

FOUNDATIONS

PARK CHURCH MEMBERSHIP CLASS



PARKCHURCH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to <i>Foundations</i>	p.5
Introduction: <i>The Mission of God</i>	p.7
Week One: <i>Gospel-Centered Worship</i>	p.13
Week Two: <i>Gospel-Centered Community</i>	p.37
Week Three: <i>Gospel-Centered Mission</i>	p.55
Park Church: Other Resources	p.77
Who We Are	p.85
Doctrine	p.89
Theological Vision	p.95
Membership Covenant	p.105

WELCOME TO FOUNDATIONS

God is on a mission to fill the earth with His own glory through all that He has created. In particular, He designed human beings to bear His image in a unique way, crafting us as rational and relational beings, capable of demonstrating aspects of His character. He commissioned us to be fruitful and to multiply, to fill the earth with other humans who would faithfully bear His image, joyfully living in His presence, under His reign, and for His glory. This is what it means to be human. And this is what it means to worship God.

When humanity rebelled against the good reign of God, we were separated from His presence, and the image of God in us—while not destroyed—was fatally distorted. What are the consequences? Now we exist in a broken world filled with broken people in need of merciful reconciliation. This is why the mission of God is centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Triune God redeems a people for Himself, forgiving our sins, restoring our relationship to the Father, and filling us with the Holy Spirit.

Now we may once again faithfully (though imperfectly) image God in our everyday lives, continuously being remade in the image of Christ, experiencing the joy of living in God's presence, under His reign, and for His glory. As we do this, we call others to join us, likewise finding restored life and joy through Jesus Christ. And we remain confident that one day "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14 ESV).

We are convinced that Jesus calls each of His disciples to commit to a local expression of the church, being accountable to it and sacrificially serving as part of it. This is called church membership.

We're grateful that you're considering membership with Park Church. Over the next few weeks, we will look together at what God has called us to *be* and *do* here in Denver.

The primary metaphor Scripture uses for the people of God is *family*. To that end, we like to begin our *Foundations* classes by spending the first week together sharing a meal inside the home of an elder or staff member with a handful of other *Foundations* participants.

During the following three weeks, we'll gather on Sundays from 12:45–2:45pm in the downstairs event space at the Park Church building for lunch, teaching, and discussion. Lunch and childcare is provided.

Before coming together each Sunday, we ask that you commit about one hour to completing the pre-class work for that week. This effort helps us all be on the same page with our teaching content and helps the class discussion around our tables be more engaging. The weekly pre-class work consists of:

1. A talk or a sermon to **watch or listen to**
2. A chapter of a book to **read**
3. Several questions to **reflect on**

Following each class, we've also provided ideas for how to put the week's content into practice. With friends, family, and/or by yourself, we encourage you to implement some simple practices to further embody our commitment to Jesus. Everything you need for the class—sermons, book chapters, articles, and questions—can be found either in this workbook or at **parkrenew.org/foundations**. Please utilize these resources during the class and in the future.

To start things off, here is a look at the mission statement of Park Church:

We exist to make disciples of Jesus for the glory of God and the joy of all people.

We pursue this mission through:

1. Gospel-Centered Worship
2. Gospel-Centered Community
3. Gospel-Centered Mission

We're looking forward to the next several weeks with you. Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can help you with anything by emailing **renew@parkchurchdenver.org**.

With gratitude and anticipation,
The Leadership at Park Church

INTRODUCTION: THE MISSION OF GOD

READ

The Mission to Make Disciples **p.9**

Made Alive by the God of Grace **p.11**

THE MISSION TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28:16–20 ESV)

Many people view the church as a building to visit, an event to attend, or a community to be a part of, but what's the point of it all? What is our purpose? What should we be pursuing? This is the fundamental question before us. What is the mission of the church?

In the Garden of Eden, God gave the first humans a task: Multiply worshipers of Him who live under His good reign. The implications of this task—if fulfilled—were that God's glory would flood creation as His human image bearers stewarded their role in the world in ways consistent with His character. But faithful pursuit of this task was soon snapped by pride and the desire for autonomy. We feel the effects of this fall from grace every day in the brokenness in our own hearts and in our world.

Thankfully, Jesus Christ has completed this task on our behalf. He alone was faithful to fulfill the original commission given to humanity. After suffering and dying for our sins and rising from the grave, Jesus gave a renewed commission to all who would follow Him, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20 ESV).

This is often called the Great Commission, Jesus' parting directive to His followers. It's quite amazing to see that this is actually a recasting of the original commission God gave us in the Garden: Multiply worshipers of Him who live under His good reign. Where we originally and devastatingly failed, we can now reengage precisely because of Jesus' reconciling and redeeming work for us. But how does this commission get worked out? Pastor Mark Dever has a helpful summary of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus:

A disciple is a follower... A disciple of Jesus follows in Jesus' steps, doing as Jesus taught and lived. But it means more than that. Following Jesus first means that you have entered into a personal, saving relationship with Him. You have been "united with Christ," as the Bible puts it. You have been united through the new covenant in His blood. Through His death and resurrection, all the guilt of sin that is yours becomes His, and all the righteousness that is His become yours... How do we accept this gift and unite ourselves to Him? Through faith! We turn away from our sins and follow after Him, trusting Him as Savior and Lord... Our discipleship to Christ [thus] begins when we hear those two words and obey them: 'Follow me.' ¹

¹ Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 13–15.

And yet, the Christian life does not stop at merely *being* a disciple. As we saw in the Great Commission, disciples of Jesus are called to make disciples. In other words, essential to following Christ is calling others to follow Him as well. Jesus was quite clear about how this works. He unpacks this command to make disciples in two parts:

First, we are called to baptize new believers into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This signifies and celebrates that person's *union* with the Triune God by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. A disciple is first and foremost someone who has freely received the love of God, through Jesus, and by His Spirit. Never are we called to obey Jesus in order to be loved and accepted by the Father. Quite the contrary, we are instructed that *because* of Jesus, we are loved and accepted *already*. To make disciples begins by helping people see what Jesus has done to bring us to God and helping them root their lives in His gracious and unconditional love.

Second, we are called to teach one another to obey all that Jesus has commanded. It is within the context of this unconditional love that we learn to obey everything that our good and kind Lord has commanded us. Jesus taught us to *worship* God the Father and to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He taught us to live in *community* with His family, laying down our lives for one another. He taught us to live on *mission* in the world, reflecting His character and proclaiming His Kingdom wherever He has called us.

In short, **a disciple of Jesus is someone who has been made alive by the God of grace and is learning to follow Jesus in rhythms of worship, community, and mission.** So our mission as a community of disciples is to make disciples of Jesus, and as this mission advances, the knowledge of God's glory will fill the earth and joy will extend to all people.

MADE ALIVE BY THE GOD OF GRACE

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, so that in the coming age He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
(Ephesians 2:1–10)

"In the beginning, God..." (Genesis 1:1). The story of the world starts with the Triune God, self-existent and entirely self-sufficient. Out of love and to display His glory, God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. As the pinnacle of His creation work, He formed humans to represent their Creator King by reflecting His glory on the stage of creation. When He had finished His creation work, He saw everything He had made and declared it to be "very good." God's purpose from the beginning was that people would image Him as they spread joy and life by multiplying families, building societies, and developing cultures. This flourishing life could only be experienced as humanity lived in right relationship with their God, trusting in His word, submitting to His rule, and depending on His presence.

