



Leadership Development Program

Our Purpose

The purpose of Grace Fellowship's Leadership Development program is to teach, train, and test men in the hands-on environment of a local church, in order to prepare and evaluate them for the possibility of future biblical eldership and church planting, either with Grace Fellowship or with another church or ministry (e.g., missions).

Our Emphasis

See appendix 1

Our Plan

Our plan is threefold:

1. **Teaching:** The elders of Grace Fellowship will provide instruction in matters of doctrine, evangelism, church practice, and biblical eldership. Teaching will rarely be in the form of lecture, but rather, most often, through discussions with the elders and other leaders. In addition, participants will be given reading, writing, and Scripture memory assignments, and may be required to attend or listen to specified Bible conferences or lectures.
2. **Training:** Participants will be given numerous opportunities to hone their teaching skills. These will most often be in the context of the elder/leadership meetings and home gatherings, but may also include teaching at our whole-church gatherings. Teaching and preaching will be evaluated and critiqued by the elders and others who can provide sound, pertinent input.
3. **Testing:** Participants will be required to attend a weekly meeting with one or more of the elders. The times and length of these meetings may vary. It will be helpful for trainees to have a somewhat flexible schedule. Participants will also be assigned the duties of planning, coordinating, and carrying out much of the necessary work involved in the various activities of the church. In this way they will not only serve the body of Christ and relieve the elders, but will also have the opportunity to demonstrate their eagerness to be found faithful in whatever tasks they are assigned.

Prerequisites

Because we will make a significant investment in a developing leader, not just anyone may be a part of the program. A prospective participant in the leadership development program must meet the following criteria:

1. He must be a member of Grace Fellowship for a minimum of six months before applying for the leadership development program.
Note: The only exception will be in the case of prospective interns who will be moving to our area for the purpose of internship. In such cases, membership with Grace Fellowship will still be required before entering the program, but the six-month period will be waived if the prospective intern can provide satisfactory written commendation (as defined in prerequisite #2).
2. He must obtain written commendations from three people (not family members) who are known and/or approved by the elders. These people must affirm their current and personal awareness of the applicant's character, enthusiasm, self-discipline, work ethic, teachable spirit, submission to leadership, cooperation with others, faithfulness in attendance and participation, etc.
3. He must be in complete agreement with Grace Fellowship's statement of faith. If there are points of doctrine that he does not fully understand, or with which he does not fully agree, he is required to disclose his differences and/or lack of understanding in writing before entering the program. The elders will review his written statements and determine whether or not his doctrinal differences and/or lack of understanding are significant enough to preclude him from teaching, in which case he would be ineligible for the intern program.
4. He must be in agreement with Grace Fellowship's vision and values, and our emphasis.
5. He must have a God-given desire, evident giftedness, and every intention, to dedicate his life to serving as a pastor, missionary, evangelist, church planter, Bible teacher, etc. Our investment in the training of interns is too significant to allow for those who merely want the experience or education.

Counting the Cost

Like all dedicated Christian ministry, leadership training will place certain necessary demands on a man and his family (e.g. time, energy, extra study, etc.). Men who are already excessively busy with school or work, or those who do not have the full and informed support of significant family members (specifically, wives) should not consider leadership training at this time.

Reading Requirements

Trainees will be required to read 2 books during each quarter (i.e. 2 books every three months). In order to promote cohort learning, all leaders will work through one mandatory book and Porterbrook Module. In addition, other suggested resources are recommended. After reading each book, the trainee must submit a written overview, no more than 2 pages in length (typed, single-spaced), which he will distribute and verbally summarize at one of the elder/leadership meetings. Participants must obtain their own books for these reading assignments.

1. The Supremacy of God

* Book. *The Prodigal God* by Tim Keller

(Porterbrook: The Real God for the Real World)

Book. *Desiring God* by John Piper

Book. *Vintage Jesus* by Mark Driscoll

Book. *The Pleasures of God* by John Piper

Book. *The Attributes of God* by A. W. Pink
Book. *The Holiness of God* by R. C. Sproul
Book. *Delighting in the Trinity* by Tim Chester
Booklet. "The Glory of the God Most High" by Murray McLellan
Book. *Who is God* by Mark Driscoll

