading material published. It expects that disciples are able to take responsibility for their spiritual needs and awareness. It moves the disciple from looking at a church as something to feed them, to participating in the kingdom of God and building the kingdom one disciple at a time. The Sunday school model has done this faithfully. But in order to build something cohesive between the multi-generational aspects of the Church, it may need to be shifted.

⁷ Charles G. Finney, *Revival Lectures* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1868), 415.

The New Face Of Discipleship

Another portion of the implementation process will be one on one counseling. In the past, when I would counsel people, I did not have such spiritual formation tools. Instead of listening and only being able to offer Scriptural support for the ailment, I am able to give the disciple something deeper and more meaningful. This does not diminish the capacity or use of scripture, but gives scripture some more concrete methods to take root in the life of the disciple. Myself or another lay person within the Church community would be able to take this material, and the other material that Willard offers, and give someone in need something more tangible to practice. The importance of one-on-one discipline is very much a need for today. Some may call it mentoring, others living life together, but in essence it is discipleship.

This is key for those who truly want to walk with Jesus. As one Nazarene evangelist recently noted:

The church is intended to be a function like a family. In a healthy family, good parents give personal attention and affection. They give clear direction about what is intended and what is forbidden, because parental love does what is best for the children. Good parents not only expect obedience with their caring directives but also inspect their children's responses, giving promised rewards for compliance or disobedience. The church has generally been more like an orphanage than a family.⁸

This kind of initiative takes time to establish and time to continue. A disciple, as further implied earlier in the project, cannot be wholly formed without family. Being a disciple is not an individual pursuit of God. Even in the old Monastic traditions, community still played an important factor. The social context is needed for all six

⁸ Hal Perkins, *Walk with Me: A Biblical Journey in Making Christlike Disciples* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 2008), 163.

dimensions to be changed. This manner of formation moves the church past an assembly line production to something more unique, something more relational, something more meaningful. For this type of formation takes the example and life of Christ and places it into practice. It also potentially pushes the church past just meeting on a Sunday morning and going on with life as if the Church did not exist. It becomes the new reality of life.

This type of mentoring may prove to be difficult because it takes more time from laity within the community. Even with that stated, this is probably the most effective way to actually bring about the formation of an individual. Busyness is something that plagues even the best of mentors. But as Finney recounted, “God has a right to dispose of our time as He pleases, to require us to give up any portion of our time, or all our time, to duties of instruction and devotion.”⁹ This project, along with sermons and class discussions will further drive this agenda into the local setting.

Evaluation

During the winter of 2015, a questionnaire was sent and conversations had taken place with many of those attending the Sunday morning worship experience, the mid-week group, the Sunday night group, and those who were counseled during the span of these past six months. There were four simple questions asked. Were the groups or counseling sessions helpful? Do any of those who attended feel God forming something new within them? How? All who responded did so in a positive manner. Some were thankful for the opportunity to discuss where they feel God is leading. The greatest signs of reassurance were the comments about the Sunday night

⁹ Finney, *Revival Lectures*, 250.

testimony time. To further elaborate, this time is a few moments where individuals are able to share how their life was before Christ and what Christ has done since they made a commitment to him. They are encouraged by attenders and uplifted by the leaders in the group. They were also coached with potential disciplines that may be beneficial for their walk with God.

Another key component brought forward in the questionnaire were the ways in which disciples felt a closer connection with God. They were thankful for the rotation of the mid-week group. They felt as if they were better able to build upon their walk and fellowship with other believers. Words like, providence, rescue, and reconciliation, illustrating God is the exceedingly good Father who seeks to draw us closer to Him were used. It was also stated that through what is happening, “He becomes a God who is known, rather than one completely unknown or unknowable. His desire is for us, and He takes back that which is rightfully His, that which was stolen and blinded by the enemy. We can be His forever! What JOY!”¹⁰ This is the purpose of this material. It was written to take out the barriers of formation and open the floodgates of His grace, so His people could know Him better and without reservation.

The next step, will be integrating the idea of becoming an apprentice with Jesus. This type of training will better equip followers to further develop their walk. One of the most formative moments happened during the very first lesson about spiritual formation. The list, shown on Appendix E, hit some disciples as something fresh and something tangible. One even remarked that this mid-week group was the lifeline that she had been looking for. Without this class, she did not know how she

¹⁰ This was stated by a disciple of the local congregation at Carrollton Nazarene Church.

would continue to survive throughout the entirety of the week. Again, there is not a lack of hunger for God, but misdirection in how one can be formed by God. In essence, the programming of the Church needs such renewal.

