




FIRST BAPTIST ARLINGTON

GLORIFYING  
GOD BY  
FOLLOWING  
THE JESUS  
WAY





# GLORIFYING GOD BY FOLLOWING THE JESUS WAY!

“Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” These famous opening words from the Westminster Shorter Catechism (1646) offer a succinct and enduring declaration of the ultimate purpose of humanity. But how do we glorify God as the highest fulfillment of our existence?

At First Baptist Church Arlington, we believe the way to glorify God is by following Jesus. More specifically, each day we must actively pursue both Jesus as the Way as well as the way of Jesus.

Eugene Peterson describes it like this: “So. Jesus the Way, the ways of Jesus. He shows the way. He also is the way. Jesus points out the way, but then he takes the initiative, inviting us to go with him. Jesus is our way to God, but at the same time Jesus is God’s way to us. The way we come to God is the same way that God comes to us. God comes to us in Jesus; we come to God in Jesus. It is the same way, the Jesus way.”

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# KNOWING GOD

*The Christian life is an intimate, personal relationship with God, made possible through faith in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity is a dynamic, intimate love relationship between the Creator and his creation that begins at salvation and continues for eternity!*

*"Now this is eternal life: that they may **know you**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*  
John 17:3

The root Greek word translated "know" in this verse is used elsewhere in the Bible to describe the intimacy of a sexual relationship. It reflects personal, experiential understanding. "Knowing" God is more than just acknowledging belief, memorizing information, or keeping a set of rules. It's the way to abundant life and eternal life!

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to **know** this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:16-19*

In order for your relationship with God to grow and develop, it must become a priority. Love takes time, energy, and intentionality! It requires a serious, sustained commitment and a shift in orientation on our part. Intimacy requires

honesty, vulnerability, and risk-taking. It involves "doing life" together.

None of this can start until you choose to make the most important decision of all... committing your life to Christ! Here's how you do that:

**ADMIT** that you're a sinner and you can't save yourself. All of us have sinned and the consequence of our sin is "death"... both physical death on earth and eternal separation from God. **Read Romans 3:23; 6:23; 10:9, 13.**

**BELIEVE** that Jesus died for you and offers you complete forgiveness and eternal life. God the Father showed his love for us by sending Jesus the Son to die for us. We must place our faith and hope in Jesus, claiming his righteousness as our own. **Read Romans 5:8; 1 John 1:9.**

**COMMIT** your life completely to Jesus... giving him control of your past, present, and future. Allow God's Spirit to fill you and guide you. Experience the full and meaningful life that Jesus wants to give you. **Read John 10:10.**

When you trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you are "born again." You become spiritually alive and able to understand spiritual truth. The Holy Spirit - the Counselor - comes to live inside you, prompting you to pursue your relationship with God. You begin to submit to the Spirit's control, instead of your old nature.





God invites us to know him personally. We must choose to respond. The way we keep growing is the same way we start: deliberate pursuit by grace through faith.

*“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” Colossians 2:6-7*

There is much to learn as you seek to glorify God by following The Jesus Way. You will be transformed over time from the inside out. Your identity is based on your relationship with God. Your outlook and worldview are shaped by your relationship with God. Your values and priorities are oriented around your relationship with God. Your whole life is now centered on your relationship with God.

## JESUS GAVE US THESE 3 FOUNDATIONS FOR GLORIFYING GOD AS WE FOLLOW HIS WAY...

### THE GREAT PRIORITY (Seek)

*“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...” Matthew 6:33*

### THE GREAT COMMANDMENT (Love)

*“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.” Matthew 22:37-39*

### THE GREAT COMMISSION (Share)

*“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20*



# FOLLOWING



Christianity is being “saved” to an intimate journey with Jesus. It’s being “renewed” as the Spirit of God guides your thoughts and actions. It’s being “transformed” from the inside out as the love of God and the Word of God increasingly take control.

After you commit your life to Christ... pledging allegiance to King Jesus and choosing to follow him each day... here are some “next steps” you need to take.

**PRAY.** Now that you are part of God’s family, acknowledge his presence and invite him into every situation. The Bible tells us to “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 4:17) and “don’t worry... talk to God” (Philippians 4:6-7). Your heavenly Father knows you best and loves you most. Share your heart continually with him.

**TELL OTHERS.** It’s important for you to share the decision you’ve made with someone else. This will reinforce the commitment in your own life and serve as a witness and encouragement to them. Good news is meant to be shared!

**DON’T FOCUS ON YOUR FEELINGS.** Following Jesus isn’t a warm, fuzzy feeling. Choosing to follow Jesus each day is an eternally significant decision that’s much bigger than your circumstances or emotions. Don’t evaluate

your relationship with God based on how you feel at any particular moment. Trust God to accomplish his will in your life despite what you see or how you feel!

**GET BAPTIZED.** Baptism is a public symbol of your inner commitment. It illustrates your repentance of sin and devotion to Christ. When you're laid back in the water, it symbolizes Jesus being laid in the grave and your desire to be "dead to sin." When you're raised out of the water, it symbolizes Jesus' resurrection from the dead and your desire to live a new life in him.

**WORSHIP WITH OTHERS.** Choosing to follow Jesus is a personal decision that has public implications. Christians are part of the Church... made up of all the followers of Jesus across the ages and around the world. A great expression of that reality is joining other Jesus-followers in a public worship experience, celebrating our oneness in Christ!

**READ THE BIBLE.** Reading the Bible regularly is vital to your continued growth as a Christian. Get a translation of the Bible that you can understand and follow a reading plan. Our church offers a daily Bible reading that relates to our Pastor's Sunday sermons. You can sign up to receive it at [www.fbca.org](http://www.fbca.org).

**MEDIATE ON GOD'S TRUTH.** God commands us to reflect on his Word (Joshua 1:8). The idea behind "meditate" is to "chew the cud." Only after a cow eats the grass three times is her body able to digest it. If she ate it only once, the grass would simply pass right through. But after three times, her body is nourished. The food becomes part of her. Take time to meditate on God's revealed truth!

As you reflect on God's Word, ask the Holy Spirit to apply it to your life. James 1:22 warns us, *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says!"* Use the acrostic SPACE to help you consider your appropriate response.

- Is there a **S**in to confess?
- Is there a **P**romise to claim?
- Is there an **A**ttitude to change?
- Is there a **C**ommand to obey?
- Is there an **E**xample to follow?

**GET INVOLVED IN A STUDY GROUP.** The Christian life is meant to be lived "in community." We grow best as followers of Jesus when we choose to live in loving, accountable relationships with others. Our church offers a variety of Bible study groups for people in different ages and stages of life.

**CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER.** We believe the Lord's Supper (Communion) symbolizes the sacrifice of Jesus. The elements of the Lord's Supper (bread and grape juice) represent the body and blood of our Lord offered up on our behalf. Like baptism, this ordinance is only for those who have committed their lives to Jesus. And like baptism, it's a celebration of the new life we have together as God's family.

**GIVE BACK TO GOD.** Good stewardship of our earthly possessions is a God-given responsibility. God has graciously blessed us with material resources, and we should honor him in the way we handle our finances. Followers of Jesus ought to invest their time, talent, and treasure in the work of God's kingdom. Ideally, that includes giving at least a "tithe" (10%) of their income to the local church.

**SERVE.** God has blessed you so that you can bless others. When you become a Christian, God's Spirit comes to live inside you. He gives you "spiritual gifts" that he intends to use to strengthen the Church and minister to other people. Learn more about your "spiritual gifts" and how your talents and interests can be used by God.

**COMMIT YOUR WORK OR SCHOOLING TO THE LORD.** View your role as an employee or student as a gift from God. One aspect of being made "in the image of God" is the desire and potential we have for productivity. Work reveals our strengths and weaknesses. It provides a natural opportunity to engage and influence the culture. Good work well done honors God!

**KEEP GROWING.** Most people are spiritually immature because spiritual growth is not a priority for them. You will not "grow up" into Christlikeness by default. Your sinful nature and selfish inclinations actively work against the process of spiritual maturity. To overcome that, you must be equally intentional and active to make spiritual progress in your life. God expects us to grow and mature as followers of Jesus and he will actively assist us in this process. We should expect spiritual growth and maturity for ourselves and other Christians and actively participate in the process as well.







# THE CHURCH

*We believe the Church is the body of Christ on earth today! Jesus established the Church, and it exists to perform God's will on earth. Believers are to invest themselves in the life and work of the Church. FBCA Core Beliefs and Values*

The Church that Jesus established is made up everyone who has ever trusted in him! It's the family of God comprised of followers of Jesus from around the world and across the ages.