But something went terribly wrong. Instead of depending upon their Creator and Lord, they rejected His authority, declared independence from Him, and rebelled against His call on their lives. We carry this same rebellion in our bones, living out the desire for autonomy and rejecting His authority in our own lives. Because of our rebellion, we are separated from God and the joy and life that is found in His presence. We become "dead in [our] trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). This fall from right relationship with God has cosmic consequences, leading to a breakdown in every sphere of creation. Our fractured existence leaves something deep within us aching for restoration, for some kind of *good news* that will remedy the *bad news* we experience as part of living in this broken world.

Thankfully God did not leave us to our own demise. Though we were His enemies—defiant rebels in His kingdom—the Son of God took on human flesh in order to deliver us from our sin and brokenness. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life. This uniquely qualified Him to pay the debt sinful humanity owed to God. His sacrificial death on the cross served as the substitute for us, providing a double-transfer: Jesus took on our sin and punishment while we received His perfect righteousness. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, defeating the power of sin and death and demonstrating His power to give new life to all who would trust in Him and to restore all that has been broken in the world. All this has come as a free gift to those who put their trust in Jesus Christ. Through belief in His work, we are reconciled to God by grace! This is good news—it is the Gospel. Greg Gilbert explains in more detail how all this was possible through Jesus' work on the cross:

When Jesus died, it was not the punishment for His own sins that He endured. (He didn't have any!) It was the punishment from His people's sins! As He hung on the cross at Calvary, Jesus bore all the horrible weight of the sin of God's people. All their rebellion, all their disobedience, all their sin fell on His shoulders. And the curse that God had pronounced in Eden—the sentence of death—struck. That is why Jesus cried out in agony, 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?' (Matt 27:46). God His Father, who is holy and righteous, whose eyes are too pure even to look on evil, looked at His Son, saw the sins of His Son's people resting on His shoulders, turned away in disgust, and poured out His wrath on His own Son. Of course, all this is good news only because King Jesus the crucified is no longer dead. He rose from the grave.²

The cross and resurrection of the God-man Jesus is no arbitrary event in history; it is the decisive work of God through which He is redeeming everything that is broken in our world. In view of this overwhelming mercy found in Christ, we are called and compelled to put our personal trust in Jesus. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, we experience this redemption. Indeed He is *the way, the truth, and the life*, and none of us can recover restored communion with God the Father apart from Him. But once we believe, the Bible is clear: we are given new life! The technical term is "regeneration," a beautiful reality that takes place when God speaks new life into our dead souls. John Piper put it this way:

There is no spiritual life—no eternal life—apart from connection with Jesus and belief in Jesus. In the new birth, the Holy Spirit unites us to Christ in a living union. Christ is life. Christ is the vine where life flows. We are the branches (John 15:1–17). What happens in the new birth is the supernatural creation of new spiritual life, and it is created through union with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit brings us into vital connection with Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. That is the objective reality of what happens in the new birth.³

In short, a *disciple* of Jesus is one who has first been *made alive* by Jesus. We need this new life precisely because sin—our "sickness unto death"—has rotted the joyful and abundant life for which we were designed. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4–5).

² Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 67.

³ John Piper, *Finally Alive* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2009), 32.

WEEK ONE: GOSPEL-CENTERED WORSHIP

DO THE FOLLOWING BEFORE CLASS

WATCH

You Are What You Love: Learning to Read Cultural Liturgies by James KA Smith

- Video **parkrenew.org/foundations**
- Notes **p.15**

READ

Gospel-Centered Worship **p.17**

REFLECT **p.19**

Liturgical Audit **p.20**

USE THE FOLLOWING DURING CLASS

Teaching Notes and Discussion Questions **p.21**

USE THE FOLLOWING AFTER CLASS IN RESPONSE

- Practice **p.31**
- Resources **p.33**

YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE: LEARNING TO READ CULTURAL LITURGIES

NOTES

What captivates or convicts you?

Does anything confuse or frustrate you?

What would you like to follow up on?

GOSPEL-CENTERED WORSHIP

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
(Matthew 13:44 ESV)

"In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everyone worships. The only choice we get is what to worship."¹ These words were spoken by a professed atheist in 2005 during a college commencement speech. Even though he rejected the reality and authority of the Biblical God until his dying day, this statement runs parallel to a strong Biblical theme: *everybody worships*.

But let's make sure we define "worship" correctly. When we hear that word, most initial thoughts flitting through our brains contain images of singing in a sanctuary or bowing down before Buddha. Without question, these count as worship. And yet, worship stretches far beyond these limits. We could rightly say that "worship" is *the organization of our lives around what we value*. Each of us is given varying amounts of time, energy, and material resources. The question is, what do we do them? Or, to put it another way: *What are we seeking to obtain by sacrificing our time, energy, and material resources?* To learn what we truly worship, we often have to look no further than what fills our calendars, attention spans, and credit card statements.

Our trouble is not that we invest time snowboarding, work toward excellence in our careers, or enjoy Chicago-style pizza. Our trouble is that we have "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images" (Romans 1:22), foolishly seeking *ultimate* comfort, joy, and meaning in *penultimate* realities. The Biblical term for this is *idolatry*. Tim Keller explains:

*Anything can be an idol, and everything has been an idol. What is an idol? It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought. It can be family and children, or career and making money, or achievement and critical acclaim, or saving "face" and social standing. It can be a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence and skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, your beauty or your brains, a great political or social cause, your morality and virtue, or even success in the Christian ministry. An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure." There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is "worship."*²

¹David Foster Wallace, "This is Water," 2005. <http://bulletin-archive.kenyon.edu/x4280.html>.

² Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), xvii–xviii.

Again, the problem has never been with the created things themselves; to the contrary, the Bible tells us that God has made these things *good*. They are meant to be enjoyed as gifts from the Giver, purposed to reflect and point to God's goodness and glory. However, in our sin, we warp the relationship we are designed to have with the created order, choosing instead to run headlong after our distorted understanding of "the good life."

*[The good life] is a picture of flourishing that we imagine in a visceral, often-unarticulated way—a vague yet attractive sense of where we think true happiness is found... To be human is to be animated and oriented by some vision of the good life, some picture of what we think counts as "flourishing." And we want it. We crave it. We desire it.*³

But what if we've been deceived? What if the places, positions, and possessions we assume make up the good life cannot satisfy us in the ways we anticipate? Jesus says this is precisely the case. The Creator God crafted the human person to find ultimate satisfaction in Him alone. We are meant to worship Him, organizing our lives around our relationship with Him, recognizing the eternal value found in His presence. In other words, God is the fountain of life, the source of everything good, true, and beautiful. And in the face of this eternal and supreme Treasure, we snubbed our noses and lunged toward temporary toys with everything we've got.

Here's where the Gospel of grace enters again. The good news is that Jesus died to forgive us from our idolatry and to bring us back to God. He has purchased our lives and our affections, so that we may again delight in the One who is worthy of our worship. To worship God is to know Him and to praise Him as He is. A disciple—one who has been made alive by the God of grace—is learning to run to God to receive all that they long for. God provides freely, without price. He beckons us to repent again and again, to enjoy *Him* above all else, and to enjoy *His gifts* secondarily, in their proper place. As we pursue true and rightly-ordered worship, we become more fully human. When God is the center of our worship, we can find peace and joy in His goodness and wisdom both when He gives and when He takes away. To worship God alone is the only way to truly live the good life.

³ James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016), 11.

REFLECT

Who worships? What does it mean to worship? In what ways do we worship?

What does it mean to say that people are primarily driven by what they love rather than what they think or believe? Do you agree? Why or why not?

What do you expect to happen when we gather on a Sunday? What do you expect to happen when you meet with other Christians in a small group gathering? Do you expect God to be at work speaking to you as well as speaking through you to others for their encouragement?