The last, and most significant assessment was the communal formation time. This change had the greatest amount of influence on the congregation. This is partially due to the amount of people who experienced this small change. The encouraging sign were the conversations that ensued due to disciples being able to talk about where they felt God was leading them. Due to some opening up, others felt free to express parts of their development. Overall, because of this and other initiatives, God is moving in a positive and new way within the Carrollton Church. The changes have not always been simple, and at times have had to be tweaked. The morale of the community has shifted into a more positive and authentic pursuit of what God calls of each of His disciples. The Nazarene Church has a rich history of discipleship, and with the integration of Willard, the Wesleyan movement has a never-ending and bright future.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Dallas Willard wrote: “Spirituality” wrongly understood or pursued is a major source of human misery and rebellion against God.”¹ Recent years suggest that many in the Nazarene Tradition have wrongly understood the work of sanctification. The primary purpose of this project is to empower the Nazarene Church to embark on a new conversation regarding spiritual formation. The emergence of such material is necessary for the Church to reclaim lost opportunity and relive what some may consider as the glory days. In summary, this project provided new ways for the Church to embrace the teachings of Christ. The primary focus was clarifying the distinct Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification and using the work of Wesley and Willard to further pursue holy living in a practical way. This was not an attempt to demean or correct the way discipleship has been historically conveyed but to build upon the foundation of the past.

The writings of Willard have already renovated, and can further renovate, the processes used in Nazarene congregations to walk faithfully with God. The conversation is much like this thought from Toler: “eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members, and the deterioration of some older ones.”² That is the purpose of this project. The robes of the church have served it faithfully for many years, but at times need to be updated. This project has allowed the congregation to form new practices, and has served as a springboard to further dig into the writings of Willard so that discipleship can become the most

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 81.

² Stan Toler, and Martha Bolton, *That Ain't Just Preaching: A View from the Pew* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 2005), 40.

prevalent focus of the church. And this is the kind of discipleship that takes on formation and does not just impart doctrinal assumptions or dispositions.

True discipleship, formation, leads to renewal and generates a new level of revival. The Spirit of God consistently demonstrates the effective level by which God can shape believers into something more than this world can offer. The walk of a disciple proves the effectiveness of how effort is able to show others a faith that is not dead and eventually will become the natural characteristic of life for a follower of Christ. If spirituality ever becomes a marginalized, compartmentalized, or a stagnant lifestyle, it ceases to be drawn from the living water. It ceases to be what Jesus commanded in the New Testament. It then becomes just another task that one must follow to feel as if they are in right standing with God. However, if discipleship is a breath of fresh air, inhaled in moments of crisis and joy, it begins to provide life. Just as God would breathe within humanity, the first breath of life, so God must breathe life into His bride. Without this life-giving power, the church would become just another institution. Without the consecration of the believer, God does not have a vessel to breath into. The church is something more, because God is able to make it something it has yet to be.

To conclude, this project serves as an example to those who wish their hunger for God would translate into something dynamic. This project is for those who truly long to be the Church of Jesus Christ. Without these disciplines, without these practices, the Christian walk can become a passive and noncommittal, ritualistic burden. If one were to apply this work to a traditional Church, time is key. Each new step is a stretch from being spoon-fed, or told exactly what to do, to placing the

responsibility of formation upon those who claim the name of Jesus Christ. This project is an example of coming to Jesus, “The living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5).

APPENDIX A

We believe that [entire] sanctification is [that] *the* [act] work of God[, subsequent to regeneration, by] which *transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. It is wrought by God's grace through the Holy Spirit in initial sanctification, or regeneration (simultaneous with justification), entire sanctification, and the continued perfecting work of the Holy Spirit culminating in glorification. In glorification we are fully conformed to the image of the Son.*

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with *or infilling of* the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.

Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by *grace through* faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as “Christian perfection,” “perfect love,” “heart purity,” “the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit,” “the fullness of the blessing,” and “Christian holiness.”

We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of **growth in grace**.

We believe that the grace of entire sanctification includes the *divine* impulse to grow in grace as a *Christlike disciple*. However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in **Christlikeness of character and personality**. Without such purposeful endeavor, one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.

