

BELIEFS

Our hope is to simply be Christians in Christ's church... being SHAPED BY SCRIPTURE.

Overview:

We are called to...

1. ...understand God's relationship to Christ Jesus.
2. ...be in a relationship with God through Jesus.
3. ...be in a relationship with God in Kingdom community.

1. Called to Understand God's Relationship to Christ Jesus

○ There is one God – the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit.

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three are co-equal in nature and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 8:6; II Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

○ Prophecies predicted Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection.

Jesus is the fulfillment of over 300 historical prophecies.

Luke 24:44-47; Acts 2:14-36; 13:26-43; Hebrews 1:1-3

○ Jesus is the Son of God, born miraculously of a virgin.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is fully God and fully human, equal in nature with the Father, born as a human in a miraculous birth.

Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6

○ Jesus lived a perfect life and was the perfect sacrifice.

Jesus lived a sinless human life, and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins (disobedience to God's will) of all people by dying on a cross.

John 1:1-5; Hebrews 4:14-15

○ Jesus overcame death with bodily resurrection.

Jesus arose bodily from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11

○ Jesus is the only Way.

Only through Jesus will we find the way to have a relationship with our Creator, the truth concerning reality, and spiritual life both now and in eternity.

John 14:6; Acts 4:12

- **Jesus Christ is the Word.**

Jesus is the embodiment of the Word of God. He delivered the will of God to humanity. The will of God is preserved for us in the Bible. The Bible is inspired of God and without error. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living.

John 1:14; 14:10-30; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105, 160; 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

- **Jesus reigns in heaven and will return again someday.**

Jesus ascended to Heaven to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and will return again someday.

Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 17:14; Titus 2:13

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2. Called to Be in a Relationship with God through Jesus

a. God offers salvation to all people.

We are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character while exercising free moral choice. We are the supreme object of God's creation. Although each of us has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by sin that separates us from God. This is the dangerous condition from which we need to be saved.

Genesis 1:27; 9:6; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2

➤ **The New Covenant**

God offers all of mankind a way back into His Kingdom through "covenant relationship". (A covenant is an agreement offered by God for a special relationship with Him that must be accepted by mankind.) Jesus offers us His "New Covenant" for the Christian age which began on the day of Pentecost (Jewish feast day on which Christ's church began) and continues today.

Ezekiel 36:24-28; Hebrews 8:8-13; 1 Timothy 2:3-5

➤ **God's Grace Gift**

Salvation is God's free gift to us. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. We avoid separation from God only by accepting God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9

➤ **People's Faith Acceptance**

Though salvation is a free gift to us, we still must choose to accept it. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in obedient faith, we are saved and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven. In spite of our many mistakes, we remain secure in God's grace. Only if we turn in rebellion may we be lost.

Romans 5:1; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; 14:6; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26-28; II Peter 2:20-22

- **Belief**

Faith begins with choosing to believe what we learn from scripture concerning the Good News of Jesus Christ: that He is the Son of God, that He died for our sins, that He was buried, and that on the third day after His burial, He was raised from the dead.

John 3:16; 6:45; 8:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

- **Repentance**

Faith includes a change of mind or heart, produced by grief concerning our separation from God because of our own sin. This grief leads to a willing change in the way we think and act. Our will becomes that of doing our Heavenly Father's will.

Luke 13:3; John 7:17; Hebrews 12:1-2; Acts 17:30

- **Public Confession that Jesus is God's Son**

Faith in the heart finds expression in the verbal confession that Jesus is the Son of God. This confession includes faith in God having raised Jesus from the dead, a belief central to Christianity.

Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10

- **Baptism – The New Birth**

Faith culminates in baptism of the penitent believer (Different from such practices as infant baptism – which is never mentioned in scripture – baptism of a penitent believer stands on the capacity of a person to choose to trust God's offer of grace.) Baptism (which means immersion) is a reenactment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism is the time at which God pronounces forgiveness and where our guilt of sin is removed from God's view of us. In light of this, we recognize that baptism is essential for salvation. The blood that Jesus shed on the cross provides the sacrificial payment required by God for our sins and is the power of baptism. As God created us to be children in His eternal Kingdom, our new birth at baptism begins life in His family.

