The Evangelism & Discipleship Pathway

“Toward Realizing the Vision...
Welcome to First Baptist Church of Cambridge, Minnesota! We are taking people on a journey along The Evangelism and Discipleship Pathway (“The Pathway” for short). Our destination? Realizing our 2025 Vision! Why are we doing this? To bring glory to God!

This journey is an adventure of a lifetime. The central person we will encounter is our Lord Jesus Christ. The central events on our journey are His death and resurrection. Our route is one in which every person in the world has navigated to some degree, yet there are only a few who take the less traveled Pathway toward Christ-likeness. Will you? You may say “I’m too busy,” and you may be correct. So let’s use our time wisely as we eagerly await the imminent Second Coming of Jesus Christ! As Jesus urgently declared, “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done” (Rev. 22:12).

There are two segments in our journey along The Pathway. First, The Evangelism Pathway leads people who have yet to experience the forgiveness of sins to travel toward the foot of the Cross. Second, The Discipleship Pathway leads people who have been forgiven of sins to be living life by the power of the Cross and His Resurrection: to be living for Jesus. As we experience this journey together, we will encounter various spiritual maturity Stages along The Pathway. To make progress with one another in our pilgrim’s journey, we will focus on 3 Core Areas that serve as “catalysts” by the Holy Spirit in driving us forward along The Pathway. These 3 are…

1. Being Faith-Filled
2. Having a Loving Lifestyle

So as we move forward along The Pathway by maturing toward Christ-likeness in our faith, our love, and our witness, we pray that the First Baptist Vision will become a reality, “…And we will hand down to the next generation of Christ-followers at First Baptist another chapter of faithful obedience along with endless stories of the power of God doing immeasurably more than all we could have ever asked or imagined.”

“Are you ready to begin? … As Jesus said, ‘Come, and follow Me!’”
“The Mission, Vision, and The Pathway of First Baptist are all centered on Jesus Christ because apart from Him we can do nothing (see John 15:5). Join us on the adventure of a lifetime as we follow Christ together!” First Baptist Lead Pastor Jared Gustafson

- “(Jesus) said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me’” (Luke 9:23).

So Discipleship is not optional, as theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer has stated: “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”

Therefore…

- **The Purpose of Discipleship** at First Baptist is to help people know, love, and become like Jesus as we courageously follow Him in moving forward in realizing our Vision.

- **Disciples at First Baptist** are children, youth, and adults who know, love, and are becoming like Jesus as we courageously follow Him in moving forward in our roles—together—in realizing our Vision.
• As each person is moving forward on The Pathway by means of the 3 Core Areas, the Mission of First Baptist is being achieved: “Helping people Know, Love, and Become like Jesus.” Progressing along The Pathway is not just about becoming more moral or law abiding.

• The guiding principle for our 3 Core Areas is: “As we seek God, He will form us to become increasingly Christ-like and to be family to everyone who needs family.”

• The method by which we equip the people of First Baptist in the 3 Core Areas is Discipleship, specifically through a Discipleship Team of people and ministries who carry out Ephesians 4:11-16, namely, “to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:12, emphasis added).

• The emphasis of the “works of service” is to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach people to obey the commands of Christ (see Matt. 28:18-20).

• The desired impact of achieving First Baptist’s Mission is the realization of our Vision in terms of our ultimate contribution into our community and beyond.

• Every year a new “Yearly Focus” of our Vision will direct First Baptist in an area key to realizing the Vision. We will measure our progress as a church toward realizing our Vision based on achieving our “Yearly Focus” goals.

All Scripture in this booklet is taken from the New International Version except where noted.
Let’s check out these 3 Core Areas in greater detail...
God is always about building our faith in Him, His purposes, and His ways. The Bible says, “Our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged” (2 Cor 10:15b, ESV), so there is also a correlation between our growing faith and our influence in the community for the Gospel.

The importance of faith is seen in Hebrews 11:6, as the Bible says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” and also in Galatians 5:6b, that “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” Abraham’s faith is seen as a great example (see Romans 4:20-21), and Jesus is the source of this faith, as He says, “Come to Me” (Matt 11:28); apart from abiding in Him we can do nothing (see John 15:5).

Finally, Colossians 2:6-8 encourages us to be strengthened in our faith, and the wisdom of Proverbs, chapter 3 verses 5-6, challenges us to “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Our faith in God and His Word is the key in impacting people for eternity.
1. Faith-Filled - as demonstrated by the following 3 Key Impact Points...

- **A fully engaged, joyful, and humble life of worship under the Lordship and grace of Jesus Christ. Goals include…**
  - I am growing in my knowledge of God, of His purposes, of His ways, in His truth, and in my understanding of who I am in Christ as a child of God.
  - I reveal my love for God by repenting of sins and self-centered living and voluntarily surrender all of my life to God's loving leadership.