*Participating in the means of grace, especially the fellowship, disciplines, and sacraments of the Church, believers grow in grace and in wholehearted love to God and neighbor.*¹

¹ Church of the Nazarene, *Church of the Nazarene - Articles of Faith*. 2014, (accessed May 23, 2015).

APPENDIX B

A Survey of Your Sanctification Experience

1. What are your initial thoughts about the pursuit of holiness? What is it? How do you get it?
2. If you were to pick a term to describe this movement of God upon your life, what would it be? Christian perfection, heart purity, holiness, sanctification, spirit empowerment, perfect love, spiritual formation, renovation - Or does something else come to mind?
3. Do you currently feel that you are in a process of being spiritually formed? If so, why? If not, why?
4. How did you become sanctified?
5. If you were to describe Entire Sanctification to another, how would you describe it?
6. What made you interested in the holiness life? Why do you find it important? Do you see transformation at work? How?

APPENDIX C

The Disciplines

Disciplines of Abstinence

Discipline: Solitude

Definition: Being by yourself – removing oneself from social stimuli & interaction.

Benefits: No distractions
Prayer
Refreshing
Relaxing
Sabbath
Improves physical health

Dangers: Social hostility
Shallow relationships
No accountability
Removal from the world & reality
Self-centered
Depression

Discipline: Silence

Definition: Abstaining from speaking verbally & mentally... Keeping the focus on listening. Elimination of sound and speaking.

Benefits: In a position to hear God & others better
Better listener
Better observer
Hear more of the language of creation

Dangers: Can be used as a weapon
Hurtful to others
Apathy
Too Passive

Discipline: Fasting

Definition: Deprive of everyday substances: food, media, etc.

Benefits: Patience
Clarity of mind

Rest/relax
Healing
Re-orient priorities
Dependence on God
Appreciate gifts/life/blessing

Dangers: Physical danger
Weakness
Legalism
Pride

Discipline: Frugality

Definition: The thoughtful stewardship of resources, particularly money.

Benefits: Increases your ability to be conscientious
Keeps you out of debt
Temperance

Dangers: Cheapskate
Selfishness
Scope of “how to be benevolent” is diminished

Discipline: Chastity

Definition: Abstinence of physical & emotional intimacy with those not in spousal or other appropriate relationships with warrants such indulgence.

Benefits: No STDs
Increase intimacy & trust
Keeps marriage bed holy
Safety & security
Not abusive
Respectful
Not robbing potential mate of the fullness of the relationship

Dangers: Prudish
Obsession
Thinking that intimacy is dirty or shameful
Staying in an abusive situation & fear

Discipline: Secrecy

Definition: Honoring a Godly act to God alone (e.g. tithes & other blessings).

Benefits: Self control (over tongue & pride)

Dangers: Break/destroy relationships, keeping too many things

Disciplines: Sacrifice

Definition: Doing something you wouldn't normally do for the betterment of others. Usually inconvenient.

Benefits: Helps you build perspective on the needs of the world
Identity discovery
Learn humility
You meet others needs

Dangers: You gain the mentality of a martyr
Can be abused as a "giver"
Spiritual masochism

Disciplines of Engagement

Discipline: Study

Definition: Gain knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of God

Benefits: Learning
Enlightenment
Awareness
Communication with others about God
Connection to history and theology
Humility

Danger: Intellectualism
Legalism
Text-bookism
Lack of sleep
Shutting out the work of the Spirit
Overconfidence
Arrogance
Being worn out

Discipline: Worship

Definition: The public & private reflection, recognition & appreciation of God, His awesomeness, glory, forgiveness, etc. often expressed through music, prayers, reading of scriptures, receiving of teaching, and living. The highest act of obedience is worship

Benefits:	Connects us to wider Christian community Offering worship as a response Humility Joy
Dangers:	Worship as entertainment Performance Aloof, so heavenly minded disregards human life Shirk the intellect Narrow vision of worship style, making worship a style Single-minded focus, to the detriment of other corporate disciplines Self focus on feelings and experience rather than God
Discipline:	Celebration
Definition:	Party- Indulge in the joy of life or blessing that God has given through extreme gratitude. Often but not limited to community
Benefits:	Joy Fellowship Appreciation of freedom Alleviates worry Can breed contentment & peace Remembrance
Dangers:	Could lead to drunkenness or some form of immorality Always seeking “happiness” (feeling happy avoiding pain) Forget the meaning of remembering and only acknowledge the celebration or act
Discipline:	Service
Definition:	Work not only for others, but also for God Humble yourself not only before others but also before God
Benefits:	Satisfaction by helping people Sharing what is given by God Seeing others growing spiritually
Dangers:	Legalism Burnout No more joy People are apt to give something which they gave others back Works morality False humility Bitterness