LITURGICAL AUDIT

A liturgical audit (or habit inventory) is simply an honest account of how you are spending your time during the week. The goal is not to foster comparison or shame, but to help you see the habits and rhythms that are shaping you, and to consider what they reveal about your values and desires.

WRITE: Make a list of your time spent during the week.

- Write down what you do in the morning, during the day, and in the evening. Include the first and last things you do every day.
- Write down how much time you spend on each activity, including the small things (time spent sleeping, getting ready for the day, on your phone, watching TV, getting kids ready, preparing & eating meals, exercising, time with Jesus, commuting, podcasts, time with friends, etc.)
- Consider how frequently or infrequently you incorporate various activities. Consider how your weekend habits are different from weekday habits.

CONSIDER: Consider your daily and weekly habits and write down some observations.

- What is encouraging or discouraging about your habits?
- What do they reveal about your values and desires?
- How might these things be forming you, your family, or your community?
- Are these things cultivating a deeper love for Jesus and for His calling in your life?

PRAY: Talk to Jesus about what you are seeing and feeling about these things.

- Remember that Jesus loves you and is inviting you into deeper communion with him and a more meaningful life.
- Ask Him if there are habits that should change in some way?
- Tell Him about what feels challenging.
- Ask Him for help as you continue to try to orient your life around His presence with you.

DISCUSS: Take time to talk about your observations and thoughts with a friend, spouse, or people in your Gospel Community.

TEACHING NOTES & DISCUSSION

THE THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

Everyone worships.

Worship: The organization and orientation of our lives around what we love and value most.

Sin is misdirected worship.

Idolatry: Anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. (Adapted from Tim Keller)

Our worship works itself out in liturgies.

Liturgy: The rhythms and habits of our lives that orient our affections toward our perceived "good life"—whether consciously or subconsciously.

The Gospel awakens true worship.

Gospel: the good news that God in Christ is saving a sinful people for Himself and His glory.

Christian worship by default must take on new liturgies.

Rule of Life: A collection of liturgies that work together to shape us into a particular kind of person and lead us down a particular path.

THE PRACTICE OF WORSHIP

How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing. A schedule defends us from chaos and whim. It is a net for catching days. It is a scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands at sections of time.⁴

The Christian Year

⁴ Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), 252.

The Christian Year (cont.)

THE STORY OF JESUS

Advent

Christmas

Epiphany

Lent

Easter

Pentecost

THE STORY OF THE CHURCH

Ordinary Time

The Christian Week

Park Church Sunday Liturgy exists to help the gathered church delight in the Triune God through rehearsing the Story of the Gospel and experiencing the God of the Story.

WE GATHER TO REHEARSE

*Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless His holy name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all His benefits,
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
(Psalm 103:1–5 ESV)*

In her book, 'A Royal Waste of Time,' Marva Dawn tells of Vaclav Havel, a playwright who is also the president of the Czech Republic. He was asked, how the revolution to overthrow communism in the Czech Republic was bloodless and yet had experienced real staying power. He simply replied, "We had our parallel society. And in that parallel society, we wrote our plays and sang our songs and read our poems, until we knew the truth so well that we could go out into the streets of Prague and say, 'We don't believe your lies anymore!' And communism had to fall."⁵

⁵ Kevin Twit, "What's in a Song? Tuning Our Hearts." *Covenant Magazine*, 2002.

WE GATHER TO EXPERIENCE

But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

(1 Corinthians 14: 24–25 ESV)

The Bible isn't the biography of a distant, absent, or dead deity. Jesus Christ is alive. It can't be said often enough that the Bible is sufficient to provide all we need for a godly life. But God's presence and power aren't confined to it. Scripture speaks of a God who is near, a God who is active, a God who breaks into the present—a God with whom we can engage. A God who is personal. A God we can experience mentally, emotionally, and even physically at times.

By experiencing God physically, I'm not referring to shaking, strange coincidences, or emotional excesses. I'm talking about acknowledging and appreciating the fact that God is seeking true worshipers who not only believe things about Him, but also know Him as a God who is living, active, and with us. Not an idea, a philosophy, a social construct, a political system, or an inanimate object. True worshipers have a relationship with God that includes head knowledge but goes beyond it. Jesus is alive and wants us to know Him. Personally.

Our worship isn't only about God; it involves God. It isn't only to and for God; it's the way we encounter and engage with God. The One who enables us to encounter God in the way I'm describing is God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit.⁶

OUR ORDER OF SERVICE

Call to Worship

⁶ Bob Kauflin, *True Worshipers* (Wheaton: Crossway), 2015

Confession of Sin

Assurance of Pardon

Passing The Peace

Reading of Scripture

Preaching of Scripture

The Sacraments (Baptism and Communion)

Response

Benediction

The Christian Day

*God has given us the Disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us.*⁷

*The Spiritual Disciplines are those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth... The Spiritual Disciplines are the God-given means we are to use in the Spirit-filled pursuit of Godliness.*⁸

SCRIPTURE

When we seek to enjoy communion with the Lord—and not to be led astray by the ambiguities of religious experience—we read the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, God's words and God's deeds reveal God Himself for our knowledge and our enjoyment. Of course, it is possible to read the Bible without enjoying communion with God. We must seek to understand the Bible's meaning, and we must pause to contemplate what we understand and, by the Spirit, to feel and express the appropriate response of the heart. God communicates with us in many ways through the Bible and seeks the response of our communion with Him.

Hearing

Reading

⁷ Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco), 1978.

⁸ Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress), 1991.

Studying

Memorizing

Meditating

Applying

PRAYER

*"Prayer is personal communication with God, corporate or individual."
(Wayne Grudem)*

*"Prayer is meant to be the conversation where your life and your God meet."
(David Powlison)*

*"Talking to God about what we are doing together."
(Dallas Willard)*

Opportunities for Corporate Prayer

- Gospel Communities
- Boiler Room Prayer (Sundays • 8:15–8:45am • Downstairs event space)
- Thursday Morning Prayer (Thursdays • 6:30am • Side gallery)
- Elder-Led Prayer for Healing (First Sunday of the Month • During the 11am Service • Prayer Room)
- Worship & Prayer Nights

Frameworks for Personal Prayer

- Pray **from the Bible** (The Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, the prayers of Jesus, the prayers of Paul)—pray until you run out of Bible or time
- **Journal** your prayers and journal what you hear as you pray
- Use the **A.C.T.S.** order as you pray (start with one and move to the next): Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication
- Use the **P.R.A.Y.** order as you pray: Pause, Remember/Reflect, Ask, Yield
- Practice **Listening Prayer**: silent prayer with the aim of listening to what the Spirit of God might be speaking to you
- Pray a **Prayer of Examen**: The Prayer of Examen is an ancient Ignatian method of prayer in the spirit of Psalm 139:23–24. In this prayer, one intentionally reviews their day, their experiences throughout it, and their interaction (or lack thereof) with the presence of God. A simple way of practicing this would be asking, "God, where did I experience Your gifts and Your presence today? Where did I sin against You or sense Your absence?"

PRACTICE

Annually: How have you looked back at your year in the past? What annual celebrations do you currently observe without giving much thought to? What has your experience of the Christian Year been? What might it look like to engage in the Christian Year with more intentionality? This year, seek to learn more about the Christian Year and ask God to help you build your calendar more around Him and His story!