The Bible tells us that the Church is "the body of Christ" and Christ is "the head of the Church." The Church has many critics, but no equals! The Church is made up of broken, sinful people who have been saved and set free. The Church is not perfect, because it is made up of imperfect people (like you and me). However, the Church continues to be the presence of Christ and an agent of redemption in the world.

Eugene Peterson puts it this way... "The local congregation is the place and community for listening to and obeying Christ's commands, for inviting people to consider and respond to Jesus' invitation, 'Follow me,' a place and community for worshiping God. It is the place and community where we are baptized into a Trinitarian identity and go on to mature 'to the measure of the full stature of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13), where we can be taught the Scriptures and learn to discern the ways that we follow Jesus, the Way."

First Baptist Church Arlington is a part of – and a manifestation of – the global Church. We're a "family of faith" responsible for organizing ourselves to promote the will and work of God in the world.

As the name implies, FBCA is a "Baptist" church. That means we have a set of core beliefs that help identify us as a distinctively Baptist expression of the Christian faith. We embrace things like:

- The authority of the Bible as the Word of God for our lives
- Salvation by grace through faith in Jesus
- Believer's baptism by immersion
- The Lord's Supper as a symbol of Jesus' death
- Soul competency and the priesthood of the believer
- Church membership for baptized believers
- Local church autonomy
- Congregational church governance
- Religious freedom and separation of church and state

Our church was founded in 1871 and a lot has changed since then. What hasn't changed is our commitment to these core Baptist principles.

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Joining a church is a spiritual decision. Church membership comes after a person has committed their life to Christ. Followers of Jesus should invest themselves in and through a local congregation as a tangible expression of their commitment to the Lordship of Jesus and dedication to serving as his representatives in the world. The Christian life is meant to be lived in community.

We all need the instruction, encouragement, and accountability that come from being personally identified with and connected to the “body of Christ.” When you join a church, you become part of a “faith community.” Church membership:

- testifies to your faith in Christ (identification, confirmation)
- demonstrates a commitment to living for Christ (ownership, sacrifice)
- helps you live out your faith (encouragement, accountability)
- allows you to serve in positions of leadership (growth, responsibility).

There are three ways you can become a member of First Baptist Church Arlington.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH.** If you have chosen to commit your life to Jesus Christ, and you want to make that decision “public” for the first time, you can join FBCA on your “profession of faith.” This is the first step toward church membership. We encourage everyone who has trusted Jesus as Savior to be baptized by immersion. This is a necessary “next step” in your church membership.

**STATEMENT OF FAITH.** If you are not currently a member of another Baptist church – but have already confessed your faith in Jesus and been baptized – you can join on your “statement of faith” and previous baptism by immersion.

**TRANSFER OF LETTER.** If you are currently a member of another Baptist church, you can move your membership to FBCA. We will contact your former church and notify them of your change in membership... “transfer of letter.”

After a person declares their commitment to Christ and expresses the desire to become a member of FBCA, their membership must be voted on and formally approved by the church at a business meeting.

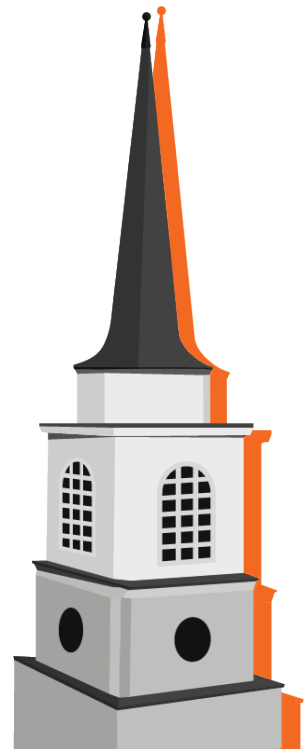
## BAPTIST HISTORY

Immediately after Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, the Apostles and early believers were afraid and confused. Even though Jesus appeared to them and explained the reason everything had happened, they were unsure of what to do next. It wasn’t until Jesus ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost that his followers began to understand God’s plan.

In Acts 2, Peter stood up among the crowd in Jerusalem

and proclaimed how Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection were the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He called on all of them to repent of their sin and place their faith and hope in Jesus. The Bible says 3,000 people were saved that day.

Over the next 3 centuries, Christianity mutated from a small, persecuted Jewish faction to become the official religion of the Roman Empire. The evolution from “government oppression” to “government sponsorship” launched a long and often bloody union between church and state.



In 1054, the Christian movement split into two factions with Eastern Christians based in Constantinople and Western Christians based in Rome. These groups became the Greek Orthodox Church (led by a Patriarch) and the Roman Catholic Church (led by a Pope). Each “excommunicated” the other and claimed dominance.

In Western Europe, the Roman Catholic Church was closely allied with (and supported by) the government. There was no religious freedom and those who dissented were imprisoned, tortured, and executed. The various “inquisitions” that took place in the 1400’s offer a graphic example of what happened to “heretics.” That persecution extended from Europe to the colonies in the “new world.”

In the early 1500’s, a reform movement began to spread. Abuses by the Church and a lack of adherence to the Bible caused several church leaders to “protest.” Reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin began to question certain practices common in Roman Catholicism. Eventually, the Protestant movement materialized.

In England, the Reformation took a different turn when King Henry VIII broke from the Roman Catholic Church and established the Church of England, with himself serving as the head of both the church and the state. The battle between Catholics and Protestants now had the Anglicans to consider.



Out of this landscape, new groups emerged. Anabaptists, Separatists, and Puritans each contributed to the Protestant Reformation. Then, in the early 1600's, followers of Jesus with deeply held convictions about the authority of Scripture, salvation by faith, baptism only for believers, and religious freedom for all began to organize.

The London Confession of 1644 offers an early expression of the theological convictions of some of these dissenters, reformers, and protesters who would break away from the Church of England and come to be known as "Baptists." Not surprisingly, other Baptists would soon edit and "correct" that statement of faith to better reflect their own distinct beliefs, and the divisions continued.

The Protestant Reformation was nurtured by the development of the printing press and the growing availability of the Bible and various religious materials to the masses. When scholars like John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, and Miles Coverdale translated the Bible into English, many people suddenly had access to Scripture for the first time and were able to read God's Word for themselves.

Courageous leaders like John Smyth and Thomas Helwys pastored Baptist churches and wrote articles in support of religious liberty. Even though King James I commissioned a popular translation of the Bible in the early 1600's, he also demanded loyalty to the Church of England, decreeing that everyone aged 16 and over was required to attend his state-sanctioned services.

About this time, migrants began to travel from England to settle in America. Many were dissenters and protesters of the state-sanctioned church. Yet, ironically, some of them established communities that were just as religiously restrictive as the one they had fled. As such, Baptists in the new colonies were often persecuted.

Eventually, Baptists began to find a measure of freedom, especially in the middle colonies. But it wasn't until the Great Awakening of the 1730's that Baptists began to multiply rapidly on the continent. And the American Revolution in the 1770's significantly expanded the growth and influence of Baptists in this country.

## BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

Baptists are an interesting and diverse group. Currently in the U.S., approximately 11% of the population identify as Baptist, making it the third largest religious group, after Roman Catholics and non-denominational Protestants.

Over the past 400 years, Baptists have taken the Gospel around the world. According to the Baptist World Alliance

2022 census, there are approximately 51 million Baptists in 128 countries. Of course, Baptists are part of the over 2 billion Christians globally, who comprise the largest religion in the world.

