

Class 101

Wrightsboro Baptist Church
Discovering
Our Church Family

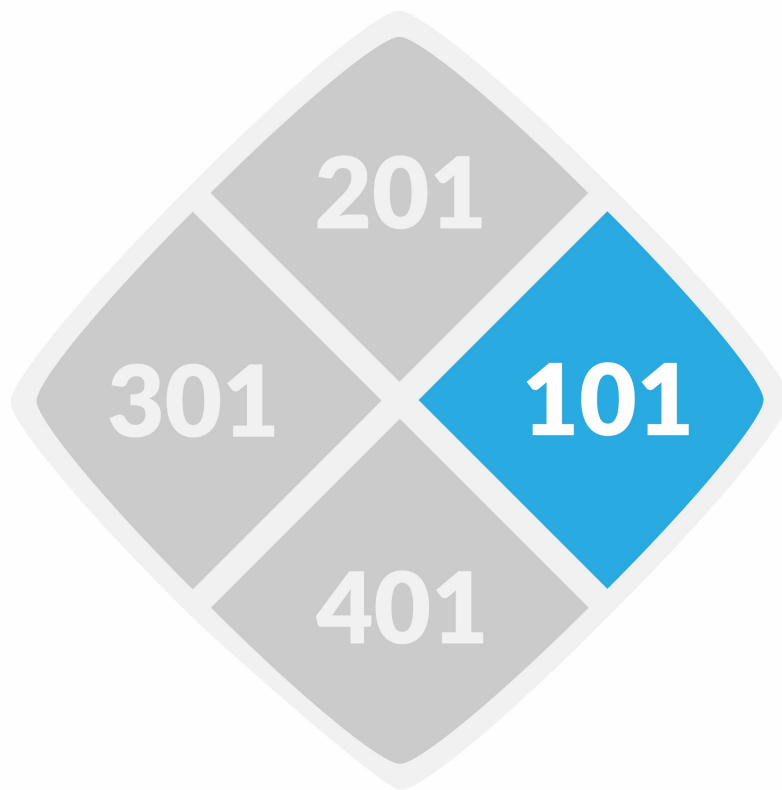
PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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Welcome

Class 101: Discovering Our Church Family is the first of Wrightsboro's foundational classes. You were designed to be a part of a church family, and that's exactly what Wrightsboro Baptist Church is intended to be—your family. A healthy family has common beliefs, purposes, and commitment. That's why we want to share with you what we believe and where we're going.



YOU ARE HERE

SESSION ONE

Our Story

OUR HISTORY

Brief History of Wrightsboro Baptist Church 1909 –2022

On August 1, 1909, 41 futuristic minded Wrightsboro men and women gathered at the George W. Trask home, all sharing a vision of organizing a neighborhood Baptist church. No longer a dream but a reality, Wrightsboro Baptist Church was established that day, 19 of the 41 attending becoming charter members. Soon, the church officially opened its doors for worship in an old store, while able-bodied members built a new structure on land donated by the Hornes family, the current courtyard.

The Wrightsboro family held its first worship service in the newly completed little white church on January 9, 1910, bringing to fruition a dream that originated in the hearts of its members, Membership increased from 19 to 272 by 1934 and approached 600 by the early fifties, consequently precipitating a three-phase building program.

Phase one, a three-story building completed in 1952 initially housed a basement sanctuary and presently serves as the education building. Unfortunately, the little white church threatened future development and was sold and carried by rail to Georgia. Over the next six years, membership climbed to 826, resulting in the kickoff of Phase Two.

On June 8, 1958, church members celebrated the completion of Phase 2, a two-story brick building that included a main-floor sanctuary and bible study rooms— the chapel today. Twenty-five years later, enrollment topped 1000 and the church started its third building phase.

Completed in March 1987, the large brick building housing the current sanctuary concluded the three-phase building program started in 1950. Forward thinking, however, the church purchased a 19.5-acre tract of land located directly behind the main sanctuary in 1988. Earmarked for future development, the land remained unimproved until 2009, the year Wrightsboro celebrated its 100th birthday. Simultaneous with the anniversary festivities was the construction of the new family life center.