Matthew 3:16; 28:19-20; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; 8:36-39; 22:16; Romans 6:1-14; 1 Peter 3:21; Ephesians 1:5

- **"In-Christ"**

At the moment of baptism, we can know we have passed from spiritual death into spiritual life. We have passed from Satan's realm into the "In-Christ" realm.

Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 1:12-13

- **"Christ in you" – The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit**

We know at the moment of baptism that His Holy Spirit indwells our heart. This promise of the New Covenant empowers us to live according to God's way.

Colossians 1:27; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:13; Galatians 5:22-23

b. Salvation requires us to be transformed followers of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is just the beginning of a lifetime of Christian growth better known as discipleship.

John 15:8; Acts 6:7

➤ **Growing in a Covenant Relationship**

Just as in a marriage relationship, a covenant relationship has to be nurtured in order to be healthy.

Hebrews 8:9

- **Nutrition – Keeping the Word in our Mind**

Providing our mind with constant interaction with the Word is vital to our continued growth, health, and greater faith.

1 Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:15; Romans 10:17

- **Exercise – Faith in Practice**

Putting our faith into practice strengthens our spirit. We do not participate in good works in order to be saved; rather, we participate in good works out of gratitude for our salvation. Good works is now a part of who we are. Failure to grow in good works leads to spiritual weakness and eventual death.

Hebrews 5:14; James 2:17; Ephesians 2:8

- **Discipline – Going Beyond What is Comfortable**

Jesus asks us to grow beyond our comfort zone. This growth is sometimes difficult and requires spiritual discipline to achieve. The Holy Spirit helps us in a special way with this life of discipline that leads to purity, maturity, and Christlikeness.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:13-15

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3. Called to Be in a Relationship with God in Kingdom Community

a. Fellowship of the Church

The church is not a sacred building, but a gathering of God's people. It is composed of all who have experienced the new birth (baptism) through faith in Jesus. Each new Christian, at the moment of salvation, is added by the Lord to His one universal church. Jesus is the only head of His church. His church finds expression in local congregations which, in the New Testament, were interdependent, each having its own leadership of elders. Once a person is saved and added to the universal church, he or she needs to join the fellowship of a local congregation that honors the teachings of Scripture.

Acts 2:41-47; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Titus 1:5

➤ **The People of God**

In the Bible, the church is referred to as "the people of God" who are to be a holy nation and a royal priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9-10

➤ **The Body of Christ**

The church is also referred to as being the "body of Christ". Christ's presence in the world today is represented by the church as they continue His ministry in the world. The different parts of the

body represent many talents within the church where each member contributes to the growth of the whole body.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 18; 27

➤ **The Unified Community of the Holy Spirit**

When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit's indwelling of us brings us together into community. The Holy Spirit gives the church the gift of unity. Jesus charges us with keeping this unity in the bond of peace with all humility and love.

Ephesians 4:1-5; 2 Corinthians 13:13

➤ **The Family of God**

Being added to Christ's church includes becoming a part of His loving spiritual family. This new family is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 10:29-30; Romans 8:14; 1 Timothy 3:15

➤ **Male Spiritual Leadership**

The Bible leads us to understand that we all have important roles within His family. God asks men to fill some roles while asking women to fill others. We trust God's infinite wisdom concerning our roles in our homes, in church leadership and in assembly worship.

Genesis 1-3; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:33-35; Ephesians 5:25-33; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-2, 12

b. **Worship & Assembly of the Church – Coming Before Our King**

Worship covers the Christian life as well as Christian assembly. However, in assembly, the church manifests itself by being together as a family. Not everything that is acceptable in daily Christian living has a place in assembly worship. Assembly worship is celebrative and relevant worship that adores the Creator according to His will. The Bible refers to this kind of worship as being in "spirit and in truth". When we approach our Heavenly King in this manner, our spiritual needs are met in a way that leads to unity, vision, maturity, blessing, and empowerment.