Religiosity

Discipline: Prayer

Definition: Communication with God involving dialogue and listening

Benefits: Connectedness with God
Discernment
Fighting demons
Calming effect

Dangers: Stuck in helplessness
Having “special discernment/revelation”
Only listening, not acting

Discipline: Fellowship

Definition: Being with others

Benefits: Miracles happen
Power
Change
Provision
Getting to know people
Support
Taking care of each other
Accountability
Fidelity

Dangers: Too much focus on people (lost purpose)
Gossip
Becomes a means to an end
Cliques

Disciplines: Confession

Definition: Proclamation of personal or community struggles, joys, sins, to God and/or the Church with the intent to seek reconciliation, forgiveness, celebration and/or unity

Benefits: Healing
Freedom
Redemption
Growth
Transparency

Dangers: Inappropriate, damaging corporate confession
Use as a form of gossip
Attention getting
Recited words
Empty meaningless habit

Discipline: Submission

Definition: Humbling yourself before God & community in order to truly experience God's presence & blessing. Recognizing/respecting authority. Obedience. Daily habit

Benefits: In a position to be truly blessed
Straightens out priorities (ours to God's)
Posture of learning

Dangers: False humility
Taken advantage of

APPENDIX D

Letting God Speak To You Today

Lectio Divina

Lectio divina: ecclesiastical Latin phrase for “sacred reading” (pronounced LEX-ee-oh-dih-VEE-nuh in ecclesiastical Latin)

Four Parts

Reading a Scripture passage (*lectio*) READ

Reading aloud helps the words and phrases resonate in the ear

Meditate on that passage (*meditation*) REFLECT

How is my life touched today by the passage?

What is this passage inviting me to do?

Prayer (*oratio*) RESPOND

Respond to God, telling your desire to respond to the invitation or asking questions. Writing out this prayer keeps our mind from wandering.

Contemplation (*contemplation*) REST

Waiting on God; paying attention to God: How does God seem?; worshipping God.

Group *lectio*: Hearing God together. People tell what they heard from God. Hearing what happens with others can complete the meditation for us. Waiting in silence together can build community. Words aren't necessary.

APPENDIX E



Being Renovated

“We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory,
are being *transformed* into his likeness.”

2 Corinthians 3:18

Spiritual Transformation...

1. Is essential, not optional for all Christ-followers
2. Is a process, not an event
3. Is God’s work, but requires my participation
4. Involves those practices, experiences, and relationships that help me live intimately with Christ and walk as if he were in my place.
5. Is not a compartmentalized pursuit. God is not interested in my spiritual life; he’s interested in my life—all of it.
6. Can happen in every moment. It is not restricted to certain times or practices
7. Is not individualistic, but takes place in community and finds expression in serving others
8. Is not impeded by a person’s background, temperament, life situation, or season of life. It is available right now to all who desire it.
9. The means of pursuing it, will vary from one individual to another. Fully devoted followers are handcrafted, not mass-produced
10. Is ultimately gauged by an increased capacity to love God and people. Superficial or external checklists cannot measure it.

What is the goal?

Training Vs. Trying

What the Spiritual Disciplines Are NOT

*“Who teaches
you? Whose
disciple are you?
Honestly. One
thing is sure: You
are somebody’s
disciple.”*

-Willard

Every Moment Counts

God's Role and Mine

The Kingdom Life is Possible Now

Throughout the week, keep track of how this experience goes. How easy was it for you to stop midstream? When did you feel like you got it right? How about times when your attempts failed? Do you notice any patterns to those experiences?



Bible Study-

It might be a good idea to have a notebook, diary, or journal for this portion of your week.

Imagine that you knew you only had hours left to live. You would more than likely try to have one final conversation with the people closest to you. What would you say? What would your final words be? You would probably move quickly beyond small talk to those things of greatest importance to you; things you wanted your loved ones to hear and really *get*; things you wanted them to hold in their hearts forever. This is the context of Jesus' words in John 14 & 15 as he prepares his disciples for his departure.