Weekly: How have you looked at our Sunday services? What new things did you learn as you considered our order? Why do you think it's important to rehearse the Gospel? How might you come to a Sunday gathering with a greater expectation to meet with God and be used by Him to encourage others? Commit to attending corporate worship each Sunday (unless you are truly unable). When you come, challenge yourself to engage in the service (Ideas: meet someone new, use your body during singing, take notes during the sermon, expect God to speak to you or through you, ask someone from the prayer team to pray for you or pray for someone in need, etc.).

Daily: How are you currently engaging with God on a daily basis? How have you sought to meet with God as you read the Bible? What about prayer? What are some simple ways Jesus might be inviting you to come to meet with Him in these practices? Talk to a friend about this! Start small and try to faithfully practice this for a month or more.

EXERCISE

Sit down with someone who knows you well (such as your spouse, family member, or close friend), and ask the following questions:

1. In what types of situations or relationships do you typically see me react or respond in sinful ways?
2. From what you observe in my life, which of the following "idols" do you think I most often run toward: Comfort, Control, Glory, and/or Approval?
3. How have you seen God change my heart and life for the better since you have known me?

Now write your own reflections based on the above conversation:

1. What about this conversation confirmed what you already thought about yourself? What was clarifying? Did anything surprise you?
2. Read Ephesians 1:3–14. Consider the character and work of God as described in this passage. In what particular ways does God in Christ *better fulfill* your desires for the following?

Comfort

Control

Glory

Approval

RESOURCES

BOOKS

- *You Are What You Love* by James KA Smith
- *Unceasing Worship* by Harold Best
- *True Worshipers* by Bob Kauflin
- *Rhythms of Grace* by Mike Cospers
- *Living the Christian Year* by Bobby Gross
- *Family Worship* by Donald Whitney
- *The Valley of Vision*
- *Every Season Prayers* by Scotty Smith

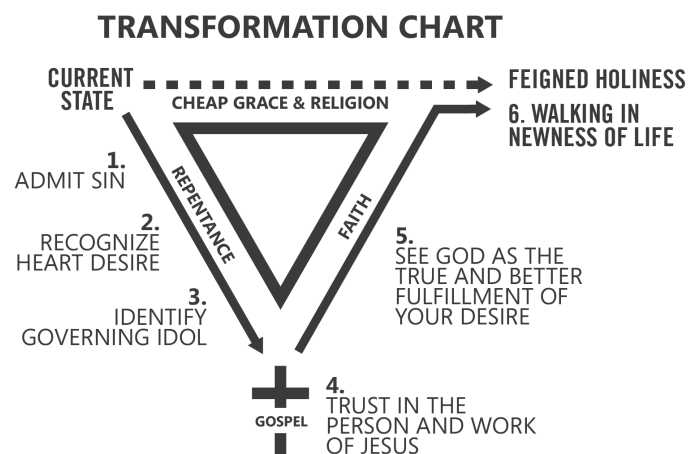
GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION (CARD AVAILABLE IN THE GALLERY):

Gospel Transformation

All of us see the need for change. The question is how that change takes place in our lives. God calls us to trust that His word is good and to walk in obedience in relationship with Him. At different times and in different ways, we all fail. Further, we are deeply broken and incapable of fixing ourselves. We need divine rescue. The good news of the Gospel is that God came to us in the person of Jesus Christ, who bore the penalty for our sin and has conquered sin and death so that we might experience true life. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection have accomplished our deliverance. But how does this get worked out in our lives?

The purpose of this resource is to walk through that process. Personal transformation through the Gospel is real and it is possible. Sin is fundamentally more about misaligned desires than breaking rules. The heart is the seat of our desires. We must address what resides there in order to see genuine change. Use this card with others to pursue holiness together.

When we see sin in our lives, we often try to rearrange our behaviors and words so that we meet the right standard. While this may work to fool some for a while (including ourselves) this type of "holiness" is not real and is not sustainable. We need an approach that goes to the center and source of our lives—our hearts.



1. Be humble and honest. Admit that you have sinned and name what that sin is. (Psalm 51)
2. Thinking back on that moment (or one of the moments) in which you sinned, ask: "What did I really want right then that I was not receiving?" (James 4:1–2)
3. Recognizing the motivations of your heart, place those desires into a category of idolatry:
 - **Control:** I wanted things to go or be a certain way.
 - **Glory:** I wanted others to respect me or be impressed by me.
 - **Comfort:** I wanted an absence of interruptions, demands, or annoyances.
 - **Approval:** I wanted others to validate what I did or who I am.
4. Having identified the governing idol of your heart in that situation, turn to Jesus, who bore your sin on the cross and was raised to new life. Trust in Him for forgiveness. (Romans 8:1–4)
5. Receiving forgiveness and trusting in Jesus for salvation, think about how God fulfills the desire you had better than the way you were otherwise trying to fulfill it. (II Peter 1:4–5)
 - **He is the sovereign One:** You do not need to be in control because God, the one who is perfectly wise, is already in control.
 - **He is the glorious One:** You do not need to be impressive because God, the one who is eternally glorious, is already impressive.
 - **He is the satisfying One:** You do not need to find ultimate comfort in created things because God, the one who is uncreated, satisfies entirely.
 - **He is the gracious One:** You do not need to find approval from those around you because God has already approved of you in Jesus Christ.
6. Trusting in Jesus' salvation and looking to God as the true and better fulfillment of your desire, walk in faithful obedience with God. (Romans 8:5–11)

The Role of Community

We cannot fight sin and pursue rightly ordered joy on our own. God has designed humans to be in relationship. As the people of God, we are meant to care for another, listen to one another, bear one another's burdens, and ask hard questions of one another. Therefore, we need to be interacting with each other in a consistent and intentional way such that we know others and are known by others. This is where the true work of transformation takes place.

In order to do this well, we must ask three different types of questions of one another. This allows us to be drawn out, seeing more clearly our situations and our lives for what they are. The first level of questions is designed to expose what actually took place in a particular situation. The second level questions help us articulate the heart's desires in the moment of externalized sin. And the third level of questions categorizes those desires into idolatries that often functionally command our lives. Not all of these questions are directly applicable every time; simply use the questions as a guide in your conversations.

LEVEL ONE QUESTIONS: WHAT HAPPENED?

1. Where have you experienced tension in your relationships recently?
2. Where have you seen ungodly thoughts, words, or behaviors in your life? 3. What was the situation? (If there is more than one, pick just one.)
3. What did you do/say?
4. Who else was involved in the situation?
5. What did others do/say?

LEVEL TWO QUESTIONS: WHAT DID YOU WANT?

1. Why were you angry, annoyed, hurt, or frustrated in this situation?
2. How did you want the situation to go instead of how it did?
3. What were you really wanting right then that you were not receiving?
4. What were you trying to get by responding the way that you did?
5. If you had _____ then everything would have been okay. How would you fill in that blank?

LEVEL THREE QUESTIONS: WHAT DID YOU THINK WOULD SATISFY YOU IN THAT MOMENT?

1. Would you have felt satisfied if you had been able to make things go your way? (**control**)
2. Would you have felt satisfied if you had received respect or recognition from others? (**glory**)
3. Would you have felt satisfied if you had no external demands or frustrations? (**comfort**)
4. Would you have felt satisfied if you had received validation from others? (**approval**)

WEEK TWO: GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY

DO THE FOLLOWING BEFORE CLASS

WATCH

The Gospel, Together: Night Two by Bob Thune

- Video **parkrenew.org/foundations**
- Notes **p.39**

READ

Gospel-Centered Community **p.41**

REFLECT **p.45**

USE THE FOLLOWING DURING CLASS

Teaching Notes and Discussion Questions **p.47**

USE THE FOLLOWING AFTER CLASS IN RESPONSE

- Practice **p.49**
- Resources **p.51**

THE GOSPEL, TOGETHER: NIGHT TWO

NOTES

What captivates or convicts you?