John 4:23; 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 33-34; 14:23

➤ **Need**

Christians need one another. God created us this way. Christian faith always includes expression as community because God exists in community. As opposed to being based on ritual, our assembly worship is based on relationship... to God and to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Hebrews 10:25; Acts 17:24-25

➤ **Attitude**

The Bible teaches us to approach our assembly worship with an attitude of dependence and humility before God the Father. Because of our salvation in Christ, Christians come to God with an attitude of thanksgiving and joy. From the Holy Spirit comes expectation and hope as we look towards eternity.

1 Thessalonians 5:18; Romans 15:13

➤ Scripture Shaped

The proper goals of the assembly are to glorify God and to edify the church. The apostles' teaching sets the standard for how we participate in this as a church.

Acts 2:42; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 14:9, 12, 15

- **Weekly Communion**

As we see in the New Testament, the Lord's supper is the central act of the church in its weekly assemblies. These assemblies took place upon the first day of the week. The Lord's supper is expressive of the central principles of the Christian faith, namely, remembering what Jesus has done through His death, burial, and resurrection and remembering what that means to our lives.

Acts 20:28; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

- **Spiritual Communication**

Much of our assembly worship is focused on the spiritual communication necessary for a healthy relationship to grow between each Christian and God and between each Christian and our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ephesians 5:15-21

- **Prayer**

In assembly worship, our prayers voice the family concerns of the church. We pray through the name of (or by the authority of) Jesus. Through Christ, we are allowed to come boldly before the throne of God with our prayers. The goal of prayer, however, is our submission to the will of God. Within this context, we trust God with our requests, and pray His will be done.

1 Timothy 2:1; John 16:26; Hebrews 4:16; Matthew 6:10; 7:11; 26:42

- **A Cappella Singing**

Singing spiritual thoughts from our hearts to God and to one another is an important part of growing our relationships in Christ. Singing is a sacrifice and confession of our faith made with our lips. We sing to one another for mutual edification and for affirmation of unity. Our song involves the whole person and provides an outlet for deep religious emotion. Musical instruments occur in the New Testament as a part of everyday life but are never mentioned as part of the worship assembly of the church. In light of this, we participate in a cappella singing in our assembly worship.

1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16; Romans 15:6; James 5:13

- **Bible Study**

The Bible encourages the public reading of scripture in assembly and to the receiving of teaching from the Bible. The New Testament establishes the Christian faith and interprets the Old Testament for us in the light of Christ.

1 Timothy 4:12; Matthew 17:5; Hebrews 1:1-2

- **Giving**

The everyday life of a Christian is marked by giving. However, giving also finds worshipful expression in the weekly assembly. In assembly, our giving is to be personal, intentional, planned, and according to how God has blessed us. Our attitude in giving is also important to our relationship with God.

1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9:7

c. Purpose of the Church

As a church, we seek to be about our Father's business in ways outlined for us in scripture. We seek to challenge ourselves as a church with connecting all of the various aspects of our lives to the will of Christ.

Luke 2:49; Romans 12:2

➤ **Connect our faith to Christ - Discipleship**

We seek daily to walk as Jesus' disciples and trust that Jesus, Himself, is working to finish what He has begun in us.

John 13:35; Hebrews 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 1:12-14

➤ **Connect our faith to the lost – Evangelism**

We seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the world around us so they too may become His disciples.

Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

➤ **Connect members to one another – Fellowship**

Jesus wants his people to work together, worship together and strengthen each other.

Acts 2:42-44

➤ **Connect members to the community - Ministry**

Our ministries extend beyond ourselves as we seek to demonstrate the love of Christ to the community around us.

Ephesians 4:7-11; Galatians 6:9

This is only the beginning of the search of scripture to understand God's will. We invite you to join the conversation.

- Are you new to Christianity?
- Visit our Bible Resources page