2. The Supremacy of God in the Church

* Book. *Total Church* by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis (Porterbrook: Gospel Living)
* Book. *The Deliberate Church* by Mark Dever and Paul Alexander (Porterbrook: Missional Church & Church Planting)
Book. *Vintage Church* by Mark Driscoll
Book. *Confessions Of A Reformation Rev* by Mark Driscoll
Book. *A Journey in Purity* by Richard Belcher
Article. "Every Believer is a Minister" by Geoff Volker
Article. "Biblical Leadership and the New Covenant Priesthood" by Bill Knaub
Book. *Ministries of Mercy* by Tim Keller

3. The Supremacy of God in Preaching/Teaching

* Book. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* by John Piper (Porterbrook: Reading God's Story)
* Audio "Preaching to the Heart" (series by Tim Keller) (Porterbrook: Bible Teaching in Missional Perspective)
Book. *Him We Proclaim* by Dennis Johnson
Book. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* by Graeme Goldsworthy
Book. *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics* by Graeme Goldsworthy
Book. *Death By Love* by Mark Driscoll
Audio "Preaching the Gospel in a Postmodern World" (series by Keller and Clowney)

4. The Supremacy of God in Pastoral Ministry

* Book. *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch (Porterbrook: Gospel-Centred Leadership)
Book. *The Reformed Pastor* by Richard Baxter
Book. *Brothers, We are not Professionals* by John Piper

5. The Supremacy of God in Counseling

* Book. *Counsel From the Cross* by Elyse Fitzpatrick and Dennis Johnson (Porterbrook: Pastoral Care – Parts 1 and Part 2)
Book. *Our Sufficiency in Christ* by John MacArthur
Book. *When People are Big and God is Small* by Edward T. Welch

6. The Supremacy of God in Prayer

* Book. *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* by D.A. Carson (Porterbrook: Missional Community Life)

7. The Supremacy of God in Evangelism

* Book. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer (Porterbrook: Evangelism)
Book. *Tell the Truth* by Will Metzger
Booklet. "What is a Christian" by John Reisinger
Booklet. "Evangelism 101" by Matt Waymeyer
Booklet. "The Distinctiveness of the Christian Gospel" by Fred Zaspel
Booklet. "Sinners, Jesus Will Receive" by William Payne
Book. *Faith Works* by John MacArthur
Book. *Questioning Evangelism* by Randy Newman
Book. *The World We All Want* by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis

8. The Supremacy of God in the Word

* Book. *Abraham's Four Seeds* by John Reisinger (Porterbrook: The Bible in Missional Perspective)

* Booklet "New Covenant Theology" by Murray McLellan

Book. *Tablets of Stone* by John Reisinger

Book. *New Covenant Theology* by Wells and Zaspel

Book. *The Old Testament Explained and Applied* by Gareth Crossley

Booklet. "Gabriel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks: A Prophecy of the Christ!" by M. McLellan

Booklet. "The Law Speaks" by Murray McLellan

Booklet "Theology of Fulfillment" by Fred Zaspel

Book. *On the New Testament* by Mark Driscoll

Book. *On the Old Testament* by Mark Driscoll

9. The Supremacy of God in Electing Grace

* Books on the all five points of Calvinism by John Reisinger

Book. *The Five Points of Calvinism* by Steele, Thomas, and Quinn

Book. *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* by Lorraine Boettner

Book. *Still Sovereign*; Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware, ed.

Book. *A Journey in Grace* by Richard Belcher

10. The Supremacy of God in Sanctification

* Book. *You Can Change* by Tim Chester (Porterbrook: Gospel Change)

Book. *When I Don't Desire God* by John Piper

Book. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount* by D.A. Carson

Booklet. "Is There a Difference Between O. C. and N. C. Holiness?" by M. McLellan

Audio Message. "Doing Missions When Dying is Gain" by John Piper

Book or Audio of *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan

11. The Supremacy of God in the World

* Book. *A Reason for God* by Tim Keller (Porterbrook: Apologetics)

12. The Supremacy of God in Church History/ Biography

* Book. *William Carey* by S. Pearce Carey (Porterbrook: Living the Cross & Resurrection)

Book. *Jonathan Edwards; A New Biography* by Iain Murray

Book. *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* by Jonathan Edwards

Book. *George Whitefield* by Arnold A. Dallimore

Books *D. Martin Lloyd Jones* (2 volumes) by Iain Murray

Book. *The Autobiography of John Patton* by James Patton, editor

13. The Supremacy of God in Missions

Book. *Let the Nations Be Glad* by John Piper (Porterbrook: Beyond the Church Plant)

(Porterbrook: Engaging Globally)