- **An abiding, maturing friendship with Jesus Christ that is developed through devoting time with Him in the Scriptures, prayer, solitude, other spiritual disciplines, and also in accountable friendships of trust in environments of grace. Goals include…**
  - Through my daily time with God in spiritual disciplines, I have come to know Christ personally. My faith and obedience are being increased and strengthened, as my character becomes increasingly Christ-like.
  - In developing my relationship with Christ, I have at least one Christian friend in my life with whom I share accountability, complete openness and honesty.

- **An adventurous and meaningful spiritual journey that is reflected by a bold and growing faith that consistently seeks to be Spirit-led while finding creative ways to fulfill the will of God. Goals include…**
  - I know my location, direction, and am progressing in my journey on The Pathway. As I progress, I am being transformed.
  - I am deliberately stepping out of my comfort zone in faith, obedience, and love for God and regularly attempting new things as the Spirit leads.
Why a Loving Lifestyle?

The number one lesson in life is learning how to love. In John 15:12, Jesus says, “Love each other as I have loved you.” Matthew 22:37-39, gives us the Great Commandments to “Love the Lord your God… love your neighbor,” and in 1 Cor. 16:14, we are encouraged to “Do everything in love.” Ephesians 5:1, tells us to “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

So we’ll seek to love authentically—from the heart—with compassion, radical mercy, and genuine concern and empathy in the needs and hurts of people (Mt. 9:36, 14:14, Rom. 5:8, & 1 Cor. 13): we provide the love as He transforms the life.

As Jesus says in John 13:34-35: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” A “Loving Lifestyle” leads into being a “Winsome Witness” as the authentic love we have for others will show that we are God’s people, His disciples.
2. Loving Lifestyle – as demonstrated by the following 3 Key Impact Points…

- **Compassionately Caring from the heart of Jesus through radical and sacrificial love, authentic “Life-on-Life” relationships, and generous living. Goals include…**
  - Through friendships of trust in environments of grace, I have sought to fully live out the command of Christ to love others with my time, talents, and treasure, as “love” is the ultimate sign of true discipleship.
  - There is a reduction in social problems and a measurable increase of people coming to Jesus Christ and experiencing peace, purpose, provision, and freedom in Christ.

- **Unleashing Mercy and Hope toward people we know and people in our community whom God leads us to, being open to long-term friendships. Goals include…**
  - I have been trained in providing Christian care for someone who is going through relational, emotional, physical, and/or spiritual challenges and am applying the principles as the Spirit leads.
  - Through the use of my spiritual gifts, I am actively involved in a Christian ministry or community service that seeks to impact the lives of others.

- **Maintaining a team player mentality in which all people and all ministries humbly seek the greater good through Christ-centered, God-dependent unity and alignment toward realizing God’s Vision for us. Goals include…**
  - I intentionally seek to live together in unity with my brothers and sisters at First Baptist and actively seek to help people and ministries live in harmony with our Vision.
  - From understanding and reflecting upon God’s redemptive story, I have learned through observation and by experience what it means to be family so that I can extend God’s redemptive story by being family to those who need family.
God is on a mission, and the mission of God includes His Church. Jesus says in Acts 1:8 that “You will be my witnesses”: we are not called “to” witness, but to “be” Christ’s witnesses as a witness for Jesus is who I am to the core of my being. This is not optional but is essential in maturing toward Christ-likeness.

If we are truly “Faith-Filled” by humbly surrendering to God, and if we have a “Loving Lifestyle” by meeting the needs of others with compassion and mercy, then we can step out with boldness into an unbelieving world and witness for Christ like nobody has ever seen done before in this town, county, region, and beyond. We will witness by our actions AND our words (Rom. 10:14-17, Gal. 3:5) and will put extreme pressure on the power of darkness (Acts 26:15-20, Col. 1:13).

Why be Christ’s witnesses? Because God wants all people to repent and be saved (see 1 Tim. 2:4 & 2 Pet. 3:9). But how do we witness? “Winsomely.” By a prayerful, engaging, thoughtful, and appealing manner, we are building on our “Loving Lifestyle” approach in seeking to understand others and in helping to meet their needs (see 1 Cor. 9:22-23). Then, under the authority of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, we’ll seek to complete the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 and “make disciples.”
3. Winsome Witness – as demonstrated by the following 3 Key Impact Points...

- A prayerful life that seeks to thoughtfully help neighbors and others in our sphere of influence. Goals include…
  - I am living out my role as a prayer warrior on behalf of others, both for Christians and for non-Christians.
  - I have willingly made sacrifices in my life in order to bless others.

- A heart of empathy that seeks first to understand others and why they believe what they do, then to be understood. Goals include …
  - I seek to get to know another person through active listening to their story so that I can better understand them, and then, as the Spirit leads, I seek to share my story, which leads to God’s story.
  - I have been trained in how to answer objections to the Christian faith with gentleness and respect.