Does anything confuse or frustrate you?

What would you like to follow up on?

GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

(Ephesians 2:11–22 ESV)

We worship the Triune God—He is the one God who exists eternally as three Persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. In His being there is unity and diversity. And this trinitarian God designed humans to display the glory of His unity and diversity through our relationships with one another: “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him [unity]; male and female He created them [diversity]” (Genesis 1:27). The combination of unity without uniformity and diversity without distrust and division showcases God’s glory and goodness. As Paul wrote, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all [unity]... But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift [diversity]” (Ephesians 4:4–7). Through this diverse group of people unified around the Gospel of Christ, “the manifold wisdom of God [is] now made known” (Ephesians 3:10).

But so much of our experience wars against this way of living. In our sin, we’re prone to self-protection, judgmentalism, and good old-fashioned pride. We tend to use our diverse perspectives, gifts, and resources to elevate ourselves at the expense of others. These types of sinful attitudes lead to destructive relationships, divided communities, and ultimately a distorted reflection of God’s glory. We find ourselves void of true community because we lack two fundamental things: humility and sacrifice. Before we unpack those concepts, let’s consider how Jesus has dealt with our selfishness and pride in relation to other people.

Jesus was no stranger to exclusion. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it: “Jesus Christ lived in the midst of His enemies. At the end all His disciples deserted Him. On the Cross He was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause He had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God.”⁹ Jesus did this so that we—people who were enemies of God—could be brought near to our heavenly Father,

⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 17.

made part of a new family defined by sacrificial kindness and eternal hospitality. He sacrificed His comfort and status so that genuine community would become reality. Based upon no quality found within ourselves, but entirely rooted in the person and work of Christ, we are no longer alienated from God: "For [Jesus] Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility... that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility" (Ephesians 2:14-16).

This is a beautiful picture of humility and sacrifice for the good of others. And it has substantial implications for how we engage community. Yet humans tend to be pain-averse, especially when that pain is initiated by others and must be endured for the good of others. We'd rather stay home from that party. This is because humility and sacrifice require us to consider the interests of others as more significant than our own interests, and to love and value our neighbors as ourselves. Redeemed by Christ and filled with His Spirit, we are renewed people, meant to reflect His glory as we humble ourselves before God and others, and to sacrifice our time, energy, comfort, and other resources for the building up of the Christian family.

We accomplish this vision through living our lives alongside other believers, engaging in rhythms of worship, Bible study, prayer, service, fellowship, and mission. Amidst these rhythms, each of us is wired and gifted differently to contribute to the building up of the church. To live this vision means we don't flee when things become difficult, but instead we lean in further. Again referencing Bonhoeffer:

The Christian, however, must bear the burden of a brother. He must suffer and endure the brother. It is only when he is a burden that another person is really a brother and not merely an object to be manipulated. The burden of men was so heavy for God Himself that He had to endure the Cross. God verily bore the burden of men in the body of Jesus Christ. But He bore them as a mother carries her child, as a shepherd enfolds the lost lamb that has been found. God took men upon Himself and they weighted Him to the ground, but God remained with them and they with God. In bearing with men God maintained fellowship with them. It was the law of Christ that was fulfilled in the Cross. And Christians must share in this law.¹⁰

Of course, there's more to Christian community than bearing burdens. But it can never be less than this. Otherwise we exit relationships before we can taste the richness found within them. As we persist in sustained community, we are designed to cultivate an ever-growing culture that is saturated with the Gospel.

The following principles, from Pastor Ray Ortland, help encapsulate what we should pursue in our life together:

1. We humbly recognize our dependence upon God while remaining confident that His grace meets us where we are and carries us along;
2. Through verbiage and experience, the lavish grace of the Gospel is communicated to one another consistently and unabashedly;

¹⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 100.

3. We develop an environment in which sinners are safe to own up to their problems and grow together in the Lord;
4. Sin within the church is addressed with “Gospel confrontation,” that is, head-on, with a dual pursuit of protection and restoration;
5. “Outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10) increasingly becomes the dominant pattern of relating to one another.¹¹

As we follow Jesus and sacrifice in everyday ways for the good of others, we uncover a rooted joy unlike anything experienced elsewhere. Christian community—when it is truly Christian—breeds humility, the ability to be known and loved, relational safety, ongoing support, joint celebration, joint sorrow, and joint participation in the glory of God’s eternal family. Through this, the nearness and beauty of our glorious God is experienced by those both inside and outside the church. Let’s courageously pursue this type of community together.

¹¹Ray Ortlund, “How to Build a Gospel Culture in Your Church.” Paper presented at The Gospel Coalition conference (national), Orlando, Florida, April 13–16, 2015.

REFLECT

Why do you think community exists at all in the first place? What motivates people to spend time together?

As you approach relationships, how do you act as a consumer, pulling the benefits from community but shy away from sacrifice and commitment? On the other hand, in what ways do you isolate, only interacting with others when you must? Would you say others really know you, or have you developed a crafted image of how you want others to see you?

Why do people struggle with vulnerability and honesty within trusted community? Why do you personally struggle with it? How does Jesus in the Gospel free us to pursue it?

TEACHING NOTES & DISCUSSION

COMMUNITY IN GOD'S STORY

A disciple is someone who has been called into God's diverse family to use their spiritual gifts, strengths, and resources to help the family of God grow.

God created us for community.

Sin destroys God's design for community.

Jesus came to redeem a community for God (The Church)

Jesus sent the Spirit to empower His people live in, build up, and multiply His community

Jesus will come again to restore His diverse family to Himself and to one another forever.

COMMUNITY AT PARK CHURCH

Live in Gospel-centered community (Gospel Communities).

Sacrificially serve the Church with your gifts and resources.

Generously support the Church with your finances

The Leadership structure at Park Church.

PRACTICE

Gospel Community: Join a Gospel Community. If you're already part of one, then ask your leaders about a way that you can consistently serve the group.

Close Friendships: Do you meet with anyone on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to confess sin, pray for one another, and strengthen each other's faith? If no, then identify someone you trust with whom you could start meeting. If yes, then take a look at the Gospel Transformation card (found in the *Gospel-Centered Worship* section on **p.23**) to see how this might benefit your time together.

Serving & Giving: Where are serving within the Park Church family right now? If nowhere, what are the next steps to begin serving? Are you giving financially to the mission of God through Park Church? If not, what does it look like to start? If you are already serving and/or giving, consider your heart attitude with respect to each. Do you sense bitterness, resentment, legalism, joy, gratitude, etc.?

EXERCISE

Identify and consider three important relationships in your life (examples: spouse, roommate, family member, close friend, coworker, etc.):

- Relationship #1:
- Relationship #2:
- Relationship #3:

Using Bob Thune's three thoughts/emotions that hinder genuine community and relationship, identify which of these come into play within these relationships:

- Shame
- Fear
- Guilt

In what specific ways do these thoughts and emotions keep you from being your true self with the other person? How do they limit your ability to truly love the other person without selfishness or self-protection?

How does the Gospel disarm the emotions of shame, fear, and guilt? How will the Gospel reorient your view on relationships and community? In what ways does the Gospel reverse the effects of self-protection, pretending, and performing?

Discuss what you've learned here with at least one other person you trust. Pray together that God would be glorified through transforming how you engage others in relationship.