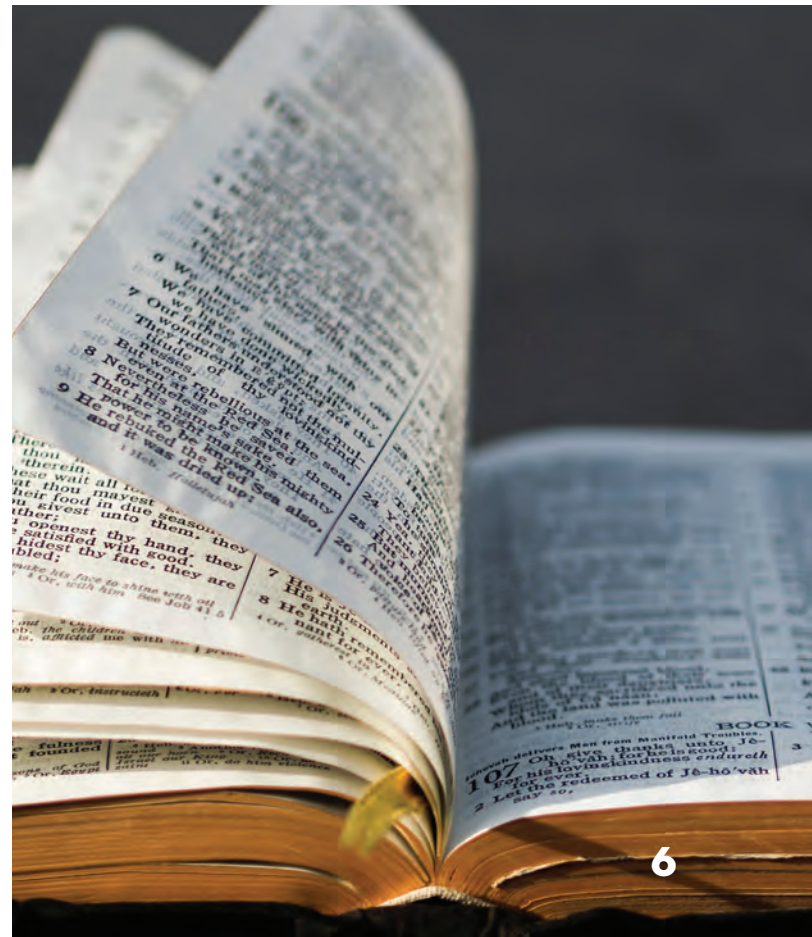
As previously noted, Baptists are historically an independent and strong-willed people. Over the years, divisions among Baptists have resulted in a wide variety of local church expressions. Most of those churches, however, adhere to the following theological and ecclesiological convictions.

### AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* 2 Timothy 3:16-17

*"No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* 2 Peter 1:20-21

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. It has historical particularity and eternal relevance. The human authors were uniquely inspired by the Spirit of God. His guidance led them to record his truth. The Bible is authoritative for every believer, and it provides the counsel of God for everyday life. It serves as our ultimate written authority for faith and practice.



## **SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH**

*“But now a righteousness of God apart from the law has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:21-24*

All humans are created in the image of God. However, each person is sinful and separated from God. Only through faith in Jesus Christ (the Messiah) can a person be restored to a right relationship with God. Each individual must pledge allegiance to Jesus, the Holy Eternal King, trusting his sacrificial death as the payment for sin and receiving his perfect righteousness.

## **BELIEVER’S BAPTISM**

*“Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.’” Matthew 28:18-19*

*“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Romans 6:3-4*

The word “baptism” comes from the Greek word *baptisma*, which means “to immerse.” John the Baptist used baptism as a public symbol of an inner commitment to show a person’s repentance from sin and desire to honor God. Jesus “reinterpreted” baptism by making it a symbol of salvation for those who believe in him.

Christian baptism is for believers only. Each follower of Jesus should be immersed in water as an act of obedience and humility. This baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It’s a testimony to the new life we have in Christ and it’s a requirement to become a member of our church.

## **LORD’S SUPPER**

*“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup*

*of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.” 1 Corinthians 11:23-28*

The Lord’s Supper is for believers only. It is a shared celebration among the people of God for the purpose of remembering Jesus’ suffering and death on our behalf. Some congregations observe the Lord’s Supper each time they meet. Others include it periodically as part of their corporate worship. Regardless of frequency, this ordinance ought to prompt reflection, confession, gratitude, and commitment.

## **SOUL COMPETENCY**

*“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” Joshua 24:15*

*“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1*

God has given each person free will. He has gifted each of us with a moral conscience. We all have the freedom to choose to worship God or not. The spiritual freedom of the individual supports the religious freedom of the group. Yet, this God-given gift carries great responsibility! Each of us is accountable to God for our choices. There are consequences – both good and bad – to our exercise of freedom.

## **PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER**

*“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9*

*“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.” Revelation 1:5-6*

Historically, priests have served as mediators between God and people. Here again, this foundational principle includes both opportunity and responsibility. Each follower of Jesus has direct access to God. We don’t need anyone other than Jesus to intercede for us (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15). However, as “priests” we have the opportunity and responsibility to pray for, care for, and share God’s truth with others. We have the privilege of representing God to people and people to God.

## **LOCAL CHURCH AUTONOMY**



*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:42, 47*

*"There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."*  
1 Corinthians 12:25, 27

The New Testament church that Jesus established is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by their faith, fellowship, and observances. These followers of Jesus are committed to sound teaching, the exercising of spiritual gifts, corporate worship, and shared ministry. These local churches operate through democratic processes under the lordship of Jesus Christ. All cooperation with other churches and entities is strictly voluntary.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

*"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and for all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." 1 Timothy 2:1-3*

*"Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone; love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king." 1 Peter 2:16-17*

Having endured so many years of religious persecution, it's no wonder Baptists are champions of religious liberty. There are countless examples throughout history of the dangers and dysfunctions of state-sponsored religion. This principle is closely aligned with our conviction about soul competency. We believe each individual should have the freedom to worship according to conscience, for the good of all.

The friendly "separation of church and state" means that the government should neither support nor oppose any particular faith group. The "free exercise of religion" allows each person to participate in the church of their choice without undue restriction or unfair benefit.

## REGENERATE MEMBERSHIP

*Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be*

*born again.'" John 3:5-7*

*"To the church of God... to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours..." 1 Corinthians 1:2*

*"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:47*

The word "regenerate" means "created new" or "born again." While everyone is welcome to fellowship, worship, and study the Bible with us, in order to join our church, an individual must be able to declare with sincerity that "Jesus is Lord!" For Baptists, church membership is a spiritual decision that follows a commitment to Christ and believer's baptism by immersion.

After a person has chosen to give their life to Jesus and be baptized as a Christian, they can request membership in our church. In order for their membership to become official, it must be voted on by the congregation at a formal business meeting. That requirement is connected to the final Baptist principle.

## CONGREGATIONAL GOVERNANCE

*"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority." Ephesians 2:6-7, 9-10*

The previous "Baptist distinctives" come together in this final conviction. We believe that soul competency, the priesthood of the believer, local church autonomy, religious freedom, and a regenerate membership find natural expression in a congregational form of governance. Committed and invested members who are seeking God's will under the leadership of the Holy Spirit can vote their conscience.

No outside group or individual has authority over a Baptist church. And no individual within the church is superior to another. Each member is expected to actively participate in the ministries of the church. Each member is expected to financially support the work of the church. Therefore, each member is entitled to vote on the business of the church in accordance with our constitution and by-laws.

# APOLOGETICS



*"Apologetics" comes from the Greek word "apologia" which means to speak in defense. It's an ancient discipline dating back to the 1st and 2nd centuries when early Christians were writing persuasively in defense of the faith. It is a practice that has endured through the centuries into the modern era. Today, apologetics is often identified with debates about the Christian faith.*

According to Dr. Paul Coutler, *"Apologetics is the task of developing and sharing arguments for the truth and rationality of Christianity and the falsehood and irrationality of alternatives with the aim of strengthening the faith of believers and provoking non-believers to consider Christ."*

In our context, "apologetics" involves 2 concepts which go hand in hand:

- biblically consistent and orthodox Christian teaching that leads to a biblically consistent and orthodox Christian worldview, and
- the tools necessary to defend that biblically consistent and orthodox Christian worldview in the face of questions, detractions, and criticisms.

Scripture calls us to this discipline. 1 Peter 3:15-16 says: *"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."*

There is an urgent need for followers of Jesus to actively pursue Christlikeness, sound theology, and a biblical worldview. We must continue to "devote ourselves to the

apostle's teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers." It's the means for "growing up" and protection from "falling away."

There is a profound lack of biblical knowledge in 21st century America. While most Americans still identify as "Christian" (65% in 2019), the majority have not cultivated a true biblical worldview based on Scripture... including most Christian Pastors (only 37% according to Barna).

The German word *"weltanschauung"* refers to a comprehensive view of the universe. It's the "lens" through which a person makes sense of the world around them. For someone who has spent time thinking deeply about "life," it would include philosophic, moral, and religious conclusions and convictions.

A person's "weltanschauung" (worldview) should answer life's biggest questions. Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? It also speaks to where a person looks for "truth." Are you trusting "reason" (materialistic) or "revelation" (transcendent) to guide you? What informs the process by which you make sense of your surroundings and circumstances?

In his latest *American Worldview Inventory*, George Barna reports that while 51% of respondents claim a biblical worldview, further questioning reveals that only 6%



actually possess a biblical worldview. It turns out there are serious inconsistencies between what they believe and what the Bible teaches. And two-thirds (68%) of those who consider themselves to be Christians claim to have a biblical worldview, yet additional research indicates only 9% truly do.

