

## **Next Steps**

### **Connect, Grow, Serve**

Congratulations! The decision you have made to become a follower of Jesus Christ is the most important decision of your entire life. God has created you with a purpose and that purpose begins with knowing Him. You may not be completely sure what happens when you decide to follow Jesus or what you should do next. You may have many questions about what you should do now. This booklet is designed to help you answer some of those questions and help you get on the right track in your Christian journey.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Following Jesus is both a one-time decision and a life-long process. God wants you to have a meaningful life in a relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. However, he doesn't force that desire on you. He gives you a choice. You can choose to live according to His plan, or choose to take your route and go on your own way. If you choose to say "no" to God and live a life on your own terms then that decision separates you from Him. Not only is refusing God a result of a sinful nature, it is sin itself. Make a commitment to say "yes" to God first and then experience His perfect purpose and plans for your life. On your own, there is nothing you can do to bring yourself into a right relationship with God. Good works won't do it. Religion won't do it. Morality won't do it. Neither will church membership, money, knowledge, philosophy, or science. For centuries, seekers have tried all of these paths with little success.

Take note of the story the following verses tell:

*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.  
Proverbs 14:12*

*But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
Romans 5:8*

*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.  
1 Timothy 2:5*

*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.  
1 Peter 3:18*

The best way to work through the following material is with another person or small group. You should try to find a mentor or accountability partner that will go through the study with you. There is also no specific time frame to finish. One topic might take days or weeks while another may only take an hour.

The mark of maturity for a believer is not just gaining more knowledge but rather acting in obedience to what God is telling you to do. We are commanded to walk in the ways of Christ. In order to be obedient to His commands, we must acquire the knowledge of what God expects from us. The ultimate goal of this booklet is for you to grow in your relationship with God and begin to disciple others. Don't wait to "graduate" from these lessons or any other course to begin sharing your faith with others and making disciples. We have good news to share. The best way to learn and grow is to teach someone else. As you continue through these pages, challenge yourself to teach others what you are learning along the way.

Now is the time to forget the past and move forward on the exciting journey that God has planned for you. Keep these words from Paul in mind as you move forward.

*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*  
*Philippians 3:12-14*

Keep pressing on...

# Next Steps

## Connect, Grow, Serve

*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

*John 15:5*

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Remember that with each of these steps there is a call to be obedient to what God is asking you to do. The Bible teaches us to obey the Lord's commands. We can stand on the promises of God, as we are obedient to all His teaching.

*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 28:19-20*

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.*

*Matthew 7:24-25*

As you work through each of the steps and lessons in this booklet obey what God is telling you. There is a great cost of disobedience but the blessings will overflow as you take each step of faith and experience all that God has planned for you.

## CONNECT: Baptism

### What is the meaning of baptism and why is it so important?

Baptism confuses many people. Initially it's not easy to understand the significance of being totally immersed in water after becoming a Christian. Much of the confusion centers on questions like, "I was baptized as a baby, so I don't have to be baptized, right?" or "If I don't get baptized does that mean I'm not saved?"

When you make a decision to commit your life to Jesus Christ, the Bible teaches that you should be baptized by immersion, following Jesus' example. Baptism is an act of obedience and a public declaration of faith. When Jesus was ready to begin His earthly ministry, He showed His devotion to the Father by being baptized.

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

*Matthew 3:13-17*

Later, the apostles taught that all who accept the message of Jesus Christ and invite Him into their lives should follow His example of baptism.

*And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

*Acts 2:38*

*So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

*Acts 2:41*

Baptism by immersion is symbolic of two essential truths of your faith:

1. Jesus died for your sins, was buried and came back to life. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*

*1 Corinthians 15:3-4*

2. You died to your old life, are buried in baptism and are now raised to live a new life in Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:3-4)

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

*Romans 6:3-4*

Never get tricked into thinking that baptism saves you. Baptism should be a natural step of obedience in response to what God has already done in your heart. You have been born again and raised to walk in newness of life!

### **When should I be baptized?**

As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. There is no reason to delay. Talk to a minister or call the church office to set up a time to be baptized.