Book. *A Vision for Missions* by Tom Wells

14. The Supremacy of God in the Family

* Book/DVD *What Did You Expect* by David Tripp (Porterbrook: Gospel Relationships)

Book. *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp

Book. *The Exemplary Husband* by Stuart Scott

(Other books may be added to this list in the future)

Review of an Unbiblical Book (pursuant to Titus 1:9)

In addition to the reading assignments described above, each leadership trainee must review and refute the teaching of one book of his choice (one that is currently in print) that presents Christian doctrine and/or practice in an unbiblical manner. The book must be previously unread and the intern's choice must be approved by an elder. This review should be more in-depth than the summaries of the books listed above, and at least 4 pages in length (typed, single-spaced).

Scripture Memory

Each participant must memorize passages of Scripture. Scripture memory may be done using NKJV, NIV, OR ESV.

Appendix 1



Our Doctrinal Emphasis

(Thanks to John Reisinger, Tim Keller and John Piper. Their influence can be found in the document below.)

THE NATURE OF GOD

God is glorious (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 145:5). His glory consists in the overwhelming and overflowing beauty which stems from the sum total of all His attributes working together in perfect harmony. God is perfect in His holiness (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3; I Peter 1:16), justice (Psalm 99:4; Luke 19:7-8; Hebrews 6:10), wisdom (Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:10), power (Isaiah 44:24; Job 9:12; Jeremiah 32:17), grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:4, 7-9; Romans 3:24), and love (I John 4:7-8, 16; Romans 5:18; John 3:16).

THE MOTIVE OF THE GLORY OF GOD

God not only is glorious, He loves His glory with infinite intensity (Isaiah 48:9-11) and therein lies His righteousness (Romans 9:14,15; Exodus 33:18,19). For God to be righteous, He must love what is best; therefore His ultimate loyalty must be to the maintenance and manifestation of His own glory. In other words, all that God does, He does for His own name's sake (Ezekiel 36:20-23). God created humanity for His glory (Isaiah 43:7,21); God redeems sinners for the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:5-6, 12, 14; Romans 3:26; 15:7); God empowers Christians to live for His glory, both individually (I Corinthians 10:31; I Peter 4:11) and corporately (Ephesians 3:10); and God's ultimate goal for His people is that they might see and enjoy His glory forever (John 17:24). His ultimate will or plan for history is that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge and the glory of God as the waters cover the sea" (Hebrews 2:14,cf. Numbers 14:21). But God's unswerving zeal for His own glory does not mean that God is unconcerned about man's welfare. No, God's mercy and grace toward undeserving sinners in Christ is the apex of His glory (Romans (9:22-23). And the greatest possible good for man is to see God face to face, just as He is (I Corinthians 13:12; I John 3:2) and to behold the beauty of the Lord (Psalm 27:4). In fact, God's absolute faithfulness to His own glory manifests itself in God's absolute faithfulness to His covenant promises (His glory is at stake in whether He keeps His word or not) and thus it becomes the ultimate ground of our assurance (Psalm 143:1, 11; Daniel 9:14-19).

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST (i.e. New Covenant Theology)

God, before the foundation of the world, purposed to manifest his glory in an unfolding way. This eternal purpose would be accomplished in and through Christ Jesus our Lord (see Eph. 3:8-11). This is the heart of what is called New Covenant Theology. The name *New Covenant Theology* is a label given to what the God-breathed Scriptures unveil for us. *Theology* comes from two Greek words: *Theos* - referring to the one true and living God; and *logos* - the word or expression or revelation from and of this glorious God. The *New Covenant* is the very Word or expression or revelation of God. At the very core of the New Covenant is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. This is what was foretold by the prophets of God. "*I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*" (Isa. 42:6-7) "...*I will preserve You and give You as a covenant to the people. . .*" (Isa. 49:8). Jesus is the Word - the *logos*. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*" (John 1:1, 14)

Thus, in the term *New Covenant Theology* we declare that God, for his own delight, has revealed himself and manifested his glory ultimately in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and his complete and perfect work on the Cross through which he has established a New Covenant in his blood. (Heb. 1:1-3) Prior to the incarnation, all of history and all of Scripture had progressively been moving toward and aiming at the great day of Christ and the New Covenant reality that would glorify God forever and ever. This was God's eternal plan, worked out through the creation of a physical world and universe; a way of going public with his glory in an incredible way for his own delight (Eph. 1:9-12; 3:8-11). This resounds to the praise of the glory of his grace!

