

Abilene Christian University

## Digital Commons @ ACU

---

Doctor of Ministry Theses

Doctor of Ministry Theses

---

5-2018

### Practicing the Way of Jesus in the College Ministry at the University Church of Christ

Jonathan Andrew Gann

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/dmin\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/dmin_theses)



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Gann, Jonathan Andrew, "Practicing the Way of Jesus in the College Ministry at the University Church of Christ" (2018). *Doctor of Ministry Theses*. 30.

[https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/dmin\\_theses/30](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/dmin_theses/30)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Doctor of Ministry Theses at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the project was to give opportunities for a community group in the college ministry at University Church of Christ to experiment practicing the ways of Jesus. This purpose was accomplished by forming a Jesus dojo based on Mark Scandrette's model as outlined in his book *Practicing the Way of Jesus*. The Jesus dojo met for eight sessions. During sessions we reflected upon different teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. Students then were given the opportunity of experimenting with the ways of Jesus together based on the theme of the teaching that week from the Sermon on the Mount. Students then reflected with the group upon their shared experiments through discussion of the *lectio divina* and discussion of their journals. Data from the project was collected in the form of field notes from the video recordings of each session, student journals, and an independent expert's analysis. From the data I observed that the Jesus dojo affected their lives in positive ways. The ministry intervention was significant by engaging college students to know experientially rather than only cognitively that living as Jesus commands leads to faithful life as a disciple of Christ. The goal of this ministry intervention was that participants would indeed find that the ways of Jesus truly lead to an abundant life. It seems that in many instances this goal was achieved.

Practicing the Way of Jesus in the College Ministry  
at the University Church of Christ

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Theology  
Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

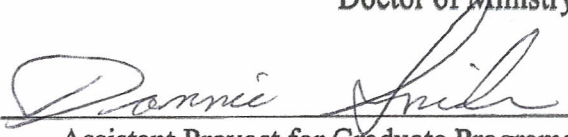
By

Jonathan Andrew Gann

May 2018

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

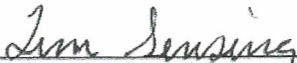
Doctor of Ministry


  
Assistant Provost for Graduate Programs

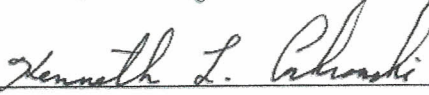
Date

4-17-18

Thesis Committee

  
Dr. Tim Sensing, Chair

  
Randy Harris

  
Dr. Kenneth L. Cukrowski

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PROJECT .....	1
Description of the Ministry Context .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Statement of the Purpose .....	6
Basic Assumptions.....	6
Delimitations and Limitations.....	8
II. THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	11
III. METHODOLOGY .....	28
Overview of the Format of the Project Intervention .....	29
Description of the Participants.....	33
Evaluation Methodology.....	35
Data Collection.....	35
Data Analysis .....	37
Summary .....	38
IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS.....	40
Challenges Faced by Participants in the Experiments .....	40
Challenge of Consistent Completion.....	40
Experiment did not fit the individual. ....	41
Accepted responsibility for the challenge. ....	42

Theological reflection due to challenges.....	46
Challenge of Remembering.....	48
Success When Remembered .....	53
Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participants Due to the Experiments .....	55
Sense of Successful Engagement with Experiments .....	56
Benefit Received Due to Experiment.....	59
Self-Reflection Indicating Growth .....	65
Theological Reflection About Growth .....	72
Evidence of Participants' Need for the Experiments.....	76
Affirming Need for Jesus Dojo Experiment.....	76
Future Plans to Experiment during Jesus Dojo .....	79
Desire to Continue After Jesus Dojo Ends.....	87
Noticing Past Jesus Dojo Experiments.....	89
Independent Expert .....	91
V. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION .....	94
Evaluation of Findings.....	94
Applicability .....	96
Dependability, Credibility, and Reflexivity.....	97
Sustainability.....	98
Personal and Ecclesial Significance.....	98
Theological Interpretations and Significance of the Data.....	100
Silence and Slippage .....	101
Unanswered Questions.....	102

Conclusion .....	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	105
APPENDIX A: IRB Consent Form .....	107
APPENDIX B: "Deep Integrity and Examen" .....	109
APPENDIX C: "Go the Extra Mile" .....	110
APPENDIX D: "Staying Awake to God's Presence" .....	111
APPENDIX E: Journal Prompts for Weeks 3 through 8 .....	113
APPENDIX F: Session 1-8 Outlines .....	115
APPENDIX G: Field Note Protocol .....	125

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

Christians throughout history have experienced the powerful words of life spoken by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount. If disciples of Jesus faithfully live the principles found in the Sermon on the Mount, the world will see the kingdom of heaven colliding with earth in such a manner that will bring glory to God in heaven. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus outlines a way of life that leads to the most abundant life possible. This ministry intervention will help a group of Christ followers experiment with intentionally practicing some of the principles found in the Sermon on the Mount.

#### **Description of the Ministry Context**

This ministry intervention took place in the town of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Tuscaloosa has a population of approximately 96,000 people and is home to the University of Alabama, which provides educational opportunities for around 37,000 students. As in many college towns, the fall season in Tuscaloosa is dedicated to college football. Every calendar or event in the city revolves around the Crimson Tide's football schedule, and it is not uncommon to receive a greeting of "Roll Tide" from strangers on the street. Saturdays are for wearing crimson and white and cheering on the Alabama Crimson Tide at the tailgate on the quad, and the hardest place to be is in church Sunday morning after a loss the previous night.

University Church of Christ (hereinafter UCC) was founded in 1954 to be a



campus ministry for the University of Alabama, although its growth in size since then has led to campus ministry being just one of many different ministries in the church. Most of the church's long-time members carry a special place in their heart for college students and campus ministry since this was the original purpose of the church. The congregation members consist mainly of middle-class and upper-class families. The majority of people at UCC are Caucasian and there are also a few African-American people. UCC adopted two worship services in September of 2014 to accommodate differing worship styles. During the past year, the combined Sunday morning worship attendance fluctuates on various days between 325 and 425 people. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the Bible class hour that meets between the two different worship service times. The Bible class hour provides classes for all age groups.

Besides serving students at the University of Alabama, the college ministry of UCC, referred to as University Christian Ministry (hereinafter UCM) also serves two other colleges in Tuscaloosa: Shelton State Community College and Stillman College. The church leaders and members want college students to have a desire to come to church on Sunday mornings. The congregation wishes to equip future leaders of local congregations. Therefore, we seek to instill the love of the local congregation into the college students who come through our ministry. UCM hopes to equip college students to be leaders in whatever future local congregations that they are a part of after they leave college. We want to help college students develop the necessary skills they need such as commitment to spending time together to share in community with each other.

The congregation leaders also want to prioritize cross-generational ministry within our congregation. The college ministry facilitates a program called Adopt-A-

Student, which helps pair up students with resident members to make faith-based friendships. Since UCM is also a church college ministry not just a Christian campus ministry such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Navigators, InterVarsity, or Young Life, UCM can help college students meet local church members who are interested in investing in the lives of college students. Many of the congregations' resident church members can relate well to our current college students because they too are alumni of the University of Alabama. Many of the resident church members are also "alumni" of UCM.

Connecting resident church members to college students helps students feel more comfortable and accepted by building a sense of community. Many new college freshmen are unaware of how much they relied on the naturally cultivated relationships that formed in their home congregations. At their home congregations, they had a web of relationships that would miss them if they were absent, would speak to them, and would show love and concern for them, and for many of them, this web of relationships consisted of some natural intergenerational relationships. When faithful Christian college freshmen move away from home and actively seek to find a new local congregation, they must navigate how to become part of a new local congregation. One of the ways UCM tries to incorporate freshmen and other new students into UCC is through community groups.

The small group ministry or "community groups" are an essential part of UCC as well as UCM. UCC is committed to helping members grow spiritually through community groups and encourages all members to be a part of a community group. The Wednesday night Bible study functions as the college ministry's co-ed community group

and is led primarily by me. The Sunday morning Bible class, on the other hand, serves as an opportunity for women and men to meet separately in community groups. The Sunday morning gender-specific community groups are led by members of UCC to further aid college students in making intergenerational connections within the congregation.

I began working as the college minister at UCC in August of 2013. I grew up as a preacher's son and was the youngest of three brothers. After graduating Mars Hill Bible School, a K-12 Church of Christ school in Florence, Alabama, I attended Harding University, where I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Bible and religion. After Harding, I continued my education by completing a Master of Divinity from Abilene Christian University Graduate School of Theology in Abilene, Texas.

My ministry experience before this current job as campus minister was primarily in youth ministry. After graduating from Harding, I served as an interim youth minister at Bammel Church of Christ in Houston, Texas. Upon completion of my Master of Divinity, my wife and I moved to Fairburn, Georgia, a southern suburb of Atlanta, where I served as the campus minister at Arlington Christian School, a K-12 school. My next ministry job was working as a youth minister at Southern Hills Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. I went from Southern Hills to work as the college minister at UCC.

At UCC, I served as the college or campus minister and leader of UCM. As the college minister, I coordinated the Sunday morning small groups and led the community group for college students on Wednesday nights. UCM also has a weekly game night and coffee house on Monday nights and eats lunch together on Tuesdays at the University of Alabama. Besides these regular meetings and events, my wife and I also enjoyed hosting college students for meals in our home. In the fall semester, UCM expends a considerable

amount of energy setting up tents, televisions, and a satellite dish so that we can tailgate on the quad before home football games.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mark Scandrette believes the earliest disciples of Jesus were formed into disciples in a way that was more like a karate dojo than a college lecture hall. Disciples would engage in active movement with their bodies to make intentional choices rather than only listening to content from a spiritual leader. Scandrette challenges modern-day disciples to go beyond knowing the content of what Jesus taught and urges them to connect Jesus's teaching with real life. In his book *Practicing the Ways of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love*, Scandrette challenges disciples of Jesus to act and try to live out the teachings of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Scandrette demonstrates how a group of disciples can set up experiments that approach the various characteristics of what Jesus did and taught. These experiments that Scandrette talks about can be as short as one week or much longer and are designed to help the participants experientially learn the teachings of Jesus through engagement and practice rather than through a lecture and content memorization. Scandrette acknowledges the fear of legalism and advises people not to impose their experiments upon other disciples but rather to remain light-hearted and simply play with it. Thus, Scandrette prefers the terms “experiment” and “life lab” for the practical spiritual practices that seek to connect what Jesus taught to modern day life of disciples.

The problem identified was that the college ministry did not provide opportunities for students to experiment practicing the ways of Jesus at University Church of Christ.

---

1. Mark Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

Students usually sat and learned information when they gathered for church services. The college ministry did not have a time when they had the opportunity to be challenged by deliberate group spiritual formation experiments. UCM college students needed opportunities to experientially test living the virtues of a Christian life. The issue in the setting and context described above was that many times college students only learned about Jesus as they attended worship services and small groups. Rarely did they have a chance in a structured, supportive community to practice living out the ways of Jesus. Experimenting living out these virtues, rather than only learning about them, provided opportunities for students to grow in their faith and discipleship to Jesus. Additionally, these types of opportunities helped facilitate college students grow into independent Christian adults who own their faith rather than relying on the faith of their family. Within the UCM context, the Wednesday night community group became a time when college students were challenged and encouraged to put to the test the ways of Jesus.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of the project was to provide opportunities for a community group in the college ministry at University Church of Christ to experiment with practicing the ways of Jesus. Through experimenting with practicing the ways of Jesus and seeing that indeed the ways of Jesus truly do lead to an abundant life, college students had the opportunity to form a firmer faith that could withstand greater doubts. They now know experientially rather than only cognitively that living as Jesus commands leads to a rich life in Christ.

### **Basic Assumptions**

Certain assumptions are present in all research and serve as the beginning

premises and platform for the study. In this intervention, I started with the assumption that all of the community group members are already Christians who believe that living for Jesus is important. I assumed that members of the community group are familiar with the content of teachings of Jesus, yet are not familiar with practicing the ways of Jesus as defined by Scandrette's book which will be used in this project.

Another assumption of this intervention was that by participating in a Jesus dojo<sup>2</sup> community group, college students would experience the positive effects that come with living out the ways of Jesus. This assumption came from conversations with Earl Lavender, who has many years of experience implementing similar Jesus dojo groups with college students in his classes at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee. Based on Lavender's experiences teaching I expected that college students participating in these types of Jesus dojo groups realize many positive benefits.

I also assumed this project would be significant and add value to the college ministry by demonstrating to college students that the Christian life is meant to be lived out in daily practical ways. The college students who participated in the experiments were given a variety of opportunities to deepen their faith. Too often college students passively give mental assent to the religious ideology of moral therapeutic deism<sup>3</sup>, which is a common trend in Christian student culture. The very act of living out the virtues of

---

2. Jesus dojo: A space, physical or temporal, in which disciples of Jesus Christ attempt an experiment in which they will train themselves in living out some of the teachings of Jesus.

3. Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 14. Dean summarizes the guiding beliefs of "moral therapeutic deism" as 1. A god exists who created and orders the world and watches over life on earth. 2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. 3. The central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about oneself. 4. God is not involved in my life except when I need God to resolve a problem. 5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

Jesus became a practical apologetic that built up the faith of the college students who participated in the Jesus dojo experiment.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

*Dojo*, *Jesus dojo*, and *Ways of Jesus* are terms that Scandrette uses often and will be defined further when I explore Scandrette's theology later on. Besides precise definitions that help define the study, each research study also has delimitations and limitations that are an integral part of the research process. Delimitations chosen by the researcher narrow the scope of the project.<sup>4</sup> In this project I chose to narrow the scope of this project in three primary ways. First, the focus of the project was on a select group of college students. Since college students served as the only participants in this ministry intervention, that is a delimitation that significantly narrows the age range of the participants. Second, the ministry intervention used the practice of *lectio divina* mainly from Matthew 5, 6, and 7, although other Scriptures were referred to as supporting the themes found in those chapters. Both of these are delimitations narrowed the focus of this intervention. Third, I did not attempt to do a history or theology of spiritual disciplines as a basis for practicing the ways of Jesus with the group.

Limitations are also inherent within the specific research strategies, such as data collection and analyses.<sup>5</sup> The data collected during this intervention was limited by the instruments and tools used to collect it. I used journal entries completed by participants during the Jesus dojo meetings. A limitation of this data collection plan was the

---

4. Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 20.

5. *Ibid.*, 21.

consistency with which the participants in the study attended the weekly community group meetings. Even though I stressed consistency as part of the commitment to participating in the Jesus dojo experiment, since participants were college students whose lives tend to have erratic fluctuations, the group did not have perfect attendance from every participant. However, participation was sufficient from which to evaluate and draw research implications. Another limitation was that while I assumed the Jesus dojo experiment will have positive effects, I did not assume the experience will automatically and radically change the participant's spiritual lives.

The preexisting and ongoing relationship between me and the participants might be viewed as a limitation of qualitative research.<sup>6</sup> However, it should not be viewed as a limitation but rather a strength. I was mindful and cautious of the “Hawthorn effect” because I serve as the college minister for the community group of students. “The Hawthorn effect is a theory that questions research dependability due to cases when subjects know they are being studied.”<sup>7</sup> It is plausible the students provide answers in their journals that help provide a positive result for the ministry intervention only because they want to please me as the researcher. However, I do not believe that was the case. Also, due to the relationship between me and the participants, it was imperative that I gave the Jesus dojo group enough freedom and options in how they chose to engage their experimentation in the ways of Jesus. Each week they received a piece of paper with suggested ways on how to experiment with the lesson for the week. Participants were always the ones to choose for themselves if they did any of them and which ones they

---

6. Ibid.

7 . Ibid., 82.



would like to try. I tried to take care not to let personal preferences or biases be overly apparent to the group so they would be able to choose ways to engage the experiments that would best benefit them and the other people in the group.

The ministry intervention project was conducted on Wednesday nights from 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the spring of 2017. The first session was on January 18, 2017 and the last session was on March 8, 2017, eight weeks total. The first week was an introduction. Weeks two through seven, the group experimented practicing the ways of Jesus as outlined in Appendices B, C, and D. In week eight we concluded, reviewed, and looked to the future.

Regarding finances and materials, the costs did not exceed routine college ministry operating expenses. UCM already had all the resources needed. Regarding the facilities, I reserved a room in the Ferguson Student Center on the campus of the University of Alabama at no cost since UCM is a registered student organization with the University of Alabama. The rooms were suitable and there was minimal clean up. Regarding the availability of staff, I am the researcher, and I worked on staff at the University Church of Christ as the college minister. I was able to secure Earl Lavender from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee to serve as an independent expert to observe our Jesus Dojo's meeting together during week seven.

## CHAPTER II

### THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mark Scandrette notes that during his formative years he “spent time with philosopher and theologian Dallas Willard, who often and memorably told us that to experience the kingdom of God a ‘group of people should get together and simply try to do the things that Jesus instructed his disciples to do.’”<sup>1</sup> It is clear Scandrette has inherited much of his theology directly from Dallas Willard. After Jesus, Willard is the only theologian Scandrette directly refers to in his book *Practicing the Way of Jesus*.

Willard is one who firmly agrees that discipleship should be an apprenticeship for all believers to continually commit to following Jesus Christ and becoming more like him. Willard points out a major misunderstanding many American Christians have that leads them to take advantage of God’s grace. Willard states that “Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude. Effort is an action. Grace, you know, does not just have to do with forgiveness of sins alone.”<sup>2</sup> Willard writes that “for at least several decades, the churches of the western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian.”<sup>3</sup> In *The Great Omission*, Willard defines a disciple as “a learner, a student, an apprentice – a practitioner, even if only a beginner ... disciples of

---

1. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 15.

2 Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper 2006).

3. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (New York: Harper, 1991), 258.

Jesus are people who do not just profess certain views as their own but apply their growing understanding of life in the Kingdom of the Heavens to every aspect of their life on earth.”<sup>4</sup> That Christians are allowed to remain simply Christians and never become disciples is what Willard refers to as the great omission from the great commission in Matthew 28. The gospel of the great commission in Matthew 28 that should be told to all people everywhere requires us to make disciples. That same gospel is a message of good news, and the center of its message is a choice to allow one’s current life to be transformed into goodness. Why is there a great disparity between the hope for life expressed in Jesus that we find in the Bible and the real daily actions and inner life of those who claim to be disciples of Jesus?

Scandrette points to Paul’s words to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:7-8 as a source of wisdom regarding our spiritual life training that needs to engage our body as well as our mind. Scandrette writes

Since ancient times, earnest spiritual seekers have explored ways to discipline their minds and bodies—leveraging their lives toward a greater purpose. An early advocate of the Way wrote to his apprentice, saying, “Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:7-8).<sup>5</sup>

Scandrette believes spiritual training should be thought of as similar to physical training with the goal of learning new skills that we would not have acquired without practice. “Training requires a purposeful change in normal activities and patterns of habit—either an action you abstain from or a new action you engage in. Disciplines are useful for connecting and directing the mind, body, and spirit toward the same goal—the undivided,

---

4. Willard, *The Great Omission*, xi.

5. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 58.

love-oriented life we were created for.”<sup>6</sup> Scandrette agrees with Willard and points out that disciples of Jesus cannot simply hope we change by uttering a quick prayer and expect real holistic life change. “Healing change comes as we learn to direct our life energy in new ways. If we do what we can, the Creator will do in us what we cannot. In this way, grace is not opposed to action or effort.”<sup>7</sup>

If our inner Christian life of discipleship is lacking, it is because “we do not give ourselves to it in a way that allows our lives to be taken over by it.”<sup>8</sup> “The word ‘disciple’ occurs 269 times in the New Testament. ‘Christians’ is found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus ... The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples and for disciples of Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup> Discipleship is not for super Christians only, but a requirement for all Christians because discipleship describes the level of devotion needed. It is clear that discipleship should not be optional for those who seek to follow Jesus. “Nondiscipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated throughout by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good,

---

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 60. Scandrette notes the following Scripture references as a follow up to this thought: “This is why one of the early followers of Jesus wrote, ‘Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill [God’s] good purpose’ (Philippians 2:12-13, my italics). We live in the now and not yet of the gospel as people in the process of “being saved” (1 Corinthians 1:18). Jesus spoke of two kingdoms in opposition to one another: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world—or what the apostle Paul described as the kingdom of light and the dominion of darkness (Colossians 1:12-13). We’ve lived much of our lives in the kingdom of darkness, having inherited and perpetuated an “empty way of life” (1 Peter 1:18).” Scandrette says that Jesus invites us “to “take off” our old practices—like sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language and deception—and “put on” new practices—like compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace and gratefulness (Colossians 3:5-17). To more fully inhabit the kingdom of love, our minds and bodies must be systematically retrained (Romans 6:13).”