- A courageous, Spirit-led life that intentionally seeks to invest into the lives of people, both locally and globally, being part of God’s plan to rescue them from the power of darkness and bring them into the eternal Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Goals include…
  - I have been trained in how to lead people to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and I apply this training as the Spirit leads.
  - I have been trained on how to disciple another person, and I apply this training as the Spirit leads.
The following points are listed to further help in understanding The Pathway:

- The ministries of First Baptist will be aligned to collaborate and complement one another in Evangelism and Discipleship as we seek to realize our Vision.

- When poor health becomes a limiting factor in a Christian's life, many of the active practices can no longer be done. Not being able—as opposed to not being willing—must be taken into account as you gauge where you are on The Discipleship Pathway.

- Guiding non-Christians in moving forward along The Evangelism Pathway typically occurs when non-Christians' misconceptions of the Christian faith are clarified and further understood; for example: we are saved by grace through faith and not by works (see Ephesians 2:8-9). Another way they move forward is when reasons to reject the Christian faith are reconsidered and their objections are discarded and no longer considered valid (see Phil. 3:1-11).

- A forgiven person does not have to first proceed through Discipleship Stages 7-10 in order to spend Eternity with Christ (#11). At any point on The Discipleship Pathway, a forgiven person can die and be with Jesus.

- People can travel from the Awareness Stage (#1) straight to the Receptive Stage (#3), thereby skipping the Resistance Stage (#2). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit can bring people along The Evangelism Pathway to the Ready Stage (#6) in a very short amount of time.

- Living at the Christ-likeness Stage (#10), although a worthy—and Biblical—aim, is only fully possible in our glorified, sin-free bodies in Eternity with Christ (#11). 1 John 3:2, reads as follows: “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Since Christ has not yet appeared, we cannot be fully like Him.
The following are the 11 Stages, numbered from 1 to 11 with their corresponding definitions and descriptions of involvement. The first segment, The Evangelism Pathway, has 6 distinct Stages.
In Stages 1 - 6, God is at work in some of the following ways:

- General Revelation in Nature and in People’s Consciences (see Ps. 19:1 and Rom. 1:19-20 & 2:12-16).
- God is searching for people who are seeking Him (see 2 Chron. 16:9a, Ps. 14:1-3, Jn. 4:23, Acts 17:27, 30).
- He is drawing non-Christians toward Christ (see John 6:65).
- He is bringing conviction of sin, Christ’s righteousness, and coming judgment (see John 16:8-11).

First Baptist has a vital role to carry out in God’s mission to non-Christians.

We are being equipped to carry out the Vision and the Mission of First Baptist. Building Christ-like disciples who are Faith-Filled, have a Loving Lifestyle, and seek to be Winsome Witnesses is what we will aim to do. These 3 Core Areas are integral in equipping the disciples of First Baptist to come alongside non-Christians and to help them move closer on their journeys to the foot of the cross. Also by offering classes that specifically help people navigate through life, such as marriage classes, money management, Seekers & Finders Bible studies, we will seek to draw non-Christians to Christ and His people by the power of the Holy Spirit.
• In our friendships with non-Christians, there are two things we need to know: 1) What does my friend know and understand about Jesus Christ? and 2) How open is my friend to change? As non-Christians go through their own unique Spiritual Journeys, they must be approached differently depending on where they are along The Evangelism Pathway. Scripture tells us to be Winsome in our Witness as well as wise: “Be wise in the way you act with people who are not believers, making the most of every opportunity. When you talk, you should always be kind and pleasant so you will be able to answer everyone in the way you should” (Col 4:5-6, NCV).

• Pray for unsaved friends regularly (see Romans 10:1). Following the principles of BlessMN to “Adopt Your Street in Prayer” (www.blessmn.org) will lead to making new relationships. In your prayers, ask God to draw people to Christ, to create an opportunity to share your faith, and to give you the courage to share your faith.

• An effective way to determine where people are spiritually is to ask them questions. This includes asking for permission to keep sharing with them. However, it is crucial to be a good listener as you first get to know them and their life stories.

• Seek to build genuine friendships, do fun things together, and be patient and wait for God to work in their lives. Don’t tell people what to believe, especially young adults who often say, “Help me seek and find what I believe.”

• It is good to follow the words from Paul as paraphrased in The Message: “Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized-whoever. I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ- but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life” (1 Cor. 9:19-22, MSG).
The following 11 Stages include descriptions of a person who is at each Stage. Underneath these descriptions are a few simple ideas of what a Faith-Filled Christian can do to Love and Witness to a non-Christian who is at that particular Stage.
1- Awareness Stage

“I realize that there is much in the world that is difficult or even impossible to explain apart from the existence of a supreme being.” Every person has some level of realization of divine existence. They may say, “I believe in a god but I don’t know who this god is.”