In 2010, the first year of Wrightsboro's second century, the members celebrated the completion of a family life center. Future development of the remaining acreage will be under God's direction. Also, He will continue to provide the church with capable leadership.

In November of 2021 Wrightsboro Baptist Church called Rev. Eddie Eaton as its current and 18th pastor and continues its mission of making disciples and fulfilling the Great Commission.

SESSION TWO

Our Purpose

THE REASON FOR EVERYTHING

1. Everything starts with God!

In the beginning God.

GENESIS 1:1 (CSB)

For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through him and for him. Everything, absolutely everything . . . got started in him and finds its purpose in him.

COLOSSIANS 1:16 (CSB)

2. God is love.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God . . . Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 JOHN 4:7–8 (NIV)

3. God wanted a family to demonstrate his love.

For this reason I kneel before the Father ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

EPHESIANS 3:14–15 (CSB)

4. God's family is the church!

But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 TIMOTHY 3:15 (CSB)

5. God's family will last forever, outlasting everything else in creation.

in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.

TITUS 1:2 (CSB)

6. Although God created us last, he thought of us first. He planned the universe for his family.

This is the word of the LORD your Maker, the one who formed you from the womb:...

ISAIAH 44:2 (CSB)

7. God didn't reveal his plan until he sent Jesus.

and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. ¹⁰ This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. ¹¹ This is according to his eternal purpose accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EPHESIANS 3:9–11 (CSB)

8. Jesus makes the whole plan possible.

This is the plan: At the right time [God] will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

EPHESIANS 1:10 (NLT)

9. The time is getting closer.

All creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. The creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.

ROMANS 8:19, 21 (NLT)

10. In the meantime, we can practice for eternity.

We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.

TITUS 2:12–13 (NLT)

GOD'S FIVE PURPOSES FOR YOUR LIFE ON EARTH

1. God planned me for _____.

For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created.

REVELATION 4:11 (NLT)

For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.

EPHESIANS 1:4 (CSB)

“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.”

MATTHEW 22:37-38 (NIV)

\

The first purpose of life is _____.

The Bible calls this _____.

By professing it, some people have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all.

1 TIMOTHY 6:21 (CSB)

2. God formed me for _____.

He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

EPHESIANS 1:5 (CSB)

But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 TIMOTHY 3:15 (CSB)

The second purpose of life is _____.

The Bible calls this _____.

in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

ROMANS 12:5 (CSB)

3. God created me _____.

For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

ROMANS 8:29 (CSB)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

COLOSSIANS 1:15 (CSB)

The third purpose of life is _____.

The Bible calls this _____.

But they have no root; they are short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away.

MARK 4:17 (CSB)

4. God “shaped” me _____.

For it was you who created my inward parts, you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

PSALM 139:13 (CSB)

S _____

H _____

A _____

P _____

E _____

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

EPHESIANS 2:10 (CSB)

The fourth purpose of life is _____.

The Bible calls this _____.

5. God made me _____.

As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

JOHN 17:18 (CSB)

The fifth purpose of life is _____.

The Bible calls this _____.

The Big Key

I can't fulfill God's purposes _____.

The big takeaway here is you can't fulfill God's purposes by yourself. You need to be part of God's family.

WHY YOU NEED THE CHURCH

*The Purpose of the Church Is to Help People Fulfill
God's Purposes for Their Lives*

in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

ROMANS 12:5 (CSB)

Having a church family will help you:

- Center your life around God (**worship**)
- Connect with other believers (**fellowship**)
- Cultivate spiritual maturity (**discipleship**)
- Contribute something back (**ministry**)
- Communicate God's message (**mission**)

What's Driving Your Life?

And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.

1 JOHN 2:17 (CSB)

but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

ACTS 10:35 (CSB)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing "WHY?" They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God's purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person asks is, "What is the meaning of life?"

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways.

- Some look for happiness by **acquiring possessions**.
- Some look for happiness by **experiencing pleasure**.
- Some look for happiness by **gaining prestige and power**.

But real happiness comes from understanding my purpose in life.

Why Am I Here?

1. God created me to _____ me.

The LORD appeared to us in the past saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

JEREMIAH 31:3 (NIV)

2. We were created to _____ a personal relationship with God and to _____ all of the rest of God's creation. This makes us special.