8. Willard, *The Great Omission*, x.

9. Ibid., 1.

hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil.”<sup>10</sup> These great costs of nondiscipleship can be avoided by people willing to accept the call to discipleship of practicing the teachings of Jesus. “The correct perspective is to see following Christ not only as the necessity it is, but as the fulfillment of the highest human possibilities and as life on the highest plane.”<sup>11</sup>

Willard gives four simple points about discipleship that challenge our understanding of what it means to be a Christ follower. First, to be a true Jesus follower, Christians do not have the option of deciding whether they will be obedient to Jesus as Lord. Second, “if we do not become his apprentices in Kingdom living, we remain locked in defeat so far as our moral intentions are concerned.”<sup>12</sup> Third, only devout discipleship to Jesus through the Spirit can transform the heart from the inside out of Christians. Fourth, “for the one who makes sure to walk as close to Jesus as possible there comes the reliable exercise of a power that is beyond them in dealing with the problems and evils that afflict earthly existence.”<sup>13</sup>

Spiritual formation is one of the key components of discipleship. “When Jesus taught about discipleship . . . he made it very clear that one could not be the servant of the body and its demands and also succeed in his course of training.”<sup>14</sup> Spiritual training and formation extend also to our physical bodies. We get nowhere by intending to be holy yet

---

10. Ibid., 9.

11. Ibid., 12.

12. Ibid., 14.

13. Ibid., 16.

14. Ibid., 84.

“our intention and effort must be carried into effect by training which leaves our body poised to do what Christ would do, well before the occasion arises. Such training is supplied by the disciplines for life in the Spirit.”<sup>15</sup> Our bodies can acquire sinful habits such as verbally abusing others or looking lustfully at others. “Christ shows us how to bring the body from opposition to support of the new life he gives us, ‘the Spirit’ now in us.”<sup>16</sup> We must intentionally choose to be an apprentice of Jesus because “learning Christ-likeness is not passive. It is active engagement with and in God. And we act with our bodies.”<sup>17</sup>

Discipleship and spiritual formation are an act of obedience and are also for a restoration of the soul. “The aim of disciplines in the spiritual life – and, specifically, in the following of Christ – is the transformation of the total state of the soul. It is the renewal of the whole person from the inside, involving differences in thought, feeling, and character that may never be manifest in outward behavior at all.”<sup>18</sup> Willard says various spiritual disciplines including, solitude, silence, fasting, rest, and scripture memorization can help aid in this transformation of the total state of the soul. “But we must choose these disciplines. God will, generally speaking, not compete for our attention.”<sup>19</sup> Willard believes the soul must be remade by God; he writes that “spiritual

---

15. Ibid., 86.

16. Ibid., 89.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 152.

19. Ibid., 154.

formation . . . is a matter of reforming the broken soul of man in a recovery from its alienation from God. Really, it is soul reformation.”<sup>20</sup>

Scandrette asserts that many people yearn for this type of reformation to be true disciples of Jesus “yet too often our methods of spiritual formation are individualistic, information driven or disconnected from the details of everyday life.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore ministers need to seek ways to help spiritually form people through groups of friends who band together to practice the teachings of Jesus rather than only learn about it. However, the main goal of these types of spiritual formation groups are not communities for lonely people, but community is an unavoidable and welcome result of a group of people seeking to follow the ways Jesus as disciples together. Scandrette writes that “people often come to our learning labs in search of a community. We patiently explain that, though we believe a sense of belonging is important, community is not the best goal in itself—it is the byproduct of shared vision, activities, practices and commitments.”<sup>22</sup> Scandrette goes on to note that “community can’t be manufactured, nor is it instantaneous. True community develops over time, through patience, love and mutual commitment.”<sup>23</sup>

Scandrette believes “we need to recover a sense of immediacy and action in our spiritual practices.”<sup>24</sup> To aid disciples of Jesus in this goal, Scandrette seeks to “offer a

---

20. Ibid., 156.

21. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 14.

22. Ibid., 43.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid. 14.

practical approach to spiritual formation that is serious about Scripture, action-focused, communal, experiential, and connected to real world challenges and opportunities.”<sup>25</sup>

Scandrette emphasizes action and contends that “we don’t enter the kingdom of God merely by thinking about it or listening to one another talk about it. We have to experiment together with how to apply the teachings of Jesus to the details of our lives.”<sup>26</sup>

Through conversations with a group of his close friends, Scandrette concluded that “what we need is a Jesus Dojo—a space where we can work out the vision and teachings of Jesus together in real life.”<sup>27</sup> Scandrette points out that “you can’t learn karate just by watching, and we can’t learn to follow Jesus without practicing to do what he did and taught.”<sup>28</sup> Scandrette describes what he calls a Jesus Dojo, or community of practice, as “(1) an experiment, (2) inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus, (3) in which a group of people commit time and energy to a set of practices, (4) in conversation with real needs in our society and within themselves, (5) and reflect on how these experiences can shape the ongoing rhythms of life.”<sup>29</sup>

---

25. Ibid. 15.

26 Ibid.

27. Ibid. In order to clarify the term Dojo Scandrette writes “In Japanese the word dojo means ‘place of the way’ and is used to describe a school or practice space for martial arts or meditation. Theoretically, a dojo could be created for any skill or discipline. You could have a knitting dojo, a cooking dojo, a karate dojo—or a Jesus dojo. The important distinction is an learning environment, where participation is invited and expected.”

28. Ibid. Scandrette writes that “Jesus didn’t just communicate information or ideas, but declared, ‘I am the Way’ and invited his disciples into a new life that was fueled and inspired by his example, teachings and sacrifice (John 14:6). As a rabbi, he taught his disciples, or talmidim, by inviting them to make dramatic changes in their lives—to risk new ways of being and doing. Through surrender and practice, Jesus expected his apprentices to become like him (Luke 6:40).”

29. Ibid., 16.



Some church leaders teach that those seeking to become disciples of Jesus must first believe the correct teaching before they can belong to the Christian religion. Scandrette emphasizes the importance of Scripture and recognizes what new disciples believe is truly important. Scandrette acknowledges “sometimes concern is raised that a practice-based approach to spiritual formation, with its emphasis on experience, might minimize the importance of Scripture.”<sup>30</sup> Scandrette stresses that “the Scriptures have been given to us to inspire us to be awake to the Creator’s reality and purposes so that we might risk obedience. Jesus repeatedly urged his audience to listen with the intent of action.”<sup>31</sup> Scandrette points out that “the best goal for studying the Scriptures is not to acquire connoisseur-level knowledge or complete understanding, but to gain the faith and inspiration to respond with obedience.”<sup>32</sup> Thomas à Kempis agrees that Christians need to focus on humility and living out the teachings of Jesus, above gaining an advanced technical knowledge of the Scripture.<sup>33</sup> However, Thomas à Kempis warns that “our

---

30. Ibid., 46.

31. Ibid. “‘Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?’ (Luke 6:46). James emphatically echoes this instruction, ‘Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says’ (James 1:22). According to the apostle Paul, the Scriptures are useful to teach and train us to live in righteousness, and to equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).”

32. Ibid. Here Scandrette refers to “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).”

33. à Kempis, Thomas. *The Imitation of Christ: A Timeless Classic for Contemporary Readers*. Translated by William C. Creasy. Notre Dame, IN.: Ave Maria Press., 31-32. “Calm that excessive thirst for knowledge, for there is great discord and deception in it. People who have great learning are often eager to appear wise, and they often wish others to recognize them as wise people. There are many things that you can know about, though, that are of little or no use to the soul, and a person is exceedingly foolish who reaches for anything that does not lead toward salvation. Endless reading and talk do not satisfy the soul, but a good life puts the mind at rest, and a clean conscience brings great confidence in God. The more you know and the better you know it, the greater is your responsibility for using your knowledge wisely.... If you want to learn something that will really help you, learn to see yourself as God sees you and not as you see yourself in the distorted mirror of your own self-importance. This is the greatest and most useful lesson we can learn: to know ourselves for what we truly are, to admit freely our weaknesses and failings, and to

curiosity often gets in our way when we try to study and understand those passages that are too difficult for us. We should simply pass over them. If you wish to profit from your reading, read with humility, simplicity, and faith, and do not try to impress others with your great learning.”<sup>34</sup>

More importantly, instead of trying to convince people to believe the right doctrines about Jesus before they behave, Scandrette thinks followers of Jesus should encourage would-be disciples of Jesus to experiment with behaving according to the teachings of Jesus. “Like a produce vendor offering free samples at the farmer’s market, Jesus seemed to take a “try before you buy” approach. He invited those who were skeptical about the divine origins of his message to test the authenticity of his teaching through experiments in obedience—confident that the truth of what he taught could be proven by experience.”<sup>35</sup> Scandrette claims that “the way of Jesus can be verified by direct experience and must be practiced to be understood.”<sup>36</sup> The gospel teaching of Jesus

---

hold a humble opinion of ourselves because of them. Not to dwell on ourselves and always to think well and highly of others is great wisdom and perfection.”

34. Ibid., 35. Later on in book 3, chapter 43, titled “Against Arrogant Learning,” Thomas à Kempis writes these words as if Jesus were speaking them to a beloved disciple “My friend, do not let fancy words and artful phrases arouse your interest and curiosity. The kingdom of God is not in words but in power. Listen to my words which kindle hearts and enlighten minds and which bring the sting of conscience and lavishly bestow comfort. Never read anything just to seem more learned or wise; rather, learn to stamp out your vices, for this will serve you better than knowing the answers to a whole list of hard questions. When you have read and learned many things you have always to come back to the one source. It is I who give knowledge, and it is I who give a clearer understanding to those who are gentle and humble than anyone can teach. The person I speak to will quickly become wise and will progress far in the spiritual life. But woe to those who spend their lives in rooting out esoteric learning, caring little about how to serve me. The time will come when Christ, the Teacher of teachers, the Lord of angels, will appear to conduct the final exam; that is, to examine each person’s conscience. Then he will search Jerusalem with a lamp, and he will bring to light the things hidden in darkness, and all those scholars, so quarrelsome in their learning, will fall silent.” Ibid., 134.

35. Ibid., 17. “Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own” (John 7:17).

36. Ibid.

leads to holistic salvation. The holistic gospel salvation includes the disciples' physical bodily life now as well as the spiritual life of the soul. Scandrette noticed that many people in our culture today want to be like Jesus and make a positive impact in the world. Scandrette believes the gospel of Jesus contains life-giving power to transform dead or dying things, into living things. Thus Scandrette claims:

Knowing the transformational promise of the gospel, it is fair to ask whether a person who claims to have a relationship with Jesus exhibits more peace and less stress, handles crisis with more grace, experiences less fear and anxiety, manifests more joy, is overcoming anger and their addictions or compulsions, enjoys more fulfilling relationships, exercises more compassion, lives more consciously or loves more boldly. In any culture, but especially in one that yearns for holistic integration, the most compelling argument for the validity of Christian faith is a community that practices the way of Jesus by seeking a life together in the kingdom of love (John 13:35).<sup>37</sup>

Willard and Scandrette challenge their readers not to go out and convert the world or even convict their local congregation with the message of discipleship, but to begin with themselves and convert their own heart. Willard challenges Christians today to go by the name disciples and to constantly be learning from Jesus. Disciples of Jesus should certainly help the world, but Willard warns “don’t allow your thoughts and efforts to change things to come before or take the place of your practice of discipleship, walking with Jesus.”<sup>38</sup> It seems this is spoken directly to Christian leaders who envision great things their church will accomplish for the kingdom of heaven. Church leaders often have an overly complicated plan devised to make disciples, many times melting down several different church models into one. Too often ministers feel very busy and often get discouraged with the complexities that can be involved in ministry. Discipleship should

---

37. Ibid. 20.

38. Ibid., 227.

be simple apprenticeship to Jesus. Different churches may need to creatively choose different experiments for discipleship training, yet the core remains following the teachings of Jesus.

How often do ministers have a series of thoughts recounting their responsibilities surrounding ministry swirling through their mind that include “are the people in his church being transformed? Is his church making real disciples, the kind of disciples Jesus made? Or is everyone just busy?”<sup>39</sup> That is a hard question for any minister to answer, but a simple and clear approach to discipleship seems to be the best. “Church leaders who have designed a simple biblical process to make disciples are effectively advancing the movement of the gospel. Simple churches are making a big impact.”<sup>40</sup>

Jesus was the original simple revolutionary. The Jewish religious leaders had 613 laws that they derived from the Torah. They divided these laws into affirmative and negative commands and spent lots of time discussing which were binding and which were not binding. Yet when Jesus was asked which of the commandments was the greatest, he simplified some of the complexity in Mark 12:30-31 when he said, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” Jesus was not abolishing the law but “he was capturing all its spirit, all of its essence, in one statement. He said it all hangs on this. He summed up 613 commands in two.”<sup>41</sup>

---

39. Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church: Returning to God’s Process for Making Disciples* (Nashville: B&H 2006), 7.

40. Ibid., 14.

41. Ibid., 17.

Some people may worry that the practice-based approach to discipleship that Scandrette advocates may tend to become overly legalistic. However, Scandrette notes that the “apostle Peter saw the teachings of Jesus as ‘the words of eternal life’ (John 6:68). We are being invited to trust that the instructions of Jesus are based on true knowledge of the way life actually works.”<sup>42</sup> Scandrette asserts that the instructions of Jesus “are meant to liberate us from the patterns of thinking and acting that are sabotaging and destroying us and everyone around us. So rather than begrudgingly asking, ‘What do I have to do?’ or ‘How far do I have to go?’ a better question is, ‘How free and alive am I willing to be?’”<sup>43</sup> In Matthew 11:30 Jesus himself said that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. Scandrette agrees that “if the invitation of Jesus to practice the Way sounds like a burden of obligation, then we aren’t hearing him correctly.”<sup>44</sup>

However, church programs, in contrast, can be hard and burdensome if they do not serve to advance an overarching discipleship process and keep everyone on the same page. Many Church education ministries “never looked at each weekly program in light of a simple discipleship process. In fact, there is no process. There is no clear beginning and no clear end. There is only a bunch of programs.”<sup>45</sup> This is not news to most ministers. Ministers, consciously or unconsciously, seek a simple solution for how best to disciple the people who attend the local congregation. Often the search for a simple solution to discipleship becomes a source of frustration for a busy minister swimming in

---

42. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 47.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 35.

45. Ibid., 23.

church programs “because he knows the problem exists. He and his staff are just running programs. He committed to ministry to make disciples, and he has become a program manager.”<sup>46</sup> To have a simple church, the discipleship process must be simple. “This process must be clear. It must move people toward maturity. It must be integrated fully into your church, and you must get rid of the clutter around it.”<sup>47</sup> It is not easy to make this happen and the structure of how disciples of Christ engage in the experiments of practicing the way of Jesus will look different for different churches. Yet church leaders must strive to design and implement simple processes for discipleship. In *Punk Monk*, Andy Freeman speaks for many ministers when he asserts “I’m tired of strategies, of keys to growth or models of building church. I’m tired because usually they don’t work. I’m tired because they put me and others in boxes. I’m tired most of all because they’re centered on us and not on Christ.”<sup>48</sup>

Scandrette challenges disciples to renegotiate what happens when Christians gather together because “what we choose to do when we gather says a lot about what we value and how we believe transformation happens.”<sup>49</sup> Scandrette urges that the disciples of Christ gathering should look more like a work in progress, messy paint splashed studio where the art is created, rather than velvet roped-off section of a pristine museum guarding the completed masterpieces of artwork. Or put another way, Scandrette also

---

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., 26.

48. Andy Freeman and Pete Greig, *Punk Monk: New Monasticism and the Ancient Art of Breathing*. (Lottbridge Eastbourne, England: Survivor, 2007), 218.

49. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 42.

uses a sports analogy that our gatherings should be more like an athlete's countless hours in the practice gym as opposed to the drama of a championship game day performance in front of a crowd of cheering spectators. Scandrette suggests three ways that disciples need to renegotiate our contracts with one another to value transformation in our gatherings. "First, we may need to renegotiate our contract of participation—from being spectators to participants."<sup>50</sup> "Second, we may need to renegotiate our contract of community—shifting from a posture of passive consumers to committed contributors."<sup>51</sup> "Third, we may need to renegotiate our contract of leadership—from service provider to practitioner or guide. Leaders need to begin to see themselves not just as hosts, caregivers or communicators, but also as initiators and coaches who invite people into acts of obedience."<sup>52</sup>

Scandrette, Willard, and Harris are keenly concerned with a simple call to be centered on Christ and practicing the way of Jesus. Before reading Scandrette, I was first impacted by the teaching of Randy Harris in his book *Living Jesus: Doing What Jesus Says in the Sermon on the Mount*.<sup>53</sup> In *Living Jesus* Harris makes a compelling argument that the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is meant to be lived out, just as Scandrette and Willard propose elsewhere in their writing. Harris points out that at the close of the Sermon on the Mount, "Jesus says, 'The wise person is the one who hears

---

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid. 43. Scandrette notes that "in the documents of the earliest disciples, a leader was someone who lived in the present reality of God's kingdom and was able to teach others, by word and deed, how to practice the Way (Hebrews 13:7)."

53. Randy Harris and Greg Taylor. *Living Jesus: Doing What Jesus Says in the Sermon on the Mount*. Kindle Edition. Abilene, TX: Leafwood, 2012.

these sayings of mine and puts them into practice.’ . . . The most devastatingly bad misreading of the sermon is to think that this is a life no one can live. Jesus is trying in this sermon to be as practical and as realistic as he can about how life ought to be lived.”<sup>54</sup> Jesus is not attempting to frighten or shame his disciples. Rather Jesus is establishing a model for us. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus calls the crowd to a way of life that can be lived. Harris observes that Christians generally have not read the sermon that way. Harris says too often we read passages from the Sermon on the Mount, and our reaction is “‘Oh boy, I don’t think I could ever do that.’ And Jesus says, ‘Wisdom is found in hearing this and doing it, and foolishness is found in hearing this and not doing it.’ This sermon is not simply meant to be understood. This sermon is to be lived. It’s to be practiced.”<sup>55</sup> Scandrette points out that the final parable in the Sermon on the Mount teaches that “through shared practices of obedience we can know the truth of what Jesus taught about the reality of God’s kingdom. In the well-known parable of the wise and foolish builders, Jesus makes the point clear that putting the teachings into practice is not merely an option—it is the difference between safety and destruction (Matt 7:24-27).”<sup>56</sup>

It seems to be clear that true discipleship teaches new Christians how to mature as an apprentice of Jesus Christ within a Christian community of faith. “No person is born a Christian. He is brought to faith by his experiences with or within the community of Christian faith.”<sup>57</sup> John Westerhoff writes, “Someone has said that Christianity is not

---

54. Ibid., Kindle Edition Locations 174-77.

55. Ibid., Kindle Edition Locations 180-82.

56. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 18.

57. John H. Westerhoff III, *Values for Tomorrow’s Children: An Alternative Future for Education in the Church* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970), 54.



taught so much as caught.”<sup>58</sup> Discipleship is more than just classroom Sunday school-type religious education. “Somewhere along the way we have forgotten that the communication of faith takes place in ways that can rightly be identified as education, but not necessarily as classroom instruction.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore churches should engage the discipleship process not only by way of Sunday morning Bible classes or gospel meetings, which tend to focus on a transfer of knowledge, but in ways of teaching people to practice the ways of Jesus by engaging congregational members in a lifelong process of discipleship. Scandrette believes that “we need to recover a sense of immediacy and action in our spiritual practices. Perhaps what we need is a path for discipleship that is more like a karate studio than a college lecture hall.”<sup>60</sup>

The Christian community is called to be active in the world, to be involved in God’s mission. His kingdom’s arrival calls Christians to live out their decision to become disciples of Jesus as they practice worship through service to others. The church’s mission is to bring heaven to earth by proclaiming God's gracious act of salvation. However, the church must be careful not to get caught up to think we earn our faith through our deeds. There must be a balance between doing and being. So far it seems the balance is completely shifted toward the church as just sitting and being a place where disciples meet together for support for one another. The church must be

---

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 55.

60. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 14.

active in serving the world by loving the poor, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting those imprisoned and oppressed.

The church also has a responsibility to serve the members of their congregation by providing environments for these types of formalized group discipleship experiments that will serve as a type of intentional Christian catechesis. Richard J. Reichert proposes that discipleship is the lynchpin in discussing the need to develop an effective catechetical process.<sup>61</sup> He proposes that there are three distinct aspects of catechesis of discipleship: “catechesis as encounter; catechesis as apprenticeship; and catechesis as initiation.”<sup>62</sup> A new disciple must first encounter Jesus, and the church should provide as many opportunities as possible for this to happen. “Jesus was the master catechist. He helped people see, recognize and respond to God’s presence in their daily lives.”<sup>63</sup> After one meets Jesus, the master catechist, there should be a commitment made to discipleship that leads to apprenticeship. “Discipleship as apprenticeship focuses on gradually helping the individual acquire the knowledge and skills to carry out the tasks of discipleship.”<sup>64</sup> “Apprenticeship, in turn, needs to take place within and is oriented toward the community—its life of fellowship, ritual celebration, and mission.”<sup>65</sup>

---

61. Richard J. Reichert, *Renewing Catechetical Ministry* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 31.

62. *Ibid.*, 42.

63. Maureen Gallagher, *The Art of Catechesis: What You Need to Be, Know and Do* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 17.

64. Richard J. Reichert, *Renewing Catechetical Ministry* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 40.

65. *Ibid.*, 42.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

Based upon the stated purpose of the proposed intervention, I chose a qualitative approach as the appropriate methodology. A qualitative approach allowed me to focus on providing thick, rich descriptions of the context, as well as the process and results of the intervention. Sensing helps define qualitative research when he states,

Qualitative research systematically seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative research is grounded in the social world of experience and seeks to make sense of lived experience. Qualitative researchers, then, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth.<sup>1</sup>

The constraints of the intervention, such as the location, the time frame, the purposefully selected participants, and the Scriptures it was built upon, provided the boundaries necessary for using a qualitative approach as well.

Participatory action research is a subcategory of qualitative research. Sensing states “within the human systems and relational constructs of research, I propose that D.Min projects are a type of participatory action research that introduces an intervention in order to provide ministerial leadership for the transformation of the organization.”<sup>2</sup> My D.Min project was participatory action research because the premise of the project was to

---

1. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 57.