God foretold the new thing he would do, and in the fullness of time, he did it (Is. 42:6-9; 43:19; 45:21-25; 46:9-13). He established the Lord who reigns over a kingdom of redeemed people upon whom the Spirit has been poured. These kingdom citizens relate to God on the basis of a New Covenant in which Jesus himself is their High Priest, Judge, Shepherd, King, Prophet; their very life! (Gal. 4:4; Acts 2:36; Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:11; 10:14)

All of God's previous revelation, including the Mosaic era, anticipated and led to the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:19). Even that Old Covenant was a "shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Col. 2:17; see also Heb. 10:1). "*For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.*" (2 Cor. 1:20) Thus, the pinnacle of God's unfolding revelation comes to us in the New Testament Scriptures, in the face of Jesus Christ. Behold Immanuel! What fullness of joy comes to those who were born blind when they behold the Lord Jesus Christ. To God be the glory! "*For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" (2 Cor. 4:6) Here in the New Testament Scriptures, the Spirit, through his chosen apostles, gives us our Lord's words about the mystery of Christ, "*which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men*" (Eph. 3:5). The two testaments proclaim the same message, but from differing standpoints. The first, sometimes using veiled and symbolic language, points forward in anticipation and the other, in clear and unmistakable terms, declares completion/accomplishment. Thus, we must read all of Scripture in light of the New Covenant, established in Jesus Christ (Matt. 5:17; Luke 10:23-24; 24:27, 44; John 5:46; 8:56; Heb. 10:7). We must read Scripture in context. The Bible needs to be understood and communicated not only in its parts, but also in the whole. "*For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.*" (Acts 20:27)

Since there is one Divine Author behind all the human authors of Scripture, it is essential that we seek to understand how all the parts of Scripture fit together to communicate the whole purpose of God. It seems consistent with God's revelation that true biblical theology is the recognition of God's purpose, unfolding and weaving its way from Genesis to Revelation on the timeline of redemptive history, culminating in

Jesus Christ. Dr. D.A. Carson, in *The Gagging of God* writes, "Each major strand [of biblical theology] must be woven into the fabric that finds its climax and ultimate significance in the person and work of Jesus Christ." [(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 545] New Covenant Theology aims to pass on the vision and purpose of God in Christ, so that students of the Word will not only learn to understand Scripture in its parts, but will gain and cherish a breath-taking sense of the Christ-centeredness of all of Scripture.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The God of the Bible is the creator of the whole visible and invisible universe and He is the sovereign ruler of it. From all eternity, He freely and unchangeably, in His most holy wisdom, ordained whatsoever comes to pass. To use the words of Paul, God does "all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11), having sovereign control of all events from the events of rulers and nations (Daniel 4:25, 32, 34-35) to the flight of a sparrow (Matthew 10:29). In particular, God's sovereignty is worked out in the area of salvation. To ensure that the salvation of sinners abounds to the praise of God's glory, God saves His people by grace alone apart from works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). The sovereignty of God's grace is seen in God's unconditional election of His people out of the mass of sinful humanity for salvation (Romans 8:29, 9:6-23; Ephesians 1:4), the glorious atonement of Christ which actually accomplishes the salvation of God's people (I Peter 3:18), the irresistible grace of God's effectual call (Romans 8:30; I Peter 2:9) and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26ff; John 3:4; Titus 3:5) which enable and move a person to respond to the gospel of Christ in saving faith, and God's persevering in grace with his saints (I Peter 1:5; Jude 1; John 10:28-30; Philippians 1:6) so that His people will in fact persevere to the end and be saved.

THREE WAYS TO LIVE

There are three ways to live - the irreligious way, the religious way, and the gospel way. The Bible presents the gospel as the antidote to irreligion and religion. Luke 15:1-2, 11-32 illustrates there 3 distinct ways. There are two worldly approaches to God which are wrong and will leave you lost and alienated from God:

- * Moralistic approach (elder brother):
- * Relativistic approach (younger brother):

The only way to approach God is on the basis of sheer grace. The gospel is, therefore, radically different from both irreligion and religion. Irreligion operates on the principle of self-acceptance, and obeys "self" as lord. Religion operates on the principle: "I obey, therefore I am accepted". The gospel operates on the principle: "I am accepted through Christ by sheer grace, therefore I obey."

THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE

Who Jesus is and what He has done provides both the motive and the means to true Christian spirituality. The Gospel is to be applied to every area of thinking, feeling, relating, working, and behaving. The Gospel changes people from the inside out. Christ gives us a radically new identity, freeing us from both self-righteousness and self-condemnation. He liberates us to accept people we once excluded, and to break the bondage of things (even good things) that once drove us. In particular, the gospel makes us welcoming and respectful toward those who do not share our beliefs. Bringing the gospel truth to bear on every area of life is the way to be changed by the power of God.

We never "get beyond the gospel" in our Christian life to something more "advanced". The gospel is not the first "step" in a "stairway" of truths, rather, it is more like the "hub" in a "wheel" of truth. The gospel is not just the A-B-C's but the A to Z of Christianity. The gospel is not just the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make all progress in the kingdom. We are not justified by the gospel and then sanctified by obedience, but the gospel is *the* way we grow (Gal.3:1-3)

and are renewed (Col.1:6). It is the solution to each problem, the key to each closed door, the power through every barrier (Rom.1:16-17).

It is very common in the church to think as follows. "The gospel is for non-Christians. One needs it to be saved. But once saved, you grow through hard work and obedience." But Col.1:6 shows that this is a mistake. Both confession and "hard work" that is not arising from and "in line" with the gospel will not sanctify you--it will strangle you. All our problems come from a failure to apply the gospel. Thus when Paul left the Ephesians he committed them *"to the word of his grace, which can build you up"* (Acts 20:32)

THE COMBINATION OF HEAD AND HEART

In the Christian life, emotions are crucial and thinking is crucial. God is not honored by either an unfeeling, joyless, loveless intellectualism or by an unthinking, uncritical emotionalism. Both are needed - minds that are gripped by the truth of God acquired through the serious and rigorous study of Scripture, and hearts that are on fire with intense emotions of love for God and His glory, awe of His majestic holiness, gratitude for His mercy, and fear of His wrath. In the final analysis, what God wants most is our hearts. That was the problem with the Pharisees - they honored God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him (Matthew 15:8). One of Jesus' most chilling threats was to professing believers who had no emotions toward God. They were neither hot nor cold - they were lukewarm. And Jesus promised to spit them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:15-16). But the way God longs to reach our hearts is through our minds. It is through the truth of Scripture that we become transformed people through the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). This truth comes through the discipline of careful reading of the text (Ephesians 3:4) seeking to find the author's intended meaning. The role of the Holy Spirit is not to add anything to the text but to make the heart of the reader humble so that he or she will welcome and embrace the truth (1 Corinthians 2:14). Thus our position could be summed up as follows: "The heart is crucial, through the head."

CHRISTIAN HEDONISM

The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever. Because God's mercy to His people is the apex of His glory, enjoying the benefits of that mercy in faith honors and glorifies God. The faith that glorifies God is a happy, hearty trust. Therefore, joy in God is essential to honoring God (as C.S. Lewis states, "Joy in God is a Christian duty"). If faith earnestly believes that "God rewards those who seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6) and if obedience flows from faith, then all obedience must be a pursuit of God's reward and of joy in God. This follows the example of Jesus "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2;cf. the example of Moses in Hebrews 11:25-26). All people instinctively long to be happy and filled with joy. The Christian is the one who by the grace of God has discovered that God is the only source of satisfying and enduring joy. Thus God is honored as the only one who can fully meet our needs. In the wisdom of God, the glory of God and the eternal joy and well-being of His people always coincide. Therefore, to pursue one is to pursue the other.



VISION:

Grace Fellowship exists to bring glory to God through lives transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To that end we seek to be a Christ-treasuring community, formed and sent by the Gospel on mission to the world, through the power of the Holy Spirit for the Glory of God.

DNA:

Worship – Love God

Community – Love people

Mission – Make Disciples

CORE VALUE:

Our vision is driven by the central value of being Gospel-centered.

VISION

Grace Fellowship exists to bring glory to God through lives transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are God-centered; we exist to bring glory to God. This is the chief aim and purpose of humanity and of all creation. The glory of God is ultimate. The scriptures share the wonderful news that God is glorified through the Gospel of Jesus and the resulting changed lives. Life change is both an event (salvation) and a process (sanctification). Both salvation and sanctification are evidences of God's grace in our lives and are appropriated by faith.

When we use the word Gospel, we mean the historic Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected. This Gospel is more than a collection of facts to be believed. It is also the good and true story that Jesus died and rose to defeat sin, death and evil in order to make all things new. As the only person capable of such an act, Jesus is the rightful Lord over every square inch of the universe. This "Jesus is Lord" Gospel compels us to be a community that lives redemptively in all aspects of life.