*So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

*Acts 2:41*

*Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.*

*Acts 8:35-38*

### **What do I need to do to get ready for baptism?**

When you are ready to get baptized let a minister know or call the church office to set up the date. You can get baptized at any of our worship services on any Sunday. Come to the entrance to the baptistery about 20 minutes before the start of the service. The entry is in the hallway behind the worship center across from the preschool nursery. Bring a change of clothes you don't mind getting wet (shorts and T-shirt are good). We will provide a robe for you to wear over your clothes and we also have towels provided. You may want to bring a plastic bag to carry your wet clothes. We encourage you to invite family and friends to come and celebrate this special time with you.

# CONNECT: Church Membership

You are somebody in the body of Christ. We have already observed the importance of identifying with Christ in baptism. Baptism is also intended to identify you with a local body – the church. As members of the body of Christ, we all share a special relationship and significant role together. You are needed in the church, and your opportunities for service are unlimited. The greatest fulfillment in life comes from your discovery of God’s plan and purpose for your life in His church and from your obedience to serve Him.

## Why do I need to join a local church?

We need healthy relationships.

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!*

*Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

We need a place where we can grow.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

*Acts 2:42*

We need a place where we can use our gifts.

*For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.*

*Romans 12:4-6*

We need to encourage and support one another.

*Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

*Hebrews 10:25*

## How do I join FBC Forney?

- **Salvation & Baptism** - By professing your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and following Him in believer’s baptism.
- **Statement of Faith** - By statement of your faith in Jesus Christ and that you have been baptized by immersion after salvation.
- **By Baptism** - By statement of your faith in Jesus Christ from another denomination that does not practice believer’s baptism. This is a statement of faith in Christ and a willingness to be biblically baptized.
- **Transfer of Membership** - By transferring your letter of membership from another Southern Baptist Church.

## **What is the mission of First Baptist Forney?**

Every member of First Baptist Forney should know and live out Our Purpose: GC4. First Baptist Church Forney exists to encourage Christians to embrace a GREAT COMMITMENT to the GREAT COMMISSION and the GREATEST COMMANDMENT in order to empower a GREAT CHURCH for the glory of Jesus Christ!

### **1. Great Commitment:** Worship - Mark 8:34-35

*Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it."*

### **2. Great Commission:** Evangelism and Discipleship - Matthew 28:19-20

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

### **3. Greatest Commandment:** Missions and Ministry - Matthew 22:36-39

*"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

### **4. Great Church:** Fellowship - Acts 2:41-42

*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Joining the church involves so much more than attending worship once a week. When you get connected to the church, you will become part of an extended family. You will learn about God and grow closer in your relationship with Him. You will be able to join with other believers to accomplish a common purpose. Church membership requires a commitment. Instead of asking what the church will do for you, ask what you will do for your church.

## **How Can I learn more about FBC Forney?**

- Become familiar with the church web site, [www.fbcforney.org](http://www.fbcforney.org)
- Download our Free Church app on your Smartphone.
- Call the church office and schedule time to speak to a minister.

To develop a better understanding of what we believe there is a printed version of The Baptist Faith and Message in the back of this document. You can also visit the **Southern Baptist Convention** web site at [www.sbc.net/bfm2000](http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000) for more information.

## CONNECT: Join a Bible Study Group

As a follower of Jesus, it is critically important that you connect with a biblically based Church and Bible study class. The best place to learn about God and grow in your faith is around other people who want to do the same. At First Baptist Forney, we want to walk along side each other and provide the best opportunity to become a fully developing follower of Jesus Christ. When you connect to a smaller Bible study group you will:

- Discover caring friends with similar life circumstances.
- Gain care and support during times of crisis.
- Receive personal prayer support.
- Experience interactive Bible study with life application.
- Use your personal gifts and abilities in ministry.

God commands us to gather together as a spiritual family. He wants us to understand the importance of meeting together regularly with other people who are passionate about following Him. We have to have set apart time to come together with other believers for worship, discipleship and fellowship. This will equip and challenge us to serve in ministry and missions so that we can go outside the church and make new disciples.

### **How does our Mission at First Baptist Forney relate to small groups?**

Our mission (GC4) is accomplished at a deeper level through our smaller Bible study groups.