2. Ibid., 58.

encourage participants to actively engage in practicing the ways of Jesus in our Jesus Dojo as opposed to learning content as they would in a lecture hall. We learned together as a group, and I acted as a facilitator and collaborator. I attempted to minimize any status and power differences between me as researcher and the participants, while still remaining authentic.

### **Overview of the Format of the Project Intervention**

For the intervention, I formed a Jesus Dojo with the Wednesday night community group during the 2017 spring semester. The main idea for this ministry intervention was borrowed from an assignment that Earl Lavender gives students who are enrolled in his “Faith and Culture” class at Lipscomb University.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Lavender borrowed the idea of this assignment from Mark Scandrette and his book *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love*.<sup>4</sup> In his book, Scandrette urges community groups to experiment with practicing the ways of Jesus. Scandrette calls these types of community groups a Jesus Dojo.<sup>5</sup> The word “dojo” is Japanese and means “place of the way.” Usually, the word dojo is used as the term for a training arena for martial arts. Scandrette encourages Christians to reimagine their community groups as a dojo to practice the ways of Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

Scandrette presents guidelines for a community group seeking to experiment with

---

3. Earl Lavender, “Faith and Culture: Life Lab Experiment” (Faith and Culture course assignment at Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN, fall semester, 2015).

4. Mark Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

the concept of being a Jesus dojo and recommends members understand that it is truly an experiment.<sup>7</sup> Our Jesus dojo experiments were for an agreed-upon period where members sought to live out a way of life derived from the life and teaching of Jesus. Being a part of the Jesus dojo required community group members to enter a deeper level of engagement and expected them to actually attempt the experiments. The experiments were supposed to be connected to needs in the larger community or within the community group itself. The experiments were intended to lead the members of the community group to reflect on how these experiences formed their spiritual journey toward God. At the end of the eight weeks, the members could reflect on what they learned so that they were able to assess if practicing the ways of Jesus in the Jesus dojo experiments were able to change how they live their everyday lives.

Many of Scandrette's experimental projects come from the Sermon on the Mount. For this ministry intervention, my project was based on Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5-7. See Appendices B, C, and D for details about the practices that the participants were invited to engage in during the three mini-experiments in weeks two through seven. For example, in Matthew 6:33, Jesus tells us to "seek first the Kingdom of God" and trust that God will provide all that we need. Gregory A. Boyd wrote in *Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now* that he had "become convinced that remaining aware of God's presence is the single most important task in the life of every follower of Jesus."<sup>8</sup> Boyd is "convinced this challenge is implied in our commitment to surrender our life to Christ,

---

7. Ibid.

8. Gregory A. Boyd. *Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.), 15.

for the only real life we have to surrender to him is the one we live each moment.”<sup>9</sup> Boyd reflects upon the work of three Christian writers as he writes, Brother Lawrence, Jean-Pierre de Caussade, and Frank Laubach, whom he considers masters of experiencing God’s presence. Boyd supplies several different exercises such as practicing being in the presence of God right after waking up in the morning. Many of Boyd’s exercises proved to be useful as experiments within our Jesus dojo group.

The ministry intervention took place over the course of eight weeks and utilized the Wednesday night community group time in UCM. During the first week of the intervention, I first introduced the concept of a Jesus Dojo and asked for everyone interested to commit to being a part of the Jesus Dojo. Following this discussion, I introduced three mini-experiments, each of which lasted two weeks. These three mini-experiments came from different teachings of Jesus within the Sermon on the Mount. These three mini-experiments covered the topics of “Deep Integrity and Examen” from Matthew 5:33-37, “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” from Matthew 5:38-42, and “Practicing the Presence of God” from Matthew 6:33.<sup>10</sup> The exercises for “Deep Integrity and Examen” and “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” were influenced by Randy Harris’s book *Living Jesus: Doing What Jesus Says in the Sermon on the Mount*<sup>11</sup> and the neo-monastic community *Monk Warriors*<sup>12</sup> which Harris founded. The exercises for “Practicing the Presence of God” were influenced by Gregory Boyd’s book

---

9. Ibid.

10. See appendix B, C, D for details about each of the three mini-experiments.

11. Randy Harris and Greg Taylor. *Living Jesus*.

12. See the Monk Warriors Webpage at <https://monkwarriors.wordpress.com>

*Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now*.<sup>13</sup> I provided the participants with suggestions about how they could practice the way of Jesus, but ultimately it was up to the participants to decide how they chose to experiment with the topic the group studied together.<sup>14</sup> Each Wednesday night during the implementation of the experiment, the group met with me to discuss and reflect upon their experiences with the current experiment. The members were asked to journal about their experiences of the previous week during those meetings. The journals served as artifacts for data collection as well as an opportunity for the students to reflect on their experiences.<sup>15</sup>

Each week the group began with the practice of *lectio divina* together. For the introductory week, the group read Matthew 7:24-29, which is the close of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus tells the disciples that everyone then who hears his words and does them will be like the wise man and those who do not will be like the foolish man. For weeks 2 and 3, the group began with Matthew 5:33-37 where Jesus teaches about oaths and integrity. At the start of sessions 4 and 5 for the *lectio divina* passage, the group used Matthew 5:38-42, where Jesus teaches disciples to go the extra mile and not refuse the one who wants to borrow from them. To begin week 6 and 7 the group used Matthew 6: 25-34, where Jesus teaches the disciples to seek first the kingdom of God. To conclude in week 8, the group returned to read Matthew 7:24-29 for the *lectio divina* passage.

Since the Wednesday night college group is an open group model where new college students can join at any time, the participants were organized in what Scandrette

---

13. Boyd, *Present Perfect*.

14. See appendices B, C, D for the suggestions for each week.

15. See appendix E for the journal prompts.

names an “open-invitation project.”<sup>16</sup> I utilized Scandrette’s model of a short-term experiment as an open-invitation project as opposed to what Scandrette calls a long-term group-initiated experiment. Scandrette expects groups to begin with short-term open-invitation experiments before progressing onto long-term experiments.<sup>17</sup> The short-term open-invitation project also fit the UCM college ministry best at the time and allowed for new college students to enter the group during the intervention.

In Scandrette’s example of an open-invitation project, each week they identified one or two tangible experiments based on a theme from the teachings of Jesus and then challenged each other to try the experiments for one week. After consulting with Randy Harris about Scandrette’s model of open-invitation groups and also Harris’s own work with college students who are a part of the Monk Warriors group, I chose to use a similar model. In our Jesus Dojo all participants practiced the same theme based on a specific passage from the Sermon on the Mount. I provided the participants with several different specific opportunities based upon the same theme and encouraged them to choose for themselves which experiments they each committed to.

### **Description of the Participants**

I attempted to get at least six college students to commit to the entire process. I had seventeen different college students who signed the informed consent form and agreed to participate in at least one of the eight Jesus Dojo sessions. Twelve of these students participated in the majority of the Jesus Dojo sessions. These twelve were engaged in the Jesus Dojo experiments; therefore, I think I had good participation from

---

16. Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 33.

17. *Ibid.*, 34.



the UCM students. Participants were introduced to the project in week 1 and then had the choice to participate in the project. If participants wanted to volunteer to be involved in the project, they were asked to sign an informed consent form at the beginning of session two.<sup>18</sup> If they were not present for session 2, then they signed the form later. This project used purposeful sampling to “select people who have awareness of the situation and meet the criteria and attributes that are essential to your research.”<sup>19</sup> The criteria for the purposeful selection was for the participants to be college age students who are over eighteen years old. They did not have to be previously associated with the college ministry at University Church of Christ. The people who were invited to participate are the people who fit within the normal demographic to which I was supposed to minister and interact with because of my position as the college minister for UCM. By choosing to use purposeful selection, I was fulfilling the routine duties of my job. The project was an open invitation to our entire college ministry at University Church of Christ. Since we met on campus at the University of Alabama on Wednesday nights, we had the potential for some college students to join our group who do not regularly attend University Church of Christ on Sundays. We did have five such guests, but they were not included in the results since they each visited only once.

Initially, I started with the assumption that all participants would already be baptized and self-identify as Christian. I believe these five guests would have considered themselves already Christian, so they fit well into the flow of the sessions and would have been able to engage in the experiments if they had so chosen. It is true that since we

---

18. See appendix A for the informed consent form.

19. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 83.

met in a public room in the student center on the campus of the University of Alabama, a student could have attended who did not self-identify as Christian. We would have welcomed such a seeker type person into the group and encouraged to try the experiments also. However, no such seeker type people attended the sessions, so we remained within the expected participant parameters for this project.

In week two participants had the opportunity to sign a covenant document and an informed consent document that explained the commitments of the experiments.<sup>20</sup> Participants had the option to quit at any time. Participants also had an opportunity to join the experiment at any time. Since we began new experiments in weeks four and six, I encouraged students to make use of this natural time to add new college students who would like to participate. Ideally, the entire group of participants would have been present for all eight sessions, yet retaining the opportunity to add participants at any time kept the spirit of the short-term open-invitation experiments that Scandrette refers to.

### **Evaluation Methodology**

#### **Data Collection**

For the insider evaluation, I gathered weekly journal reflections from the student participants.<sup>21</sup> For the outsider evaluation, I had Earl Lavender from Lipscomb University serve as an independent expert. Lavender attended our seventh session for his field observation on March 1, 2017. Lavender had the opportunity to observe a session and talk with the participants, which aided him in his ability to thoroughly evaluate the Jesus Dojo process.

---

20. See appendix A for the informed consent form.

21. See Appendix E for the journal prompts.

For the researcher evaluation, I took brief field notes during each session. For the field notes I used a two-column method in which I recorded my personal reflections during the session in one column and my field notes during the session in the other column. See appendix G for sample blank protocol sheets used for field notes. The personal reflection column was a place to record my own impressions about what was happening. The field note column was for recording notes about what was happening. However, because I was engaged in leading the discussion throughout the eight sessions, I correctly anticipated that those field notes would be incomplete. Therefore, I video-recorded each session and went back and took field notes from the video recording and combined them with the field notes that were taken during each session. I also used the same two-column method for collecting field notes while watching the video in which I recorded my personal reflections during the sessions in one column and my field notes during the sessions in the other column. Each time I viewed the video recording less than two hours after each session, the same night it was recorded. The video recordings were destroyed after the field notes were gathered. My video recordings were limited because I recorded in low definition video from a distance because I attempted not to capture the participants' faces in the video recordings to preserve the participants' anonymity. Therefore, I mostly missed gestures and facial expressions that may have been captured with a different video recording setup.<sup>22</sup>

Participants' names were not linked to any documents, and any use of this material in reports, publications, or presentations will never be associated with the

---

<sup>22</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 186.

participants in this study without permission. Participants' names were removed from the journals and pseudonyms were used for this paper. No one other than the researchers associated with this project had access to the raw data. The data was also protected by being stored on my private, password-protected computer, which was stored in my private residence or private office behind two locked doors.

### Data Analysis

Data triangulation was accomplished by researcher evaluation, insider evaluations, and outsider evaluation.<sup>23</sup> I used Dedoose software to code my data.<sup>24</sup> After examining the results I found three themes emerged from the data sources: First, *The Challenges Participants Faced in Experiments*, second, *Evidence of Spiritual Growth in the Participants Due to the Experiments*, third, *Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments*.

These three codes emerged after I carefully studied all the data. As I read through the data I began grouping similar comments and then used the terminology of “experiments” as the main describer of what the participants were engaging with. The way I am using the term “experiments” is an abbreviated way of what Scandrette referred to about how participants in a Jesus Dojo “practice the ways of Jesus.” I understand the way Scandrette uses the term of “experimenting in practicing the ways of Jesus” as equivalent to the way Dallas Willard uses the term “discipleship” or “apprenticeship” to Jesus Christ.

---

23. Ibid., 75.

24. Dedoose Version 7.6.21, web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data (2018). Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC [www.dedoose.com](http://www.dedoose.com).

The word “experiments” was used to keep the codes shorter and more manageable when I wrote about each code. A more detailed description of each code could be as follows: First, “Challenges Faced by Participants in the Discipleship Experiments” based upon Jesus’ teaching on "Deep Integrity and Examen" from Matthew 5:33-37, "Go The Extra Mile" from Matthew 5:38-42, and "Staying Awake to God's Presence" from Matthew 6:33. Second, Evidence of Spiritual Growth in the Participants Due to the Discipleship Experiments based upon Jesus’ teaching on "Deep Integrity and Examen" from Matthew 5:33-37, "Go The Extra Mile" from Matthew 5:38-42, and "Staying Awake to God's Presence" from Matthew 6:33. Third, Evidence of Participants Need for the Discipleship Experiments based upon Jesus’ teaching on "Deep Integrity and Examen" from Matthew 5:33-37, "Go The Extra Mile" from Matthew 5:38-42, and "Staying Awake to God's Presence" from Matthew 6:33.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this project sought to examine the implementation of a Jesus Dojo within a purposely selected group of college students. A qualitative approach was identified as the appropriate methodology for evaluating the Jesus Dojo because it provided the framework for me to examine in depth the activities and reflections of college students participating with the purpose of seeking to understand more about their experiences. The participants were purposely selected from existing members of UCM who were willing to participate. Students participated in the Jesus dojo for eight sessions, in which they were given the opportunity to practice three different teachings of Jesus taken from the Sermon on the Mount.

Qualitative data was gathered from each session using field notes from researcher

evaluation, the participants' own journal reflections, and an independent expert's evaluation. My data was coded in Dedoose and analyzed for emergent themes based upon the literature and my own experience using a triangulation method. Several categories emerged from this data that were then grouped into three main themes: *The Challenges Participants Faced in Experiments*, *Evidence of Spiritual Growth in the Participants Due to the Experiments*, and *Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments*. These themes and their subcategories will be discussed in the following chapter with evidence from the data to support each theme.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND RESULTS

I believe the Jesus Dojo was a positive life-giving experience for the participants. Upon inspecting the results, three themes surfaced from the data sources: First, *The Challenges Participants Faced in Experiments*, second, *Evidence of Spiritual Growth in the Participants Due to the Experiments*, third, *Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments*.

#### **Challenges Faced by Participants in the Experiments**

Participants faced two main challenges when engaging in the Jesus Dojo experiments: first, the Challenge of Consistent Completion, and second, the Challenge of Remembering.

#### **Challenge of Consistent Completion**

The challenge of consistent completion of the experiments should not be viewed as a complete failure. The very fact they are viewed as experiments or exercises leaves room for simply attempting to engage them as cause for transformation and growth. There were very few instances where participants did not put forth any effort into the experiments. Most of these challenges of consistent completion were due to participants' attempts to engage the experiments and falling short in some way, rather than willfully deciding not to try the experiment.

I found three subcategories under the code challenge of consistent completion.

First, the experiment did not fit the individual person. Second, participants accepted responsibility for the challenges in the experiment. Third, participants demonstrated some level of theological reflection due to the challenges they faced in the experiments.

***Experiment did not fit the individual.***

It should be noted that there were only seven coded entries in the sub category of “the experiment did not fit the individual person.” Usually codes that have more examples are included in the results, but the fact that there were only seven instances in which the participants expressed a sentiment in that the experiments did not fit them in some way indicates that there was widespread acceptance by the participants that they indeed could find experiments that did meaningfully impact them. Here are four examples when participants indicated that the experiments did not fit them.

Jim journaled in his week four response that:

The main focus this week for me was using the ‘Examen’ app and not justifying lateness. Personally, I did not find the app extremely helpful, but the honesty within me compels me to say that I didn’t use it regularly. At the end of the day, it was difficult to add the app into my routine. This isn’t an excuse, but rather an explanation of what I found difficult about using this method to keep my integrity in check.<sup>1</sup>

Ted noted that the effort to be last did not work out well for him. Ted journaled in his week five response that “Sometimes my attempt at being last disrupted the traffic flow of the hallway / highway, and caused more problems in the long run.”<sup>2</sup>

Jason pointed out that his personality did not fit well with the experiment to pray with someone. Jason journaled in week four that “I kind of failed at the praying exercise.

---

1. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 5-7, Session 3 – February 8, 2017.

2. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Line 81, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.



I just never really found a good opportunity to go for it. I am more reserved, so I really have to push myself to do something like that out of character. So that was not really a success for me.”<sup>3</sup>

In week eight, in response to one of the questions that asked participants to reflect upon all of the Jesus dojo experiments, Ted noted the journaling process did not seem to fit him. But Ted also immediately noted that overall, he had few complaints. Ted journaled, “What I didn’t like about the Jesus dojo was probably having to write journals like it’s middle school English (and even this wasn’t too bad to warrant actually dislikedness). Overall, there’s not much I could complain about, and I’d be trying to force something otherwise.”<sup>4</sup>

I observed an instance when participants indicated the experiments did not fit them in my field notes: Davis pointed out that “I still think that not saying maybe doesn’t mean that you can’t think, you know? I think you can say I would like to delay deciding. I don’t think this is saying you must immediately decide every opportunity that is given you.” I noted that Davis seemed a little hesitant and defensive when making his point.<sup>5</sup>

### *Accepted responsibility for the challenge.*

Most of the time participants were quick to take responsibility for their lack of consistent completion of the experiments. The following quotations are a selection from the participants’ journals that demonstrate their accepting responsibility for not

---

3. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 63, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

4. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Lines 5-7, Session 8 – March 8 2017.

5. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 115-120, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

consistently completing the experiments:

In week three journals Suja noted that “I haven’t said the Saint Ignatius Prayer of Examen once. I haven’t prayed much besides a rolling ‘thank you and help me do better’ every night.”<sup>6</sup> In another week three journal Mark bravely owned up to a failure of integrity when he wrote “I had trouble with lying this week. Right after I lied, I felt horrible but I didn’t tell the truth right after... I am definitely going to focus on 1. Telling the truth and 2. If I do lie I will turn right around and tell the truth. I am going to continue saying Yes or No and not say maybe.”<sup>7</sup>

In her week four journal Emma took responsibility for her lack of consistent completion when she noted that “It was ok for the most part. I still had problems being late places. Mostly class because it has been an exhausting week. I tried to keep what I chose to do in mind and it helped me stay focused on keeping my integrity in check.”<sup>8</sup>

Tom demonstrated an awareness of himself and took responsibility for his lack on consistent completion of “The Lowest Position” experiment although he had done better consistently completing this same experiment the previous week. Tom wrote in his week six journal entry that “This week, I think I didn’t do as good of a job of taking the lowest position because I can’t really recall when I consciously went out of my way to let someone go before me or have the better spot.”<sup>9</sup>

---

6. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 61-62, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

7. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 134-135, 139, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

8. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 47-48, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

9. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Lines 20, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

Haley took responsibility for her actions in her week eight journal when she noted in her week eight journal entry that “The hardest experiment came during the integrity weeks. It was difficult to always hold myself accountable and always do the right thing.”<sup>10</sup>

In my field notes I observed Ava taking responsibility for her challenges of completion. During the week three session regarding the integrity experiment to not say “maybe” for a week, but to literally let your yes be yes, and no be no, Ava said that:

I thought I was going to do much better than I actually did. Saturday, I realized I had double booked myself. I don’t normally do that, to my knowledge, and I had to choose one or the other and I was breaking my integrity either way. So, I will try not to double book next week. And I choose also not to speed and I found it really easy once I had already sped and I had given myself a little tally, to keep speeding. So, I was like, well I already have a Tally, but that doesn’t help my integrity. I was like ‘I have already started speeding, I might as well continue.’<sup>11</sup>

Here I made a special note in my field notes that it was obvious Ava was making this last statement with irony and was making fun of herself. She clearly was giving this example as something to be improved upon and was taking responsibility for the challenge she incurred.

In my field notes I observed Jason taking responsibility for not doing well with the examen portion of the integrity experiment when he said, “I tried to do this Examen thing and I failed at it. I had a hard time reviewing the day with gratitude. I had a paper due on Monday and I was dreading it all weekend so I was just, there was no gratitude.

---

10. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 151, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

11. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 101–103. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

And I didn't look toward tomorrow very well either.”<sup>12</sup>

Also in session three in my field notes, I noticed Tom take responsibility for his challenges to consistently complete parts of the integrity experiment. Tom said:

I became very aware of telling people that I will be there in five minutes. And I became very aware for how far I had to extend that. That and I did notice that, because I did not do a good job with the Examen, but I did notice a difference in the days that I did it and the days that I did not. Because I had a more objective not so negative view when I did do it. But I was bad because I usually read before I go to sleep and it knocks me out. I should have done the Examen before that before I am tired. So, I didn't do a good job at that.<sup>13</sup>

In my field notes for the week four session I recorded Davis taking responsibility for the integrity experiment of not being late, and then if you are late to make an excuse. David said, “I noticed that I always have an excuse as to why I am late.”<sup>14</sup> Davis went on to tell a lengthy story about when he was late this weekend and how he wanted so badly to give an excuse as to why he was late, but he did not make an excuse. Davis noted that “It killed me. Oh man, I wanted to give an excuse so bad. I feel so justified, but you know if I had just left earlier. It is hard.”<sup>15</sup>

In session five about deep integrity and examen, there was an experiment that no one had yet talked about. It was derived from experimenting with integrity by not multitasking when we are around others. One of the experiments was to ask someone the simple question “Really?” when someone says they were doing fine and see what would happen. I asked the group if anyone had attempted the “Really?” experiment and Haley

---

12. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 126–127. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

13. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 131–133. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

14. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Line 178. Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

15. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Line 178. Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

replied “I meant to but...well one time I did think about it, but I thought this probably was not the person I should ask because I didn’t know him that well. It would be kind of weird.”<sup>16</sup> This demonstrates Haley thought of the experiment yet deemed it a challenge to complete in that specific instance. Yet she took responsibility for not completing it.