As followers of Jesus, we have come to realize that we are far more broken than we really comprehend, but in Christ we are more accepted than we could ever imagine. Although we fail in following Jesus, we are confident that his redeeming grace is sufficient for our failures and strong for our successes. Grace Fellowship is part of this grand, historic Christianity which seeks the good of the whole person, city, and the glory of God.

DNA:

It is the Gospel that moves us to love and worship God (1 John 4:19), to extend grace and love to others, and it is the Gospel that moves us to make disciples in obedience to the mission Jesus has given us. We are formed as a new community by the gospel and this community has as its purpose taking this gospel message forward.

Worship – Love God

“And [Jesus] said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.”

(Matthew 22:37-38 ESV; see also Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27)

Worshipping God is first about valuing, loving, and treasuring God above all others. It is saying with the Psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but you, and there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever (*Psalm 73:25-26*).” It’s through our deep desire for God that worship spills over into our lives and becomes living in joyful, sacrificial obedience to God (*Romans 12:1*).

God can only be known and loved and worshipped in and through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit (*John 4:24; 14:6; 2 Cor. 4:6*). It is Jesus alone who can save us from worshipping ourselves to the worship of God.

Community – Love people

“And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

(Matthew 22:39 ESV)

The Church is primarily a people not a place or an event. In Christ we are reconciled to God and to one another as a "new humanity." We are formed and guided by the Spirit and the Scriptures to be a counter-cultural community that participates fully in one another's lives through giving and receiving, serving and being served, loving and being loved. As God's people, we show the world what life under Jesus' gracious reign looks like and serve as a foretaste of the coming Kingdom.

Mission – Make Disciples

We love God and others by making disciples (worshippers) who find joy and rest and satisfaction in Jesus.

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

(Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

We are the missional community of God, called to reflect the missional heart of God. As His people, we are gifted and empowered by His Spirit and sent together into the world to join with God in His mission to renew this world with the Gospel. Because Jesus is worthy, we work to reorient our lives around Him. Although God is sovereign and does not need our help, it is our blessing and a lifeline of spiritual health to be on mission with Him and to love others as He does. By being on mission with Christ, we work to redeem people from worshiping themselves to worshiping Jesus. We share the Gospel in both word and deed seeking to touch the spiritual and physical needs of others in our city and world with the message and mercy of Jesus Christ by demonstrating compassion, working for justice, and participating in a church planting movement that will establish Gospel-centered churches.

VALUES

Our vision is driven by the central value of being Gospel-centered.

Gospel Centered: The Gospel changes everything. The Gospel is “the power of God” (Rom.1:16) that changes not only unbelievers but believers as well. The Gospel is the solution not only for our “spiritual” problems but all personal problems (Col.1:16) and all societal problems (Gal.2:14).

VALUE #1:– THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING

“I am a sinner” and “Jesus is the Savior for sinners.” These are the twin truths of the Gospel, which the apostle Paul says “is the power (dunamis or dynamite) of God” (Romans 1:16). The Gospel is God’s explosive power that changes everything.

First, the Gospel makes us Christians. You cannot be a Christian unless both sides of the Gospel come together. “I am a sinner” without “Jesus is the Savior” leads to guilt and ultimately despair. “Jesus is the Savior” without “I am a sinner” has no meaning. As a result, we see Jesus merely as a great teacher or a good role model, but not as the answer to our greatest need. But when both of these truths collide you have the Gospel and everything changes. God forgives your sin, declares you righteous in Christ, gives you eternal life, adopts you as His child, and ushers you into an intimate relationship with Himself.

Application: We will minister with great hope and confidence. Since we are saved by the Gospel, which is the power of God, there are no hopeless cases. No one and no situation is beyond the Gospel’s transforming power. The Gospel can change anyone.

Second, the Gospel grows us. Most people think we become Christians by believing the Gospel, and then we grow by mastering biblical principles for living. They believe that the Gospel is the starting point, but then we must move on to more advanced teaching to grow. But the Gospel is not merely the way we enter the kingdom, it is also the way we make all progress in kingdom living. The Gospel is not the ABC’s but the A to Z of the Christian life. It is the way of righteousness “from first to last” (Romans 1:17). Therefore, the Gospel is the solution to all of our problems. At the root of all of our problems is sin, specifically the sin of looking to someone or something other than Jesus for our significance, strength and satisfaction. This root sin

manifests itself in all of our various problems. God intends that my problems drive me to see in a fresh and deeper way that “I am a sinner” and “Jesus is my Savior”. And so change continues, just as it began, through the power of the Gospel (Romans 6:1-4).