1. Jesus set high expectations for his followers. In John 14:12, he challenges them to live like him, doing the works that he did. What startling thing does Jesus go on to say in the last half of vs. 12?
2. You would think that living this kind of life would require many things. But Jesus distills it to one thing required above all else. What is that one thing? (John 15:1-10)
3. Considering Jesus' illustration of a vine and a branch put in your own words what it means to "abide" or "remain" in him?
4. How easily does abiding come for you? To what extent does your life naturally lend itself to abiding (remaining) in Christ?

5. Reflecting specifically on this past week, at what moment did you feel strongly connected to God—when abiding was reality?
6. What factors contributed to that?
7. If you did not feel very connected to Christ, what were the obstacles?
8. Think back to this statement from the discussion: “Training... means to arrange your life around those exercises and experiences that will enable you to do eventually what you are not yet able to do even by trying hard.” What is the connection between training and abiding (or remaining) in Christ?
9. How do the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 underscore the reality that leaning to abide is not something into which we passively fail?
10. Return to Jesus’s words in John 15:1-10. If we *are* living connected to Christ, something will be inevitable; if we are not, that same thing will be impossible. What is that thing?
11. What sobering words does Jesus speak concerning those who consistently fail to bear good fruit?

NOTE: Jesus is clear: living a fruitful life is not optional for believers. Fruitfulness is normal. So how do you know if you are really bearing the right kind of fruit?

It is critically important that we get clarity on this point. Being busy with a lot of Christian activities is not necessarily an indicator of fruitfulness. Neither is mastering the Bible or accumulating impressive spiritual accomplishments, degrees, or books. The Pharisees did all these things and Christ declared them least fruitful of all!

Jesus lived his life as a reflection of his father. To see Jesus was to see God. To know one was literally to know the other. This is the ultimate test of our fruitfulness. When people see you, do they see Jesus? As they come to know you better, do they know him better? Paul goes one more step in unpacking this: “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

To make this more practical... 1 being Low, 5 being High

Love 1 2 3 4 5

How tender was your heart toward God this week? Toward family and friends? Toward needy people? Toward your church family? How did you reflect the love of Jesus for someone who was lost?

Joy 1 2 3 4 5

What was your irritability factor this week? Were you more inclined to speak words of complaint or words of gratitude? How often did you laugh? Did you have any fun? To what degree were you able to choose joy even during a time of frustration or difficulty?

Peace 1 2 3 4 5

To what degree was your heart and mind at rest in God this week? How consistently were you troubled and anxious? Was this a week of contentment or discontentment? Did you find yourself relating to others in way that promoted peace, or did you stir up needless conflict?

Patience 1 2 3 4 5

How did you respond when you didn't get your way or when you were frustrated? Were you able to wait gracefully when you needed to? How tolerant were you when someone wasn't performing as quickly as you wanted them to?

Love 1 2 3 4 5

How inclined were you to lend a helping hand even when you were busy? When you knew you wouldn't be recognized at all? Did you encourage or affirm anyone? How often did you say please and thank you?

Generosity 1 2 3 4 5

What portion of your time and material resources did you give to the word of God, to the poor, to others? Did you tend to give the least amount acceptable? Do you feel your heart growing or shrinking in this regard?

Faithfulness 1 2 3 4 5

Would people around you say that you were dependable this week? How well did you keep your word, even with small things? How did you do with procrastination? How faithfully did you serve God by using your spiritual gifts this week?

Gentleness 1 2 3 4 5

How consistent were you in speaking truth in grace? How often did you get angry and inflict pain on someone? Are you growing in your ability to listen? Did you come alongside someone who was hurting and extend comfort? Were you moving too fast all week to even think of being gentle?

Self-Control 1

2

3

4

5

Were your bad habits more or less troubling to you this week? How likely were you to give in to damaging impulses? What about your month? How often did you speak without thinking? How inclined were you to say things that you knew should never have been said?

12. In what ways do you feel the affirmation of God that you really are growing and increasingly bearing good fruit?
13. What specific areas most need transforming? Honestly acknowledge those to God.
14. As you continue, invite God to do his transforming work in your life. Ask him to show you how to actively engage in this kind of spiritual training that will help you abide in him.

Notes

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