So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

GENESIS 1:27-28 (CSB)

[God] richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

1 TIMOTHY 6:17 (NIV)

I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

JOHN 10:10 (CSB)

3. When we know and love God and live in harmony with his purpose for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits in our lives.

CLEAR CONSCIENCE <i>Romans 8:1</i>	LIFE AND PEACE <i>Romans 8:6</i>	HELP WITH WEAKNESS <i>Romans 8:26</i>
PURPOSE <i>Romans 8:28</i>	CONFIDENCE <i>Romans 8:31</i>	SECURITY <i>Romans 8:39</i>
POWER AND STRENGTH <i>Philippians 4:13</i>	FULFILLMENT <i>Philippians 4:19</i>	FREEDOM <i>John 8:32, 36</i>

What's the Problem?

1. People have a natural desire to _____ and to ignore God's principles for living.



2. The Bible calls this attitude _____.

We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished him for the iniquity of us all.

ISAIAH 53:6 (CSB)

If we say that we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.

1 JOHN 1:8 (TLB)

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of his will.

The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God.

ISAIAH 59:2 (TLB)

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

ROMANS 3:23 (CSB)

When our relationship with God is not right, it causes problems in every area of our lives—marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

**“WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY
OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF
COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD.”**

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death.

PROVERBS 16:25 (NIV)

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know him.



What's the Solution?

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

JOHN 14:6 (NIV)

God himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The way is in the person of Jesus Christ.

"JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM."

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23 (NIV)

God did this for us because he loves us and wants us to know him.

But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

ROMANS 5:8 (CSB)

God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself man, is between them to bring them together, by giving his life for all mankind.

1 TIMOTHY 2:5 (TLB)

God has already done his part to restore our relationship to him. He took the initiative. Now he waits for each of us to individually accept what he has done for us.

What Does God Want Me to Do?

1. _____ that God has not been first place in your life and ask him to forgive your sins.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:9 (CSB)

2. _____ that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that he rose again on Easter and is alive today.

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is your Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

ROMANS 10:9 (NIV)

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name [Jesus] . . . by which we must be saved.

ACTS 4:12 (NIV)

3. _____ God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.

For it is by grace you are saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

EPHESIANS 2:8–9 (NIV)

4. _____ Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director (Lord) of your life.

But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

JOHN 1:12–13 (CSB)

[Jesus says,] "Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in."

REVELATION 3:20 (HCSB)

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life, and I'm sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me grow now as a Christian.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

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

ROMANS 10:13 (CSB)

BAPTISM: HOW YOU IDENTIFY WITH GOD'S FAMILY

What is the Meaning of Baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's _____, _____, and resurrection.

Christ died for our sins . . . he was buried . . . and . . . he rose again.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3–4 (KJV)

Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness^[a] of life.

ROMANS 6:4 (CSB)

when you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

COLOSSIANS 2:12 (CSB)

2. It illustrates my _____ as a Christian.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has^[a] come!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 (CSB)

For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.

GALATIANS 3:27 (CSB)

Baptism doesn't make you a believer—it shows that **you already believe**. Baptism does not “save” you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring—it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

3. It demonstrates my _____ into Christ's body, the church.

For we were all baptized by^[a] one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:13 (CSB)

Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. To follow the example set by _____.

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth . . . and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

MARK 1:9 (NIV)

2. Because Christ _____ it.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:19–20 (CSB)

3. It shows that I really am a _____.

Many of the [people] who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

ACTS 18:8 (NIV)

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

1 JOHN 2:3 (NIV)

Why Be Baptized By Immersion?

1. Because _____ was baptized that way.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.

MATTHEW 3:16 (NIV)

2. Every baptism in the _____ was by immersion.

Two examples:

Then both Philip and the [man] went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water . . .

ACTS 8:38–39 (NIV)

Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water.

JOHN 3:23 (NIV)

3. The word "baptize" means to _____ water.

The Greek word *baptizo* means “to immerse and dip under water.”

4. Baptism is the best symbol of a burial and resurrection!

The founders from different denominations agree with the statement above.

MARTIN LUTHER: “I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

JOHN CALVIN: “The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

JOHN WESLEY: “We are buried with him, alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.”