A Christian’s Loving Lifestyle and Winsome Witnessing Role at this Stage is Sowing:

- It is key to understand what the Bible says about this Stage: “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:19-20, ESV).
- Seek to build on their current awareness of a supreme being in order to bring about an openness and a desire to learn more about the Creator: the one true God of the Bible.
- A misconception that may need to be cleared up is that many different gods exist.
- Rejection of the fact of the God of the Bible may lead to resistance or open rebellion against God and the Church.
2 - Resistant Stage

“I have heard of the God of the Bible, but I am not open to Him.” Although some people bypass this Stage, people who are in the Resistant Stage have some knowledge of the God of the Bible, yet are not open to learn. People could be described as self-satisfied, skeptical, unaffected, spiritually apathetic, agnostic, atheistic, or openly rebellious and contentious against God, the Church, and the Bible. They may say, “I think religion is a crutch for weak people.”

A Christian’s Loving Lifestyle and Winsome Witnessing Role at this Stage is Sowing:

- Realize that some people we might think are Resistant are actually just uninformed of the gospel or they’ve never heard it in terms they can understand.

- What not to do: Do not argue with them. Paul’s advice for people is noteworthy as you patiently pray for and keep your cool with Resistant people:

  “Don’t get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. The Lord’s servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will believe the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants” (2 Tim. 2:23-26, NLT).
3-Receptive Stage

“I am somewhat curious about Christianity and would like to know more about Jesus. What I have heard about the Gospel seems pretty good, and I am beginning to wonder if my life has been missing something.” People at this Stage have shown the beginnings of interest in Christianity. They have begun to “Explore Christ” and the Christian faith. They have heard that Jesus is God’s Son, but do not really know what that means. They are asking questions about the Christian faith as they have become aware of an unmet need or spiritual void in life. They have more knowledge of the one true God and of the Bible. They may wonder, “I’m really fed up with the stress I’m under. Is there anything that can help?” They may also say things like, “I’ve recently been reading a book on spirituality.”

A Christian’s Loving Lifestyle and Winsome Witnessing Role at this Stage is Sowing:

- In an abbreviated manner so as not to overwhelm non-Christians, share your testimony of how Jesus has made a difference in your life, particularly as it relates to an area that you have in common with that person, such as overcoming an addiction or finding meaning and purpose in life.
- Tell them that you are praying for them.
- At this Stage, help to clarify who God is and that He is the one true God.
- You may also need to help them in reconsidering their rebellion against God.
- The words from Paul in describing the one living and true Creator God are as appropriate today as they were 2,000 years ago: “When I arrived here the other day, I was fascinated with all the shrines I came across. And then I found one inscribed, to the god nobody knows. I’m here to introduce you to this God so you can worship intelligently, know who you’re dealing with. The God who made the world and everything in it, this Master of sky and land, doesn’t live in custom-made shrines or need the human race to run errands for him, as if He couldn’t take care of Himself. He makes the creatures; the creatures don’t make him. Starting from scratch, He made the entire human race and made the earth hospitable, with plenty of time and space for living so we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find Him. He doesn’t play hide-and-seek with us. He’s not remote; He’s near” (Acts 17:23-27, MSG).
4- Consideration Stage

“I believe that I need to make a decision about either rejecting Christ or receiving Him as Savior and submitting to Him as Lord. First, I need to find out if Christianity is true and right, and if it is, I could see myself believing in Jesus.” At this Stage, people have begun to actively seek answers to questions or solutions to problems. They are continuing to “Explore Christ” and may even have begun to attend a church, but they are not involved. They begin to grasp the personal implications of the Gospel. As they are thinking deeply about the personal implications of receiving Christ as Savior as opposed to rejecting Him, there is further interest in discovering whether Christianity is true, is right for them. They consider the differences between themselves and believers and if becoming a Christian would be a change for the better. They still may say, “I think everyone will go to heaven” or “I consider myself spiritual, but committing to Christ at this time in my life is a move that I do not want to do right now.”
A Christian’s Loving Lifestyle and Winsome Witnessing Role at this Stage is Watering:

- A shift in roles from Sowing to Watering occurs. A believer now senses that sharing her own Spiritual Journey story in depth is appropriate. One way to lead into this conversation is the following: Ask non-Christians, “What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?” After listening and discussing what they said, ask them, “Can I share with you the best thing that has ever happened to me?” If they agree, share one or all of the following: a) When Jesus came into your life, which is your “Salvation Testimony”; b) the difference He has made in your life, such as giving you purpose in life, which is your “Difference Christ has Made in my Life Testimony”; and c) the assurance of heaven upon death.

- Ask them, “How can I best be praying for you?”

- Show them The Pathway map and ask them, “Where do you think you are on this Pathway? Why do you say that?”

- As the Holy Spirit leads, make a clear presentation of the gospel or give them appropriate Christian tracts or other reading materials. Key verses include John 3:16-17, 14:6, and Romans 6:23.

- Misconceptions that may need to be cleared up is in a misunderstanding of who Jesus Christ is and the implications of not receiving Christ as Savior.