In this survey, about half (46%) of the respondents say it's important (very, somewhat, or not too) for their religious faith to influence every dimension of their life. Among that group, a small majority claim to be effective at integrating their faith into the areas of family, religious life, and personal relationships. Less than a third of them are integrating their faith into politics, business, entertainment, and news choices.

Barna concludes that most of us develop a worldview by default. He says worldview is more caught than taught in the U.S. *"Our studies show that Americans are neither deep nor sophisticated thinkers. Most people seem more interested in living a life of comfort and convenience than one of logical consistency and wisdom. Our children will continue to suffer the consequences of following in the unfortunate footsteps of their parents and elders. People who are willing to fight for a more reasonable way of thinking and acting can make a difference, but it will be slow progress."*

Hebrews 5:11-6:6 offers an illustration of what spiritual maturity (and immaturity) looks like. The writer of Hebrews is deeply concerned about his readers' lack of understanding of the Christian life.

The author observes that by now these believers should be well-established in their faith, knowledgeable about the things of God, and actively teaching others. Instead, they are "mere infants" who still need a diet of "spiritual milk" because they are unable (and unwilling) to digest "spiritual meat."

*"Solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."*  
Hebrews 5:14

Continued spiritual growth is urgent and essential for two reasons. First, it's the path to maturity and fullness in Christ. Second, it's protection against *falling* away from the faith. Three times in the previous chapters, the writer of Hebrews warns his readers against "hardening their hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-8, 15; 4:7).

Becoming spiritually mature takes time, effort, and intentionality. Choosing to set our hearts and minds on things above, rather than on earthly things (Colossians 3),

not only allows us to experience the abundant life that Jesus offers (John 10:10), it provides a safeguard against apostasy (Hebrews 10:19-31).

The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of sound doctrine, deliberate teaching, and disciplined study in his second letter to his young friend, Timothy.

*"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."* 2 Timothy 2:1-2

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."* 2 Timothy 2:15

*"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* 2 Timothy 3:14-17

*"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction. For a time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."* 2 Timothy 4:2-4

Within this important "apologetic" context, we will examine the biblically consistent and orthodox Christian teaching that leads to a biblically consistent and orthodox Christian worldview.

## CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

Baptists have historically identified as a "confessional people" rather than a "creedal people." Emerging during a time of state-sponsored persecution in 17th century England, the earliest Baptists resisted mandatory "creeds." Instead, they embraced personal "confessions" that summarized their faith.

While there are definite similarities between creeds and confessions, for some, the distinction is between "compulsory" and "voluntary." Others have stated that confessions are particular statements about what a person believes, while creeds are a more general

statement about *in whom* a person believes. You could say that a creed is a pledge of allegiance, while a confession is a doctrinal statement.

Regardless, the Apostles' Creed has stood the test of time as an "apologetic" for the Church. In its oldest form, this basic summary of Christian belief dates back to around AD 140. It is still recited in many Christian churches each week.

During the 300 years after the Lord Jesus ascended back into heaven, Christianity morphed from a small, persecuted Jewish faction to the official religion of the Roman Empire. Since so much of the population was uneducated and illiterate, creeds were developed by the Church for teaching and instruction. These were memorized and recited, helping to unite the growing number of Christians scattered throughout the world as part of increasingly diverse cultures and languages.

Here is a modern English translation of the Apostles' Creed...

I believe in God, **the Father** almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in **Jesus Christ**, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by **the Holy Spirit** and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day, he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (universal) Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The goal of this kind of formal instruction is to develop mature and fruitful followers of Jesus. It is crucial for those who call themselves "Christian" to understand clearly on what basis they make that claim. We want our church members to be knowledgeable about the Person of God, the Word of God, and the work of God.

Sadly, many followers of Jesus are more familiar with and conversant about music, media, sports, and culture than the things of God. We can more readily offer an "apologetic" for our entertainment than our faith. Our worldview is shaped by what we pay attention to, in both profound and subtle ways. Our values and perspective reflect what's foremost in our head and heart.

*"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:23-25*





# CATECHISM

The Greek word “katecheo” means to instruct or teach. It is used several times in the New Testament to describe the importance of intentional training in the things of God, or as Luke says in Acts 18:25, “the way of the Lord.”

Acts 2:42 is inscribed in the floor of the rotunda outside our sanctuary. It reminds us that the first Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching.” We ought to do the same. To “catechize” simply means to systematically teach biblical truth in an orderly way.

In his adaptation of “A Baptist Catechism,” John Piper offers this explanation...

It appears that there was a body of authoritative instruction and even a way of teaching it in the early church. In Romans 6:17, Paul gives thanks that “you have become obedient from the heart to the *pattern of teaching* to which you were committed.” 2 Timothy 1:13 says, “*Follow the pattern of sound words* which you heard from me.” 2 Thessalonians 2:15 says, “Stand firm and hold to the *traditions* which you were taught by us.” And Acts 20:27 says, “I did not shrink from declaring to you the *whole counsel of God*.” It appears that there was a body of authoritative instruction and even a way of teaching it in the early church.

We believe that right theology is the basis of sound apologetics. The following catechism is an attempt to instruct our people in the way of the Lord “*until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:13).

Spiritual maturity and training in righteousness are a choice. Most people choose to remain spiritually immature and theologically ill-equipped because they are unwilling to fully orient their lives toward the things of God. They refuse to devote the time and energy required to grow and develop as a follower of Jesus.

Remember the “Great Priority” mentioned earlier: “*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*” (Matthew 6:33). You always have time for the things you put first. Your values are clearly reflected in your priorities.

In Jeremiah 29:13, God promises “*you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart*.” Knowing God is more than a Sunday activity. It’s a way of life.

The writer of Hebrews observes that “*solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil*” (Hebrews 5:14). Constant use and training denote effort, intentionality, and consistency.

The Apostle Paul encourages you to “*train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come*” (1 Timothy 4:7-8).



# AN FBCHA CATECHISM

*The following instruction is intended to systematically teach biblical truth in an orderly way to the people of First Baptist Church Arlington. We trust that this material is appropriately academic and easily accessible. While geared toward adults, we hope that it will be modified for use with younger students. Our prayer is that both individuals and small groups will take the time to go through this material with open hearts and inquiring minds “seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”*

## **GOD/THE TRINITY**

Everything starts with God (Genesis 1:1). He is the great I AM (Exodus 3:14), who was and is and is to come (Revelation 4:8). There is only one true and living God, the Creator of all things (Isaiah 44:6). All other gods are false idols (Psalm 96:4-5). God is unique, perfect, and complete in himself. He is infinite, holy, and good (James 1:17). God is one in essence, yet he has revealed himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the three persons of the Trinity. Each is equal in power and glory with distinct functions. We see the Trinity represented at Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 3:16-17) and in his final instructions to his disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

## **GOD THE FATHER**

During his earthly ministry, Jesus spoke at length about God the Father. He challenged his followers to live in such a way that others would “praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). Jesus taught us to pray to “our Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). And after his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). God is Father to all who become his adopted children through faith in God the Son (John 1:12).

## **GOD THE SON**

Jesus Christ is God the Son. He is distinct from God the Father, yet equal in glory and power (1 Corinthians

8:6). God the Son is the radiance and representation of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is the divine Word who created all things (John 1:1-4). He became human – uniquely God and man – to reveal God more fully to mankind (John 1:14) and to offer himself as the sacrifice for our sins (Galatians 4:4-7). He lived a sinless life. He was crucified, buried, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Jesus is Lord! He is Creator, Redeemer, and Ruler of all (Colossians 1:16-20). God the Son will return one day to judge all people and establish his kingdom for all time (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

## **GOD THE SPIRIT**

Jesus promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would be their Counselor, revealing God’s truth to them (John 14:25-26). The Spirit of God marks followers of Jesus and serves as a promise of their inheritance as children of God (Ephesians 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit indwells God’s children, guiding their thoughts and giving them life and peace (Romans 8:5-11). God the Spirit offers believers the ability to resist their old, sinful nature and instead follow God’s will for them (Galatians 5:16-18). We need to be careful not to grieve (Ephesians 4:30) or quench (1 Thessalonians 5:19) God the Spirit as he seeks to make us more like Jesus.

## **ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**

God is unique and infinite. He is entirely “other than” and different from his creation. Humans cannot fully grasp



God's vastness and immensity. God always has been and always will be. God simply is. With that realization, here are some of the characteristics of God that help us begin to appreciate his overwhelming and incomparable majesty and glory.

- God is Eternal... he has no beginning or end.
- God is Immutable... he is perfect, unchanging, and completely holy.
- God is Omnipotent... he is all powerful.
- God is Omnipresent... he is everywhere.
- God is Omniscient... he knows everything.
- God is Omnibenevolent... he is all loving and all good.