Who Should Be Baptized?

Every person who has _____ in Christ.

So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them

ACTS 2:41 (CSB)

But when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed. And after he was baptized, he followed Philip everywhere and was amazed as he observed the signs and great miracles that were being performed.

ACTS 8:12-13 (CSB)

At Wrightsboro, we wait until our children are old enough to **believe** and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

We do have a baby dedication service each year on Mother’s Day for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. **This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible**, which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ.

At Wrightsboro, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though some of you may have been “confirmed” as children.

When Should I Be Baptized?

“AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!”

So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

ACTS 2:41 (CSB)

Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture. As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s water. What would keep me from being baptized?” So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

ACTS 8:35–38 (CSB)

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect,” you’ll never feel “good enough!”

Practical Questions

1. Can my family be baptized together?

Yes! If each family member fully understands the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them and delays *your* obedience.

2. What should I wear when I am baptized?

We have baptismal gowns you can wear over your swimsuit or any clothes you feel comfortable in. We also provide changing rooms and towels you can use.

3. Will I have to say anything?

Yes. At the beginning of the service, one of our pastors will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. You will wait at the edge of the pool for your turn to be baptized. A pastor will introduce you and ask, “Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior and Lord?” After a positive response you will be asked, “what is your profession of faith?” To which you will respond, “Jesus is Lord.” The pastor will then briefly lower you just under the water, and then you can leave the pool, dry off, and watch the others. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism!

4. Special needs?

All of our pastors can perform a private baptism in special circumstances.

THE LORD'S SUPPER: COMMUNION WITH GOD'S FAMILY

Jesus never asked his disciples to remember his birth. But he did instruct them to remember his death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called *ordinances*) as reminders of his death. These two ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

What Is the Lord's Supper?

To find the answer to what is the Lord's Supper, let's read, one verse at a time, 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV).

1. It is a _____.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread.

VERSE 23

2. It is a _____.

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."

VERSE 24

3. It is a _____.

In the same way . . . he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . . drink it, in remembrance of me."

VERSE 25

4. It is a _____.

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

VERSE 26

Who Should Take the Lord's Supper?

Only those who are already _____ (Mark 14:22–26).

For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body,^[a] eats and drinks judgment on himself.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:29 (CSB)

Only those who have demonstrated _____ in the body of Christ through baptism.
(1 Corinthians 10:16–17)

Only those who have _____ themselves prior to eating the bread and drinking the cup.
(1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

How Do I Prepare Myself for the Lord's Supper?

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 11:27-28 (NIV)

You prepare yourself through:

- **Self-Examination** (1 Corinthians 11:27)
- **Confessing My Sins** (1 John 1:9)
- **Recommitment** (Romans 12:1)
- **Restoring Relationships** (Matthew 5:23-24)

When and How Often Should We Observe the Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper. He instituted it on a Thursday night. In the Bible, Christians observed the communion in small groups in homes.

SESSION THREE

Our Strategy

The Great Commandment

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart . . . soul and . . . 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 22:37–40 (NIV)

The Great Commission

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20 (NIV)

OUR MOTTO

A Great Commitment . . .

. . . to the Great _____

and the Great _____

. . . will grow a Great Church!

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

“TO BRING PEOPLE TO JESUS AND
MEMBERSHIP IN HIS FAMILY,

DEVELOP THEM TO CHRIST-LIKE
MATURITY,

AND EQUIP THEM FOR THEIR
MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

AND THEIR LIFE MISSION IN THE
WORLD,

IN ORDER TO MAGNIFY GOD’S NAME.”

OUR VISION STATEMENT

DEVELOPING DISCIPLES FOR DEPLOYMENT

DEVELOPING

We assimilate people into Wrightsboro Baptist Church through our Discipleship Diamond. A series of four stages of growth within the body. This is training for the believer so that they can grow in their walk with Christ into maturity.