**Great Commitment** – We seek to TEACH God’s Word and worship Him. One of the main functions of a small group is to study the Bible and apply what is learned to the lives of each individual. We desire to make prayer and spiritual growth a priority.

**Great Commission** – We are called to be REACH our community and make disciples. A great way to reach out to a friend or neighbor is to invite them to your Bible study group.

**Great Commandment** – We MINISTER by loving God, loving each other, and serving Him. In a Bible study group you will develop authentic friendships and enjoy great fellowship together. You will also find a place to put your spiritual gifts to use and serve on mission together.

When you connect to a Bible study group you are actively involved in building a **Great Church**.

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

*Hebrews 10:24-25*

For a complete list of all First Baptist Forney adult Bible study classes visit our web site at [www.fbcforney.org/ministries/adults](http://www.fbcforney.org/ministries/adults). We also have classes available for children and students of all ages. There are greeters at each of our welcome desks to help you and your family connect to a Bible study group.



## **GROW: Worship**

You were made to worship God! Worship is not just something that happens in a church service. Your daily life is an act of worship as you live in a way that brings pleasure to God.

*“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”*

*Revelation 4:11*

You bring glory and honor to God when you:

- Love Him supremely
- Trust Him completely
- Obey Him wholeheartedly
- Praise Him continually
- Use your abilities to serve Him unconditionally

Every aspect of your life can be an expression of worship when you live in the realization and recognition of who God is and what He has done. Worship can happen anytime and anywhere. In fact, God calls us to a life of worship.

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

*Romans 12:1*

Ways you can live a life of worship include:

- Attend and participate in Sunday and Wednesday services
- Serve in a specific ministry on Sunday or during the week
- Pray with your family
- Give financially (Tithe, World Missions, Higher Ground building campaign, etc)
- Join a Bible Study class
- Have a daily quiet time with God – pray, read Bible, etc.
- Lead and/or attend a small group Bible Study at home, work, etc.
- Commit your business and work to the Lord
- Go on a mission trip
- Share your faith with another person
- Listen to Christian music in the car

We were created to worship God. We worship Him when our lives bring glory and honor to Him. We are enabled to live the Christian life because God has provided His Spirit to live in us.

At the moment you received Jesus Christ as your savior you were born again. You became a new creation and the Holy Spirit now lives in you.

*“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

*John 14:15-17*

### **Who is the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit is a person. He is not an “it” or a “force”, but rather the third person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) with a distinct personality and ministry. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to enable us to continue His ministry in the world. Living a life of worship means submitting to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life every day and trusting Him.

### **What does the Holy Spirit do?**

The Holy Spirit is committed to revealing the truth about Jesus, convicting us of our sin, transforming us with the new life provided by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and enabling us to live a victorious Christian life, giving glory to Christ in our daily walk. The Holy Spirit works in your life as a Christian to:

1. Teach and guide you into truth. John 14:26
2. Secure your salvation. Ephesians 1:13-14
3. Intercede on your behalf. Romans 8:26-27
4. Give you fruit and satisfy your life. Galatians 5:22-23
5. Give you gifts for ministry. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7
6. Give you boldness to witness. Acts 4:31
7. Give you power. Ephesians 3:16
8. Help you to pray. Ephesians 6:18, Romans 8:26-27
9. Give you wisdom and revelation. Ephesians 1:17-18
10. Provide a way for God to speak to you. Matthew 10:20

### **How can you receive the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit is a gift that you received at the moment of salvation. When Christ came into your heart, He came to stay by the indwelling of His Spirit. You must surrender your life to the Holy Spirit and let Him work in you. In order to live a spirit-filled Christian life, you must submit your will to the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in you. You must remove any unconfessed sin in your life and turn from that sin. You must take God at His Word and trust the Holy Spirit to work in you for the glory of God. You must surrender your life to Him.

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* 1 John 1:7-9

# GROW: Share your Faith

There are three questions many Christians ask when it comes to fulfilling God's Great Commission: Why should I share? Whom should I tell? How do I start?

## I. Why should I share?

Jesus gave us what we call the Great Commission.

*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 28:19-20*

There are 3 great observations that come from these verses.