## THE BIBLE

The Bible is the eternal Word of God (Isaiah 40:8). The human authors were divinely inspired by the Spirit of God to record his truth for mankind (2 Peter 1:20-21). The Bible is living and active (Hebrews 4:12-13). It is able to teach, correct, inform, and inspire (2 Timothy 3:15-17). The Word of God is authoritative for followers of Jesus, and it provides guidance for everyday life (Psalm 119:9-16).

The Bible consists of history, narrative, prophecy, poetry, wisdom, letters, and apocalyptic literature. It is inspired by God and a revelation of God. Amazingly, it is trustworthy and reliable, even though it was written by dozens of authors in multiple countries over a period of about 1,500 years.

The 39 Old Testament (old covenant) books were written primarily in ancient Hebrew. The 27 New Testament (new covenant) books were written primarily in Greek. Its pages span the fullness of human history and beyond. God has miraculously provided this sacred text for us, so it warrants our full attention.

## HUMANITY

Humans are God's special creation, made in his own image (Genesis 1:26-27). God created mankind as male and female. The first humans, Adam and Eve, were placed in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15-17). God blessed them and gave them stewardship over the rest of creation (Genesis 1:28-29). In the beginning, humans were innocent of sin. The man and woman had a special relationship with God and with each other (Genesis 2:21-25). God gave them free will and the ability to choose what they would do.

In addition to the capacity for knowledge and the responsibility of stewardship, part of being made in God's image includes the "soul" or moral consciousness of humans. It imparts an inherent "worth" and value to all people that merits dignity and respect. It also provides

an awareness of the transcendent... the eternal, divine, and beautiful... that causes us to appreciate and question (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The soul is the essence of who we are, and it is closely connected to the spiritual realm, which is just as real and present as the physical realm.

## SATAN

Satan is a created being. He appeared to Adam and Eve as a serpent (Genesis 3:1). Satan is evil incarnate. He is sometimes called the devil or "that ancient serpent" (Revelation 12:9). The word "devil" means "accuser," referring to his emphasis on guilt and shame. Perhaps Satan's greatest weapon against followers of Jesus is the weight and bondage of guilt and shame. That's why forgiveness is so powerful!

Jesus refers to Satan as a murderer and "the father of lies" (John 8:44). His sole purpose is to undermine God's perfect will, yet his defeat has already been accomplished (Revelation 20:10). Satan prompts us to question God's existence and motive. He distorts God's image and intent. Satan's original downfall and greatest enticement is the pride of wanting to be like God.

Strangely, despite the rampant wickedness in our society, most Americans say they don't believe Satan is real (which is exactly what Satan wants). The effects of Satan's war against God are everywhere, and countless individuals are serving his purposes consciously and unconsciously. Thankfully, followers of Jesus can resist Satan's attacks and overcome him by their testimony of God's goodness and grace (Revelation 12:10-12). We can take our stand against Satan and defeat him through the presence and power of God in our lives (Ephesians 6:10-18).

## SIN

Through Satan's temptation in the Garden of Eden, humans chose to rebel against God, violating his command and losing their original innocence. Choices have consequences. Adam and Eve's disobedience and rejection of God set in motion a series of penalties and outcomes that introduced sin into the world (Romans 5:12, 18-19). "The Fall" resulted in relational division and spiritual death. The curse of deception, shame, fear, blame, and guilt affected all creation (Genesis 3:8-19).

As such, humanity is born with a sin nature. We have an innate understanding of right and wrong, with an inclination toward evil (Romans 7:15-20). All of us are sinners and fall short of God's intended purpose and plan for our lives (Romans 3:23). The consequence of our sinfulness is physical death and eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23). God's righteous judgment still stands

wicked attitudes and actions; suppression and rejection of God's truth; and the worship of other gods (Romans 1:18-32).

## SALVATION

Although each of us is "dead in our sin," because of God's great love for us, we have been given the opportunity to be made "alive with Christ" by God's grace through faith (Ephesians 2:4-10). Though we were God's enemies, he has provided the means for our forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus' shed blood for us (Colossians 1:21-22).

The individual believer's salvation is reflective of God's plan to reconcile all things to himself (Colossians 1:19-20), ultimately resulting in "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1).

Only the grace of God can bring us back into right relationship with him, allowing us to experience our true purpose. Jesus offers forgiveness of sin and abundant life to all who put their faith and hope in him (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Each person must admit their sinfulness and guilt; choose to trust in Jesus as the sacrifice for their sin; and commit themselves to following Jesus as Lord for the rest of their lives.

The act of salvation (justification) is a new birth – being "born again" (John 3:3) – through faith in God the Son. It results in adoption by God the Father and inner presence by God the Spirit. At that point, the Christian is saved from the penalty of sin and the process of "sanctification" begins. Followers of Jesus spend the rest of their lives growing in Christlikeness, being saved from the power of sin. Ultimately, when Jesus returns, all believers will be transformed (glorification) and saved from the very presence of sin (Colossians 3:4; 1 John 3:2).

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Just as salvation is a choice, so is spiritual growth. Spiritual maturity requires devotion and discipline. Your sinful nature and selfish desires will actively seek to undermine the Holy Spirit's work in your life (Galatians 5:16-17). God expects us to grow and mature as followers of Jesus and he will actively assist us in this process (Colossians 2:6-7).

We should expect spiritual growth and maturity for ourselves and actively participate in the process. Over the centuries, followers of Jesus have practiced many "disciplines" in order to grow closer to God including Solitude and Silence, Reading and Reflection, Prayer and Worship, and Service and Sacrifice.

One evidence of spiritual growth in a person's life is "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-26). When our lives are characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, it indicates that we are increasingly under the guidance of God the Spirit.

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE

One reason spiritual growth and maturity are so important is because we are all engaged in spiritual warfare. Satan and the forces of evil are actively seeking to undermine God's will and work in the world. And our sinful nature is all too ready to give in to his promptings!

Satan and other fallen angels (demons) can tempt and torment followers of Jesus, but they cannot possess or overcome them. There is power in the name of Jesus! The Apostle Paul puts it this way: *"If God is for us, who can be against us? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us"* (Romans 8:31, 37). We can stand firm in our faith and resist temptation knowing God is with us (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Followers of Jesus must constantly be on their guard because *"your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8-9). From the beginning, sin has been "crouching at the door" (Genesis 4:7). We must be strong in the Lord and put on the full armor of God to take our stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:10-18).

## HEAVEN

Humans were created by God for eternity! Our souls live on after our physical death. As stated previously, the spiritual realm is just as real and present as the physical realm. And the choices we make on earth have eternal significance (1 John 2:28; 3:2-3). Choosing to know and love God now through faith in Jesus enables us to know and love God forever.

For those who trust in Jesus, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Perhaps the most compelling example of this is Jesus' promise to the criminal who was crucified next to him: *"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise"* (Luke 23:43). Jesus offers additional perspective on "paradise" in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). This blessed post-death condition for followers of Jesus is a temporary "heaven" that will ultimately be replaced by "the new heaven and the new earth" (Revelation 21:1-4).

While we don't know all the specifics of heaven, we know that it will be good because we will be with God forever. The Apostle Paul puts it this way: *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"* (1 Corinthians 2:9).



## HELL

Those who refuse Jesus' offer of salvation also live forever. As seen in Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus, "hell" is a place of torment (Luke 16:19-31). And, just as "paradise" is a temporary post-death location for those who die in the Lord, so hell or "hades" is a holding place for those who die apart from the Lord. Ultimately, after Jesus' second coming and the final judgment, all of God's enemies will be thrown into "the fiery lake of burning sulfur" (Revelation 19:20; 20:10-15).

The tragedy of living only for this life with no thought of eternity is illustrated in the parable of "the rich fool" (Luke 12:16-21). Jesus asks the profound question: *"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns us to store up treasure in heaven rather than on earth because *"where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21). Those who choose to live separated from God on earth will sadly live separated from God for eternity.

Jesus warns and encourages us to *"enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it"* (Matthew 7:13-14).

## THE CHURCH

The Church that Jesus established is made up everyone who has ever trusted in him. It's the family of God comprised of followers of Jesus from around the world and across the ages. The Church is "the body of Christ" and Christ is "the head of the Church" (Colossians 1:17-18).

The Church has many critics, but no equals! The Church is made up of broken, sinful people who have been saved and set free. The Church is not perfect, because it is made up of imperfect people. However, the Church continues to be the presence of Christ and an agent of redemption in the world (Ephesians 3:10-11, 20-21).

We get a glimpse of the Church's place in God's eternal kingdom in Revelation 7:9-10 as *"a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language"* stand before the throne of God singing his praises.