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

- *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* by Paul David Tripp
- *How We Change* by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp
- *The Gospel* by Ray Ortlund
- *The Compelling Community* by Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop
- *Gospel-Centered Community* by Bob Thune and Will Walker

THE CROSS CHART (CARD AVAILABLE IN THE GALLERY):

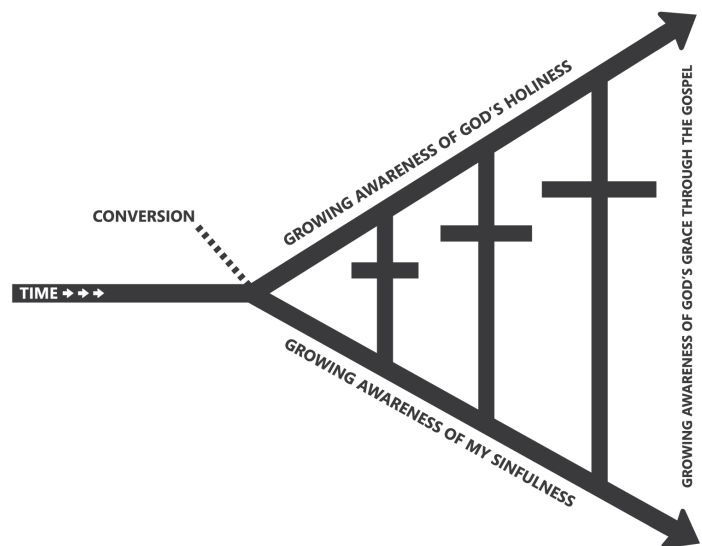
The Cross Chart

THE PROBLEM

The Christian Gospel deals with the fundamental human problem each of us experiences: Things in this life are not the way they're supposed to be. According to the Biblical narrative, we have all rebelled against the authority of our Creator God, the Righteous King of the cosmos. This rebellion caused a rift in our relationship with God, which in turn injected distortion into every other relationship we have. We need holistic restoration.

THE GOSPEL

The good news of the Gospel is that the holy and righteous God has come to sinful humanity in order to deliver us from our sin and brokenness, initiating the reintegration of the created order. Jesus Christ gave His perfect life over as a sacrifice on the cross and was raised up from the dead to restore all things according to their original design. By trusting in His person and work, we are brought into right relationship with God, thus beginning the process of our reintegration.



THE GOSPEL CONTINUED

What God initiated with the Gospel in reconciling us to Himself, He intends to continue to unfold in our lives, recreating people and relationships through reconciliation. Yet our mistaken tendency is to see the Gospel as the mere entry point into the Christian life, assuming that our own moral effort becomes the basis of our ongoing growth. The Bible tells us something different. Paul insisted that it is

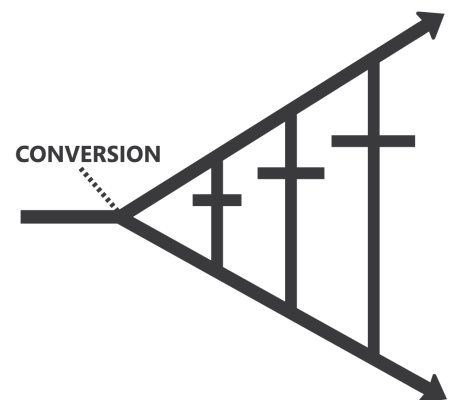
the Gospel that “is bearing fruit and increasing” (Colossians 1:5) in the lives of Christians. His desire for the church in Rome was that they would again hear the Gospel preached, though they already had a cognitive-level understanding of it (Romans 1:15). Peter told his readers that if they did not grow in virtue formation, then they had fundamentally forgotten the Gospel (2 Peter 1:9). Indeed, growing in our understanding of the Gospel forms the foundation of our continual life as Christians.

At its essence, the Gospel is the good news that the holy and righteous God has come to dwell with and transform humble people who are willing to acknowledge their sin and put their trust in Jesus. This gap—between God’s perfect holiness and our fundamental sinfulness—is infinite without His Gospel of grace. And it is precisely this grace that compels God to provide salvation for us. God continues His good work in the lives of His people as we again and again recognize His perfect character and our deep brokenness, looking to the grace of His Gospel to deliver once more.

Details of the Cross Chart

CONVERSION

God saves people. Through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, by grace and through faith, all who trust in Him are **converted** from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life. When we are initially humbled by God’s holy nature and our own sinfulness, and we put our trust in Jesus, we are brought into God’s family.



GOD’S HOLINESS & OUR SINFULNESS

God is absolutely righteous; there is no whisper of imperfection in His character. This fact never wavers or ceases to be true. However, our own understanding and awareness of **God’s holiness** is weak and often confused. To grow in our Christian life, our awareness of who God is—in all His perfections—must increase. Further, without God’s grace in our lives, we are fundamentally rebellious, *incurvatus in se* as the ancients used to say, literally meaning, “bent inward on oneself.” Even our seemingly good works are tainted by the impure motivations of pride and self-centeredness. In order to grow in holiness, we must be increasingly honest and aware of **our sinfulness** against God.

GOD’S GRACE

As we grow increasingly aware of God’s holy character as well as our own tendency toward sin and rebellion, we must look to the work of Jesus in the Gospel to save us. In the person and work of Jesus, we see the fullness of the **Gospel of grace** on display. And as the functional distance between our awareness of God’s holiness and our own sinfulness grows, so does our capacity to receive this grace.

Shrinking The Cross:

PERFORMING:

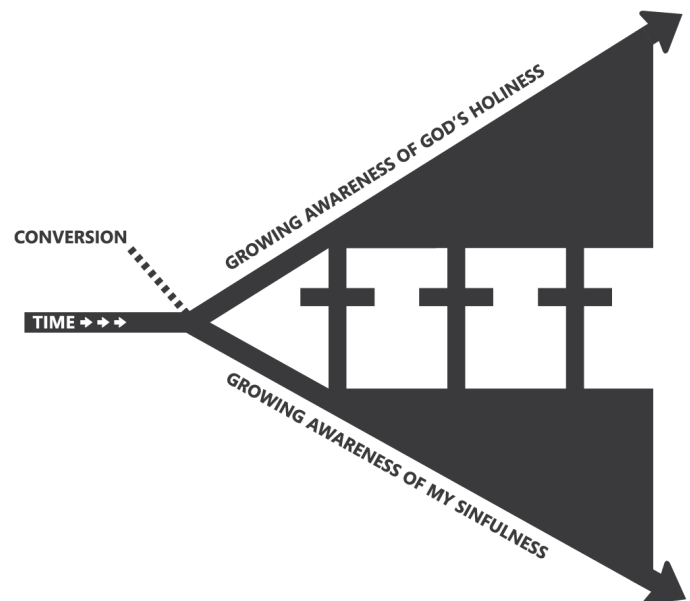
One of our tendencies is to minimize God's perfect holiness, thinking of Him as something less than His Word declares Him to be. In so doing, we begin to live as though we can earn God's approval through our own **performance**.

PRETENDING:

Another of our tendencies is to elevate our own righteousness, thinking of ourselves as someone better than we actually are. This leads to dishonesty, comparison, excuse making, and false righteousness as we pretend we are better than we are.

GOD'S GRACE:

Both of these tendencies functionally shrink our experience of God's salvation in the Gospel. The work of Jesus becomes less effective in our lives as joy is replaced with wearisome striving. The remedy is to recognize God as He has revealed Himself and to be honest about our own sin and brokenness. This allows our appreciation and love for Jesus and His **gracious work** on our behalf to increase.