### Go, Not Come

In addition to inviting people to come to church, we need to go out and find them, to touch them, to talk to them.

### Everybody, Not Just Some

We tend to choose who we think will respond to the gospel.

Jesus said, "Don't just choose some. Go to everybody.

Sowing the seed is our responsibility. Only the Holy Spirit can make the seeds grow. So don't miss anybody. Right now, the soil may not be good. But one day, God can change the soil; we never know. We can't miss any chance.

### Make Disciples, Not Church Members

Jesus teaches us to obey, then to teach other disciples to obey also. Teach every believer to obey what he/she learns and pass it on.

Do you realize God not only wants to reach you, but He also wants to reach your whole household through you? You must walk down this path God has put before you.

Participating in the Great Commission is not an option. It simply says go and it applies to all believers. Perhaps the greatest motivation for going and making disciples is the fact that Jesus told us to do it.

## II. Whom should I tell?

Another reason Christians do not witness is they do not know whom to talk to.

**What does the Bible say? To whom does the Bible say you should tell your story?** Read selected stories from the Bible about the times when God saved one person and then used that person to win his family and friends.

- Genesis 6:17-18 – God saved not just Noah but his whole family.
- Genesis 19: 12-16 – God saved Lot and his family along with him.
- Joshua 6:17-25 – Rahab in Jericho, along with her family.
- Mark 5 – the Gadarene demoniac (especially verses 18-20)
- John 4:7-42 – the Samaritan woman (especially verse 39)
- Acts 2:38-39 – the promise is for them and their children.
- Acts 10 – Cornelius along with his family and friends (see verse 24). See Peter’s report of the event in Acts 11, especially verse 14.
- Act 16:14-15 – Lydia and her household
- Acts 16:27-34 – Philippian jailer and his whole family.
- Acts 18: 8 – Crispus and his household.

To whom does God want you to tell your story? It is God’s will for you to witness to your family and friends for Christ. The most effective evangelism comes from someone who knows you and loves you.

*Oikos (Oekos)*– This is a greek word used in the New Testament to describe your household. It can be used to describe your circle of relationships including your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. God wants you to share your faith with these people.

Take out a sheet of paper and pray: “Lord, bring to my mind people in my *oikos* who are far away from you.”

Write down all the names of people in your *oikos*. Think about people you meet regularly in various circles – work, class, market, neighborhood, clubs, organizations, family, etc. If you don’t know a name, then write a description: “the lady who sells me coffee.”

Pray again - whom should I share my story with first. Pray that God will open up the hearts of these people in the coming days you go to witness to them. Pray for boldness to open your mouth and talk. Put these lists in your Bible to remind yourself to pray daily.

### **III. How do I start?**

Many Christians don't share the gospel because they have no easy way to start. A bridge is simply a way to transition a conversation to spiritual matters, especially the gospel. A short one-to two-minute testimony can be an excellent bridge.

Include the following points in your testimony:

- 1) My life before Christ (or describe a problem)
- 2) How I came to Christ (or how God changed the problem)
- 3) My life since Christ came in (or what victory you've experienced since then)

Take some time on a sheet of paper and write out your personal testimony.

In addition to our own personal testimony we must share with others how they can come to know the Lord personally. Here is a simple plan of salvation you can share with anyone. It is called the Roman Road to Salvation. If someone is seeking the Lord you can start by asking a simple question.

**Ask Question:** "Would you like to know what the Bible says about being a Christian?" If yes, continue. If no, stop. Don't force it with someone that is not ready.

#### **1. Realize that you are a sinner!**

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

*Romans 3:23*

#### **2. Realize what we deserve!**

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*Romans 6:23*

#### **3. Realize what Christ did for us!**

*But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*Romans 5:8*

#### **4. How do we receive what Christ did for us?**

*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

*Romans 10:9-10*

*For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

*Romans 10:13*

**Ask Question:** Do you believe this? If yes, then pray with them. If they are not ready yet then you can still pray for them and follow up later.