Ultimately, the Church will experience its fulfillment as "the bride of Christ" (Revelation 21:1-4). The phrase "the bride, the wife of the Lamb" expresses the intimacy of the relationship that those who know God and follow Jesus will have with him for all eternity. The Church's place in the heavenly "Holy City" combines the Old Covenant (12

tribes of Israel) with the New Covenant (12 Apostles) in a brilliant display of the glory of God and his eternal plan of redemption (Revelation 21:9-14).

## ORDINANCES

As Baptists, we regularly celebrate two "religious rituals" that Jesus established during his earthly ministry. We embrace Baptism and the Lord's Supper as tangible, multi-sensory expressions of our faith. They are signs of our union with Christ and the truth of the Gospel.

On the one hand, the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper have served to unite followers of Jesus around the world and across the ages. Every orthodox Christian group recognizes the importance of these two practices in the worship life of the people of God.

On the other hand, the actual meaning and administering of these ordinances has been a source of theological disagreement and division among Christian groups for at least the past several hundred years. At FBCA we believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are solemn and symbolic acts of obedience and celebration.

We baptize by immersion those who have committed their lives to Christ and declared the testimony: "Jesus is Lord!" We invite all believers who are present with us during communion to celebrate the Lord's Supper by taking the bread and juice offered in remembrance of the Lord's sacrificial death on our behalf.

## WORSHIP

Humans were created to worship. We have an innate, God-given predisposition to value, admire, esteem, and adore. God alone is deserving of our true worship, yet he has given us the freedom to offer our reverence and devotion to celebrities, sports teams, material possessions, various causes, and self. Although God's eternal power and divine nature are evident to all, many people choose to worship other things (Romans 1:20-22).

Jesus explained that *"true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:23-24). The writer of Hebrews instructs us to *"be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 12:28-29).

The Psalms are a powerful and enduring worship guide for God's people. Psalm 100 and 103 offer a beautiful expression of worship to God. While music and singing are often part of our worship, true worship involves all that we are. As Richard Foster says, "Worship begins in holy expectancy. It ends in holy obedience."

## STEWARDSHIP

As part of creation, God gave humans the responsibility of stewarding the earth. That stewardship includes corporate administration of community resources and personal management of individual possessions. Each of us is responsible to God for how we invest what has been entrusted to us (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

Followers of Jesus should be generous with their possessions as a blessing to others and a demonstration of their dependence on God (1 Timothy 6:17-19). Christians should invest in the work of the church, supporting their local congregation financially as well as with their time and talents.

The Apostle Paul offers this encouragement: *“just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving”* (2 Corinthians 8:7).

## EVANGELISM/MISSION

Good news is meant to be shared! Those who have received God's gift of forgiveness and adoption have a responsibility to share that good news with others (Romans 1:16-17). Jesus instructed his followers that the indwelling Holy Spirit would empower them to be his witnesses in their everyday lives and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:7-8).

The Great Commission clearly states Jesus' expectation that his followers would *“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”* (Matthew 28:18-20). Baptists have historically organized themselves and cooperated to minister locally and send missionaries around the world in fulfillment of Jesus' command.

## END TIMES

God established the parameters of human history before the world was created. He knew the end before the beginning, and he is working out everything according to his plan (Ephesians 1:3-14). God's will and purpose in Jesus' death and resurrection – the restoration of all things – will be *“put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”*

Matthew 24 records Jesus' teaching about his second coming and “the end of the age.” While there is much speculation concerning the timing of these events, Jesus clearly states that no one knows but God the Father. The point is that it could happen at any moment, and we

should always be ready (verses 42, 44, 46).

Scoffers and false teachers will distort things for their own ends, but *“the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”* (2 Peter 3:3-13). When Jesus returns to earth, time as we know it will cease to exist and *“every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:10-11).

“The Big Story” – God's metanarrative – will finally come to an end. The curse of Genesis 3 will be fully reversed. The brokenness of The Fall will be healed and God's original intent for his creation will be restored. The tree of life from the Garden of Eden will reappear in the Holy City and God's people will have access to it (Revelation 22:1-5). God's ultimate plan of redemption will be complete.

## WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Among the issues that Baptists disagree on is the role of women in ministry. Since 1991, FBCA has ordained women to serve in the Deacon Ministry of our church. That position was arrived at after years of careful study, conversation, and an overwhelming vote of the church. We are grateful to God for the Spirit-gifted women who serve as Ministers, Deacons, Committee Chairs, Council Chairs, Bible Study Teachers, Ministry Leaders, Mission Leaders, and Missionaries. Women teach, preach, lead, and serve here as we follow The Jesus Way together.

In 1986, FBCA Pastor Charles Wade wrote an article entitled “The Role of Women in the Church.” In it, he states, “It is difficult to make the prohibitions (against women speaking and teaching in the church) absolute in the light of the obvious participation of Priscilla in teaching Apollos (Acts 18:26), Phoebe's service as a deacon (Romans 16:1-2), Phillip's four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9), and women who were allowed to pray with veils (1 Corinthians 11:5). Baptist churches are free to determine their own individual use of men and women in ministry under the authority of Jesus Christ.”

In 2021, FBCA Pastor Dennis Wiles wrote an article entitled “Women in Ministry.” He concludes by stating, “After hours of study, prayer, and consultation, I have arrived at a position that allows the freedom for women and men to serve the church according to their giftedness. I do not think the text prohibits women from serving in ministry leadership roles in the church. In fact, I think the text admonishes all of us to learn, grow, and serve.

## MARRIAGE

*“Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made*



*them male and female' and 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."* Matthew 19:4-6

Marriage is a sacred union established by God in which a man and woman willingly bind themselves together in love and become as one. Choosing a spouse is one of the most important and lasting decisions a person will ever make! Husbands and wives are to love and share with one another in a unique and intimate way. Marriage should be highly valued and honored by everyone (Hebrews 13:4).

## FAMILY

*"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' - which is the first commandment with a promise - 'so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.' Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."* Ephesians 5:21-6:4

The family is the foundational building block of society and the God-ordained institution for passing on personal faith to the next generation. The primary substance of any family is the loving commitment of a husband and wife to each other under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Each member of the family has a unique contribution to make. Husbands are commanded to sacrificially love and provide for their wives the way Jesus loves and provides for the Church. Wives are commanded to respect and support their husbands as the leader of the family. Children are commanded to honor and obey their parents. Parents are commanded to nurture and correct their children in a way that doesn't break their spirits. Each family member is responsible to the others.

## PARENTING

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."* Deuteronomy 6:4-7

*"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."* Proverbs 22:6

Parents are the primary influence in a child's life. That includes the crucial dimension of faith development and spiritual maturity. Parents have the opportunity and responsibility to help their children reach their full potential. That involves ensuring their health and safety, providing for their education, and preparing them to become productive adults. Through the inevitable challenges, parents must seek to maintain an intimate "heart connection" with their children that will serve as the basis for their evolving relationship over the years.





covenant, prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and confirmed in Hebrews 8:7-13. As the new covenant people of God, we realize that *“no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law, rather through the law we become conscious of sin”* (Romans 3:20). In our hearts, we desire to please God and obey his commands, but we are unable to fully do so.

By these commands we recognize our sinfulness and our need for a Savior (Romans 3:21-24). The Ten Commandments still express God’s character and expectation for his people. As followers of Jesus, we still seek to obey God’s commands, and we ask his forgiveness when we inevitably fail.

**1<sup>ST</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.*

There is only one true and living God who created all things, sustains all things, and governs all things. Almighty God is uniquely worthy of our praise and adoration. God expects and deserves to be supreme in our lives and the focus of our worship.

**2<sup>ND</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.*

In light of the first commandment, we must be careful never to worship any created thing, whether animate or inanimate. God is spirit and we must worship him alone in spirit and truth.

**3<sup>RD</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*

Part of honoring God is honoring his name. We should be respectful and considerate when speaking to God or about God.

**4<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *Observe the Sabbath by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.*

God established the rhythm of “Sabbath rest” in the order of creation. Regularly ceasing from work to focus on God and enjoy his creation is intended for our benefit. Since Jesus’ resurrection, most Christians have gathered on

God initially revealed his “moral law” to mankind by giving the Ten Commandments to Moses (Exodus 20:1-17). “The Decalogue” – or 10 Words from God – was the basis of the old covenant (Exodus 19:5-6). It’s an expression of God’s character and expectation for his people. That covenantal relationship assumes that *“if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness”* (Deuteronomy 6:25).