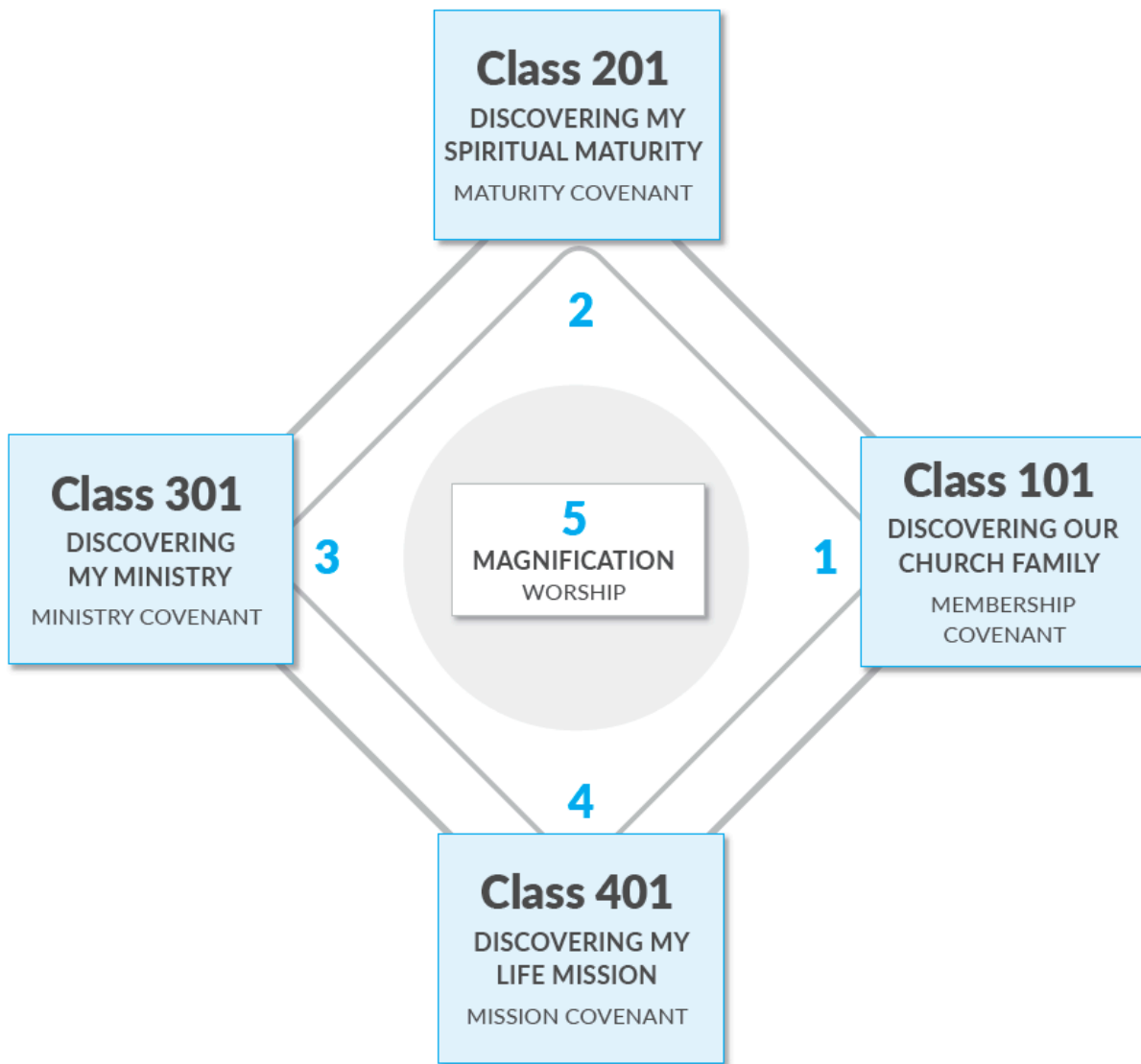
DISCIPLES

Discipleship is the sanctification process for the follower of Christ. This is a life-long process.

DEPLOYMENT

The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity, but it's sending capacity. We are commissioned to GO into all the world and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

DISCIPLESHIP DIAMOND



THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE

I. The Scriptures

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

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

II. God

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

A. God the Father

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

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

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He

made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

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

C. God the Holy Spirit

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

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

III. Man

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

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

IV. Salvation

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

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

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

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

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

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

[Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians](#)

[2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.](#)

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

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

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord.

Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

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

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

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

VIII. The Lord's Day

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

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

IX. The Kingdom

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

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

X. Last Things

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

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

XI. Evangelism and Missions

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

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

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

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

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

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

XIV. Cooperation

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

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

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

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

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

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

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

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the

right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

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

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

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

SESSION FOUR

Our Family

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

**“THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A MEMBER
AND AN ATTENDER MEANS BEING A
PARTICIPATOR, NOT JUST A SPECTATOR, A
BELONGER, NOT JUST A BYSTANDER, A
CONTRIBUTOR, NOT JUST A CONSUMER.”**

And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful.

COLOSSIANS 3:15 (CSB)

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

1. The church is a _____.

Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble

1 PETER 3:8 (CSB)

Galatians 6:10, Hebrews 2:10–12, 1 Peter 4:17

So we operate on the basis of _____ not _____.

Don't rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers,² older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters with all purity.

1 TIMOTHY 5:1–2 (CSB)

[A pastor] must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

1 TIMOTHY 3:4–5 (NIV)

2. The church is a _____.

1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:23, Ephesians 1:22–23, Colossians 1:18, 2:19

We are a body, not a business! We are an organism, not an organization!

Therefore, we function on the basis of _____.

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

ROMANS 12:4-6 (NIV)

In an organization, “maintenance” becomes the focus. But in an organism, “ministry” is the focus.

At WBC we have a simple structure so we can maximize _____ and minimize _____.

[God] gave . . . some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

EPHESIANS 4:11-12 (NIV)

Currently there are over _____ different ministries in our church founded and operated by members.

3. The church is a _____.

This is Jesus’ favorite description of the church.

John 10:1-30, Matthew 26:31, Matthew 25:33

Therefore, it is cared for and led by _____.

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

JOHN 21:16 (NIV)

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leaders:

“POIMEN” = _____

“PRESBUTEROS” = _____

“EPISCOPOS” = _____

To the elders among you . . . Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them.

1 PETER 5:1-2 (NIV)

Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them . . . “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God.”

ACTS 20:17–18, 28 (NIV)

See also Titus 1:5–7, 1 Timothy 5:17

WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

1. It's an act of obedience to Christ's commands.

God expects every believer to join a local church. In fact, there are over 50 commands in the New Testament you cannot follow unless you commit to joining a local body of believers. Without a church family, you're a spiritual orphan.

Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another.

ROMANS 12:10 (CSB)

So, then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household,

EPHESIANS 2:19 (CSB)

2. It's a counter-cultural choice that shows maturity.

Immaturity is the inability to make and keep commitments. Today's culture promotes immaturity everywhere: “Keep your options open. . . don't commit to a job, a marriage, a church. . . anything.” Even many believers have a superficial consumer's attitude of “shopping and hopping”—attending different churches each week without being dedicated or loyal to any specific church family. You cannot build character without making commitments.

Brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your thinking, but be infants in regard to evil and adult in your thinking.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:20 (CSB)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her

EPHESIANS 5:25 (CSB)

3. It's a necessary step in your spiritual development.

and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by God's will.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:5 (CSB)

strengthening the^[a] disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, “It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”

ACTS 14:22 (CSB)

4. It provides spiritual protection.

TO PASTORS:

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God,^[a] which he purchased with his own blood.

ACTS 20:28 (CSB)

TO MEMBERS:

Obey your leaders^[a] and submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

HEBREWS 13:17 (CSB)

OUR MODEL FOR MEMBERSHIP:

THE FIRST CHURCH

What the First Christians Did in the Jerusalem Church

Every day in the temple, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

ACTS 5:42 (CSB)

All the believers met together . . . and shared everything they had . . . They worshiped together regularly in the temple courts. They also met together in small groups in homes and fellowshipped with communion and eating together. They also shared whatever they had with joy and generosity. They praised God together and the whole city liked them so every day more people were saved, and the Lord added to the number of believers in the church.

ACTS 2:44, 46–47 (NLT)

1. They *united* into a congregation.
2. They *shared* to meet each other's needs.
3. They *worshiped* in the Temple courts (multiple venues/campuses).
4. They met in small groups in homes for *fellowship*.
5. They celebrated *communion*.
6. They *ate together*.
7. They gave *generously* and joyfully.
8. They built a *reputation for love*.
9. They brought people to Christ every day.
10. *Never stopped growing!*

What Does It Mean to Be a Member of Wrightsboro Baptist?