Sample Prayer: "God, I know I'm a sinner. Please come into my heart and forgive me of all my sins. Thank you Lord for saving me. Amen"

## **GROW: Prayer and Quiet Time**

The best way to build a relationship with someone is to spend time talking to the other person. You wouldn't have many friends if you never talked to them. How would your relationship with your family suffer if you never made time for them, or never let them speak to you? The same thing is true in your relationship with God. Prayer is "talking" with God. When you pray you should be truthful and earnest, as Jesus was when He "talked" with God and as He taught His disciples.

### **Why do we need to pray?**

#### **God's Command**

*And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.  
Luke 18:1*

*Keep praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,  
Ephesians 6:18*

#### **Our Need**

*Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.  
1 Peter 5:7*

*Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.  
Jeremiah 33:3*

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.  
Hebrews 4:16*

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 4:6-7*

# Daily Quiet Time

## PRAISE

Listen to praise music; Rest in God's presence

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. (Rev 4:8)*

*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being. (Rev 4:11)*

## THANKSGIVING

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Phil 4:6)*

*I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. (Ps 69:30)*

Pray, "God, I thank you for ..." Be specific.

## PERSONAL CLEANSING

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Ps 139:23-24)*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit. (Ps 51:10-12)*

Allow a few minutes of silence for God to speak regarding relationships, actions, or any other aspect of your life that He needs to correct.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

Resolve to set any relationship right that God brings to your mind. Receive the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

## YIELDING

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)*

Pray, "Jesus, today I place you on the throne of my heart. I give you this day to express yourself to others through me."

## FILLING

*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. (Eph 5:18)*

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Luke 11:9-10)*

Ask God to fill you with a fresh touch of his Spirit. Receive by faith that fresh touch.

Put on the **spiritual armor** – the belt of truth; breastplate of righteousness; gospel of peace; shield of faith; helmet of salvation; sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph 6:10-20)

## **PERSONAL REQUESTS**

**Intercession** - Praying for others: Family, Friends, Church, Pastor, Staff, Spiritual Awakening, Higher Ground, Lost, Missionaries

**Petition** - Pray for personal needs: Humility, Peace, Joy, Discipleship - Deny self, Divine Appointments

**Read the Bible** - Follow a plan and do your best to stick to it. If you miss a day don't beat yourself up; just start back tomorrow.

## **The Answers to Prayer**

1. Yes, God grants your request
2. No, God does not grant your request. Trust that God knows what is best for you and says "no" because He loves you.
3. Wait, God may not immediately respond. You must be patient.

## **Attitudes that are important in prayer**

1. Faith (James 1:6)
2. Repentance for Sins (Psalms 66:18)
3. Correct Motives (James 4:2-3)
4. Desire for God's will, not our will, to be done (1 John 5:14)
5. Persistence (Luke 18:1-7, Luke 11:5-10)

## **Hints for Effective Prayer**

1. Set aside time every day for prayer. Don't be tempted to push your time with God into the leftover pieces of your busy day. We can pray anytime, anywhere.
2. We pray in great reverence, aware of the awesome God in whose presence we stand. Our words are addressed to Him, not those around us.
3. We often end our prayer with "amen", which expresses strong agreement or affirmation. We pray "in Jesus' name" because only through Jesus can a person come before God.
4. Prayer can have many parts: Praise, Thanksgiving, Personal Cleansing, Yielding, Filling, Praying for others, and Praying for personal needs.
5. We pray in normal, understandable language. Just be yourself and talk to Him. You don't need to use fancy words and you don't need to try and impress God. Speak from the heart. He is your Father.



## **GROW: Read the Bible**

How much do you really know about the Bible? Maybe you have read bits and pieces of the Bible, but you never understood it as a cohesive unit. As followers of Jesus, we believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God.

The Bible is comprised of 66 books that were written over a period of 1500 years by over 40 different authors, from different places, and with different life experiences. These authors did not collaborate with each other. In many instances, they didn't even speak the same language. Yet their work, passed down through many generations and translated many times, has resulted in the consistent manuscript you are about to integrate into your life. This book tells God's story of the creation of the universe, the beginning and fall of man, and God's plan and purpose for us to know Him through His son, Jesus Christ. God communicates with us through His Word. Here are several methods for making that communication a daily part of your walk with the Lord:

**Hear** – Make sure you listen to good Bible teaching, both through your church and through other resources you can find. Take notes on what you hear.