Moses summarized the intent of The Law with this question: *“And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?”* (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

Jesus summarized The Law by emphasizing our relationship with God and other people. *“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.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments”* (Matthew 22:34-40).

Jesus’ death and resurrection established the new



the first day of the week (Sunday) to worship, study, and celebrate together.

**5<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*

Family relationships are the foundation of society. Children first learn appropriate behavior in the home. We show respect for God – and learn respect for others – when we respect our parents. It is essential that children are taught to honor and appreciate those with responsibility over them in the context of the family.

**6<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not murder.*

Humans are created in God's image and as such have intrinsic value. Murder is the intentional and unlawful taking of another person's life. We ought to employ all lawful means to preserve the life of all people.

**7<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not commit adultery.*

God created humans as sexual beings with two distinct genders: male and female. God established marriage as an intimate covenantal connection between a husband and wife. Marriage is a sacred union in which a man and woman willingly bind themselves together in love and "become one."

In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus quotes Genesis 2:24 when he says, *"at the beginning the Creator made them male and female... for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So, they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate."* Husbands and wives must be faithful to each other!

Hebrews 13:4 says, *"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."* I Corinthians 6:15-20 warns against sexual sin by reminding us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Having sexual relations with anyone other than your spouse is adultery, and the Bible warns us to flee from it.

Regardless of marital status, God expects us to be appropriate and responsible with our sexuality. The Apostle Paul offers a list of unacceptable behaviors for a Christian in I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; and Ephesians 5:3-7. As with every area of life, we should

seek to honor God and respect others in our intimate relationships, avoiding sexual immorality in its many forms.

**8<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not steal.*

God forbids taking anything that belongs to someone else. We honor God by respecting other people's property rights. It demonstrates our respect for God and our dependence on him to meet our needs. Beware of justifying theft.

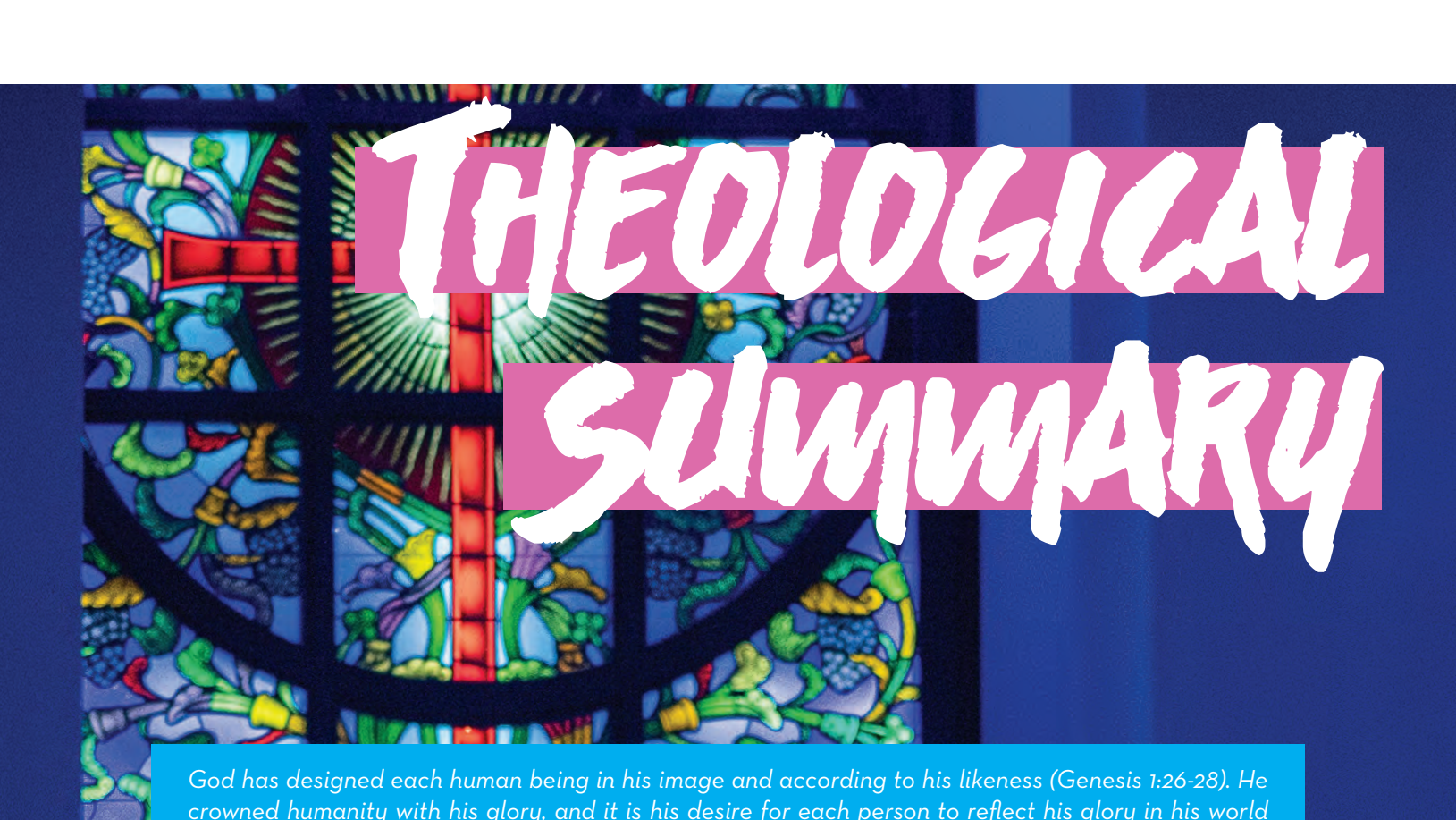
**9<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not give false testimony.*

*"A good name is more desirable than great riches"* (Proverbs 22:1). Honesty and integrity are evidence of good character. Followers of Jesus should speak truth and engender trust. People ought to be able to take us at our word. *"The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in those who are truthful"* (Proverbs 12:22). Satan is the father of lies. God is the author of all truth. *"A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish"* (Proverbs 19:9).

**10<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land... or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

To "covet" means to "lust after." It's a form of greed and selfishness that can take root in a person's heart and mind. Coveting something that belongs to someone else can cause a person to mentally or emotionally violate any of the previous commands. God wants us to be satisfied with what we have and trust him for what we need.





# THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

*God has designed each human being in his image and according to his likeness (Genesis 1:26-28). He crowned humanity with his glory, and it is his desire for each person to reflect his glory in his world (Psalm 8; Isaiah 43:7).*

However, humanity chose to rebel against God and his plan for us. As a result of that failure, we are unable to fulfill our original vocation or live into our true purpose (Genesis 3; Romans 3:23).

Because of his love and grace, God chose to answer the brokenness of our world due to mankind's rebellion with his great plan of redemption. This plan continues to be lived out in the lives of real people. It began with an incredible promise to Abraham that his one family would be a blessing to all peoples on earth (Genesis 12:1-3). Through Abraham's descendants (Israel), God's plan became a reality, and the promise of redemption for all of humanity was set in motion (Exodus 19:3-6).

Eventually, God promised Israel that he would send a Messiah who would establish a new covenant with his people; rule over his kingdom; and extend his grace to all people (Isaiah 9:2-7; 61:1-3; Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus Christ is that Messiah! Jesus fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, and he is now the Savior of all who hope and trust in him.

In his earthly life, Jesus manifested the image of God and radiated the glory of God (John 1:14-18; Hebrews 1:1-3). He announced the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth and proclaimed the life-giving message of the Gospel (Mark 1:14-15). He provided instruction on how to live in this new

kingdom (Matthew 5-7; 18). Jesus boldly declared that his Way is The only Way to abundant life on earth and eternal life in glory (John 3:16; 10:10; 14:1-7).

Jesus addressed the sinfulness of humanity with his perfect human life and his perfect sacrifice on the cross (Mark 10:45; Romans 5:6-8; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus' death paid the full penalty of mankind's sin. As such, the perfect righteousness of Jesus is available to everyone who places their faith and hope in him.

God gloriously raised Jesus from the dead, declaring victory over both sin and death (1 Corinthians 15). After Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to many of his disciples, then he gloriously ascended to God the Father with the promise that he would return one day as King of kings and Lord of lords (Acts 1:1-11).

While on earth, Jesus established the Church (Matthew 16:13-19). He endowed the Church with purpose and spiritual authority, and he promised its success. Later, New Testament writers explained the unique nature of the Church as the means through which Jesus would accomplish his work on earth (1 Corinthians 12:1-30; Ephesians 3:2-21; 1 Peter 2:4-10).