Application: We will preach the Gospel to believers, not just unbelievers. Since, the Gospel not only makes us Christians (justification), but also grows us as Christians (sanctification), the most desperate need of both unbelievers and believers each and every Sunday is to hear and appropriate the Gospel to their lives.

Third, the Gospel empowers us to serve. Some would warn that if we focus on the Gospel of grace that we will produce lazy Christians. Their logic is: If we tell people “Jesus has done it all!” then they will have no motivation to serve others. Nothing could be further from the truth. Only the Gospel can produce unselfish love and service. Apart from the Gospel we will either avoid serving out of fear of failure, rejection, or inconvenience, or we will be driven to serve in order to ease our guilty conscience and gain approval from God and people. But when “I am a sinner” and “Jesus is my Savior” come together, our old motivational structure is demolished. We are no longer driven by fear, guilt or the need for affirmation. The Gospel gives us a whole new motivational structure. Paul says: “Christ’s love compels us” to live for others (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; cf. Romans 12:1). It is Jesus’ generosity towards us that moves us to be generous with our time, talent, and resources. To claim we believe and yet not be engaged in the needs of our world reveals that our faith is not in the living, powerful Gospel of Christ (James 2:17). For the Gospel changes everything!

Application: We will motivate with grace not guilt. We will refuse to use guilt trips to drive people to serve. Rather, we will motivate with the Gospel, which sets us free to love and serve unconditionally in response to God’s grace in Christ.

VALUE #2: THE GOSPEL GIVES US A NEW IDENTITY

We have a new identity because of what Jesus has accomplished. We live differently because of what he has done and who we are in Christ. Our doing comes out of our being.

We are His:

Family – Because God has restored us to himself, forgiven our sin, and removed his wrath from us by placing it on his own Son, we have become children of God, holy, and dearly loved by our Father! Therefore, we are God’s children and his people in the world, a community that does for each other what God has done for us in Jesus, that the world might taste and see the goodness of our Father. (John 1:11-13; Eph. 3:15)

Missionaries – Because God has come to restore and redeem all of creation through Jesus, his healing work extends to people, systems, cultures, and all of creation! Therefore, we are God’s ambassadors or representatives, sent into our culture by the Holy Spirit, commissioned to proclaim and demonstrate that God is restoring the world to Himself through Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; John 17:18; 20:21)

Servants – Because God has sent his Son as a sacrificial servant, taking our place on the cross and thereby healing and forgiving us in his substitutionary death, we then are freed from our self-love and self-reliance and empowered by him to serve those around us. Therefore, we model our lives after the Servant-King, increasingly being freed by Him from slavery to self and so empowered to serve others. (Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-46; John 13:1-17; 1 Peter 2:16)

Learners – Because God has begun this work in us and by His Spirit promises to bring it to completion one day, we recognize the need to continuously be learning together from him and being changed by him. Therefore, we are students and followers of Jesus, learning from him how to live life the way God intended, and helping one another to do the same. (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:1-2; Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:14 - 4:5; 2 Peter 3:18)

*We are a **family** of God sent on **mission** to **serve** our world and continually **learn** how to live in the way of Jesus so that the joy of the gospel fills our city and beyond!*

VALUE #3: THE GOSPEL MAKES US A CHURCH FOR THE CITY

Cities are central to Jesus' mission. For example, Jesus chose as the text of his first recorded sermon Isaiah 61, which proclaims that the Messiah has come to "rebuild...restore...renew the ruined cities" (4). We want to live as a city within the city. We see the city as a strategic center from which to plant churches and spread the gospel in community. This was the apostolic pattern.

We do not want to be assimilated into the culture, nor separate ourselves from it. Our desire is to incarnate our Lord, embracing the call of God to act as a missionary (as a community, not simply individuals) into our culture (Matt. 4:19; Acts 16:20; 17:6). We want to love and serve the city for God's glory and their good (Jer. 29:4-7).

VALUE #4: THE GOSPEL MAKES US PEOPLE OF PRAYER

The Gospel causes us to pray with an unique combination of humility and confidence. We approach God humbly because the Gospel teaches us that we are far more sinful than we ever dared imagine. And we approach God confidently because the Gospel teaches us that in and through Jesus Christ we are far more loved than we ever dared dream.