- Rejection of the truth of Jesus may lead to the rejection of Christ being the only way to heaven, which may lead to rebellion against the gospel.

- If appropriate, invite them to your home for a meal; invite to a Sunday service or to a special event or ministry of First Baptist, such as Wednesday Night Suppers.

- Live out the Faith-Filled, Loving Lifestyle, and Winsome Witness words of Peter: “You must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ (1 Peter 3:15-16, NLT).
5 - Understanding Stage

“I imagine what it might be like to live life with Christ, and am trying to decide if that is a change that I want. I believe in God, but I still have a few questions about Jesus. I know how to become a Christian, and I think I eventually might.” At this Stage, people have a deep awareness of a void or personal need in their lives. They are openly “Exploring Christ,” and there is a recognition of what life with Christ would be like for them; therefore, there is a move toward an intention to act on their current understanding. They grasp how to become a Christian and are wrestling with their beliefs. They are struggling mostly with what they believe about Christ, not with belief in God. They read Scripture more intently & also begin to reflect upon it. They occasionally seek guidance and confession of sin in prayer. They may think, “Why do Christians seem joyful and at peace in areas that I am not? I need to change, but I’m still fearful of what that may involve.”

A Christian’s Loving Lifestyle and Winsome Witnessing Role at this Stage is Watering:

- Non-Christians need to clearly understand why and how to become a Christian.
- Help them see the benefits AND the costs of following Jesus.
- A misconception that may need to be cleared up is a misunderstanding of their personal need for a Savior from sin, death, and the devil. At this stage, help to clarify their need for Jesus as God’s Person to pay our penalty for our sins. Also help in reconsidering their potential rejection against the need. Another misconception is in a misunderstanding of how one becomes a Christian (e.g., being baptized does not make someone a Christian).
- Rejection of the truth of their personal spiritual need leads to rejection of Jesus as their personal Savior.
- Meet with or talk to him 1-2 times a month to help him grow spiritually.
- Begin to connect him to First Baptist by encouraging him to serve in an appropriate church ministry and/or attend a small group.
- Encourage him to faithfully attend weekend services.
6- Ready Stage

“I sense that God has prepared me to believe in Jesus and receive Him as Savior and Lord.” People’s hearts have been prepared by God to believe and receive Christ. A person may say, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).

A Christian’s Loving Lifestyle and Winsome Witnessing Role at this Stage is Reaping:

- A shift in roles from Watering to Reaping. By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, lead a person in a prayer of commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord. Just as Paul sought to lead people to the foot of the cross and receive Christ as their Savior through prayer, so should we: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).
God and His Role:

Regeneration. People are “born from above” as salvation is 100% the work of God in a person's life: God has made a new creation (see John 3:3, 2 Cor. 5:17, 1 Peter 1:22-23, Eph. 2:4-6, Col. 2:13, Titus 3:4-7). God saves all people from sin and death who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Upon receiving Christ, the new believer is declared justified by God as he has been freed from the penalty of sin, and he is now free to live for Jesus. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ and is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. Therefore he has…

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

“To all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). The new Christian has confessed and repented of sin and has saving faith in Christ. By the grace of God and power of the Holy Spirit, a person will say something like, “I turn from sin and believe!” He is free to now live for Jesus (see Col. 1:16).

Some Faith-Filled, Loving Lifestyle, and Winsome Witness catalysts that people in this Stage can be encouraged to mature to the next Discipleship Stage:

A shift in roles from Reaping to Discipleship.

- Celebrate the New Life in Christ!
- Walk through an “Assurance of Salvation” study with them.
- Encourage new Christians to connect and commit to a group or ministry at First Baptist and begin the journey on The Discipleship Pathway of becoming what God has already declared His children to be.
- Take them to a church service! Encourage baptism.
- Encourage them to share their new faith with their sphere of influence!
- Get them into some type of a Bible study. Start one if needed!
- Take to heart what Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi, “I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith” (Phil 1:25b, emphasis added).
First Baptist’s Role:

Discipleship. “(Jesus) said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me’” (Luke 9:23). In all the Discipleship Stages, God is freeing the believer from the power of sin in order to live for Jesus (see 2 Cor. 3:18, Eph. 4:11-16, Heb 5:13-14, Rom. 8:29, Gal. 4:19). Together, we seek the fulfillment of Colossians 1:28, ESV: “(Jesus Christ) we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” It’s a process of transformation as Jesus said, “I will make you”; Discipleship also has an application as Jesus concludes by telling His disciples that they will be made to “fish for people” (Matt. 4:19, NCV).
7 - Growing in Christ

“I believe in Jesus as my Savior and am working on what it means to get to know Him. I am becoming rooted in Christ and I am learning the core beliefs of the Christian faith. I am growing in understanding what it means to be Faith-Filled, have a Loving Lifestyle, and be a Winsome Witness, but I am hesitant to take my faith into the world that I live. I am beginning to repent of words and actions that reflect worldly living, so I am becoming ready for spiritual advances and for making an impact in the lives of others, especially in being family to those who need family.”