**Read** – You will get to know God better by spending time reading His Word. Set a goal to read the Bible for at least 15 minutes every day. Make a plan, don't just wing it.

**Study** – Make sure you are studying the truths you read. As you read a passage, ask yourself these questions:

- What promise is there to claim?
- What lesson is there to learn?
- What example is there to follow?
- What command is there to obey?
- What sin is there to confess?
- What blessing is there to enjoy?

**Memorize** – God wants us to hold scripture close to our heart and to be able to call on it when it is needed. Try to memorize one verse a week.

**Meditate** – This ties in with memorizing. After you memorize a verse spend some time meditating on it. Analyze and dwell on it's truth as you go through your day.

The Bible is useful and helpful in all situations.

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

Each time you read a passage from the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit for:

**Teaching** – Ask God to show you the main lesson or truths that He wants you to understand and believe.

**Reproof** – Ask God to correct any false or sinful beliefs, deeds, attitudes and values in your life.

**Correction** – Ask God to show you what you need to add to your life or remove from your life to be right with Him.

**Training in righteousness** – Ask God to show you what Bible verse or spiritual truth He wants you to apply to your life this week so that you develop a Godly character and habits.

### **What translation should I use?**

Here are several translations that are easy to read and considered to be reliable and accurate.

English Standard Version (ESV) - *used in FBC Forney sermons*

Christian Standard Bible (CSV)

New American Standard Version (NASB)

New Living Translation (NLT)

Some of these translations come as Study Bibles that provide additional commentary to help explain the scripture in more detail. A good study Bible is a great investment.

Try going to a bookstore or reading passages online to see which translation you are most comfortable reading.

As you take the step to integrate the Bible into your daily life, you will see how it is relevant to everything that you face. God will use your time in the Bible to teach you about His truths and draw you closer to Him.

### **Where do I start?**

The best thing you can do to get started reading the Bible daily is to make a plan. There are many great reading plans available. One popular reading plan is the One Year Bible. This plan will guide you to read scripture each day in such a way that you will read through the entire Bible in one year. Copies of the one year plan are available on the church website or in the Church Office. There are also many reading plans and devotion books available online and in Christian bookstores. Many new believers will start by reading through a book of the Bible like the book of John. The bottom line is you need to make a plan and stick to it.

## SERVE: Serve in Ministry

As a believer and faithful follower of Jesus Christ we must realize that God created us for a purpose. He has a special plan for our lives and wants to use us to accomplish His work. When you became a Christian, you were filled with the Holy Spirit and given special gifts for ministry. A spiritual gift is an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers, which empowers them to serve the body of Christ, the church.

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

*1 Corinthians 12:4-7*

*For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...*

*Romans 12:4-6*

There are several key passages in scripture that talk about spiritual gifts.

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:9-11 contain representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church. A definition of these gifts follows.

**Leadership** —Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

**Administration** —Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Teaching** —Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God's Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

**Knowledge** —The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God's Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Wisdom** —Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Prophecy** —The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).

**Discernment** —Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

**Exhortation** —Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).

**Shepherding** —The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).

**Faith** —Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).

**Evangelism** —God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).

**Apostleship**—The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

**Service/Helps**—Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).

**Mercy**—Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).

**Giving**—Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).

**Hospitality**—Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

God has gifted you with an expression of His Holy Spirit to support His vision and mission of the church. It is a worldwide vision to reach all people with the gospel of Christ. As a Christian, God desires that you know how He has gifted you. This will lead you to where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission for the church.

You can use a Spiritual Gifts Survey to help you identify your gifts. There is a free spiritual gift survey available on our web site. Go to [www.fbcforney.org/resources/serve](http://www.fbcforney.org/resources/serve) and you either print a copy of a spiritual gift survey through Lifeway or you can click on a link to take a free survey online.

Once you identify your Spiritual Gifts then you can begin to serve in areas of ministry that will use your gifts. There are many service opportunities at First Baptist Forney. Here is a list of just some of the ministry opportunities that are available:

Bible Study Teacher/Leader (outreach, fellowship, secretary, administration, missions, etc.)