Recognizing that God is the primary agent and orchestrator of mission, we view prayer as a missionary activity. We will offer prayer to unbelievers, witnessing to a living and personal relationship with our sovereign Father. We want prayer to be both a regular community discipline, and an impromptu response to needs and opportunities. We will not assume we are in control of mission, nor rob God of his glory by boasting of our achievements.

VALUE #5: THE GOSPEL MAKES US PEOPLE OF THE WORD

We want our lives and our life together to be formed and shaped by the Bible's story of redemption. We are committed to reading and teaching the entire Bible in light of the gospel. We believe the Bible to be the reliable, authoritative and sufficient word of God, and are therefore committed to good Bible learning. We will not act on the basis of tradition, habit or pragmatism without reflection on the Bible. We will not see Bible teaching as an end in itself, but as that which must shape our thinking and action. We do not want the gospel and truth we learn to be believed as "concepts" in the mind, but rather truths to be treasured in the heart that transforms our behavior.

VALUE #6: THE GOSPEL CREATES A NEW COMMUNITY

The “body of Christ”, “a temple of living stones”, “a holy nation”, “the family of God”. The authors of the New Testament thought of themselves primarily as a community, rather than as individuals. They knew the reality of what we often fail to see and experience: that Jesus came not merely to save individuals but to create a new community. The individualism of our day and age has blinded us to the radical corporate nature of salvation.

The Gospel breaks down all barriers (race, class, gender, age) and makes all who claim Jesus as Lord and Savior one in Him (Galatians 3:28). Unity cannot be overemphasized. The Father decided in eternity not merely to save a collection of individuals, but to redeem a people (Ephesians 1:4). Jesus died to shatter everything that separated us from one another and to make us one in Him (Ephesians 2:13-15). The Holy Spirit takes very different persons, makes us one (1 Corinthians 12:13), and miraculously enables us to love one another.

Christian community is cultivated as people believe the Gospel and in response devote themselves to the Lord and one another. When Luke describes the early Christian Community he says immediately after believing the Gospel “they devoted themselves...to the fellowship” (Acts 2:42). The word “devoted” means they “set as a priority”, “committed to”, spending significant time with one another. They ate together in their homes, discussed God’s Word, worshipped, prayed, and shared their resources with one another. That’s why the basic building block of Grace Fellowship will be our Community Groups—small groups that meet to experience Christ’s presence in community. Being a part of this new community partnering together on Jesus’ mission is not an optional thing – an “extra” for the Christian. Rather it is a part of the overall purpose of God’s kingdom.

We want people to experience church as a network of relationships, not simply a meeting you attend or a place you enter.

VALUE #7: THE GOSPEL MAKES US OUTWARD FOCUSED

Through the Gospel, Jesus makes us a people for others. His Gospel gives us deep respect and great hope for every non-Christian, and frees and empowers us not to live for ourselves but for our friends, neighbors and associates who don’t believe. The Gospel makes us a people and a place where non-Christians are expected, welcomed, and respected. Their questions and objections are invited. Their struggles and doubts are taken seriously. They are loved not that we might evangelize them, but we evangelize them because we love them.

In our daily life. We will love our neighbors. Through the testimony of a transformed life, deeds of love and kindness, and hospitality, we will actively cultivate authentic relationships with non-Christians and invite them to our home and to our church gatherings that they might meet Jesus (Luke 5:29).

In our gatherings, we will be determinedly conscious of and welcoming to non-Christians in our midst. We will worship in such a way that unbelievers can understand and be included (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). We are committed to welcoming broken people and making church accessible to those who do not yet believe. We want to offer a sense of belonging, and be communities of grace in which people can be open and vulnerable.

VALUE #8 THE GOSPEL ENERGIZES NEW CHURCH PLANTING

On Pentecost, the exalted Lord Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on his church to empower bold preaching of the gospel and, through that, to energize a multiplying church planting movement.

Throughout the Book of Acts, Luke calls our attention to how the gospel spread, lives were changed and people were incorporated into vibrant new churches. To this very day, the same gospel continues to spread, changing lives and gathering people into new churches. Churches that not only grow but churches that plant new churches for new people because the gospel cannot be stopped.

We want to be part of Jesus' church planting movement. By God's grace and the energizing power of the gospel we hope to not only plant churches but to plant churches that plant churches.