As they are young in the faith, unfamiliarity of Discipleship is still quite prevalent; they may say, “I need to pray regularly and read the Bible regularly? What? How would I do that?” or “Well, I’d join the Children’s Ministry, but no one’s ever asked me,” or “I’ll never be able to pray out loud around others.”

Some Faith-Filled, Loving Lifestyle, and Winsome Witness catalysts that people in this Stage can be encouraged to do to mature to the next Discipleship Stage:

- **Crucial:** Reading the Bible & meditating/reflecting on Scripture; continue seeking guidance in prayer.
- Giving tithes and offerings to the church; practicing times of solitude; evangelizing by having spiritual conversations with non-Christians; serving those in need on their own with authentic love; having regular discussions with spiritual mentors/encouragers.
- Some core beliefs that need to be a part of one’s life in order to mature:
  - God desires a personal relationship with His children; salvation by grace through faith; the authority of the Bible; and Christ being first (Lord) in life as He has the right to rule.
  - Begin to find one’s identity in Christ as opposed to listening to the lies of the devil or the world.
- Continue to follow-up with your newly saved friend. This can include discussions to answer any questions and to confirm the new Christian’s position in Christ.
- Seek to connect your believing friend into First Baptist. Encourage new Christians to commit to the Vision, get on The Pathway, and also share their own faith and build ongoing friendships with people who are in need of family.
Regressed in Christ, Stalled in Spiritual Journey, and/or Dissatisfied with the church

Although this part of a Christian’s Spiritual Journey does not have to occur, it can happen at any point along The Discipleship Pathway, especially in the earlier Stages. While there are many factors which can cause being regressed, stalled, and/or dissatisfied, there are certain characteristics that often occur in the life of one who struggles in their Journey.

- In the earlier Stages along The Discipleship Pathway, what may take place in the lives of Christians still in “infancy” is self-centeredness leading their thoughts, words, and actions.
- They are investing little time and effort in their faith.
- They are often overwhelmed by the pressures of life and don’t know what to do.
- They are often less connected to and disappointed in their local church.
- They are often trapped in unbiblical beliefs or worldly habits that are not part of their true Identity in Christ.

In their struggle, they may say the following:

a) “I don’t know if this church is meeting my needs anymore. Maybe I should go to a different church that does better.”

b) “I just do not have the desire to follow Jesus or go to church anymore.”

c) “I feel ‘stuck’ in my faith and don’t know what to do to get moving again.”

d) “No Christians should ever listen to hip-hop or rock. God disapproves of that kind of music.”

e) “I cannot overcome this sin, negative self-image, or destructive thought pattern in my life.”

Although these statements are legitimate concerns, people who have overcome these will be able to mature in their lives toward Christ-likeness. A catalyst that can help them once again get moving forward on The Discipleship Pathway is the following:

- Get these people involved with a group of people in an in-depth Bible study that speaks to the current need. These accountable “Life-on-Life” friendships of trust in environments of grace help fulfill what Paul wrote in 1 Thes. 5:11, ESV, “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”
8 - Close to Christ

“I feel really close to Christ and depend on Him daily for guidance. As I am being built up in Christ, I am seeking to make my relationship with Jesus more a part of my everyday life. I am confident in God’s presence and power. I am connecting with Him on a daily basis in my spiritual disciplines. I have shown more signs of spiritual transformation in defeating the power of various sins in my life as I live by the power of Christ. I am more involved in the life and ministry of First Baptist as we team-up and seek to realize our Vision.” At this Stage, rather than just thinking about what others can do for him, a Christian starts to compassionately care for others by being family to those in need of family. He is well on his way toward becoming mature in faith, love, and witness as he is getting out of his comfort zone and attempting new things for God. Further words that can be heard from him are, “Let’s go to the class on apologetics so that we can winsomely respond to our friends’ objections about the Bible,” or “I really want to go to Ukraine on a mission trip this summer to help grow the family of God. I know I’m ready for it. I know God has big plans for my life.”
Some Faith-Filled, Loving Lifestyle, and Winsome Witness catalysts that people in this Stage can be encouraged to do to mature to the next Discipleship Stage:

- **KEY:** Continue reading the Bible, meditating/reflecting on Scripture, and practicing solitude.
- Continue tithes and offering, daily prayer to confess sins and seek guidance, evangelism, having spiritual mentors, and in caring for others on my own with authentic love.
- Some core beliefs and practices that need to be a part of life in order to mature:
  - Continue to desire Christ to be first; to find my identity in Him; to live by the authority of the Bible; and to serve those in need of family through First Baptist and elsewhere with my spiritual gifts.
  - Begin to believe in surrendering all of their life to God's control and authority and humbly submitting everything that is important for the Lord Jesus Christ. Begin to believe in biblical stewardship because a Christian should not be driven by the pursuit of material things. Begin to attend additional teaching/worship services.
- Encourage your friend to discover their spiritual gifts for ongoing ministry. Through an accountable friendship, encourage one another in struggles and difficulties in life. Encourage and pray for one another and for people who are far away from God.
- Follow the admonition of Paul to Timothy in making disciples who make disciples: “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others” (2 Tim. 2:2, NLT).
9 - Christ-Centered