***Theological reflection due to challenges.***

Chris demonstrates some theological reflection due to the challenges of the experiments in this week three journal when he writes:

Alright, I said ‘maybe’ more than a couple of times but I realized when I said it and changed my answer to either yes or no. I believe I was late to a couple of meeting or such activities and I did not make any excuses. The hardest or more difficult part about the experiment was becoming aware of God’s presence throughout a typical day. I usually focus on school and practice the most and therefore my thoughts were predominantly occupied by those matters.<sup>17</sup>

Ava exhibited thoughtful engagement with the experiment and demonstrated some theological reflection even though she identified her own efforts as a lack of consistent completion. Ava journaled in week five that

The experiment was interesting. My roommates were/are really putting me to the test, and it’s rather frustrating. I’m having a hard time knowing when to be the lowest and when to call people out. So I’ve been trying to take Jesus’ approach to dealing with conflict, while doing my best to be loving. The way I did it is washing their dishes, and they typically have a small pile there at bedtime. I don’t do it every night, but I have been trying to do them when I have time. I have definitely failed when discussing them to other people, sometimes out of an honest desire of wanting to know what to do, and other times out of anger. I need to work more on that.<sup>18</sup>

---

16. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 282–286. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

17. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 83-84, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

18. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Lines 169-172, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

Ryan displayed theological reflection in his week seven journal entry when responding to the journal question regarding the experiment to “Stay Awake to God’s Presence.” Ryan wrote:

I really struggled with this challenge but recognizing that is a success for me. Prior to this, I seldom took time to think about God during my daily activities. This isn’t because I was turning my back on Him or anything; I have a very bad habit of compartmentalizing. Even though I struggled to break this habit, I found myself increasingly more aware of this. I saw myself seeing God’s ‘handiwork’ more regularly throughout the week and recognizing how awesome our God truly is.<sup>19</sup>

Jessica showed a theological reflection and did not shy away from taking responsibility for her lack of consistent completion of the week seven experiments. Jessica wrote:

I had attempted to experiment with doing “Observing you Mind and Heart” and “Volunteer for the Worst Sinner Award.” I find myself subconsciously judging others a lot and would like to reverse that habit by humbling myself and seeing others as people Jesus also died for. Last weekend when I went to an Ultimate Frisbee tournament to play against other colleges, I realized I has started thinking negative thoughts/judging other players during competition. It was easy to do this because I didn’t personally know these girls and we were trying to win against them, so my thoughts turned to thinking I am better than them or thinking less of them. This was totally not the right attitude to have and I didn’t catch myself having this attitude until the second day of the tournament. Many of my other teammates have great sportsmanship and positive attitudes while playing, so I hope to channel a more uplifting spirit during games in the future.<sup>20</sup>

In the week eight journals Tom noted a challenge of the “Thinking in Terms of We” experiment in his journal when he wrote “I also tried to think in terms of ‘We’ again, but I do not think I was as successful this week. Many times, ‘what would you

---

19. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 102-106, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

20. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1”, Lines 118-121, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

have me do?’ was changed to ‘will you help me do this?’ I feel like I flattened what was a potential conversation into a list of wishes.”<sup>21</sup> I also noted Tom discussing this same challenge in my field notes. I recorded that “Tom talked about the ‘Thinking in Terms of We’ and said that he feels like he has taken a step back and sometimes asks God for what he wants, more than asks for guidance or direction.”<sup>22</sup> This demonstrates Tom was engaged in reflecting theologically upon the challenges he faced in the experiments.

### Challenge of Remembering

The second main category under the Challenge of Consistency Completion was the Challenge of Remembering the experiment. I encouraged the participants to find a comfortable way to insert reminders into their daily lives about the Jesus Dojo experiments. Some of the reminder suggestions were to put alarms on their phones, leave sticky notes in strategic locations, or write on their bathroom mirrors with dry-erase markers. Beneath the Challenge to Remember code I also identified a subcategory with twenty-one excerpts because many participants noted that it was a Challenge to Remember, but when they did remember they experienced what I labeled Success When Remembered.

Ryan noted that “One point of failure for me this week was that I was not regular with the ‘Daily Examen’ activity. This was mainly due to general forgetfulness/carelessness, but is something to change for the better this coming week.”<sup>23</sup>

---

21. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8”, Lines 70-71, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

22. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8”, Line 493. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

23. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 187-189, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

Although said he had trouble remembering the daily examen activity, he was quick to call out Davis on UCM's group text message. Davis journaled this about his challenge to remember the experiment "It was difficult to remember the experiment at times. In out campus ministry's group message, I actually responded to an invitation to go bowling by saying maybe, at which point I was promptly called out by my peers."<sup>24</sup> Davis went on to note that "My biggest issue last week was not willingness to participate, but rather simply remembering the challenge on a daily basis. A good way to combat this might be to set and alarm on my phone, or to put sticky notes/other reminders around my room, office, etc."<sup>25</sup>

Tom showed a mature self-reflection when confronted with the challenge of forgetting the experiment with examen. Tom wrote in his week four journal:

I think I did well with keeping my integrity this week. I can't think of any points when I lied or was late. However, I did a terrible job with the Examen. A few nights, I started and fell asleep, and other nights, I just skipped it. I guess not doing the Examen is an example of me not having integrity since I said I would do it. I also think that I didn't have too many breaks in my integrity because this was a relatively easy week. If I gave my word to do something that was trying, I'm not sure how well I would have kept my word because I didn't do a good job of keeping this experiment on my mind.<sup>26</sup>

Chris journaled a similar remark when he wrote "The hardest thing about this experiment was remembering to do it on a daily basis. I'm a very forgetful person and most of the time this past week I didn't remember about the experiment."<sup>27</sup> In the same

---

24. In "Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1" Lines 207-208, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

25. In "Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1" Lines 215-216, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

26. In "Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8" Lines 36-40, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

27. In "Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22" Lines 108-109, Session 6 – February



journal entry Chris went on to write, “One thing that I was planning on doing but completely forgot about was the praying with a non-UCM challenge. I was kind of looking forward to this but with lots of other things going on, I just forgot. This is probably a sign that I should put a little more thought and time into my faith life.”<sup>28</sup>

Similarly Ted boldly admitted his challenge to remember in his week seven journal when he wrote, “I will be completely honest, I forgot to practice the experiment for the week. Midterms were on Thursday, and I rarely had time for anything else besides studying (including sleep).”<sup>29</sup>

Davis summarized the Challenge to Remember well in an excerpt from his final week eight journal when he wrote, “The hardest to implement was setting physical reminders. Setting the reminders themselves is easy enough, but setting effective reminders proved to be more difficult. I got too used to some of them, or sometimes I would encounter them at inopportune times; both of these conditions caused the reminders to lose their effect.”<sup>30</sup>

In my field notes I recorded Davis discussing this topic with the group after he had completed his journal entry. Davis told the group, “I was surprised about how difficult it was to set effective reminders. Because if you set it on your phone, like we talked about, you can just silence it and move on. Sticky notes we get used to. It’s

---

8, 2017.

28. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Lines 110-111, Session 6 – February 8, 2017.

29. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 162-163, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

30. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Lines 228-230, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

impressive how difficult it is to remind myself about something effectively.”<sup>31</sup>

I encouraged the group to set up reminders for themselves with sticky notes or setting phone alarms. Haley responded with the example that she put a sticky note on her mirror that said, “Yes or No” to remind to be intentional about how she made decisions.<sup>32</sup> In another instance I asked the group if anyone had found any creative reminder ideas, and Davis said he set an alarm for 8am that said Jesus Dojo which helped remind him. Haley said she was still using her post-it note. Davis agreed with Haley and said he likes post-it notes too, especially in his car. I mentioned that I like to use a dry-erase marker on the bathroom mirror to write reminders to myself.<sup>33</sup>

In the fifth session Suja and Ryan both shared similar comments about how they noticed that they were challenged to stay present and not multitask when they were talking on the phone with their little brothers from home. “Suja talked about how when her little brother called her on the phone it was difficult to give him her full attention and not multitask. Her little brother was talking about what everyone was having for dinner at their house and it was not an interesting conversation so she caught herself doing homework and not listening.”<sup>34</sup> From the field notes “Ryan said he also did not do well with the multitasking experiment this week. He said that he just forgot about that one before coming back to group this week. He told a similar story to Suja about struggling to

---

31. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 561–562. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

32. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 174–177. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

33. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 369–373. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

34. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 317–319. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

listen to his little brother on the phone.”<sup>35</sup>

In the seventh session in my field notes I recorded Davis commenting on the challenge he experienced remembering the experiment to be *Aware of God’s Presence Before You Get Out Of Bed*. “Davis said ‘I tried it. It was kind of sporadic. I didn’t really set a reminder because I guess it would be on my ceiling. Some days I would remember, some days I wouldn’t. And then if I didn’t remember when I was in bed I would usually remember when I was in the shower or something. It was always the best when I remembered it while I was in bed because that really was the first moment. I really might try to put something on my ceiling.’”<sup>36</sup>

Right after that in the seventh session I recorded in my field notes Ryan and Davis, discussing the challenge of the *Strategically Placed Reminders* experiment, which was to help the participants remain awake to God’s presence. Regarding *Strategically Placed Reminders* Ryan said:

I had an alarm on my phone.” Davis agreed with Ryan and said “Yeah I did that as well. But here in the instructions it says move the papers around so that they don’t become wallpaper, that sort of happened. My alarms just became kind of a drone. Like this morning, it went off and I remember looking at it and immediately swiping because I was just like ‘oh this just comes on.’ I guess I would suggest if you would the move papers around you also need to change the time of the alarm or something.”<sup>37</sup>

Davis also pointed out later in that session that the *Observing Your Mind and Heart* experiment was challenging to remember “because that is the kind that you can’t set a

---

35. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 320–322. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

36. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 480–483. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

37. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 485–489. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

reminder for. You just have to figure out a way to trigger your memory.”<sup>38</sup>

In the eighth and final session I recorded an interesting comment from Tom in which he discussed the challenge to remember and his attempt to combat that challenge.

Tom said:

I did a physical reminder that helped a lot. In the morning, I noticed it because there it was. It wasn't a sticky note because that wasn't really working. So, I took an old church bulletin that I had, and stuck it sticking out of my white board and put a magnet on so that I couldn't miss it. And that worked really well. But still the issue was I felt like I would have the reminder and then like ten seconds later it would be gone.<sup>39</sup>

In response to Tom's comment, Suja pointed out that “Even if you can't remember it very long, but it comes up more (*the awareness of the presence of God*) if you are intentional about it.”<sup>40</sup>

### Success When Remembered

Many of the students struggled with remembering some parts of the experiment. However students also reported they found benefits in the experiments when they did remember. On the week three journal entry Tom wrote that “I feel like my biggest failure this week was with the Examen. I only did it half of the time because I lost motivation towards the end of the day. I feel like it helped me to focus on God and to have an objective and less negative view of my day when I did to it.”<sup>41</sup> Jessica had similar sentiments; she noted “I forgot to think about and pray the Daily Examen except twice. It

---

38. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 499–500. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

39. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 568–571. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

40. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 573–574. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

41. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 38–40, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

was helpful to look back at my day and reflect and find gratitude.”<sup>42</sup>

In week four Davis notes that:

This week went better than the previous week. I was able to remember my commitment to be on time more often, and the few times I broke that commitment, I was able to remember my other commitment not to make any excuses, but rather to own my mistake and simply apologize. I typically try to be on time, so that aspect of the challenge wasn’t new to me, but I always attempt to justify my lateness, so simply apologizing was more challenging.<sup>43</sup>

In week seven Tom journaled, “I noticed that I was aware of God at times when I wasn’t doing anything. However, when I was busy with something, I did a bad job of being aware.”<sup>44</sup> Also in week seven Suja wrote in her journal that “I put my stack of Bibles and Books closer to my bed so I did have that mindset –well, I left them by my bed from the night before’s reading. I did use an item to associate with thinking of God and I only wear one piece of jewelry every day, so I used my engagement ring to remember, and I’m paranoid about bumping the rock out so I check it a LOT and once I told myself to remember God it really worked.”<sup>45</sup>

In week seven Davis recorded in his journal that his attempt to experiment with staying “Aware of God’s love before you get out of bed... was sporadic; somedays I would remember, others I forgot. Sometimes I would attempt to make-up missed time in the shower on days I got up too quickly.”<sup>46</sup> In regard to the same experiment, Haley in

---

42. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Line 83, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

43. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 81-84, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

44. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 10-11, Session 7– March 1, 2017.

45. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 28-31, Session 7– March 1, 2017.

46. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 108,110-111, Session 7–

week eight wrote in her journal that:

This week I attempted to become aware of God's presence before I got out of bed each morning. The first few says I work up and completely forgot to do it. Once I did remember, I struggled to stay awake. Being still and contemplative made it really easy to fall back asleep. I did notice that the days I managed to stay awake seemed to get off to a better start. It was like that little reminder that God loves me and is always with me helped me to make it through the day.<sup>47</sup>

In my field notes for session three I recorded an instance where Haley shared one way she remembered the experiments. At the end of session three I "encouraged the group to set up reminders for themselves with sticky notes or setting phone alarms. Haley responds with example that she put a sticky note on her mirror that said, 'Yes or No' to remind her every time she goes in the bathroom to make intentional decisions."<sup>48</sup>

In my week seven field notes I recorded Davis referencing success when he remembered to practice the experiment 'Aware of God's Presence Before You Get Out Of Bed'. Davis said:

I tried it. It was kind of sporadic. I didn't really set a reminder because I guess it would be on my ceiling. Some days I would remember, some days I wouldn't. And then if I didn't remember when I was in bed I would usually remember when I was in the shower or something. It was always the best when I remembered it while I was in bed because that really was the first moment...I really might try to put something on my ceiling.

### **Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participants Due to the Experiments**

I coded my field notes and participants' journals into four subcategories under the second major heading *Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participants Due to the*

---

March 1, 2017.

47. In "Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8" Lines 182-185, Session 8– March 8, 2017.

48. In "All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8" Lines 180-183. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

*Experiments*. The first code shows that participants had a *Sense of Successful Engagement with Experiments*. The second code demonstrates instances where participants indicate that some sort of *Benefit Received Due to Experiment*. The third code reveals participants' own *Self Reflection Indicating Growth*. The fourth code records participants making their own *Theological Reflections about Growth* they experienced due to their own engagement with the Jesus Dojo experiments.

#### Sense of Successful Engagement with Experiments

In the third week of the Jesus dojo experiments in response to the integrity experiment of saying yes or no rather than saying maybe, Ava recorded her sense of success with the experiment in her journal when she wrote "I don't recall saying "maybe" the whole week! Success."<sup>49</sup> Similarly in week four Jason wrote in his journal that "I didn't say maybe at all this week, so I did well in that aspect."<sup>50</sup> Suja recorded these instances in her week three journal where she had a sense of success with the experiments. "Successes – I haven't been late for classes or for work...Success – I haven't cheated, although I had a quiz to take outside of class and could have, -- but I definitely did not...Success – I have done two of the "she reads truth" devotions."<sup>51</sup>

Mark recorded the following example of a sense of success in completing the experiment in his week three journal. "Last Thursday someone at work asked me to cover for him on a day that I had a lot going on and I had to say no when usually I would have

---

49. In "Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1" Lines 12, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

50. In "Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8" Line 48, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

51. In "Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1" Lines 54,56,58 Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

said maybe and I would try to cancel something else that day.” However, the above example with Mark seems to be an example of sticking too closely to the literal experiment and perhaps not taking into account the spirit of the experiment.<sup>52</sup> Also in the third session Haley recorded the following journal entry, which seems to demonstrate a good understanding of the experiment. Haley wrote, “This week I experimented by only giving yes or no answers again. Since this was the second week I found it easier to do. I still had to give extra thought to each decision through. Every time I was asked to do something or go somewhere, I said “yes” only if I had every intention of keeping that commitment.”<sup>53</sup>

Suja in week five journaled about her sense of success with the experiments. Suja wrote, “I took out the garbage in the dorm and in our bathroom. We normally just sort of wait and see who does it, and it is usually me but I just bit the bullet and went on and did it when it got full. I’ve also been trying to invite a girl from class to do things with me or hang out, even though she’s super enthusiastic and talkative and I’m normally a lot quieter than that.”<sup>54</sup> Also in week six Suja journaled another instance of her sense of success with the experiments: “Going home this weekend, I tried to just go with the flow and not decided how I spent my time. I just did what my family wanted to do.”<sup>55</sup>

---

52. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 54,56,58 Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

53. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Line 52-54, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

54. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Line 148-150, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

55. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 35, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.



In week six Tom recorded an instance of his sense of success with the experiment when he journaled, “I feel like I did a decent job of not multitasking when I was around other people this week.”<sup>56</sup> Also in week six Jason recorded the following in his journal in which he displayed a sense of success with the experiments. Jason wrote:

I think in seeking opportunities to be last was a more successful challenge for me. I kind of took a mentality to not rush and be more patient. I was kind of surprised in my days that there were not more opportunities to be last. I generally try my best to use encouraging words. It is pretty simple with other law students who are stressed out also to just be kind to people and lift them up with encouraging words.<sup>57</sup>

Also, in week six Jessica recorded an instance of his sense of success with the experiment when she journaled, “I didn’t really get to offer more attention in difficult relationships, but I have been willing to listen to my roommates’ complaints and hardships while trying to maintain a positive attitude and not get bogged down by negative rants and such.”<sup>58</sup>

In my Field notes from week seven in regard to the *Observing Your Mind and Heart* experiment, Emma noted a sense of success in her statement:

I tried that and also kind of *Silencing the Accuser*. I had to train somebody this week and he was kind of hard to teach and I was trying to remind myself ‘Remember I was hard to teach’, every time that would come into my mind “oh gosh, he is so hard to teach.” then remember ‘But Emma, you would go home and cry after your first double (work shift) don’t forget that. And then he called me stupid. And it really hurt and I had to stop myself and think ‘It’s his culture, he is from a very strict culture and I should try to walk in his shoes a little bit. It was just really hard, especially when like he was testing me. It was almost a fail, and

---

56. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 24, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

57. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 81-84, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

58. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 97-98, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

almost a triumph. It kind of went back and forth.<sup>59</sup>

In week seven Tom wrote:

I think the thing that I had the most success with this week was thinking in terms of “We”. I had a bit of a difficult week, and I did better than I usually do with asking God for guidance. I feel like the experiment also helped me to not judge others and to be as negative as I can be sometimes. As far as being aware of God’s presence in general goes, I think this experiment made me improve. It was very little progress, but I am glad to see some progress. I noticed that I was aware of God at times when I wasn’t doing anything. However, when I was busy with something, I did a bad job of being aware.<sup>60</sup>

### Benefit Received Due to Experiment

In week three Haley recorded this instance of a benefit received due to an experiment:

I experimented by not saying “maybe” for a week. Every time I was asked if I wanted to do something or go somewhere I forced myself to give yes or no as an answer. This made me put a lot more thought into my answer than I normally would. I also experimented by keeping my commitments to others instead of occasionally backing out. This week I was successful in following through with everything I said yes to. A few times I caught myself wanting to say maybe but I corrected it and gave a definite answer.<sup>61</sup>

In week three Tom journaled about a benefit he received due to the experiment: “I feel like the integrity experiment affected how I made plans in a positive way. I was forced to be honest about how long it would take me to go somewhere. Rather than tell someone ‘I’ll be there in five minutes’ and really taking thirty minutes, I was more up front about it.”<sup>62</sup> Later in the same journal entry Tom wrote about another benefit he

---

59. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 491–495. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

60. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Line 6-8, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

61. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Line 108-110, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

62. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Line 30-31, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

received due to the experiment, “The integrity experiment also helped me in school this week. I didn’t want to go to class without having done the work that was expected of me.”<sup>63</sup> Also in week three Ted journaled about a benefit received due to the daily examen experiment: “I thought it was going well for the most part at the beginning of the experiment. I noticed how much lighter I felt just by seemingly ending the day with the daily examen, a feeling I usually do not get when I feel a ‘connection’ of sorts.”<sup>64</sup>

In session three I recorded my field notes where Tom and I spoke about the same benefit he journaled about due to the integrity experiment:

Tom said ‘I found something very positive with school about this that I didn’t want to show up to class without doing the work that I was expected to do. So, I did a good job, like that was a positive benefit that came from it that I was more prepared for class. So that is something that I am really enjoying with this. I asked Tom ‘So what out of having more integrity caused you to want to be more prepared for class?’ Tom replied, ‘In that, the teacher would be like do this and with the classes that aren’t really about what I want to do, you never do it, I never did and now this week I am doing it.’<sup>65</sup>

In week four Tom journaled about a benefit received due to the integrity experiment “I think I did well with keeping my integrity this week. I can’t think of any points when I lied or was late.”<sup>66</sup> Also in week four Ryan wrote about a benefit received due to the examen experiment: “One of my major successes for this week was that I became more regular with the Examen portion (credits to the app!). This helped me to

---

63. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Line 33, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

64. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Line 126-127, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

65. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 152–158. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

66. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Line 30, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

better recount my day and reflect on all that had happened.”<sup>67</sup> In session four I recorded my field notes of Jim telling about a benefit he received due to the integrity experiments. Jim mentioned that “someone was surprised that I owned up to my lateness as ‘being my fault.’ Jim went on to say that ‘it was a good thing’ referring to having integrity about why he was late and it was noticed by the other person because an excuse was expected.”<sup>68</sup> In my field notes from session four, I recorded Emma talking about a benefit she received due to the integrity experiments:

Emma told a story about when working at a restaurant in town she forgot to put in an appetizer order. She went to them when she realized her mistake and took full ownership. She told them she was the one who forgot to put in their appetizer and she offered to buy it herself for them so they could take it home and eat it there. The people thanked her for her honesty and said just to go ahead and put it on their bill. ‘It worked out to my advantage.’<sup>69</sup>

In week five Ryan journaled about another benefit received due to the service experiment: “One success I had this week was electing to drive some friends to a gathering I hadn't really planned on going to. Initially, I saw it as a sacrifice but, once getting there, it turned out to be really fun. Compared to the dishwashing scenario, I tried to maintain a more positive attitude than I had and it ended up working out better.”<sup>70</sup> Also in week five Ted journaled about a benefit received due to the service experiment. Ted wrote:

Service, I single-handedly scrubbed the toilet, shower, sink counter, and did the dishes once; granted, I had ulterior motives for doing each chore...However, I

---

67. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Line 54-55, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

68. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 185–186. Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

69. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8”, Lines 194–196. Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

70. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15”, Line 71-73, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

believe my win-win attitude would still count as successfulness. For my friendships I actually talked with all of my high school friends at the same time on Monday; It was the first time all five of us were talking all together since probably this summer, so we got to talk, hang out, and reconnect again.<sup>71</sup>

In my field notes from session five, Tom provided an example of putting himself last. Tom said:

One opportunity this week was when I was on call. The way it goes is you are on call in pairs. One person had the phone from 5:00 pm to 10:30 pm and the other person had the phone from 10:30 pm to 8:00 am in the morning and so it's always like 'Dibs on the phone first' because you have a five-and-a-half-hour time with it. So, I asked the other person, 'Do you want the phone first?'<sup>72</sup>

Also, in my field notes I recorded asking if anyone tried to do the "hard friendships experiment" and Mark told a story about how he had benefited from the experiment. Mark said:

There is a guy at work who is kind of hard to listen to and he walked in... Actually, it kind of has to do with the "Really?" also. He walked in and as usual we were greeting everyone there and said, 'How was your week?' or something and he just walked in and said, 'It was alright.' But you could tell something was wrong. And I was like 'Is something going on?' and he said that he was going through some stuff as school and he said his long-time girlfriend for a couple of years, they broke up and he was having a hard time with that. So, I just tried to listen to him and be nice and kind of give him some advice. So, I am definitely going to try to keep going with that and keep listening to him more.<sup>73</sup>

Suja's engagement with the service experiments benefited both her and her roommate. In my field notes I recorded asking if anyone did the "pray for someone" experiment. Suja said she did, but she didn't make any follow-up comment about it so I moved on. I got the impression that Suja did not want to talk about the time she prayed

---

71. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15", Line 100-104, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

72. In "All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8", Lines 309–311. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

73. In "All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8" Lines 333–337. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

with someone because she answered quietly and did not say anything more than “I did” in response to my questions.<sup>74</sup> So I did not press Suja to comment further but proceeded on with the session. In Suja’s journal response for session five she noted that “I did pray with my roommate. I heard her crying through the walls and went and knocked on her door and prayed with her.”<sup>75</sup>

In week six Ted journaled again about a benefit received due to the service experiment: “The experiment pretty much went the same as last week. In terms of service, I washed all of the dirty dishes in our dorm room (it was actually quite relaxing, especially with my roommate playing on his piano while I did it)”<sup>76</sup> In week six Chris journaled about a benefit he received due to the going the extra mile in service experiment. Christ wrote “I was keeping up with the normal chores I usually do and found that I didn’t really keep in mind to do the extra. I guess that I did better in my service to others by simply doing things for them. It ranged from giving rides to people to helping with homework to just having deep conversations.”<sup>77</sup>

In my field notes from session seven Tom talked about a benefit he received from the “Thinking in Terms of We” experiment. Tom said:

The ‘Thinking in Terms of We’ made it feel more like a conversation or a relationship than just a mental exercise of thinking ‘God, God, God’ at random moments. I had a bit of a rough week at school, so it was good for me to like, seek guidance. If I would get overwhelmed with something I would ask ‘what is the

---

74. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 341–344. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

75. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Line 139, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

76. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 7-8, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

77. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 91-92, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

best way I should go?’ rather than just automatically start planning it out.<sup>78</sup>

Also, in my field notes from session seven I recorded asking if anyone did the “Primary Goal of Every Social Activity” experiment. Ryan said, “‘I tried that and mostly I succeeded. When I thought about it I was aware that I was a lot kinder. Where before I was not rude, but I was more engaged to actually listening to people. When I thought about it, I did see that work.’ Suja also said ‘I tried that and I think help helped keep me more involved in my conversations.’”<sup>79</sup> Just after that in session seven Tom made a comment that indicated he benefited from the “Silencing the Accuser” experiment. Tom said:

For some reason this one came pretty easily. Anytime I would go to think something bad it would be really hard because this would all pop back into my head. Which is a good thing. I feel like it makes it extremely difficult to judge someone. Like if you were going to do something bad it is like your parent is standing right there.<sup>80</sup>

In week eight Suja journaled about a benefit she received due to an experiment:

I did play the ‘game with minutes’ as I washed dishes, and though I wasn’t able to keep a steady stream of thought directed towards/with God, I found myself remembering to come back to Him more than normal. And this was true of a lot of my week – my mother told me she’d be giving me all of my bills over Spring Break – and so throughout my worrying – I found some reassurance and some peace sprinkled in there, especially after recalling Matt. 6:25-34. I did do the Palms Down/Palms Up exercise a few times and found it relaxing and comforting.<sup>81</sup>

In week eight Davis journaled about benefits he received due to several different

---

78. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 426–427. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

79. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 466–469. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

80. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 471–472. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

81. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 111-113, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

experiments: “The most impactful (experiments) were Going the Extra Mile in Service, Aware of God’s Presence Before You Get Out of Bed, and Observing Your Mind and Heart. These really reprogrammed my thought process and helped guide me throughout my day.”<sup>82</sup> In week eight Ryan journaled about a benefit he received due to the service experiments: “The best experiment for me was the one on servant leadership and taking the lesser role. This was by no means easy but it was one that I put into practice and felt a difference in how I was living and relating to others and Jesus.”<sup>83</sup> In my field notes from session eight I recorded Ava talking about a benefit she received from the “Awareness of the Presence of God” experiment. Ava said, “You know sometimes people will say ‘Just focus on God.’ That’s not helpful, but this is helpful because it is practical.”<sup>84</sup>

#### Self-Reflection Indicating Growth

The third code I identified under the Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participations Due to the Experiments comes from when I observed a participant demonstrating *Self-Reflection Indicating Growth*.

Ryan recorded the following example of a self-reflection indicating growth in his week three journal. “One thing I really became aware of was my casual use of the terms like ‘honestly’ or ‘to be honest’. Also, I became more aware of not ‘overbooking’ as it would lead to unfulfilled promises/statements.”<sup>85</sup> In session three Jessica wrote:

---

82. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 188-189, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

83. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 238-239, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

84. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Line 530. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

85. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 164-165, Session 3 – February 1, 2017



I was definitely more thoughtful and intentional about saying “maybe” and being late. I caught myself saying “maybe” a couple times and corrected myself by committing yes or no. I also found myself getting late to a couple things. I tried not to make excuses but put more effort into not being late again. I thought of why I had been late, mostly laziness or bad time management, and tried to correct those habits.<sup>86</sup>

Also, in my field notes I noted that in our group sharing time Ryan said:

I became a lot more aware of what I said. Two specific examples where I noticed myself using the phrases “Honestly” and “To be honest” as in very casual, but that would imply that what I was saying before was not.” Ryan continued “I would be talking to a friend and they would say “Do you want to do this?” normally I would have no intention of doing it and I would say “Oh I will think about it” but I was like, wait Ryan you can’t keep doing that. I normally caught myself before slipping into it, but there was a couple of times I was like Oh yikes yeah like I am not going to do that.”<sup>87</sup>

Jim demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth in week three when he journaled:

Overall, the experiment was difficult and tiring at times. Actively thinking about the practices I pledged to do (especially not saying maybe) made me realize how much I depend on being obscure to cover my own reputation. For instance, saying maybe is a common way I express uncertainty about an event I could be more certain about. Forcing myself to streamline my decisions and simplify my responses to requests has definitely changed my mindset about how often I permitted myself to flat out lie to people. Simple practice (not saying maybe) led me to some realization about how comfortable I am about being dishonest.<sup>88</sup>

The next week in session four Jim again journaled about self-reflection indicating growth. Jim wrote “I found myself much more wisely managing my time so I wouldn’t be late. I still was late on several occasions, but I found it easy to explain that the lateness

---

86. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 68-69, Session 3 – February 1, 2017

87. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 118–121. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

88. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 201-205, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

was only my fault. It turns out, this acknowledgement of fault is surprising to people. I suppose excuses are the norm.”<sup>89</sup>

Also, in session four Suja had a journal entry which showed self-reflection indicating growth. Suja wrote:

I think things went better this week than the last week. I did the prayer most nights and it helped me see that by hard days aren't all bad and I would be happy even during tough weeks. Reading the 'She Reads Truth' articles helped me not get mad at my roommate when she sent a rude text to everyone. I just sort of let it go and tried to make her happy. However, I was almost late one morning for class, and I realized I couldn't give an excuse so I walked as fast as I could and make it on time. I was 1 minute late to one class, (because the class before went until 2:58 and I had two minutes to get there). I didn't say why I was late though, because I had to hurry & get to my next class.<sup>90</sup>

Tom demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth in his session four journal when Tom wrote:

I think I did well with keeping my integrity this week. I can't think of any points when I lied or was late. . . I also think that I didn't have too many breaks in my integrity because this was a relatively easy week. If I gave my word to do something that was trying, I'm not sure how well I would have kept my word because I didn't do a good job of keeping this experiment on my mind.<sup>91</sup>

Also, in session four Ryan noticed a change from the previous week experience with the experiment yet still demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth. Ryan wrote, “For the deep integrity portion, I felt less aware this week than last week but did not have any major/monumental breaches. I was still very conscious of saying certain phrases that

---

89. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 9-10, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

90. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 14-18, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

91. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 30-33, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

strengthen statements when the simple statement would have easily sufficed.”<sup>92</sup>

In a week five journal entry Mark provided an example of how the Jesus Dojo experiments made him more aware of others around him. Mark wrote the following self-reflection indicating growth:

I actually did something like the hard friendships (experiment). A guy at my work who usually is kind of annoying wasn't acting like himself so I asked him if something was wrong and he told me that school wasn't going too well and he broke up with his girlfriend. This is a guy who I usually don't listen to but I honestly cared about what he was going through.<sup>93</sup>

Also, in a week five journal entry Ryan supplied a great example of how the Jesus Dojo experiments made him more aware of his own motivations and emotions. Ryan wrote the following self-reflection indicating growth:

One thing I really found as more obvious this week as a challenge was trying to sacrifice my time and helping around the dorm room. I still felt that I was somewhat successful this past week and sacrificing to help clean dishes and straighten up the room when necessary but I didn't realize how easy it was to do these tasks with a negative attitude. For instance, I normally clean the dishes in our dorm but, this past week, I was more conscious that I was doing this for other people and realized the negative emotions I have with this task and haven't really been realizing it. One success I had this week was electing to drive some friends to a gathering I hadn't really planned on going to. Initially, I saw it as a sacrifice but, what's getting there, it turned out to be really fun. Compared to the dishwashing scenario, I tried to maintain a more positive attitude than I had and it ended up working out better. Overall, I saw so many opportunities that tested me on this topic this week and look forward to facing the challenge for another week!<sup>94</sup>

In another week five journal entry Davis demonstrated self-reflection indicating

---

92. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 54-55, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

93. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Lines 39-40, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

94. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Lines 52-56, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

growth when he journaled about finding ways to engage with the Jesus Dojo experiments.

Davis wrote:

The first part of my experiment was to perform the tasks that are generally not fun (dishes, trash, vacuuming, etc.) around my apartment. I planned on doing the dishes that had piled up, but when I got home that day, my roommate was already doing them. I did take the trash out, though. The second part of my experiment was to take the lowest position. The simplest way to enact this was to take the less favorable parking spots. Sometimes there were few even available, but most of the time I was able to free up a spot near the destination for someone else. The increased distance never ended up being a big deal.<sup>95</sup>

Jim also demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth when he journaled in week five about his engagement with the Jesus Dojo experiments. Jim wrote:

My focus this week was to work on interpersonal relationships. I took experiment 1b (Go The Extra Mile In Our Attention and Presence with Everyone) and 1c (Take the Lowest Position) very seriously and attempted to devote 100% of myself to each conversation I had. I personally believe this is one area that many people don't go the first mile in. Because of this, I actively stopped whatever I was doing (writing, reading, eating, etc...) to talk to somebody if they were interested in talking to me. Several people were adamant on telling me that they didn't want to bother me or that I should continue doing what I was doing. It was almost as if people didn't expect my full attention and may have been surprised that I gave it to them. In my experiences this week, I've found it very fulfilling to devote my attention to conversations instead of balancing several things along with conversing. I also had success in finding positions I could be last in. In several physical chemistry lab experiments, I found myself waiting until everyone else had an apparatus to use before scrambling for my own. It made the process far less hectic and enjoyable for everyone because I simply did not add to the chaos.<sup>96</sup>

Suja demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth when she identified an area of potential growth within herself in response to the experiments. Suja wrote, "I am most stingy with the food I make and so I thought a good idea for (Go The Extra Mile - With

---

95. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15", Lines 64-67, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

96. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15", Lines 98-104, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

your Possessions) would be to make food to share with people and I had made pie for Tom and I for Valentine's day and I checked with Tom and he was good with sharing the pie with his family this weekend, so we did that."<sup>97</sup>

In my field notes from session five, I noticed an occurrence of a student exemplifying self-reflection indicating growth when Tom said about the experiment made him "aware of how into it get when I feel that someone has done something against me. For instance, last week someone took my seat in class and I was prepared to show up early to take my seat back. Otherwise I wouldn't have been conscious of it, but this made me conscious of it, to say 'no don't do it.'"<sup>98</sup> When Tom finished his statement, Davis also demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth. Davis said:

It was kind of the same thing for parking spaces for me. It was actually surprisingly easy to remember that I was supposed to not take the closest parking spot. But I realized how much effort and intention I was putting in to like which entrance to the parking lot to go into and like if I got there at a certain time, I was like well this row is probably filled up. I could just park in the back row and it would take like ten seconds to cross the parking lot and someone else can have that spot. It's just not a big deal.<sup>99</sup>

In week six Tom demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth when he wrote about how the Jesus Dojo experiments changed the way he handled some difficult conversations. Tom wrote, "I had to have a difficult conversation this week, and this experiment had me thinking about 'turning the other cheek' more than I usually would have been, which made the conversation go better than it would have gone otherwise."<sup>100</sup>

---

97. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15", Lines 130-131, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

98. In "All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8" Lines 282–283. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

99. In "All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8" Lines 285–287. Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

100. In "Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22" Lines 18-19, Session 6 – February

In week six Ryan noted progression in his attempts to practice the Jesus dojo experiments. Ryan journaled, “In comparison to last week, I felt as if I had a better perspective or attitude about trying to take the lowest position. Specifically, I did not have as many negative thoughts about washing the dishes this week.”<sup>101</sup>

One of my favorite instances due to its uniqueness that demonstrates self-reflection indicating growth came in session seven relating to the “Do everything for the Lord” experiment when Suja said “There was this really big hill and I told myself that I am going to walk up this hill for God.”<sup>102</sup>

In week eight Tom reviewed all the experiments from the eight weeks of the Jesus dojo, and in his journal entry he demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth. Tom wrote, “I think the “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” experiment was the most impactful one. If I had God on my mind more often, I think the other experiments would be a lot easier to do. I think realizing His presence is a good foundation for spiritual growth. In general, I really liked how practical the experiments were. I also think journaling is great for my spiritual growth because it forces me to take a hard look at myself.”<sup>103</sup> Also in session eight Davis demonstrated self-reflection indicating growth when he talked about the “Observing your Mind and Heart” experiment. In the field notes I recorded that Davis told “a story about when he realized that he was being negative on

---

22, 2017.

101. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Lines 103-104, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

102. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 453. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

103. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Lines 80-82, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

the Ultimate Frisbee team. He noticed it and wanted to apologize to the team in the future and be more positive in the future.”<sup>104</sup>

### Theological Reflection About Growth

The fourth code I identified under the Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participations Due to the Experiments comes from when I observed a participant demonstrating some sort of *Theological Reflection Indicating Growth*. Here I use the word theologically loosely, meaning simply that the participants merely displayed an awareness of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit regarding their engagement with the Jesus Dojo experiments.

In session four Jason demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when he wrote, “I really focused on the Examen Prayer thing mainly this week. My goal was to look at the day w/ more positivity/gratitude and I feel like I was able to do that. I also think praying about the specific part of the day helped me to focus and be aware of God’s presence during that part and take advantage of the opportunities God was giving me.”<sup>105</sup>

In session five Tom demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when he wrote:

I think I was very aware (compared to normal) of taking the lowest position. This is very petty. But someone took my seat in class, and I was prepared to start showing up earlier to get my seat back before I came to my senses and realized how that was not at all Christ-like. Also, at work, the pair of RAs on call try to the one on-call phone first so that they won’t have to keep the phone overnight (myself included). This week, I asked my partner if she would like the phone first.<sup>106</sup>

---

104. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 523-524. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

105. In “Journal Responses Week 4 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 45-47, Session 4 – February 8, 2017.

106. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 8” Lines 118-120, Session 5 – February

Also in session five Ava demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth. Ava wrote:

The experiment was interesting. My roommates were/are really putting me to the test, and it's rather frustrating. I'm having a hard time knowing when to be the lowest and when to call people out. So I've been trying to take Jesus' approach to dealing with conflict, while doing my best to be loving. The way I did it is washing their dishes. I do not use any of the dishes, and they typically have a small pile there at bedtime. I do not do it every night, but I have been trying to do them when I have time."<sup>107</sup>

In session seven Tom again demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when he wrote "I think the thing that I had the most success with this week was thinking in terms of 'We'. I had a bit of a difficult week, and I did better than I usually do with asking God for guidance. I feel like the experiment also helped me to not judge others and to be as negative as I can be sometimes. As far as being aware of God's presence in general goes, I think this experiment made me improve. It was very little progress, but I am glad to see some progress."<sup>108</sup> Also in session seven Emma demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when she wrote, "I can remember that I took 'Five Minutes' to refocus on God. A success from that was I got a connection I needed to do an assignment I didn't know about yet. I give God the credit for that or I would have been very lost."<sup>109</sup> Also in session seven Jessica demonstrated a

---

15, 2017.

107. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15" Lines 176-179, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

108. In "Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1" Lines 6-8, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

109. In "Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1" Lines 42-43, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.



Theological Reflection Indicating Growth. Jessica wrote:

I had attempted to experiment with doing ‘Observing your Mind and Heart’ and ‘Volunteer for the Worst Sinner Award.’ I find myself subconsciously judging others a lot and would like to reverse that habit by humbling myself and seeing others as people Jesus also died for. Last weekend when I went to an Ultimate Frisbee tournament to play against other colleges, I realized I had started thinking negative thoughts/judging other players during competition. It was easy to do this because I didn't personally know these girls and we were trying to win against them, so my thoughts turned to thinking I am better than them or thinking less of them. This was totally not the right attitude to have and I didn't catch myself having this attitude until the second day of the tournament. Many of my other teammates have great sportsmanship and positive attitudes while playing, so I hope to channel a more uplifting spirit during games in the future.<sup>110</sup>

In my field notes for session seven I noted a great instance where Suja demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth:

Suja said, ‘Related to the ‘Palms Down, Palms Up’ one I actually thought that was pretty silly, but I was reading the *Screwtape Letters* that C. S. Lewis wrote, where this demon is trying to convince a person that praying on his knees doesn’t matter because humans are animalistic beings and their bodies determines their attitude and then I thought that maybe I should do that.’<sup>111</sup>

In session eight Suja demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when she wrote “As far as judging your neighbor, one of my roommates is just awful and rude to everyone, so I really caught myself thinking negative thoughts towards her and I usually remember to stop or I usually listened to the voice telling me to stop – it’s always there – just sometimes I’m too mad to listen.”<sup>112</sup> Later in the session eight journal Suja again demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when she wrote, “The

---

110. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 126-130, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

111. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 425–426. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

112. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Lines 115-116, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

‘staying awake to God’s presence’ was definitely the most spiritually impacting because it was really self-reflexive. I feel like the first two can go under ‘being a good person’ (although out can’t really without God) but that the last one makes you really focus on your mental habits.”<sup>113</sup> Again in session eight Suja demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when she wrote “The hardest to practice was definitely the last one, because it’s not something you can get a break from – not that we should want a break – but it’s not something I could ever justify not doing because I was busy, or alone, or going to bed. And it was less of actions to take and more habits of thought to make.”<sup>114</sup>

Also, in session eight Haley demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when she wrote:

This week I attempted to become aware of God’s presence before I got out of bed each morning. The first few days I woke up and completely forgot to do it. Once I did remember, I struggled to stay awake. Being still and contemplative made it really easy to fall back asleep. I did notice that the days I managed to stay awake seemed to get off to a better start. It was like that little reminder that God loves me and is always with me helped me to make it through the day.<sup>115</sup>

Later Haley also journaled:

Staying aware of God’s presence had been highly beneficial to me. Every time I judge someone else or myself this little voice pops into my head reminding me that God loves us all equally no matter what. Any time I find myself worrying about the future or dwelling on past events that can’t be changed I remind myself that the only important thing is that current moment because God is with me.”<sup>116</sup>

---

113. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Lines 124-125, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

114. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Lines 129-130, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

115. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8”, Lines 148-150, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

116. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8”, Lines 155-156, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

Also in session eight Ryan demonstrated a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth when he wrote “I felt like this week went better in comparison to last week in terms of my success in realizing God's presence in my daily activities. I think this is a product of me trying to be more deliberate in setting aside time throughout the day (using reminders) to think about God and, in doing this, I was able to stay focused on Him more throughout the rest of the day.”<sup>117</sup> In my field notes for session eight I noted an example of Ava demonstrating a Theological Reflection Indicating Growth. Ava said “It [the Jesus dojo] taught me that the Bible is about faith application, not just faith and trust, but there is also a doing aspect of that.”<sup>118</sup>

### **Evidence of Participants’ Need for the Experiments**

The third major section I observed when I coded my field notes and the participants’ journals was Evidence of Participants’ Need for the Experiments. Under this section of Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments I found four subcategories. First, *Affirming Need for Jesus Dojo Experiment*. Second, *Future Plans to Experiment during Jesus Dojo*. Third, *Desire to Continue After Jesus Dojo Ends*. Fourth, *Noticing Past Jesus Dojo Experiments*.