The Church has been given the assignment of taking the message of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth (Acts



1:1-11; Matthew 28:16-20). God has uniquely equipped the Church to fulfill its task on earth, to live as communities of believers engaged in worship and ministry (Ephesians 4:1-16).

The Gospel addresses the deep brokenness of humanity by offering us a path to forgiveness and life. Once we pledge our allegiance to King Jesus, we spend the rest of our lives learning to follow him and his Way. God the Spirit indwells us and restores our ability to bear God's image and reflect God's glory in the world (2 Corinthians 3:9-18).

We serve God through the local church and live in community with fellow believers. We follow Jesus, under the control of the Holy Spirit, and represent our Lord in every area of our lives. As the family of faith known as First Baptist Church Arlington, we are living and serving together in community and seeking to *glorify God by following The Jesus Way!*

## BECOMING FRUITFUL BELIEVERS, INFLUENCING OUR WORLD FOR CHRIST!

At FBCA, we talk a lot about "glorifying God by following The Jesus Way" and being Psalm 1 people who make up a Psalm 1 church. Another mission statement of sorts for us is "becoming fruitful believers, influencing our world for Christ."

When we use the imagery of the Psalm 1 Tree, we talk about how our identity in Christ and growth in godliness leads to impact on the world around us. In this context, there are several ways that each of us can be "fruitful" as followers of Jesus.

The Bible talks about "the fruit of the Spirit." These are attitudes and attributes that characterize a person who is living under the control of God the Spirit.

*"So, I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."*

*The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance,*

*kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"* (Galatians 5:16-24).

Our fruitfulness as Psalm 1 people is evidenced in our character, our relationships, and our influence as "salt and light" in the world. As blessed people, we should bless those around us in countless ways throughout the day.

As the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthian believers, *"thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing"* (2 Corinthians 2:14-15).

Hopefully, our testimony of God's goodness and grace will also help lead others to saving faith in Jesus. The Great Commission charges followers of Jesus with the responsibility of "making disciples" as we go about our daily lives. We are instructed by our Lord to teach others what we have learned about glorifying God by following The Jesus Way. We need to encourage everyone to *"repent and be baptized... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins"* (Acts 2:38-39).

Jesus told his disciples, *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last"* (John 15:8, 16).

## 6 GROWTH AREAS

Finding your way toward spiritual maturity involves devotion, intentionality, and discipline. You will not "grow up" into Christlikeness by default. Your sinful nature and selfish inclinations actively work against the process of spiritual maturity. You must be equally intentional and active to make spiritual progress in your life.

**THE JOURNEY INTO SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION. WE HAVE IDENTIFIED "SIX GROWTH AREAS" TO SERVE AS TANGIBLE GUIDES AND MARKERS AS WE FOLLOW THE JESUS WAY. LEARN. OBEY. SHARE. LOVE. TRUST. WORSHIP.**

### 1. LEARN

Reading and reflecting on Scripture. Develop a biblical worldview. Cultivate a wise, godly perspective. Seek to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Know "The Big Story" well enough to share it with someone else.

## 2. OBEY

Responding to God's revelation. Humility. Discipline. Submitting to God's will. Doing what God says. Confess an area of resistance and offer it to God.

## 3. SHARE

Talking about Jesus. Telling others who he is and what he's doing. Intentional evangelism. Personal missions. We are Christ's ambassadors. God is making his appeal through us. Pray for an opportunity to testify about the Lord.

## 4. LOVE

Cultivating healthy relationships with God and others. Living in community. Scot McKnight: "Love is a rugged commitment of presence on behalf of another person unto Christlikeness." Jesus: "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." Choose to live in love.

## 5. TRUST

Selflessness. Stewardship. Living life with an open hand. Generous giving. Walking by faith in God's provision. Demonstrating our trust in God by how we live each day. You have been entrusted with resources to be used for God's glory. Make a sacrificial gift.

## 6. WORSHIP

Reverence. Awe. Wonder. Fear. Silence. Celebration. Practiced alone. And with others. The Lord God Almighty is eternally present, incomprehensibly holy, outrageously good, staggeringly gracious, overwhelmingly kind, exceedingly wise, embarrassingly forgiving, and abundantly generous. Set aside time to worship him.

in the morning...

### The Lord's Prayer

Gracious Heavenly Father,  
you are holy and exalted!  
May your kingdom come  
and your will be done  
in my life, home, and community  
just as it is in heaven.  
Help me to trust you today  
to meet all of my needs.  
Help me to forgive others  
just as you have forgiven me.  
Help me to resist temptation  
and overcome the evil one.  
For yours is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen!

in the evening...

### The Prayer of Examen

**STOP.** Be aware of God's presence.  
*"be still and know that I am God"* Psalm 46:10

**SUBMIT.** Yield to God's authority.  
*"be exalted, O God, above the heavens"* Psalm 57:5

**REFLECT.** Think back over your day.  
*"search me, O God, and know my heart"* Psalm 139:23

**REPENT.** Admit your sin to God.  
*"if we confess our sin, he is faithful to forgive"* 1 John 1:9

**PRAISE.** Worship God for his loving kindness.  
*"give thanks to the LORD, for he is good"* Psalm 107:1

**PRAY.** Share concerns for yourself and others.  
*"don't be anxious... present your requests to God"*  
Philippians 4:6

**RELAX.** Let God's sufficiency restore and renew you.  
*"the peace of God will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus"* Philippians 4:7

Congratulations! You made it to the end of this resource. Certainly, there is always more to learn as we seek to "glorify God by following The Jesus Way." However, we hope that this material will serve as a solid starting point for you. You will likely need to go back and review it from time to time to help reinforce your biblical Christian worldview.



We encourage you to develop the habit of beginning and ending your day with a time of prayer. This routine will help you remember your true identity in Christ, reclaim your God-given purpose, and restore your natural rhythm in God's creation.



Ultimately, we want our people to fully embrace the  
**FBCA LIFESTYLE**

- **Feed** yourself spiritually.
- **Bless** others generously.
- **Connect** with others intentionally.
- **Advance** God's kingdom faithfully.

**FEED YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY.** It's about taking responsibility. You are responsible for your spiritual growth and maturity. As described throughout this resource, following Jesus is a daily decision that involves every area of your life. You must choose to read and reflect on Scripture, pray, study, and worship. Learn to listen to God and let him transform you from the inside out.

**BLESS OTHERS GENEROUSLY.** It's about sharing and caring. You bless the people around you by listening to their stories and bearing their burdens. You bless others by encouraging them, serving them, and helping to meet their needs. Look for simple ways to use your gifts and resources for the benefit of others (and try to keep it a secret). Blessed people bless people!

**CONNECT WITH OTHERS INTENTIONALLY.** It's about relationships. Become part of a faith community. Develop meaningful friendships (it takes time). Notice and engage with those who are lonely. Eat with people you don't know well. Look for an opportunity to interact with someone you cross paths with each day. You never know how God might use a random conversation.

**ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM FAITHFULLY.** It's about being an ambassador. We must "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." We must also realize that we have been "sent" as God's representatives. We have pledged our allegiance to King Jesus, and we are living "on mission" to promote his purposes in the world. "Your kingdom come, your will be done, in my life and community as it is in heaven."

We encourage you to **test** your retention by answering the following questions. And remember: *We learn best when we teach someone else!* Pray for an opportunity to share what you've learned with others.

**"NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO  
IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN ALL WE ASK OR  
IMAGINE, ACCORDING TO HIS POWER THAT  
IS AT WORK WITHIN US, TO HIM BE GLORY  
IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST  
JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS,  
FOR EVER AND EVER! AMEN."  
EPHESIANS 3:20-21**

# FBCA CATECHISM TEST

1. How does a person become a Christian?
2. What does it mean to “glorify God by following The Jesus Way”?
3. What is “The Great Priority”?
4. What is “The Great Commandment”?
5. What is “The Great Commission”?
6. What are 4 things a person should do after committing their life to Christ?
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7. Describe 3 “Baptist distinctives”.
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8. What are the 3 ways a person can join our church?
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  - 
  -
9. What is “Apologetics”?
10. What is a “Catechism”?



11. Describe 3 elements of an orthodox Christian worldview.

- .
- .
- .

12. Why are the Ten Commandments important for us today?

3. List 5 of the Ten Commandments.

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

14. Briefly describe “The Big Story” (God’s meta-narrative)?

15. What does it mean to be a “fruitful believer”?

16. What are the spiritual formation “6 Growth Areas”?

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- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

17. What is “the FBCA lifestyle”?

**F**

**B**

**C**

**A**

18. What is your “next step” in following Jesus?

## NOTES:

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**FBCA SPIRITUAL FORMATION MINISTRY**  
**FBCA.ORG**