“My relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in my life. It guides everything I do. I feel I am living in Christ as I am equipped and actively involved in ministry and I have people I am actively evangelizing and discipling. A daily devotional life is an integral part of my day and it brings me a strong sense of contentment in all circumstances, along with a deep love for Jesus. Although I’m not unwilling to do so, I may need to be challenged more in loving others as I sometimes am uninspired and unmotivated. However, I feel that I still have much more to give in my life to my community and beyond. I seek to be led by the Spirit and will follow Him no matter what.” These people regularly make sacrifices for the gospel, are kingdom-centered and God-dependent. Further words that can be heard from such a person are, “I’m helping this guy at work as he asked me to mentor him. Pray for me as I spend time in the Word with him and train him how to make disciples,” or “Will you hold me accountable to lead daily devotionals with my kids? I get so busy that I’m not consistent with them.”

Some Faith-Filled, Loving Lifestyle, and Winsome Witness catalysts that people in this Stage can be encouraged to do to mature to the next Discipleship Stage:

Continue to encourage others on The Discipleship Pathway and building on “Christ-centered” beliefs and practices. The desire of Paul may serve as a guide:

“I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do. Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained (Phil 3:10-16).
10 - Christ-Likeness

“I know, love, and have become like Jesus. By God’s grace and power, my relationship with Jesus has reached complete maturity. I have attained to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. I have fully surrendered everything in my life to Jesus and have no anxiety or worries but rest contently and peacefully in His will. My identity is fully found in Christ and I abide in His love. I trust the Lord with all my heart and always obey His good, pleasing, and perfect will in all my decisions. I have thrown off everything that hinders my faith, love, and witness, as well as all sin that so easily entangles people. I am making disciples and teaching them. I am loving God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I am loving others just as Jesus loves me.”

• Yet, we agree with Paul from Philippians 3:12: “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”
11- Eternity with Christ

(The Lord Jesus Christ says) “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25:21). The Christian is now Glorified in the very presence of Christ. She has been freed from the very presence of sin and is now fully living for Jesus. (Of course, a Christian can die and then be Glorified at any time and at any Stage.)

God and His Role:

Glorification. God has freed the believer from the very presence of sin by putting to death the mortal body so that she can live for her Lord Jesus in glory.

First Baptist’s Role:

Celebration and Consoling. In the homegoing of the departed saint, a God-glorifying Memorial Service provides a celebration of life, consoling to the bereaved, and a gospel message to non-Christians. Seek to listen to and comfort friends and family still remaining. Regular check-ups with the remaining family and friends at appropriate intervals is a necessary part of ministry as is providing ongoing ministries to help them through the grieving process.
“Where Am I on The Pathway?”

In summary, we are asking the people of First Baptist to commit to growing in the 3 Core Areas of The Evangelism and Discipleship Pathway: Being Faith-Filled, having a Loving-Lifestyle, and being a Winsome-Witness. Through these catalysts we will move forward together in our relationship with Jesus along The Pathway. Ultimately, our movement toward Christ-likeness will allow us to begin realizing the Vision God has given First Baptist.

In gauging where you are at on The Pathway, a good start is…

1st) Your own prayerful self-reflection.
2nd) Ask a trusted friend, such as your accountability partner.
3rd) Go to www.revealforme.com and take some of their assessments for further reflection.
4th) The following self-assessment is another way; along with the Map, it is simply a tool for assessing at what Stage a person may be along The Discipleship Pathway; it can be taken on a yearly basis to gauge progress.

The following self-assessment is only for you to see, unless you decide to share it with others.

1. **Faith-Filled:**

   It can be said of me as the Bible says of Abraham in Romans 4:20-21, “Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised.” (Read Genesis 12-25, Acts 7:1-10, Romans 4, Galatians 3:6-9, and Hebrews 11:8-12 for more about Abraham.)

   1. This is always true of me. Christ-like
   2. This is almost always true of me. Christ-centered
   3. This is occasionally true of me. Close to Christ
   4. This is sometimes true of me. Growing in Christ
   5. This is rarely true of me/I’ve never really thought of this before. New in Christ
2. Loving Lifestyle:

Jesus could say of me that I reflect the command that He gave to His disciples in the Upper Room on the night before He was betrayed, as found in John 15:12-13. Jesus said, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (Read John 15:1-17 for the full context.)