The Bible is very clear about the privileges and responsibilities of belonging to a church family. These are spelled out in our Membership Covenant, which has been signed by every member of our Wrightsboro family.

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized by full immersion, and being in agreement with Wrightsboro's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Wrightsboro Baptist Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church.

- By acting in love towards other members
- By refusing to gossip and by resolving conflicts using Matthew 18:15–17
- By following the leaders

*"If your brother sins against you,^[a] go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he won't listen, take one or two others with you, so that **by the testimony^[b] of two or three witnesses every fact may be established.**^[c] ¹⁷ If he doesn't pay attention to them, tell the church.^[d] If he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you.*

MATTHEW 18:15–17 (CSB)

So then, let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another.

ROMANS 14:19 (CSB)

Now may the God who gives^[a] endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus,

ROMANS 15:5 (CSB)

Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth,^[a] so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure^[b] heart love one another constantly,

1 PETER 1:22 (CSB)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

EPHESIANS 4:29 (NIV)

Obey your leaders^[a] and submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

HEBREWS 13:17 (CSB)

2. I will share the responsibility of my church.

- By praying for its growth
- By inviting the unchurched to attend
- By warmly welcoming those who visit

We always thank God for all of you, making mention of you constantly in our prayers.

Then the master told the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges and make them come in, so that my house may be filled.

LUKE 14:23 (CSB)

Therefore welcome one another, just as^[a] Christ also welcomed you, to the glory of God.

ROMANS 15:7 (CSB)

3. I will serve the ministry of my church.

- By discovering my gifts and talents
- By being equipped by my pastors to serve
- By developing a servant's heart

Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

1 PETER 4:10 (CSB)

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ,

EPHESIANS 4:11–12 (CSB)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others. Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man,

PHILIPPIANS 2:3–4, 7 (CSB)

4. I will support the testimony of my church.

- By attending faithfully
- By living a growing and godly life
- By giving regularly

not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

HEBREWS 10:25 (CSB)

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, in one accord,^[a] contending together for the faith of the gospel,

PHILIPPIANS 1:27 (CSB)

On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he is prospering, so that no collections will need to be made when I come.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:2 (CSB)

Every tenth of the land's produce, grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.

LEVITICUS 27:30 (CSB)

OUR COVENANT

Today I am stepping across the line. I'm tired of waffling, and I'm finished with wavering. I've made my choice; the verdict is in and my decision is irrevocable. I'm going God's way. There is no turning back.

I will live the rest of my life serving God's purposes with God's people on God's planet for God's glory. I will use my life to celebrate his presence, cultivate his character, participate in his family, demonstrate his love and communicate his Word.

Since my past has been forgiven, and I have a purpose for living and a home awaiting in heaven, I refuse to waste any more time or energy on shallow living, petty thinking, trivial talking, thoughtless doing, useless regretting, hurtful resenting, or faithless worrying. Instead I will magnify God, grow to maturity, serve in ministry, and fulfill my mission in the membership of his family.

Because this life is preparation for the next, I will value worship over wealth, "we" over "me," character over comfort, service over status and people over possessions, position and pleasure. I know what matters most and I will give it all I've got. I will do the best I can with what I have for Jesus Christ today.

I won't be captivated by culture, manipulated by critics, motivated by praise, frustrated by problems, debilitated by temptation, or intimidated by the devil. I'll keep running my race with my eyes on the goal, not the sidelines or those running by me. When times get tough and I get tired, I won't back up, back off, back down, back out, or backslide. I'll just keep moving forward by God's grace. I'm spirit-led, purpose driven, and mission-focused, so I cannot be bought, I will not be compromised, and I shall not quit until I finish the race.

I'm a trophy of God's amazing grace so I will be gracious to everyone, grateful for every day and generous with everything that God entrusts to me.

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I say: However, whenever, wherever, and whatever you ask me to do, my answer is yes! Wherever you lead and whatever the cost, I'm ready. Anytime. Anywhere. Any way. Whatever it takes, Lord; whatever it takes! I want to be used by you in such a way that on that final day I'll hear you say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

WHAT ARE MY NEXT STEPS?