#### **Affirming Need for Jesus Dojo Experiment**

In session three Ryan affirmed the need for the Jesus dojo experiments in his journal when he wrote:

One of my biggest successes from this week was becoming more aware of how often I encounter the chance to breach my integrity. Before this week, I often would half-heartedly agree to something with no real intention of fulfilling it and think

---

117. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8”, Lines 234-235, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

118. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8”, Lines 529. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

nothing of it; it is simply a way to navigate around possible conflicts. However, over this past week, I caught myself doing this often and either stopped myself from doing it or fixed it when I could.<sup>119</sup>

In session four Ava affirmed the need for Jesus dojo experiment in her journal when she wrote:

I remembered a few nights to do the Examen, but honestly? I was scared to do it, especially when the first one I did focus in on relationships, an area I was stressing about/struggling with. How can I be a person of integrity when someone asks, ‘How are you?’ I wish I hadn’t just lost motivation to do it this week, but I did. I’m guessing a large portion came from speeding the first night, and my all-or-nothing personality subconsciously gave up. It’s hard to want to be perfect at something or not want to do it all. I know I need to work and grow in this area.

In session six Ava again affirmed the need for Jesus dojo experiment in her journal when she wrote:

My roommates are still a struggle to love, but I have tried to remember to wash their dishes. I heard them discussion how they didn’t have a lot of friends here and they seemed really discouraged about it. I think that the LORD allowed me to hear that so I could have compassion on them. I’d be having a hard time too if I was having a hard time making friends. Frankly, a part of me hopes me being nice to them will make them feel guilty for treating me as sub-human. But that’s how the Jews were treated, and Jesus told them to love them and to not treat them as those people were treating the Jews. Love them and treat them how you want to be treated. I hope that when I clash with them that I will still love them and come from a place of love instead of anger and entitlement. I wish I knew better how to mesh Jesus’ teaching about conflict with this teaching on retaliation.<sup>120</sup>

Also, in session six Ryan affirmed the need for Jesus dojo experiment in his journal when he wrote, “I still caught myself this week trying to get the best position for myself in lines, driving lanes, and other scenarios where position is relevant; in most of all of these circumstances, the choices were not deliberate. This helped show me how

---

119. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 151-152, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

120. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Lines 42-45, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

imprinted this ideology of being first is into our culture and how working against it is difficult yet important.”<sup>121</sup>

In session seven Suja affirmed the need for Jesus dojo experiment in her journal when she wrote “I’ve tried to not thing negative thoughts about people and I don’t really; I did when a girl was speaking negatively about a person and when classmates were advocating for abortion. I do have to remind myself that there is a point to every social encounter because otherwise I wouldn’t ever want to talk to people but I did have that thought a few times this week.”<sup>122</sup> Also in session seven Haley affirmed the need for Jesus dojo experiment in her journal when she wrote:

I tend to be a very judgmental person. I’m critical of myself and others. I try to stop myself when I start thinking these negative thoughts. Since we began this experiment, I decided to not only stop the negative thinking, but also acknowledge God’s presence every time I was in those situations. I would kind of say to myself “God is here with me.” I know that is true but I don’t really know what it feels like. What does it really mean that God fully surround us everywhere we go? Sometimes I think that maybe it’s so great that we aren’t meant to be able to fully understand.<sup>123</sup>

In session eight Ava again affirmed the need for Jesus dojo Experiment in her journal when she wrote:

I hate to say it, but I didn’t follow the bullet points well. But when I would get frustrated or anxious, or begin sinning in ways I have a difficult time stopping, I begin thinking of being in His presence, presence of the loving, omnipotent, omniscient God, Creator of the universe. And that was really helpful-a practical way to focus on God and not on myself. It’s much more difficult to sin when you’re focused on the beauty of your Savior.”<sup>124</sup>

---

121. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Lines 102-103, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

122. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 26-28, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

123. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 58-60, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

124. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Lines 42-45, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

### Future Plans to Experiment during Jesus Dojo

In session three Ava discussed her future plans to experiment during Jesus dojo in her journal when she wrote, “Perhaps I should tally seconds of speeding instead of sections of speeding and I’d like to begin incorporating Saint Ignatius’ Prayer of Examen, just to better incorporate prayer into my life and let my yes be yes and no be no.”<sup>125</sup> In my field notes from session three I wrote that “Ava said she was going to start tallying second of her speeding and immediately the group joked with her about not texting or tallying and driving at the same time out of a concern for safety.”<sup>126</sup> In session three, Tom discussed his future plans to experiment during Jesus dojo in his journal when he wrote, “I plan to be more honest with making plans by not cancelling at the last minute. I also need to do the Examen every night because I think it’s very helpful. I also hope to stay honest concerning my homework, and want to bring the same mindset to my workplace when I have to work.”<sup>127</sup> In session three Suja discussed her future plans to experiment during Jesus dojo in her journal when she wrote, “I need to make extra sure not to say “maybe” or hold out on making plans, though they seem to revolve around homework right now. Be honest with poetry reviews, sometimes I just sort of keep quiet if I don’t like something. I should give honest feedback. (poetry class)”<sup>128</sup> In session three Jessica

---

125. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 15-16,21, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

126. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 160. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

127. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 35-36, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

128. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 53-54, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

discussed her future plans to experiment during Jesus dojo in her journal when she wrote:

I will continue being intentional about not saying “maybe” and having better time management so I will not be late. I will try to write daily tasks down in my calendar/planner and a lot enough time to complete each thing. When I find myself not being able to finish an assignment the day I planned to complete it, I’ll work on it as soon as I can rather than putting it off because I’ve already missed my deadline. I plan to put a reminder on my phone about the prayer of Examen. I think the most beneficial habits to commit to are becoming aware of God’s presence and paying attention to my emotions. These are harder to keep myself accountable to throughout the day, but when I feel my emotions growing heavier, I’ll say a prayer for peace or gratitude, and in that way I’ll become more aware of God in those moments.<sup>129</sup>

In session three Chris discussed his future plans to experiment during Jesus dojo in his journal when he wrote, “I’ll continue to use the Daily Examen for this upcoming week. Specifically, the first and third steps of becoming aware of God’s presence and paying attention to my emotions. We have a tournament this coming weekend so I’ll especially have to utilize the third step and try to keep my emotions in check.”<sup>130</sup> In session three Haley discussed her future plan to try the “No Saying Maybe” experiment during Jesus dojo in her journal when she wrote, “My friends are going to want to make weekend plans so I will have to give them a yes or no answer even if I’m worried something better might come up.”<sup>131</sup> In session three Mark discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo in his journal when he wrote, “I’m definitely going to focus on 1. telling the truth and 2. if I do lie I will turn right around and tell the truth. I am

---

129. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 70-73, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

130. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 92-93, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

131. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Line 108, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

going to continue saying Yes or No and not say maybe.”<sup>132</sup> In session three Ryan discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo in his journal when he wrote, “I really want to focus this week on continuing to think about what I say and if I am going to truly stand by what I say. Also, as I mentioned, I want to be more regular with the Daily Examen portion as it is a great way to reflect and remember every day what goal is.”<sup>133</sup> In session three Jim discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo in his journal when he wrote, “After tallying how frequently I was late or used maybe as a fallback, I realized how much that simply action kept me in check. Blatant (but small) lies have entered my language skill library as much as simple pleasantries. I hope to continue many of the practices to eliminate them (the lies) entirely.”<sup>134</sup> In session three Jason discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo in his journal when he wrote, “I think I need to do a better job of being aware of God’s presence and praying (being specific). Specificity in prayer about different parts of the day. Looking at the day as more of a chance to show what Jesus means to me. Don’t be negative. Show positivity. Don’t dread the next day.”<sup>135</sup>

In the session five journal entry Haley discussed a future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when she wrote, “Last week I meant to ask “really?” when someone

---

132. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Line 141, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

133. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 159-160, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

134. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 194-195, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

135. In “Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1” Lines 211-216, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.



said they were doing fine, but I forgot. I would like to experiment with this to see if someone will open up or change their response, because maybe they aren't really doing fine."<sup>136</sup> In Mark's session five journal entry he discussed a future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when he wrote, "I'm going to continue to listen and care about people who annoy me and usually get on my nerves. I'm also going to try to give to people who ask me for stuff. There are times when I don't feel like doing anything and my parents or friends ask me to help them or do something and I argue with them over it. So, I'm going to try to be more understanding in general."<sup>137</sup> In the session five journal entry Davis discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo when he wrote, "I plan on continuing with the previous experiments, but to an even greater degree. For example, I will clean the dishes / take out the trash early, so that my roommates will never have the chance to feel compelled to do so. Also, I will park even farther away than usual, so that I can impress upon myself the sacrificial nature of the experiment."<sup>138</sup> In the session five journal entry Jim discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo when he wrote, "I'd like to find more opportunities to take a lower position, but it can be difficult to find ones that seem significant (I find myself doubting whether letting someone go ahead of me in a fast food line is significant). I think I will try to build up the courage to pray with/over someone this week. I have someone in mind that will very positively

---

136. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15" Lines 14-15, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

137. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15" Lines 46-47, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

138. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15" Lines 72-73, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

receive that action. Hopefully that goes well!”<sup>139</sup> In the session five journal entry Tom discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when he wrote “I hope to continue taking the lowest position, especially concerning petty things that shouldn’t bother me at all. However, I hope to go out of my way this week to serve others. My dorm is really dirty, and my roommates are supposed to clean it. I want to take the chance to clean it for them.”<sup>140</sup> In session five Suja discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when she wrote, “I can—if we play video games—take the remote that isn’t the black one (the best ones) and make plans to hang out with the girl from class, my roommate, and friends.”<sup>141</sup> In session five Jessica discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when she wrote:

I usually try to do an even amount of chores as my roommates, but since I am less busy this week than them, I can put in some extra work. Sometimes I expect other to clean up after themselves or get irritated when something isn’t done the way I like it to be done, but I will try not to have that attitude and be willing to do acts of service without expecting anything in return. I will also put more effort into listening to my friends and not being quick to judge or assess the situation, but just be attentive and compassionate. Sometimes when someone has a complaint or rant, I don’t really want to listen or give my full attention because I don’t want to be swayed with a negative attitude, but it’s also important to give others their time to cope with their situations and be the one to listen to their issues so they can get over it. I’ll try to be non-judgmental and empathetic but also try not to contribute any negative attitudes.<sup>142</sup>

In session five Chris discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo

---

139 . In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Lines 107-109, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

140. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Lines 120-121, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

141. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Line 137, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

142. In “Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15” Line 191-199, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

when he wrote:

This coming week I will do the Lowest Position and Second Mile experiment. I'll focus on being attentive to those in my life who are emotionally needy. I'll try to encourage them and really listen to what they are going through so that I might better understand them. Another part of the experiment that I'll try is giving complete attention to whomever I am speaking with at the time. I find that it is somewhat annoying and rude when I try to talk to others and they don't pay attention so I want to make sure I don't do the same thing to others. I'm not one to do out of my way to express my religious beliefs to others, unless it is warranted. Therefore, I believe that praying with a non-UCM person would be a good experiment for me personally. I am not sure who it will be, but hopefully it will be a very good experience.<sup>143</sup>

In session five Ava discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when she wrote, "I will continue loving my roommates by washing dishes and I need to watch my tongue when talking about them. I also need to spend less time on my phone and more time with others."<sup>144</sup>

In session six Jessica discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when she wrote:

I had planned on trying to offer my service and compassion in hard friendships. I was more aware of my thoughts when doing extra chores, especially when I would think about the fairness or equality of doing the same amount of work as my roommates. I was more willing to do extra acts of service this week because I wasn't having a particularly busy week, so I hope I'll be able to continue having a humble attitude of service when I am busier. I didn't really get to offer more attention in difficult relationships, but I have been willing to listen to my roommates' complaints and hardships while trying to maintain a positive attitude and not get bogged down by negative rants and such. I've noticed that in a lot of my relationships I let other people bring up their issues first to talk about without prompting or initiating tough conversations. I would like to try to ask people how they are really doing more often and get to know people on deeper levels.<sup>145</sup>

---

143. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15" Line 209-216, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

144. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15" Line 237-238, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

145. In "Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22" Line 99-106, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

In session seven Tom discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when he wrote, “I want to do the ‘Game with Minutes’. I feel like this would be a really good way to improve my awareness of God. I also want to continue ‘Thinking in Terms of We’ because it seemed to make my attempts of being aware of God more like a relationship rather than a mental exercise.”<sup>146</sup> In session seven Suja discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when she wrote, “I need to put more reminders and establish a quiet hour apart from my readings. I didn’t think in terms of we, but I’m going to put that on the sticky notes. I need to put the reminder on my glasses because I can’t see anything before them.”<sup>147</sup> In session seven Emma discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus Dojo when she wrote “I plan to reflect everyday on what had happened and then make note of when something happened that wouldn’t have without God’s help.”<sup>148</sup> In session seven Haley discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo when she wrote, “This week I not only want to refocus on acknowledging God’s presence but also try to better understand what that means for me going about my day.”<sup>149</sup> In session seven Mark discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo when he wrote, “I am definitely going to try to be more aware of God’s love when I wake

---

146. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Line 17-19, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

147. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Line 42-44, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

148. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Line 54, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

149. In “Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1” Line 69, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

up. Up to now when I wake up I think of what am I going to deal with today and all the bad things that are going to happen. I want to start my day with God's love and thoughts of all the good things I can do for God's kingdom."<sup>150</sup> In session seven Davis discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo when he wrote, "I will definitely place more strategic reminders around my house and car (maybe even my office). I definitely want to do a better job of starting my day on the right foot. I also think that I will do a better job of keeping tabs on my thoughts and being more positive in general."<sup>151</sup> In session seven Ryan discussed his future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo when he wrote:

I definitely have room to improve for this upcoming week; I want to try and channel this into the reasoning behind my actions. Normally, I try and do the right thing. However, it isn't usually because I am putting God at the forefront of my decision-making. This is what I want to work to improve this week. I also want to try and practice more of the "Worst Sinner" policy this week.<sup>152</sup>

In session seven Jessica discussed her future plan to experiment during Jesus dojo when she wrote:

It will be difficult to change my habits of judgment in a short period of time, but I will pray for humility. Especially in a time of Lent, I will be more constantly reminded through devotionals how much I need God because of my sins. I'll take the time to acknowledge my own sins and shortcomings and hopefully be less judgmental. Every time I find myself having a negative judgmental thought, I will think about God's love for every person.<sup>153</sup>

---

150. In "Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1" Line 83-84, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

151. In "Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1" Line 103-104, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

152. In "Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1" Line 114-115, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

153. In "Journal Responses Week 7 for Jesus Dojo – March 1" Line 138-140, Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

### Desire to Continue After Jesus Dojo Ends

In session three Chris discussed his desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when he wrote:

I tried to pray at the end of each day and review the ups and downs. This was helpful not just in praying and getting to thank God, but also in simply calming down and letting the weight off my shoulders for a brief moment. Another aspect of the Daily Examen that I tried to incorporate into my week was paying attention to my emotions. This proved to be difficult at times, especially when I was driving. I usually blame the individual drivers when it's not really any of their faults. I'll probably keep applying the Daily Examen in my life because I think it is a useful guideline to follow and develop from.<sup>154</sup>

In session five Haley wrote she wanted to continue a Jesus dojo experiment for the "long run," so she demonstrated her desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when she wrote:

I'm usually the only one who cleans the apartment, takes out the trash, etc. so I wasn't really able to take the lowest position by "serving" in that way. However, I did try to keep a good attitude about whatever dirty job I was having to do. Every time I found myself getting angry or frustrated with my roommates I had to consciously make an effort to keep a positive attitude and look at it as performing a service for someone else. I also attempted to give my full attention to people who were speaking to me. It made me realize how often I zone out or think only about what I'm going to say next. I feel like in the long run, this will allow me to strengthen relationships because I am fully listening to what others have to say.<sup>155</sup>

In session six Haley directly stated her desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when she wrote:

There is a girl in my sorority who is also in my psychology class who is one of those people that no one likes to talk to because they complain all the time. She sat next to me in class on Monday and my first thought was "Oh great." After I remembered this experiment I began trying to listen to what she had to say and see things from her point of view. It was very difficult for me to not blow her off and

---

154. In "Journal Responses Week 3 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 1" Line 97-100, Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

155. In "Journal Responses Week 5 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 15" Line 6-9, Session 5 – February 15, 2017.

go back to my work. This is something I want to continue experimenting with even after the Jesus Dojo ends.<sup>156</sup>

In session eight Ted discussed his desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when he wrote, “I will attempt, emphasis on ‘attempt’, but I’m not sure I’m reliable enough to keep these experiments up for more prolonged lengths of time. Luckily, some of the experiments are second nature to me, like most of the Going The Extra Miles experiments.”<sup>157</sup>

In session eight Ava discussed her desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when she wrote, “I plan to continue not multitasking interpersonal relationships, avoid saying “maybe” where possible, and loving those around me by remembering that I am being sustained by God Almighty Himself.”<sup>158</sup> In session eight Tom discussed his desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when he wrote, “I really want to continue the ‘Staying Awake’ experiment because I feel like my walk with God would greatly improve by doing so. I think it would be a lot easier to follow Christ’s example if I am constantly aware that He is with me.”<sup>159</sup> In session eight Davis discussed his desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when he wrote, “I will continue to attempt to not be late (and not make excuses when I fail at this), practice Examen, perform the least desirable chores, focus on God before I even get out

---

156. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 55-57, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

157. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 28-29, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

158. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 62, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

159. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 93-94, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

of bed, and observe my mind and heart to weed out negativity. These all improve my mental and spiritual well-being, as well as positively affecting those I encounter.”<sup>160</sup> In session eight Ryan discussed his desire to continue an experiment after the Jesus dojo ends when he wrote:

I think I will definitely continue to work on the experiments in the future - especially servant leadership and taking the lesser role and staying awake to God's presence. Although I definitely struggled with being ‘awake’, I do see its value and need to improve tremendously over the coming weeks, months, and years on this idea.<sup>161</sup>

In my field notes from session eight I recorded Tom, Suja, and Davis commenting on how they might continue experiments from the Jesus dojo after it ends:

Tom said “I have really been thinking about the last question a lot, the one about how it would affect my friends. It made me notice that one thing, something that is missing in some of my relationships with my friends, that a lot of times I don’t have a lot of spiritual conversations with my friends. So, I don’t know what would happen because it kind of changes if I were to do this with my friends outside of UCM, I feel like it would change our friendship in that oh were not just people who go to church on Sundays and we don’t talk about that kind of stuff. Except for on rare occasions. It would be like oh how are you doing with this, but it would change the dynamics.” Suja agreed and said that “I realized my response to this was that I am not a very commanding person. But then I realized that is a very Moses thing to say.” Davis said “The kind of things that I am going to try to keep doing are mostly like the more practical things. For example, ‘Going the Extra Mile in Service’ where you do the things that no one else likes to do, for example when you have dishes piling up.”<sup>162</sup>

### Noticing Past Jesus Dojo Experiments

In session six Ava discussed how she noticed a past Jesus Dojo experiment when

---

160. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 200-201, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

161. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 245-246, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

162. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 535–543. Session 8 – March 8, 2017.



she wrote, “I’ve think I’ve done better with interpersonal relationships. When I catch myself doing it, I apologize for partially ignoring them. This is something I’ll definitely be noticing more as time goes on, just as I am still aware of speeding and integrity’s relationship.”<sup>163</sup> In session seven I observed that Davis incorporated a past Jesus dojo experiment into his current experiment when I recorded in my field notes that “Davis said ‘I tried to do this (Do Everything for the Lord) in conjunction with the last module we were talking about doing tasks that other people don’t want to. So, I have been taking out the trash, doing the dishes, and vacuuming.’”<sup>164</sup>

In session eight Ted discussed how he enjoyed and noticed a past Jesus Dojo experiment when he wrote:

I feel like the Daily Examen recitation, Keeping a Tally on Myself when I’m Late and Not Living With Integrity, Going the Extra Mile with Lowest Positions and Serve and Hard Friendships, Silencing the Accuser, and Five-Single Minutes all impacted me the most throughout the weeks’ experiments. All of these either made me stop and remember God’s presence or place others (be it strangers or friends) before myself, or taking responsibility and accountability for my actions and decisions. What I enjoyed most was the variety of the experiments used to keep us engaged with the lessons at hand, instead of running the risk of us tuning out and going through the motions.<sup>165</sup>

In session eight Suja discussed how she noticed a past Jesus Dojo experiment when she wrote, “I would really like to continue with these. Already I am finding myself implementing things from past weeks into my daily life. I would like to pick a certain task for the week to do, so that I’m not completely overwhelmed and caught up with

---

163. In “Journal Responses Week 6 for Jesus Dojo – Feb 22” Line 41-42, Session 6 – February 22, 2017.

164. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 454–455. Session 7 – March 1, 2017.

165. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 15-18, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

“being” good – and pair it with trying to carry a conversation with God throughout.”<sup>166</sup> In session eight Haley discussed how she noticed a past Jesus Dojo experiment when she wrote:

I’ve noticed that many of the experiments carried over even after we had moved on to a new week. I really liked the one about staying awake to God’s presence so I will try to continue with that one. I will also continue trying to let my yes be yes and my no be no- if I tell someone I’m going to do something, I need to keep my word.<sup>167</sup>

### **Independent Expert**

My first angle of evaluation came from the students’ journal entries in which they reflected upon their experiences in the Jesus Dojo. The second angle of evaluation came from my field notes, which I composed by watching the video recordings of the session a few hours after each session. The third angle of evaluation came from Earl Lavender, who served as my independent expert. Earl Lavender wrote the following in his professional evaluation report:

I was invited by Andy to observe a session with University of Alabama students who are involved with his doctoral project. I took the opportunity to do this on the evening of March 1st in the University of Alabama’s student center. My interest and expertise in the project stems from my extensive use of Mark Scandrette’s *Practicing the Way of Jesus* in undergraduate classes on apologetics at Lipscomb University. I am in my 8th cycle of dividing students into “Jesus Dojos” (a place to practice the spiritual disciplines in community). In my experience of teaching this has been the most successful approach to facilitating life change. My findings indicate the experiential element is what makes the critical difference. The challenge is to put one of the paradoxical teachings of Jesus to the test over time. When Andy invited me to evaluate his version of Scandrette’s “Dojos” I was very keen to do so.<sup>168</sup>

---

166. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 136-137, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

167. In “Journal Responses Week 8 for Jesus Dojo – March 8” Line 167-168, Session 8 – March 8, 2017.

168. In “Professional Evaluation of Jonathan Andrew Gann” Lines 15-21. Email from Dr. Earl Lavender – March 9, 2017.

Lavender went on to affirm the project and give it his endorsement. Lavender wrote:

The organization of the project, including the materials handed to the students each week, is excellent. Andy's inclusion of a journaling element to the experiment adds a layer of evaluation that is needed. Andy's interaction and trust level with the students present was evident from the beginning of the session. The level of interaction once the lectio began exhibited a level of trust and transparency that validated Andy's methodology and work. Andy was fully present with each individual as he questioned them and listened to their responses. I thought his follow up questions were very thoughtful and helpful. Andy also demonstrated excellence in his ability to integrate other study resources into his project – particularly his use of Greg Boyd's *Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now*. This was helpful and added value to the discussion. The students present were fully engaged throughout the session. I was given the opportunity to question them at the conclusion, and it was clear they were enjoying the experience and had benefited greatly from it. Some of their reactions were similar to ones I have received when involved in similar research. Most obvious was the recognized power of intentionality. When one intentionally models the behavior of Jesus, things happen – mostly for good. The evening was very enjoyable. I congratulate Andy on his work and his writing. It is a worthy and meaningful project.<sup>169</sup>

I recorded these notes in my field notes when Lavender observed the Jesus Dojo on March 1, 2017:

Dr. Lavender appreciated the students' engagement during the evening and asked, "What have you learned in this process?" Emma said "I guess it is just simple things. It is just nice to be reminded to do these things and to keep us engaged and even though these are small things." Tom said "I think the self-reflection and the journaling is very helpful for me. Usually it is just like an abstract goal, like it is not defined and then you don't know how you are doing pursuing that goal. So, I think the self-reflection really helps to define what you want to do." Davis said "Yeah it is really impressive how a simple act of like setting an alarm on your phone and that sort of thing can have. Or like just observing your thoughts and that sort of thing. It is just impressive what impact these little things can have." Ryan said "This has helped me with compartmentalizing, in like separating your regular daily activities and then like Bible Study and church on Sunday, because I know that I have struggled with that. I mean I still struggle with that. I struggled with that for a very long time by basically not being aware of God most of the day and this has

---

169. In "Professional Evaluation of Jonathan Andrew Gann" Lines 22-33. Email from Dr. Earl Lavender – March 9, 2017.

been like, things that I can tie to what I am doing, and when I am doing them. I can be like ‘oh, I am supposed to do it this way.’<sup>170</sup>

In my field notes I recorded that Lavender asked the group an insightful follow-up question:

Dr. Lavender asked, “Is there anything that you can think of that you will do differently because of this?” Ryan says “I catch myself, we did these in like two week segments, you know like the same topic for two weeks, and I would catch myself you know like after that period doing the same thing I had learned, and not being mad but being like wait, that is not this week’s lesson. But I think that is a testament to how it really did change my life.” Dr. Lavender said that in his experience with his classes at Lipscomb University, these kinds of experiments stick with students and they do tend to carry them over into their lives after the Jesus dojo is completed. Dr. Lavender taught for a few more minutes and encouraged the students and ended the session by praying over the group.<sup>171</sup>

Chapter four has presented the results of my data collection from my project.

Three major themes emerged from the triangulation of data collected from the participants’ journals, field notes, and an independent expert’s evaluation. These three themes were, one “Challenges Faced by Participants in the Experiments”, two “Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participants Due to the Experiments”, and three “Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments”. Earl Lavender’s observation of the Jesus dojo affirmed my leadership and thus lends credibility to the way I chose to break down the data into these three major categories. The following chapter will provide my interpretation of the implications and conclusions of these three major themes from the Jesus dojo.

---

170. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 503-515. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

171. In “All Field Note Sessions 2 to 8” Lines 517-525. Session 3 – February 1, 2017.

## CHAPTER V

### IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### **Evaluation of Findings**

The three themes that emerged from my Jesus dojo ministry intervention project were: one, “Challenges Faced by Participants in the Experiments,” two, “Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participants Due to the Experiments,” and three, “Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments.”

The first theme, “Challenges Faced by Participants in the Experiments” had six subcategories: one, Challenge of Consistent Completion, two, Experiment Did Not Fit The Individual, three, Accepted Responsibility For The Challenge, four, Theological Reflection Due To Challenges, five, Challenge of Remembering, and six, Success When Remembered. The challenges noted in this section did not diminish the effectiveness or benefits of the Jesus dojo experiments. These types of challenges were not surprising or unexpected and allowed participants to accept responsibility for the challenges and reflect upon them. Many of the participants were able to take the positive step to accept the responsibility for the challenges instead of simply claiming the Jesus dojo experiments were too hard or not beneficial. There were only six instances where participants encountered the challenge that the experiment did not fit the individual participant. One reason this challenge was so low was probably because participants had the power to choose which Jesus dojo experiments they did each week. Also, the low number of

participants who encountered an experiment that did not fit them suggests that there was a sufficient variety of experiments present to provide participants a choice of which would be best for them to try.

The second theme that emerged was “Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participants Due to the Experiments.” This theme suggests that the participants underwent some degree of spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is difficult to measure, so this theme cannot do more than point out possible evidence of spiritual growth. However, the entries under this heading suggest that indeed the Jesus dojo did contribute positively to the participants’ spiritual growth. The second theme of “Evidence of Spiritual Growth in Participants Due to the Experiments” had four subcategories: one, Sense of Successful Engagement With Experiments, two, Benefit Received Due To Experiment, three, Self-Reflection Indicating Growth, and four, Theological Reflections About Growth. Since many participants reported a sense of successful engagement with the Jesus dojo experiments, as well as noticing the benefits they received due to the experiments, I conclude that the Jesus dojo experiments did indeed help the participants experience growth spiritually. Participants demonstrated noticeable self-reflection and reflections about God that also indicate the Jesus dojo experiments were a positive contribution to the participants’ overall spiritual life.

The third theme was “Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments.” This theme demonstrated that the participants saw value in the group and they thought they did need to attempt the Jesus dojo experiments. The third theme of “Evidence of Participants Need for the Experiments” had four subcategories: one, Affirming Need For Jesus dojo Experiment, two, Future Plans To Experiment during Jesus dojo, three, Desire to

Continue After Jesus dojo Ends, four, Noticing Past Jesus dojo Experiments. I conclude that the Jesus dojo was helpful to the participants' overall spiritual growth since participants affirmed their need for the experiments and made plans to engage the experiments both during the Jesus dojo and after it ended. Also, it was encouraging to see a few participants continue past Jesus dojo experiments because they perceived them as positive habits that enrich their spiritual lives beyond the weeks where the group was practicing those specific experiments together.

From the three themes presented above, I conclude that this intervention was effective in providing UCM students an opportunity to practice the ways of Jesus. The Jesus dojo gave UCM students a structure to participate in group spiritual formation in a way that was absent before the ministry intervention. This Jesus dojo gave students an example of what group spiritual formation can look like, which hopefully they can build upon in the future.

I believe the Jesus dojo was a successful ministry intervention because the participants felt the experiments helped them grow spiritually; therefore they saw value in the project. However, my conclusion that the Jesus dojo was successful is subject to some limitations, such as applicability, dependability, credibility, and reflexivity. I also must consider the implications of sustainability as well as the personal and ecclesial significance of our Jesus dojo. I will conclude by noting some unanswered questions from our Jesus dojo that perhaps can be discussed by another group who does its own Jesus dojo experiment.

### **Applicability**

The conclusions of this ministry intervention apply only to the twelve UCM

students who participated in the majority of the Jesus dojo sessions. For the other five students who only participated in a few of the sessions, I did not have enough information to make any conclusions about whether the Jesus dojo helped them grow spiritually. I suspect it did not, or if it did, it did so to a much lower degree than the students who put forth the effort to participate in the majority of the Jesus dojo sessions. It is uncertain if any of the spiritual practices will persist in the lives of the participants beyond the Jesus dojo. Several times participants said they intend to engage in some of the Jesus dojo experiments in the future, but there is no way to prove this without coming back and interviewing them in the future, which I will not have the opportunity to do. It is encouraging that a few of the participants reported noticing some of their past Jesus dojo experiments, so hopefully, that will continue.

### **Dependability, Credibility, and Reflexivity**

Since I used the journals of the participants and my field notes and had an independent expert observe and validate my methods, this provided me with a triangulated evaluation method that helps determine the dependability and credibility of my data. The participants' journal responses were limited by questions I asked. My field notes are limited by my point of view. The independent expert was limited by being available to attend only one of the eight sessions. My conclusions are only dependable for this particular Jesus dojo. However, I suspect other Jesus dojos, if approached in the same way, would have similar positive results.

Concerning the issue of reflexivity, it is impossible for me to be completely without bias. The way I structured the Jesus dojo sessions, the questions I asked, the way I interpreted the data must be considered. However, the methodology I employed tried to



protect this ministry intervention from my biases as much as is practically feasible.

### **Sustainability**

A Jesus dojo is meant to be a reproducible environment for learning the ways of Jesus. However, it is unlikely that this specific group will reconvene to participate in the same Jesus dojo, with the same experiments. Participants did learn enough to form their own Jesus dojos in the future. Participants were encouraged to make up their own “write in” experiments to engage the theme we were working on together each week. However, none of the participants ever did make up their own experiments. This suggests that if participants started their own Jesus dojos in the future, one area that may be difficult for them would be formulating the list of possible experiments.

### **Personal and Ecclesial Significance**

The Jesus dojo was personally significant to me because too often in my own spiritual journey I have been overly focused on having the correct beliefs about God instead of focusing on living out the actions that Jesus taught or the way of Jesus. I take comfort in the fact that I do not have to have all the right beliefs about God figured out, since more and more of the hardline, clear cut facts that I once knew for certain about God seem to grow fuzzier. I appreciate the opportunity to test the ways of Jesus and see that they lead to a fulfilling life. This seems to me to be one of the most convincing “apologetics” for Jesus.

This study was significant because it directly impacted the college ministry by providing a way for college students to experientially practice the ways of Jesus rather than only cognitively learn about Jesus. After interpreting the findings, I conclude that the college ministry was given an opportunity to practice the ways of Jesus where this

specific kind of opportunity was previously lacking. This project can be used to inform future ministry to college students as well as other groups of Christians.

However, since the experiments were done solely within the college student ministry and also off site from the church building, the ecclesial impact for the entire church body of UCC is obviously low. This could be seen as a flaw in the method and in the experiments. Alternately, it could be argued that since the experiments were engaged by a consistent small group of college students, the college students themselves were a mini church. If twelve students were considered a mini house church, the ecclesial impact was high because they all intentionally engaged in these communal spiritual formation activities together surrounding the same theme, which emerged from a specific passage from the Sermon on the Mount in each of the two-week segments.

It would be of obvious benefit in the future to expand this type of Jesus dojo by including participants in various stages of life. Perhaps it would have been constructive to use the preexisting relationships built through the adopt-a-student program as an effort to include more of the UCC members. It would undoubtedly contribute to a richer communal spiritual formation experience and have a broader ecclesial impact if a wider section of UCC members were involved in future Jesus dojos. During this project, meetings were held Wednesday nights at eight o'clock on the campus of the University of Alabama in a room in the student center. If the meetings were held in a classroom at UCC during the Sunday morning Bible class hour, which meets between the two different worship services, then other UCC members could have attended alongside the college students in the Jesus dojo. If that had been the case, then the project could have had a broader ecclesial significance. Also if the Jesus dojos became an established and

expected annual or bi-annual occurrence, hosted by the college ministry, there could be more opportunities for regular involvement between college students and UCC members because the UCC members and college students could plan in advance to be involved in at Jesus dojo together.

### **Theological Interpretations and Significance of the Data**

The data indicates that the participants took the goal of becoming an apprentice of Jesus seriously. The participants indicated a willingness to engage in the experiments because of their own understanding that practicing the ways of Jesus will bring them into a closer relationship with God. The participants were fully convinced of the value of imitating Jesus and following his teaching. As seen in chapter four, the journal entries provided several instances of participants demonstrating theological reflections about how their experiments in the Jesus dojo corresponded positively with their relationship with God. The first two-week segment, focused on "Deep Integrity and Examen" from Matthew 5:33-37, resulted in many participants noting positive engagement with the experiments and growth in their own personal area of integrity and in their exposure to the discipline of examen. In the second two-week segment "Go The Extra Mile" from Matthew 5:38-42, again the data indicated many of the students' lives were positively impacted from sharing in these experiments. Finally, from the third two-week segment, which focused on "Staying Awake to God's Presence" from Matthew 6:33, most participants reported constructive habits formed due to their interaction with intentionally striving to partake in the Jesus dojo experiments, leading them to be more aware of God's continual presence.

### Silence and Slippage

The students' journal reflections have a flaw because they are silent on the matters of specific written reflection on the passages from the Sermon on the Mount. Students did discuss orally the *lectio divina* passage, and some of those conversations were captured in field notes. However, I neglected to gather student journal reflections about the Sermon on the Mount passages. The students did engage the passages from the Sermon on the Mount, and they were beneficial as I anticipated from the theology section, but I could have done a more thorough job of recording this part of the Jesus Dojo as part of my research data.

Also, another major area of silence between my theology section and my results were the lack of the term "discipleship" to Jesus in the journal reflections. We mostly used the language from Scandrette of "experiment" which implies experimenting with "following in the way of Jesus." I understand the phrase "following in the way of Jesus" from Scandrette as analogous with the term "discipleship" used by Willard. But it is a most unfortunate oversight on my part not to also include the term "discipleship" more throughout the project.

An area of slippage between the themes and chapter two was on how the general term of discipleship is understood in relation to the experiments that participants undertook. I think the participants generally understood the importance of discipleship to Jesus, but this connection could have been made stronger. Another point of slippage between the three angles of evaluation was that my independent expert, Earl Lavender, did not see as many examples about the challenges faced by the participants as I observed in the field notes and in the journals from previous sessions.

### **Unanswered Questions**

As noted above in the sustainability section, one of the unanswered questions I have is how to get participants comfortable with formulating their own new Jesus dojo experiments. If another college ministry attempts its own Jesus dojo, I would like to see them explore ways for the participants to become more skilled at formulation of their own experiments. It is possible that the skill of formulating their own experiments would be best learned in a Jesus dojo that lasts longer than eight weeks to give participants time to do a few experiments constructed by the facilitator of the Jesus dojo in the beginning and then shift to constructing their own experiments later.

One design flaw of this project was that I gave the participants too many options to experiment with. It possibly could have been better if I had given them only one or two options so that the participants would have had more overlap in the experiments that they did. My decision to provide several different options of experiments was a deviation from the way Scandrette ran his Jesus dojo groups. I wanted to help the participants understand the concept of the Jesus dojo, and I enjoyed finding the different suggested experiments. It was helpful for them to have that level of direction in the beginning; however, it would have been a stronger project if I had spent an additional several weeks teaching the Jesus dojo participants how to read a passage of Scripture and formulate one experiment for the group to practice all together. If the group became able to formulate their own experiments rather than relying upon me to provide them, it is likely they would have even more impactful participation. If the participants learned the skills of formulating an experiment and deciding together as a group how to implement that experiment, it would be more likely that group members would reproduce other Jesus dojos in the future with

other groups of friends.

Another area of need is how to move this type of Jesus dojo into more substantial next steps, such as equipping participants to be leaders of other Jesus Dojos. Further work is needed in connecting this intentional model of communal spiritual formation called a Jesus Dojo to what it means to be an apprentice and disciple of Jesus Christ. Those connections were present in this experiment; however, in future Jesus dojo's that connection needs to be strengthened and made even more explicit. Also, a strategy is needed for how to expand to a wider grouping of church members beyond just the college ministry.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of the project was to give opportunities for a community group in the college ministry at University Church of Christ to experiment practicing the ways of Jesus. This purpose was accomplished by forming a Jesus dojo based on Mark Scandrette's model as outlined in his book *Practicing the Way of Jesus*. The Jesus dojo met for eight sessions. During each session we reflected upon different teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. Students then were given the opportunity of experimenting with the ways of Jesus together based on the theme of the teaching that week from the Sermon on the Mount. Students then reflected with the group upon their shared experiments through discussion of the *lectio divina* and discussion of their journals. Data from the project was collected in the form of field notes from the video recordings of each session, student journals, and an independent expert's analysis.

From the data I saw that when students remembered to engage the experiments, it really affected their lives in positive ways. It was often challenging for them to remember

to practice the ways of Jesus because it does not come naturally. But it was also encouraging that we were able to create a communal spiritual formation environment in which the college students intentionally reflected upon practicing the ways of Jesus. Oftentimes students learned as much from pondering on where they forgot to practice the way of Jesus and then stopping to discuss that with the group. Also, students were able to learn from each other's successes in practicing the ways of Jesus and were uplifted by their stories of how the experiments positively impacted their lives. The ministry intervention was significant to UCM by engaging college students to know experientially rather than only cognitively that living as Jesus commands leads to faithful life as a disciple of Christ. The goal of this ministry intervention was that participants would indeed find that the ways of Jesus truly lead to an abundant life. It seems that in many instances this goal was achieved.

This project was abundantly positive for many of the participants who engaged in the Jesus dojo and for me. It was fulfilling to observe college students learn something tangible from Jesus's teaching and get put them into practice in their daily lives. Oftentimes in ministry it is unclear if it actually affects people's daily lives. This project was enjoyable because I felt that the students enjoyed the process. It impacted their lives in a positive way because they engaged in the project. It was encouraging to watch them reflect upon what they were learning and how they might continue practicing the ways of Jesus.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boyd, Gregory A. *Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- Creasy, William C. *The Imitation of Christ: A Timeless Classic for Contemporary Readers*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2004.
- Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Freeman, Andy and Pete Greig. *Punk Monk: New Monasticism and the Ancient Art of Breathing*. Lottbridge Eastbourne, England: Survivor, 2007.
- Gallagher, Maureen. *The Art of Catechesis: What You Need to Be, Know and Do*. New York: Paulist Press. 1998.
- Harris, Randy and Greg Taylor. *Living Jesus: Doing What Jesus Says in the Sermon on the Mount*. Abilene, TX: Leafwood, 2012.
- Lavender, Earl “Faith and Culture: Life Lab Experiment” Faith and Culture course assignment at Lipscomb University, (Nashville, TN, fall semester, 2015).
- Rainer, Thom S., and Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning to God’s Process for Making Disciples* Nashville: B&H, 2006.
- Reichert, Richard J. *Renewing Catechetical Ministry*. New York: Paulist Press, 2002.
- Scandrette, Mark. *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- Webber, Robert. *Ancient-Future Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.
- Westerhoff, John H. *Values for Tomorrow’s Children: An Alternative Future for Education in the Church*. Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970.



Willard, Dallas. *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. Harper: San Francisco, 2006.

——— *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. Harper & Row: San Francisco, 1988.

## APPENDIX A

### IRB Consent Form

#### **Adult Consent Form – Journals and Video Recording IRB**

# PI NonResNonHumRequest #

Thank you for your interest in participating in my ministry intervention project. This form describes the project and what will be asked of you today. Please read over it carefully and let me know if you have any questions.

#### **What is this project doing?**

This ministry intervention project is seeking to equip a community group in the college ministry at University Church of Christ to practicing the ways of Jesus.