GOSPEL-CENTERED MISSION

DO THE FOLLOWING BEFORE CLASS

LISTEN

City—Jeremiah 29:4–14 by Gary McQuinn

- Audio **parkrenew.org/foundations**
- Notes **p.57**

READ

Gospel-Centered Mission **p.59**

REFLECT **p.61**

USE THE FOLLOWING DURING CLASS

Teaching Notes and Discussion Questions **p.63**

USE THE FOLLOWING AFTER CLASS IN RESPONSE

- Practice **p.67**
- Resources **p.71**

CITY—JEREMIAH 29:4–14

NOTES

What captivates or convicts you?

Does anything confuse or frustrate you?

What would you like to follow up on?

GOSPEL-CENTERED MISSION

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

(1 Peter 2:9–12 ESV)

If it's true that, as we've stated before, God is on a mission to fill the earth with His own glory through all that He has created, then there's work to be done. Many people in many places persist in rebellion against God, either not knowing or not receiving the merciful truth of the Gospel. We carry the very message of life that renews people and restores creation. As John Piper has put it, "Missions exists because worship doesn't."¹ Where the worship of God is not the dominant reality, we must enter in to proclaim and represent the Christ of the Gospel.

Of course, it's easy to assume this is the task of formal church leaders and missionaries. Sure, we may "pay and pray" to support their work, but is the practice of missions merely for the professionals? This is a dangerous and drastically un-Biblical conviction.

This was never the original expectation; neither was it how the early church operated. "[E]very Christian was expected to evangelize, follow up, nurture, and teach people the Word. This happened relationally—one person bringing the Gospel to another within the context of a relationship."² Church leaders, rather than *doing* the work of ministry, exist to *prepare* people in the church to do the work of ministry. "It is the responsibility of the ordained leadership to build up the church and its members... discipling the laity for ministry in the world."³ Paul makes this clear when he wrote that God "gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints [everyday Christians!] for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11–12).

So what are the contours of this mission to which God has called each of us? To rightly understand Christian mission, we must see it as expansive. This is how theologian Chris Wright describes it:

*God's mission is what spans the gap between the curse on the earth of Genesis 3 and the end of the curse in the new creation of Revelation 22. God's mission is what brings humanity from being a cacophony of nations divided and scattered in rebellion against God in Genesis 11 to being a choir of nations united and gathered in the worship of God in Revelation 7. It [is] a vast, comprehensive project of cosmic salvation.*⁴

And yet, within the expansive scope of Christian mission, it is simultaneously *practical* and *everyday*. Mission is putting *faith* in action, *love* in action, and *hope* in action. This describes a way of living, designed to be woven into the ins and outs, ups and downs of ordinary life in the world.

¹John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 15.

²Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 277.

³Keller, *Center Church*, 277.

⁴Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010), 46.

The implications for Christian mission in our lives are substantial. Each of us has relationships with other people, found in the contexts of household, neighborhood, workplace, and throughout society. Each of us has been given varying amounts of time, energy, money, abilities, influence, and other resources. What if the church—scattered as we are amongst different places, people, and positions—lived as sons and daughters of the King? What if we utilized the realities and resources under our stewardship for the good of others and the glory of God in the various contexts to which we are called? What if we truly desired those around us to come into reconciled relationship with God through the Gospel? Author Greg Forster argues that this is the only way we'll have true impact:

[T]he joy of God [is] the state of flourishing in mind, heart, and life that Christians experience by the Holy Spirit. The joy of God makes us happier, but also wiser, humbler, more patient, and so forth. The joy of God is all the fruits of the Spirit... If Christianity is going to have a distinct impact, it needs to rely on what truly makes it distinct—the work of the Spirit in our minds, hearts, and lives. That's what makes Christianity unique, and it gives us a unique opportunity to bless our unbelieving neighbors through the way we participate in the civilization we share with them.⁵

We must push this fruit-bearing life into every dimension and sphere of human society. Indeed, the Gospel is meant to bear fruit and increase in the whole world (Colossians 1:5-6). As Christian leader Tim Keller has written:

Ministry in which Christians serve the common good of the city is not only Biblical but a necessary context for any convincing evangelistic call to believe in Jesus... Only if we produce... church communities that regularly win secular people to Christ, seek the common good of the whole city, and disciple Christians to write plays, advance science, do creative journalism, begin effective and productive new businesses, use their money for others, and produce cutting-edge scholarship and literature will we actually be doing all the things the Bible tells us that Christians should be doing.⁶

In short, we are transformed people, living transformed lives, and carrying a transforming message. As Paul has said, "[I]f anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation... All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... [W]e are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us" (II Corinthians 5:17-20). The interesting thing about ambassadors is that their entire lives become a representation of their home country—their words, their decisions, their values, their relationships, their work, and so on. Remaining a citizen of the country of their birth, ambassadors reside and seek to persuade those in the host country.

We have been born of the Spirit, citizens of a heavenly country, presently residing in the kingdom of this earth. God has called, equipped, and sent us to our neighbors and to the nations with this glorious good news, the message of reconciliation. This permeates every facet of our lives as we participate in Christian mission—to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the glory of God and the joy of all people.

⁵Greg Forster, *Joy for the World: How Christianity Lost Its Cultural Influence and Can Begin Rebuilding It* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 18-19, 23.

⁶Keller, *Center Church*, 291-92.

REFLECT.

What is God's mission in the world? What role do humans play in this mission?

What are some of your initial takeaways about the local church's mission in the world? In what ways are these things consistent and/or inconsistent with your experience of the local church, past and present?

How would an unbiased observer describe the “mission” of your life? In other words, what fundamentally motivates you, excites you, or compels you? What activates how you make use of time, money, material things, and relational energy?

Where have you been convicted or challenged so far in what you’ve listened to, read, and considered in this section? What change do you think God might be moving you toward?

TEACHING NOTES & DISCUSSION

THE MISSION OF GOD

Only One Life

The Role of Mission Statements

God's Glory and Our Joy

The Cultural Mandate & the Great Commission.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

(Genesis 1:28 ESV)

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

(Matthew 28:18–20 ESV)

Vocation, Geography, and Stewardship

- *Who are you?*
- *Where are you?*
- *What do you have?*

CAMPUS MINISTRY

- Jenny Boryla: Navigators, US Headquarters
- Austin & Kayla McLaughlin: Cru College Ministry, Knoxville, TN
- Campus Outreach: Colorado School of Mines, University of Denver, University of Northern Colorado
- Micah & Stephanie Dettmer: Cru, Denver, CO
- Tim Jordahl: Navigators, Denver, CO

CHURCH PLANTING

- Dan & Lisa Bartol: Pioneers Church Planting Ministry, Olomouc, Czech Republic
- Dan & Rachel Marotta: Redeemer Anglican Church, Richmond, VA
- Matt & Sharon Morginsky: Grace and Peace Church, Denver, CO
- Leonel Pacheco: Fuente de Redención, Mexico City, Mexico
- Jason & Loanne Procopio: Église Connexion, Paris, France
- Jeff & Lindsay Rodland: Redeemer Community Church, Centennial, CO

LOVE5280

- Alternatives Pregnancy Center
- Denver Institute for Faith & Work
- Hope in Our City
- Providence Network

LOVE5280 (CONT.)

- Save Our Youth
- Issachar Center for Urban Leadership
- Natalie Baddour: Youth For Christ Juvenile Justice Ministry, Denver, CO

OVERSEAS MINISTRY

- Chazz & Stephanie Wolfe: Discipleship and Counseling with World Venture, Cote d'Ivoire
- Lauren Gage: Counselor to Missionaries with Beyond, Southeast Asia
- Park Church Short- and Mid-term Trips
- Martin Black, 20schemes, Scotland

EVERYDAY MISSION

There is not square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is Lord over all, does not cry, "Mine!"
Abraham Kuyper

Family/Household

Workplace

Neighborhood

City

PRACTICE

Family/Household: Ask each person in your home to give you one way in which you can better serve him or her. Start putting into practice what they told you.