Children's Ministry (teacher, leader, counselor, etc)

Greeters/Ushers

Media/Audio Visual

Missions (mission trips, praying, giving, evangelism, church planting)

Outreach Ministry (G.R.O.W visitation and letter writing)

Preschool Ministry (teaching, extended care)

Recreation Ministry (coaching, referee, score keeper, devotions)

Student Ministry (teaching, mentoring, counseling, music)

Special Needs Ministry

Children's Choir

College Ministry

Hospitality

Men's Ministry

Music Ministry

Prayer Ministry

Single Adult Ministry

Senior Adult Ministry

Women's Ministry

The best way to use your gift is through a small group Bible study. Every group has many ways to serve using your gifts. Talk with your teacher or the leader of the group and ask them how you can serve. Let them know your spiritual gifts. Once you find your place in ministry using your gifts, you will experience the true blessing of knowing you are in God's will. We call this your "sweet spot." For further assistance identifying your spiritual gifts and serving in ministry you can contact the church office and ask to visit with a minister.

## **SERVE: Give Sacrificially**

The Bible says more about giving than Heaven, prayer, or even faith. God is the owner and provider of everything. Our role as a Christian is to be a good manager or steward of 100% of what God entrusts to us during our lifetime. One of the greatest measures of spiritual maturity is how we handle the resources that God has given us. Stewardship, honoring God with our finances, is a form of discipleship that will help you to become a fully developing follower of Jesus Christ. You cannot serve God **and** Money but you must learn to serve God **with** Money.

### **Faithful giving draws us closer to God.**

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

*Matthew 6:21*

### **Faithful giving is the key to a full life.**

*They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

*1 Timothy 6:18-19*

### **Faithful giving blesses us in return.**

*Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

*Malachi 3:10*

### **Faithful giving makes us happy.**

*In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

*Acts 20:35*

### **Faithful giving reminds us that everything belongs to God.**

*You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.*

*Deuteronomy 8:18*

Here are some great stewardship principles to incorporate into your life.

- God owns everything. I'm His money manager.
- My heart always goes where I put God's money
- Heaven, not earth, is my home.
- I should live for my present life on earth, but for eternity.
- Giving is the only antidote to materialism.
- God blesses me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving.

**Why should we give through a local church?** Giving helps us grow in our faith as we support the ministries in our church. Giving supports the ministries of the church. Giving allows each of us to be a part of God's impact through the church not just here in our community but all over the

world. By giving to FBC Forney you are part of spreading the gospel here in Forney, in our state, in our country, and to the ends of the earth.

**How much should we give?** The Bible teaches that every believer should give generously to the work of the local church. A tithe is considered to be 10% of gross income and provides support to the church budget. Many people give above their tithe to support other ministries like missions and future growth.

**How can we give to the church?** There are several ways to give:

- Online – Visit our website at [www.fbcforney.org](http://www.fbcforney.org). Click on the Give button. You can set up one-time donations or electronic drafts from your bank.
- Via Your Bank – Contact your bank to set up a bank draft or electronic checks to First Baptist Forney.
- Offering Plate - Drop your donation in the offering plate during any of our Sunday or Wednesday worship services.
- Mail/Drop off – mail/drop off directly to First Baptist Forney, P.O. Box 97, 1003 College Street, Forney, TX 75126.

**Where does the money go?** Your first commitment should be to give a tithe (10% of gross income). All tithes go to support the church budget, which provides funding for all church ministries and facilities. Our church automatically gives 10% of the church budget to the Cooperative Program (CP). Through the CP you are joining millions of other Southern Baptists in fulfilling the Great Commission of taking the good news of Jesus to a world in need of a Savior. The CP provides a way for fifty thousand plus churches to work together to support missions around the world.

You can also give to the FBC **World Missions Offering**. This offering is collected all year and goes directly to missions, bypassing the church budget. Here is a break down of where the World Missions Offering goes:

- International Missions = 60%
- North American Missions = 20%
- Texas State Missions = 10%
- First Baptist Forney Missions = 10%

You can also designate an offering to the church **Building Fund (Higher Ground)**. This offering will help pay for new church facilities and future growth.