#### **What would I do if I participate?**

The ministry intervention project will take 8 weeks, with 8 sessions. Sessions will be during the Wednesday night community group time in UCM. Each session should last between 60-75 minutes. During each session, you will meet with the project leader to discuss and reflect upon their experiences that week. You will be asked to reflect or journal about your experiences of the previous week to examine your attitudes and experience during the project. The project leader will be able to review these journals for data. The sessions will be video recorded for review.

#### **How will I benefit from participating?**

There is not any compensation for participating in this ministry intervention project, but you may have the opportunity to grow in your own spiritual formation by practicing the way of Jesus with a community group. I hope you will see that the ways of Jesus truly do lead to an abundant life. It is my hope you will have the opportunity to form a firmer faith that can withstand greater doubts. I hope you will gain experiential wisdom, rather than only cognitive knowledge that living as Jesus commands leads to an abundant life.

#### **Are there any risks in participating?**

I don't expect you to encounter any risks other than those experiences in everyday life. The project leaders and ACU do not have any plan to pay for any injuries or problems you may experience as a result of your participation in this project.

#### **Can I quit if I become uncomfortable?**

Yes, absolutely. Your participation is completely voluntary. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you can ask to leave the sessions, stop journaling or to stop the interview. Dr. Sensing and the Internal Review Board have reviewed the process and think you can participate comfortably. During the sessions, you can choose to not participate in any

exercise you do not feel comfortable with. You are free to leave at any time you wish. Participating is your choice. However, we do appreciate any help you are able to provide

**How long will participation take?**

The ministry intervention project will take place over an 8-week period, with 8 individual sessions. Sessions will be during the Wednesday night community group time in UCM which begin at 8pm. Each session should last between 60-75 minutes.

**How are you protecting privacy?**

Your name will be removed from your journal. Your name will not be linked to any documents and any use of this material in reports, publications, or presentations will never be associated with the participants in this study without permission. No one other than the project leaders associated with this project will have access to the raw data. Video recordings will attempt to not record participants faces. The video recordings will be destroyed after reviewed by the project leader. The data will also be protected by being stored on the project leader's private, password-protected computer, which is stored in project leader's private residence or private office always behind two locked doors.

**I have some questions about this study. Who can I ask?**

You may ask any questions that you have at this time. However, if you have additional questions, concerns, or complaints in the future, you may contact the Project Leader of this study. The Project Leader is Andy Gann and may be contacted at (205) 737-4730, [andy@universitycofc.org](mailto:andy@universitycofc.org), 1200 Julia Tutwiler Dr., Tuscaloosa, AL 35404.

If you are unable to reach the Project Leader or wish to speak to someone other than the Project Leader, you may contact

The ministry intervention project is being supervised by Dr. Tim Sensing from the Graduate School of Theology at Abilene Christian University. If you have questions, you can call him at 325-674-3792 or email him at [tim.sensing@acu.edu](mailto:tim.sensing@acu.edu).

ACU also has a Board that protects the rights of people who participate in research and ministry intervention projects. You can ask them questions at 325-674-2885. You can also mail questions to Dr. Megan Roth, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103 or send an email to [orsp@acu.edu](mailto:orsp@acu.edu) or [megan.roth@acu.edu](mailto:megan.roth@acu.edu).

Signature

---

Date

---

Printed Name

---

This consent form is not valid after December 31, 2017.

## APPENDIX B

### “Deep Integrity and Examen”

#### **Suggestions for ways to engage the experiment for weeks two and three for “Deep Integrity and Examen”<sup>1</sup>**

The experiment for weeks two and three emerges from Matthew 5:33-37.

The experiment has several ways one might engage it:

- Keep a tally of when you are late and not living with integrity (focus on telling the truth and being on time).
- Correct breaches of integrity as soon as possible and explain to the person why you lied, cheated, etc. (fix it immediately).
- No saying “maybe” – Matthew 5:37 “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’”.
- No excuses when you are late.
- Examen Prayer: Use Saint Ignatius’ Prayer of Examen at the end of each day.
  - Below is a simple version of the five-step Daily Examen that St. Ignatius practiced:
    1. Become aware of God’s presence.
    2. Review the day with gratitude.
    3. Pay attention to your emotions.
    4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.
    5. Look toward tomorrow.
  - You may want to make use of the app “*Reimagining the Examen*” by Loyola Press which is available on the app store for iOS and the Play story for android. The icon is above.<sup>2</sup>



**Circle which experiments you will try out and/or write your own custom experiments here.**

---

---

---

You may want to set reminders on your phone to help you remember your chosen exercise.

**Sign or Initial here:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Take this sheet with you as a reminder.**

---

1. Adapted from the Monk Warriors Website:  
<https://monkwarriors.wordpress.com/2015/10/28/examen-and-integrity/>

2. App Store Link for iOS: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/reimagining-the-examen/id1065042173?mt=8> Play Store Link for Android:  
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.gmail.dtaylor.loyola.DailyExamen&hl=en>

## APPENDIX C

## “Go The Extra Mile”

**Suggestions for ways to engage the experiment for weeks four and five for  
“Go The Extra Mile”<sup>1</sup>**

The experiment for weeks four and five emerges from Matthew 5:38-42.

The experiment has several ways one might engage it:

- **Go The Extra Mile - *In Service*:** Do the chore in your house/dorm room/common area that no one wants to do, e.g., cleaning the bathroom, washing dishes, pick up trash that is not picked up. At mealtimes, place a special emphasis on serving others and placing their needs above your own. Examples: keep an eye out for people eating alone and invite them to join you; offer drink refills to the people you are eating with; clear their place; pick up napkins or silverware from the floor.
- **Go The Extra Mile - *In Hard Friendships*:** Be especially attentive to the people in your life who are emotionally needy or hard to listen to and spend time with them. Give them your attention, your compassion, and your presence. Our conversations will be marked by talking less about ourselves, refraining from personal boasting, and using our words to encourage others.
- **Go The Extra Mile - *In Our Attention and Presence with Everyone*:** Don’t multitask in interpersonal relations. Ask the question “*really?*” when people tell you they are doing fine and see what happens.
- **Go The Extra Mile - *With your Possessions*:** “Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.” – Matthew 5:42. Experiment with taking this teaching as literally as possible for the next two weeks. For example: Give a dollar the homeless person begging. Let your roommate borrow your car for the afternoon. See how it affects you.
- **Go The Extra Mile - *Take the Lowest Position*:** Instead of seeking to be first, look for opportunities to be last: as you check out of the grocery store, while selecting a parking place, etc.
- **Go The Extra Mile - *Pray for a Friend*:** At least once in the next two weeks, ask someone (who is not in UCM) if you can pray for them, and then stop and pray with them/over them right then and there.

**Circle which experiments you will try out and/or write your own custom experiments here.**

---



---



---

You may want to set reminders on your phone to help you remember your chosen exercise.

**Sign or Initial here:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Take this sheet with you as a reminder.**

---

1. Adapted from the Monk Warriors Website:  
<https://monkwarriors.wordpress.com/2015/09/30/the-lowest-position-and-the-second-mile/>

## APPENDIX D

### “Staying Awake to God’s Presence”

#### **Suggestions for ways to engage the experiment for weeks six and seven for “Staying Awake to God’s Presence”<sup>1</sup>**

The experiment for weeks six and seven emerges from Matthew 6:25-34, with special focus on Matthew 6:33. Jesus tells us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and trust that God will provide us with all that we need (Matthew 6:33).

The experiment has several ways one might engage it:

- **“Five Single Minutes”** Take one minute, five times each day, to acknowledge God’s presence and refocus on God. If you want to be successful with this, you might consider setting reminders on your phone.
- **“Game With Minutes”** - Play a game where in an “uncomplicated” hour, see how many times you can remember God’s presence each minute for 1 hour. An example of an “uncomplicated” hour may be when you are jogging, washing dishes, pulling weeds, mowing the lawn, or engaging in any semi-mindless task.
- **“Palms Down, Palms Up”** – Begin with your palms down and release everything weighing you down to God. Let it fall from your hands. After some time flip your palms up and receive God’s love. Use these physical prompts and prayer style to remain awake to God’s presence in your life.
- **“Aware of God’s Love Before You Get out of Bed”** - For many people an “uncomplicated” time is just after they wake up. Experiment with becoming aware of God’s presence before you get out of bed each morning. You may begin with only one minute, but may eventually stretch it to 5, 10, or 15 minutes.
- **“Strategically Placed Reminders”** – Set some physical object as reminders to wake back up to God’s presence. Perhaps sticky notes which you move often so they don’t become wallpaper, a piece of jewelry, a rubber band on your wrist, a stone or cross in your pocket, reminders on your phone or computer.

---

1. Appendix D comes from *Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now* by Greg Boyd. Participants will be given some excerpts from his book to use as experiment in “Practicing the Present of God” or “Staying awake to God’s presence.” Boyd provides a several exercises at the end of each chapter in his book. The “Five Single Minutes” experiment comes from Monks Warriors Webpage: <https://monkwarriors.wordpress.com/2017/02/23/practicing-the-presence-of-god/>

- **“Do Everything For The Lord”** - As you engage in any task, commit to doing it for God. As you begin or carry out your task, say, “I offer this task up to you Lord” or “This present moment is all that matters, and I offer it up to you.” For example, a monk named Brother Lawrence washed dishes for the Lord.
- **“Think in Terms of ‘WE’”** – Instead of having private thoughts, see your thoughts as a conversation with Jesus Christ. Instead of thinking “What should I do?” think what would you have me do? Develop the habit of thinking as a conversation with God rather than only talking to yourself.
- **“The Primary Goal of Every Social Activity”** – Frame all social activity as an exercise in Christlike love. Make your primary goal to love the people you encounter as Jesus would. Remember to stay awake to the fact that God loves each person you interact with so much that Jesus died to redeem them.
- **“Observing Your Mind and Heart”** – Try to observe when you think something negative about yourself or your neighbor. While observing the negative thought, remember you are immersed in God’s ever-present love. See if anything changes when you observe the negative thoughts in light of God’s loving presence.
- **“Silencing the Accuser”** – When you realize you are judging someone, don’t get angry with yourself, but use your judgment as a sort of sticky note reminder to remember it is not to judge but to remain aware of God’s love for each person. Use the feelings of judgment as a reminder to not judge but love.
- **“Volunteer for the Worst-Sinner Award”** – Usually unconsciously we believe we are better than other people. Instead try to be like Paul, confess that we are the worst of sinners for whom Jesus died (1 Timothy 1:15-16) If we humbly acknowledge our sins, we will be less judgmental. Acknowledge the beam in our own eye, before comparing it to the speck in someone else’s eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

**Circle which experiments you will try out and/or write your own custom experiments here.**

---



---



---

\*You may want to set reminders on your phone to help you remember your chosen exercise.

**Sign or Initial here:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Take this sheet with you as a reminder.**

## APPENDIX E

### Journal Prompts for Weeks 3 through 8

Journal prompt for week three:

1. How did your experiment with **Deep Integrity and Examen** from Matthew 5:33-37 go this week? If possible, you are invited to share both “successes” and “failures.”
2. Based upon your reflection this week, how do you plan to continue experimenting with **Deep Integrity and Examen** from Matthew 5:33-37 in the upcoming week? Describe any specific situations or plans you may have.

Journal prompt for week four:

1. How did your experiment with **Deep Integrity and Examen** from Matthew 5:33-37 go this week? If possible, you are invited to share both “successes” and “failures.”

Journal prompt for week five:

1. How did your experiment with **The Lowest Position and the Second Mile** from Matthew 5:38-42 go this week? If possible, you are invited to share both “successes” and “failures.”
2. Based upon your reflection this week, how do you plan to continue experimenting with **The Lowest Position and the Second Mile** from Matthew 5:38-42 in the upcoming week? Describe any specific situations or plans you may have.

Journal prompt for week six:

1. How did your experiment with **The Lowest Position and the Second Mile** from Matthew 5:38-42 go this week? If possible, you are invited to share both “successes” and “failures.”



Journal prompt for week seven:

1. How did your experiment with **Staying Awake To God's Presence** from Matthew 6:33 go this week? If possible, you are invited to share both "successes" and "failures."
2. Based upon your reflection this week, how do you plan to continue experimenting with **Staying Awake To God's Presence** from Matthew 6:33 in the upcoming week? Describe any specific situations or plans you may have.

Journal prompt for week eight:

1. How did your experiment with **Staying Awake To God's Presence** from Matthew 6:33 go this week? If possible, you are invited to share both "successes" and "failures."
2. Looking back on all the experiments you have done, which were the **most meaningful and spiritually impacting**? Describe why. In general, what did you like or enjoy about the Jesus Dojo?
3. Looking back on all the experiments you have done which were the **hardest to practice** throughout the week? Describe why. In general, what did you not like or enjoy about the Jesus Dojo?
4. Do you think you will **continue any** of the experiments in the future? If so, why and which ones?
5. If you were to shoulder tap six friends to **start a new Jesus dojo**, what do you think would happen?

## APPENDIX F

### Session 1-8 Outlines

#### **Session 1 – Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Lectio Divina – Matthew 7:24-29 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between. (6-7 minutes total)
2. Watch Jesus Dojo Film – (4 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBn82MdM4pk>
3. Watch Randy Harris Film from Living Jesus Study on Matthew 7:24-29 – (14 minutes)
4. Pass out activity sheets for 1<sup>st</sup> week as an example of the “experiments”
  - a. “Deep Integrity and Examen”- The experiment for weeks two and three emerges from Matthew 5:33-37.
  - b. “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” - The experiment for weeks four and five emerges from Matthew 5:38-42.
  - c. “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” - The experiment for weeks six and seven emerges from Matthew 6:25-34, with special focus on Matthew 6:33. Jesus tells us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and trust that God will provide us with all that we need (Matthew 6:33).
5. Pass out and talk about the Consent Forms. Emphasis commitment to coming consistently to the meetings if possible.
6. Close in prayer

---

Lectio Divina – Matthew 7:24-29 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between

24“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” 28And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

## Session 2 – Wednesday, January 25, 2017

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Lectio Divina – Matthew 5:33-37 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between. (6-7 minutes total)
2. Watch Jesus Dojo Film – (4 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBn82MdM4pk>
3. Watch Randy Harris Film from Living Jesus Study on Matthew 5:33-37 – (16 minutes)
4. Pass out activity sheets for 1<sup>st</sup> week as an example of the “experiments”
  - a. “Deep Integrity and Examen”- The experiment for weeks two and three emerges from Matthew 5:33-37.
  - b. “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” - The experiment for weeks four and five emerges from Matthew 5:38-42.
  - c. “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” - The experiment for weeks six and seven emerges from Matthew 6:25-34, with special focus on Matthew 6:33. Jesus tells us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and trust that God will provide us with all that we need (Matthew 6:33).
5. Pass out and talk about the Consent Forms (Emphasis commitment to coming consistently to the meetings if possible.)
6. Close in prayer

Lectio Divina – Matthew 5:33-37 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between

33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ 34But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; 35or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

### Session 3 – Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Lectio Divina – Matthew 6:25-34. Read 4 times. Pause 45 Seconds in between. Then discuss.
2. Do Journal for week 3 about “Deep Integrity and Examen” experiments from last week.
3. Discuss - “Deep Integrity and Examen” - The experiments for week three from Matthew 5:33-37.
4. Mention upcoming “experiments” for weeks 4 & 5 and 6 & 7:
  - a. “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” - The experiment for weeks four and five emerges from Matthew 5:38-42.
  - b. “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” - The experiment for weeks six and seven emerges from Matthew 6:25-34, with special focus on Matthew 6:33. Jesus tells us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and trust that God will provide us with all that we need (Matthew 6:33).
5. If needed pass out and talk about the Consent Forms (Emphasis commitment to coming consistently to the meetings if possible.)
6. Close in prayer

---

Lectio Divina – Matthew 5:33-37 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between

33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ 34But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; 35or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

#### **Session 4 – Wednesday, February 8, 2017**

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Scripture reading from Matthew 5:33-37.
2. Do Journals for week 4 about Deep Integrity & Examen experiments from last week.
3. Lectio Divina – Matthew 5:38-42 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between. (6-7 minutes total)
  - a. Discuss
4. Watch “Going the Extra Mile” Video – (6 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyiDi1NmRf0>
5. Pass out and discuss - “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” - The experiments for weeks four and five from Matthew 5:38-42.
6. Mention upcoming “experiments” for weeks 6 & 7:  
 “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” - The experiment for weeks six and seven emerges from Matthew 6:25-34, with special focus on Matthew 6:33. Jesus tells us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and trust that God will provide us with all that we need (Matthew 6:33).
7. If needed pass out and talk about the Consent Forms (Emphasis commitment to coming consistently to the meetings if possible.)
8. Close in prayer

Lectio Divina – Matthew 5:38-42 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 - 60 Seconds in between

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’

39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.

If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.

41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.

42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

**Session 5 – Wednesday, February 15, 2017**

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Lectio Divina – Matthew 5:38-42 Read 4 times, Pausing 45-60 Seconds in between. Discuss.
2. Do Journal for week 4 about “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” experiments from last week.
3. Discuss - “Deep Integrity and Examen” - The experiments for week four from Matthew 5:38-42.
4. Mention upcoming “experiments” for weeks 6 & 7:
  - a. “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” - The experiment for weeks six and seven emerges from Matthew 6:25-34, with special focus on Matthew 6:33.
  - b. Jesus tells us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and trust that God will provide us with all that we need (Matthew 6:33).
5. If needed pass out and talk about the Consent Forms (Emphasis commitment to coming consistently to the meetings if possible.)
6. Close in prayer

Lectio Divina – Matthew 5:38-42 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 - 60 Seconds in between  
 38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’

39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.

If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.

41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.

42 Give to the one who asks you,

and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

## Session 6 – Wednesday, February 22, 2017

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Scripture reading from Matthew 5:38-42. (NIV)

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ 39But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

7. Do Journal for week 6 about “The Lowest Position and the Second Mile” experiments from last week. Discussion after journal.
8. Lectio Divina – Matthew 6:25-34 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between. Discuss.
9. Presentation and Discussion over the Introduction & Chapter 1 of *Present Perfect: Finding God in the Now* by Gregory A. Boyd. (Approximately 30 minutes) Discuss.
10. Hand out and discuss - “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” - The experiments for weeks six and seven from Matthew 6:25-34.
11. If needed pass out and talk about the Consent Forms. (Emphasis commitment to coming consistently to the meetings if possible.)
12. Close in prayer

### Lectio Divina      Matthew 6:19-34      (NIV)

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



**Session 7 – Wednesday, March 1, 2017**

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Open with prayer requests & prayer
2. Scripture reading from John 15:1-5, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Romans, 12:1-5. (NIV)
3. Lectio Divina – Matthew 6:25-34 Read 4 times, Pausing 45 Seconds in between. Discuss.
4. Do Journal for week 7 about “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” experiments from last week.
5. Discuss - “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” - The experiments for week seven from Matthew 6:25-34.
6. If needed pass out and talk about the Consent Forms. (Emphasis thanks for their commitment & encourage them to come next week if possible.)
7. Ask guest observer and teacher (Dr. Earl Lavender) to speak to the group.
8. Ask Dr. Lavender to close session in prayer

**Lectio Divina          Matthew 6:25-34      (NIV)**

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**Session 8 – Wednesday, March 8, 2017**

Begin at 8:00 pm

1. Open with prayer requests & prayer
2. Lectio Divina – Matthew 7:24-29 Read 4 times, pausing 45 Seconds in between. Discuss.
3. Scripture reading: Read Matthew 6:25-34 once.
4. Do one journal question for week 8 “Staying Awake to God’s Presence” experiments from last week. Discuss.
5. Do journal for four additional conclusion questions. Discuss.
6. If needed, hand out and discuss the Consent Forms. (Emphasis my thanks for their commitment to the Jesus Dojo!)
7. Close in prayer

---

**Lectio Divina**      **Matthew 7:24-29**      (NIV)      Session 8      March 8, 2017  
*We will read 4 times, pausing 45 seconds in between.*

24"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man

who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds

blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a

foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27And the rain fell, and the floods came,

and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." 28

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for

he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

## APPENDIX G

### Field Note Protocol

ACU IRB# \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Approval \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Date of Expiration 12/31/2017

### Field Note Protocol During Session

Date:                      Time:                      Session #:

Project Leader's <i>Field Notes</i> During Session	Project Leader's <i>Personal Reflections</i> During Session

ACU IRB# \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Approval \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Date of Expiration 12/31/2017

## Field Note Protocol While Reviewing The Video Recording

Date:

Time:

Session #:

Project Leader's <i>Field Notes</i> While Reviewing The Video Recording	Project Leader's <i>Personal Reflections</i> While Reviewing The Video Recording

## BRIEF VITA

Jonathan Andrew Gann

I began working as the college minister at University Church of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in August of 2013. I grew up as a preacher's son and was the youngest of three brothers. After graduating Mars Hill Bible School in 2001, a K-12 Church of Christ school in Florence, Alabama, I attended Harding University, where I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Bible and religion. After Harding, I continued my education by completing a Master of Divinity from Abilene Christian University Graduate School of Theology, in Abilene, Texas.

My ministry experience before working as campus minister at University Church of Christ was primarily in youth ministry. After graduating from Harding, I served as an interim youth minister at Bammel Church of Christ in Houston, Texas. Upon completion of my Master of Divinity, my wife and I moved to Fairburn, Georgia, a southern suburb of Atlanta, where I served as the campus minister at Arlington Christian School, a K-12 school. My next ministry job was working as a youth minister at Southern Hills Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. I went from Southern Hills to the ministry position as the college minister at University Church of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.