1. This is always true of me. Christ-like
2. This is almost always true of me. Christ-centered
3. This is occasionally true of me. Close to Christ
4. This is sometimes true of me. Growing in Christ
5. This is rarely true of me/I’ve never really thought of this before. New in Christ

3. Winsome Witness

Jesus could say of me that I fulfill His commands to be His witness and to make disciples as found in Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:19. After His resurrection and before His ascension, Jesus said to His disciples that “you will be my witnesses” and to “go and make disciples.” (Read Acts 1:1-11 and Matthew 28:16-20, respectively, for the context.)

1. This is always true of me. Christ-like
2. This is almost always true of me. Christ-centered
3. This is occasionally true of me. Close to Christ
4. This is sometimes true of me. Growing in Christ
5. This is rarely true of me/I’ve never really thought of this before. New in Christ
“Where Am I Going and How will I Get There?”

Personal Pathway Planner for Discipleship

First Baptist Church, Cambridge, MN

Name: ______________________________________   Date: ______________________

(Jesus) said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

**The Purpose of Discipleship at First Baptist Church** is to help people know, love, and become like Jesus as we courageously follow Him in moving forward in realizing our Vision.

**Disciples at First Baptist Church** are children, youth, and adults who know, love, and are becoming like Jesus as we courageously follow Him in moving forward in our roles—together—in realizing our Vision.
Personal Pathway Planner for Discipleship

I. My Discipleship Lifestyle

As a child of God, I am already a saint, forever free from any condemnation, and am unconditionally loved, accepted, and secure in Christ. So until God takes me to the place He has prepared for me, my goal in this world is to be living out who God has already declared me to be. To help me in maturing toward Christ-likeness, First Baptist will focus on the following 3 Core Areas of the Evangelism and Discipleship Pathway: being Faith-Filled, having a Loving-Lifestyle, and being a Winsome-Witness. Although I do understand becoming more like Christ remains God’s exclusive activity and that the Holy Spirit is always active in the transformation process, the primary method by which He does this is by training His children through the church in a process called Discipleship (as shown in Eph. 4:11-16). It is a slow process, so it can’t be hurried; yet it is urgent, so it can’t be delayed. At First Baptist, the 3 Core Areas are the Discipleship “catalysts” that we focus on understanding and applying to our lives; as we do this we will move forward on The Pathway to achieve our Mission, which will lead to realizing the Vision God has given us.

Finally, although I admit that I’m not totally comfortable in what the future may have for me if I truly seek to let God have full control of my life—even just a little more control—I am willing to take small steps of faith as He leads. As I abide in Jesus and courageously follow Him in my Spiritual Journey, my prayer is that my life, as well as the lives of people I know, begins to look more Christ-like.
II. My Discipleship Growth Plan

First, assess what Stage you likely are in your Spiritual Journey (see page 33). Second, reflect on the following questions: How has God helped you mature in your faith, love, and witness? What are your fears about where God may be leading you or what he may be asking you to do? What Core Area is most difficult for you? Third, pray by asking for God's help in your Spiritual Journey, realizing that growing in your faith, love, and witness is His will for you (and remember Phil. 4:13, “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength”).

In community with others, I plan to intentionally focus my efforts in growing in Christ-likeness in the 3 Core Areas, their Key Impact Points, and their Goals through the following:

A. To grow in being Faith-Filled I will:

   1. Hindrances I will face and my plan to overcome is:

B. To grow in having a Loving Lifestyle I will:

   1. Hindrances I will face and my plan to overcome is:

C. To grow in being a Winsome Witness I will:

   1. Hindrances I will face and my plan to overcome is:
III. My Discipleship Partner

“Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble” (Prov. 17:17). As the Christian life is meant to be done together, I will seek accountable friendships of trust in environments of grace. Our goal is to be the kind of friends we need in order to move forward on The Discipleship Pathway and realize the Vision. Therefore, I have at least one Christian friend in my life whom I am accountable to, am completely open and honest with, and vice-versa.

**Name(s) of Person:**

In Romans 10:1, Paul wrote, “Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved.” As I desire to live a courageous, Spirit-led life that intentionally seeks to invest into the lives of people, I am praying for the following people to move forward on The Evangelism Pathway and to receive Christ as their Savior:

**Names of People:**

“Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds” (Heb. 10:24). As God has called us to make disciples, I am praying for the following Christians as I seek to be an Encourager to them in maturing in their Spiritual Journey down The Discipleship Pathway.

**Names of People:**
The following acknowledgments for their content in The Evangelism and Discipleship Pathway booklet and map include James Engel, Ed Stetzer, Frank Gray, Greg Hawkins, Cally Parkinson, Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, Robert Coleman, Mike Mckay, Mike Breen, Steve Smith, Dave Earley, Rod Dempsey, Gary Rohrmayer, Will Mancini, Neil Anderson, Jim Collins, Lifeway Church Resources, Willow Creek Association, Converge Worldwide, and more.
We are a church for all generations, committed to our Mission of Helping People Know, Love, and Become Like Jesus.