Our Discipleship Process

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the membership class. There are four questions you need to ask yourself to continue your journey on the purpose driven life development process.

1. Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ and trusted him for salvation?
2. Have you been baptized by immersion (under water) after you committed your life to Christ?
3. Have you completed *Class 101: Discovering Our Church Family*? You've just done that!
4. Do you desire to become a member of Wrightsboro Baptist Church and to abide by the Wrightsboro Baptist Church Membership Covenant?

We are praying the answer is yes to all four.

In this class, we've just barely scratched the surface of all that goes on at Wrightsboro Baptist Church.

Your next step is to take *Class 201: Discovering My Spiritual Maturity*.



Answer Key

SESSION ONE: OUR PURPOSE

God's Five Purposes for Your Life On Earth

1. God planned me for HIS PLEASURE.

The first purpose of life is KNOWING AND LOVING GOD.

The Bible calls this WORSHIP.

2. God formed me for HIS FAMILY.

The second purpose of life is TO LOVE OTHERS.

The Bible calls this FELLOWSHIP.

3. God created me TO BECOME LIKE CHRIST.

The third purpose of life is GROWING TO MATURITY.

The Bible calls this DISCIPLESHIP.

4. God “shaped” me TO SERVE HIM.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

HEART

ABILITIES

PERSONALITY

EXPERIENCES

The fourth purpose of life is TO SERVE GOD BY SERVING OTHERS.

The Bible calls this MINISTRY.

5. God made me FOR A MISSION.

The fifth purpose of life is TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.

The Bible calls this EVANGELISM.

The Big Key

I can't fulfill God's purposes BY MYSELF.

What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

Why Am I Here?

1. God created me to LOVE me.
2. We were created to ENJOY a personal relationship with God and to MANAGE all of the rest of God's creation. This makes us special.

What's the Problem?

1. People have a natural desire to BE THE BOSS and to ignore God's principles for living.
2. The Bible calls this attitude SIN.

What Does God Want Me to Do?

1. ADMIT that God has not been first place in your life and ask him to forgive your sins.
2. BELIEVE that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that he rose again on Easter and is alive today.
3. ACCEPT God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.
4. INVITE Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director (Lord) of your life.

Baptism: How You Identify with God's Family

What is the Meaning of Baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's DEATH, BURIAL, and resurrection.
2. It illustrates my NEW LIFE as a Christian.
3. It demonstrates my INCORPORATION into Christ's Body, the church.

Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. To follow the example set by JESUS CHRIST.
2. Because Christ COMMANDED it.
3. It shows that I really am a BELIEVER.

Why Be Baptized by Immersion?

1. Because JESUS was baptized that way.
2. Every baptism in the BIBLE was by immersion.
3. The word "baptize" means to SUBMERSE INTO water.

Who Should Be Baptized?

Every person who has BELIEVED in Christ.

The Lord's Supper: Communion with God's Family

What is the Lord's Supper?

1. It is a SIMPLE ACT.
2. It is a REMINDER.

3. It is a SYMBOL.
4. It is a STATEMENT OF FAITH.

Who Should Take the Lord's Supper?

Only those who are already BELIEVERS (Mark 14:22–26).

Only those who have demonstrated ASSIMILATION into the body of Christ through baptism.
(1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

Only those who have EXAMINED themselves prior to eating the bread and drinking the cup.
(1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

SESSION TWO: OUR STRATEGY

Our Motto

A Great Commitment . . . to the Great COMMANDMENT and the Great COMMISSION will grow a Great Church!

SESSION FOUR: OUR FAMILY

What is the Church?

1. The church is a FAMILY.

So we operate on the basis of RELATIONSHIPS not RULES.

2. The church is a BODY.

Therefore, we function on the basis of SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

At WBC we have a simple structure so we can maximize MINISTRY and minimize MAINTENANCE.

Currently there are over ____ different ministries founded and operated by our members.

3. The church is a FLOCK.

Therefore, it is cared for and led by SHEPHERDS.

“POIMEN” = PASTOR

“PRESBUTEROS” = ELDER

“EPISCOPOS” = OVERSEER / BISHOP