**Is my gift tax-deductible?** All contributions to the church are tax-deductible. To help with the accuracy of records you should use an offering envelope, personal check, or give online. Giving statements are mailed to church members by the end of January to help you keep track of your giving the previous year. Electronic records are also available through the online giving web site.

## SERVE: Make Disciples

God has given ALL believers the responsibility for the Great Commission.

*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 28:19-20*

Every Christian has the potential to take part and to bear much fruit for God. Everyone has the potential to witness to others and to disciple them.

Together, we fulfill Christ's central teachings of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as we worship, fellowship together, minister to those in need, obey His teachings, and spread the message of Christ's salvation. We are all leaders of someone. We all have an influence (positive or negative) on other people. Ask God to put people in your path that you can witness to and help disciple.

There is a special reason that God saved you and chose you to be His child. To understand His purpose, let's see what the Bible says about God's special purpose for us.

When the world was destroyed by the flood, God saved Noah and his household. (Genesis 6:9-7:1)

When God destroyed the city of Jericho, He saved Rahab and her household. (Joshua 6:17-25)

When Cornelius repented and turned to God, both he and his household were baptized. (Acts 10:27-48)

When the Philippian jailer turned to Jesus, he was baptized, along with all his family. (Acts:23-34)

God will put people in your path that you can influence (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.) God wants you to be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Each day as you spend time alone with God you can grow deeper in your understanding and relationship with Him.

You are the match that God can use to light the fuse of a great movement to Christ in your community! The ultimate goal is that you lead people to Christ and then disciple them to reach and disciple others, who will reach and disciple others, who will reach and disciple others, etc. Ask God to show you how you can be more effective as a leader and influence others in their faith.



**Make it a habit to pray for more workers to go into the harvest. In doing so, tell God “Yes”, I will go wherever you send me.**

*Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

*Matthew 9:37-38*

**Commit to Pray, Give AND Go**

As Disciples of Jesus Christ we are commanded to Go and make disciples of all nations. How will you commit to pray for missions? What can you commit to give to the World Missions Offering so the gospel can reach the ends of the earth? Where is God sending you to go and share the gospel and be a light for Him?

**As you go about your busy day, be reminded that you are a child of God and he is calling you to be His witness among the people you come into contact.**

*And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”*

*Mark 1:17*

**As faithful followers of Jesus Christ we are entrusted with His word and it is our responsibility to teach it to others.**

*And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

*2 Timothy 2:2*

**It is not good enough for us to just come to church once a week, hear the Word, and not do anything with it. Every encounter with God’s Word brings a new opportunity to go and share it with someone else.**

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

*James 1:22*

**God’s Spirit is already at work all around us convicting people’s hearts and preparing them to receive the Good News.**

*And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment*

*John 16:8*

**Our job is to go out and find them. The only way to find them is to share the Gospel with everyone.**

*And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*

*Mark 16:15*

We hope that this booklet has helped you take the next steps to grow closer to God. Hopefully by now, you are connected to the church, participating in a Bible study group, and faithfully living a life of worship. You are regularly sharing your faith with others, praying regularly, reading the Bible, and having a daily quiet time with God. You are beginning to serve using your spiritual gifts, giving sacrificially to the church, and leading others to be Disciples.

Remember that, as Christians, we never stop growing and learning. These basic steps are just the beginning of a life-long journey. Be reminded of the words that Paul spoke to the church:

*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 3:12-14*

You are now on your way to exciting adventure of following the Lord and experiencing the abundant life He has for you.

Keep pressing on...

# What we Believe

The Baptist Faith and Message is a detailed explanation of our core biblical beliefs.

[www.sbc.net/bfm2000](http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000)

## I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

## II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

## B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

## C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

### **III. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

### **IV. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

## **V. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

## **VI. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

## **VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

## **VIII. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

## **IX. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

## **X. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

## **XI. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

## **XII. Education**

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

## **XIII. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel,



and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

#### **XIV. Cooperation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

#### **XV. The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

## **XVI. Peace and War**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

## **XVII. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

## **XVIII. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. The husband and wife are of equal

worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.