Workplace: Write down the names of two non-Christians with whom you work closely (this can include boss, fellow employees, those under you, clients, and/or customers). Have a spiritual conversation with both of them within the next two weeks.

Neighborhood: Invite neighbors into your home within the month. Try to pick someone/s with whom you haven't yet connected that well.

City: Pick a local ministry or institution you believe serves the common good. Commit to pray three times a week for the people there and the work they do. (Go the next step and ask about ways you can volunteer.)

EXERCISE

Take some time to honestly consider and answer these questions. Discuss it with your spouse or close friend(s). Allow yourself to be challenged.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

1. What has God given to you in this area?
2. How can you best use this/these for His glory and the good of others?

FINANCIAL & MATERIAL RESOURCES

1. What has God given to you in this area?
2. How can you best use this/these for His glory and the good of others?

RELATIONSHIPS (PAST AND PRESENT)

1. What has God given to you in this area?
2. How can you best use this/these for His glory and the good of others?

INFLUENCE & AUTHORITY

1. What has God given to you in this area?
2. How can you best use this/these for His glory and the good of others?

ABILITIES & SKILL SETS

1. What has God given to you in this area?
2. How can you best use this/these for His glory and the good of others?

PAIN & SUFFERING

1. What has God given to you in this area?
2. How can you best use this/these for His glory and the good of others?

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

- *Joy for the World* by Greg Forster
- *To Change the World* by James Davison Hunter
- *Let the Nations be Glad* by John Piper
- *Every Good Endeavor* by Tim Keller
- *When Helping Hurts* by Brian Fikkert and Stephen Corbett
- *Culture Making* by Andy Crouch
- *The Sacrament of Evangelism* by Jerry Root

EVERYDAY MISSION (BOOKMARKS AVAILABLE IN GALLERY):

Missional Living

The Gospel creates a people actively concerned and engaged with the welfare of the city. Love5280 exists to organize and strengthen our efforts to effectively serve the common good in the Denver Metro Area through sustained partnerships and opportunities.

As we pursue this aspect of our mission, we pray that God would give us renewed eyes to see our city in fresh ways, filled with the compassion of Jesus. We see a paradigm for everyday mission in the story of the Samaritan man who stopped to serve a tangible need that appeared right before him during the course of his normal day (Luke 10).

This resource exists to spur creativity around everyday missional engagement. Use these ideas or come up with your own to practically serve those in your workplace, neighborhood, and city as a regular rhythm of ordinary life.

Missional Living Challenges (February–May)

FEBRUARY

1. Shovel snow or scrape ice off of your neighbors' walks and/or cars.
2. Make a list of coworkers' birthdays and find away to show you care about each one on his or her birthday.

MARCH

1. Create a regular time to either invite coworkers over to your home or out for drinks.
2. Host a "Game Night" on Friday or Saturday with your neighbors, including those you don't know very well yet.

APRIL

1. Clean the gutters of your neighbor's house.
2. Who is someone at work who is often ignored or disliked? Ask if you can grab him or her a coffee or milkshake while you're out.

MAY

1. Mow or weed your neighbor's yard.
2. Host a "kick-off to summer" BBQ for your neighborhood, either in your backyard or as a block party.
3. Organize a "tasting tour" on your street around food and/or drink. Get creative!

Missional Living Challenges (September–December)

SEPTEMBER

1. Choose one local business to frequent this Fall. Go there regularly and get to know the employees. As you get to know their stories, begin to pray for them with more specific requests (hobbies, hometown, family, suffering, etc.).
2. Treat a coworker to coffee or lunch and get to know their background. Go a step further and ask someone that you may not know or even like very well.

OCTOBER

1. Invite a few neighbors over for dinner with your household (maybe a BBQ in the backyard).
2. Babysit a neighbor or coworker's child(ren) for free so they can enjoy a date night or an afternoon off to run errands.

NOVEMBER

1. Rake/dispose of a neighbor's leaves.
2. Invite a couple of neighbors over to your place to watch a Broncos game (or other team/game of choice).

DECEMBER

1. Bake cookies for two neighbors on your block or in your apartments.
2. Take time as a family, house, or Gospel Community to make winter care bags (food, socks, blanket, water, thermos, etc.) for the homeless and keep them in your car to hand out in the city.
3. Pay for a person in line behind you at the coffee shop or lunch spot.

WAYS TO LIVE ON EVERYDAY MISSION

Get Involved

1. Create a block/street email and phone contact list for safety
2. Attend your city council meetings and get to know what's going on in your city
3. Attend your local school board meetings to know what is going on in your local schools
4. Participate in the local festivals, parades, and celebrations of your city
5. Volunteer to coach a local kids sports team
6. Attend and support your local high school teams' sporting events
7. When you can, support local businesses and get to know the owners and workers

Engage with Others

1. Start a walking/running group in your neighborhood
2. Join a city softball, soccer, football, or basketball league
3. Encourage your kids to play in city sports leagues
4. Sit on the front porch and let your kids play in the front yard
5. Deliver fresh baked goods (bread, cookies, brownies, etc.) to your neighbors
6. Grow a garden and share extra produce with your neighbors
7. Organize a neighborhood food drive or coat drive in the winter

Foster Community

1. Invite your neighbors or coworkers over for dinner
2. Host a game night (yard games outside, or board games inside)
3. Host a sports game watching party
4. Organize a tasting tour or progressive dinner on your street
5. Host a weekly or monthly play date for other stay at home parents
6. Organize a backyard movie night for kids on your block
7. Start a weekly happy hour or cook out for the neighborhood

Serve Those Around You

1. Cook an extra meal/casserole and give it to a neighbor
2. Offer to mow someone's yard on your street who needs it
3. Pull your neighbors' trash bins back in when you notice they're out
4. Organize an effort for neighbors to help take care of elderly neighbors (yard work, household chores, assisting with trips to the grocery store)
5. Offer to babysit neighbors or coworkers' kids so they can have a date night
6. Mow a neighbor's lawn, rake their leaves, or shovel their sidewalks
7. Brush off a coworker's car on a snowy day (or even a stranger's car!)

Become a Regular

1. Go to the same hair stylist/barber and get to know them
2. Take your dog to your local dog park
3. Frequent your neighborhood pool/park
4. Go to the same coffee shop when you can
5. Frequent a local gym or recreation center; get to know the people there
6. Frequent a few restaurants; get to know the staff and regulars; tip generously
7. Take your kids to story time at your local library

Be Intentional

1. Learn the names of your neighbors and coworkers and their family members
2. Pray for your neighbors and coworkers... by name
3. Get to know your coworkers' favorite kind of coffee/treat and surprise them with it on occasion
4. Write thank you notes to local officials, police officers, firefighters, and EMTs
5. Pray for your local officials, police officers, firefighters, and EMTs
6. Pray for the individuals you have met in the businesses you frequent
7. Be open about your faith and create openings in conversations for people to ask questions

MISSIONS AREAS (HANDOUT AVAILABLE IN GALLERY)



Home

Who: Spouse, Children, Roommates, Guests

Ask: In what ways do you image Christ well in your home? How can you grow? How do you practice hospitality? Do people love Jesus more as a result of being in your home? Why?

Act: Develop a simple liturgy of "Read-Pray-Sing" in your home.

Pray: Father, you have offered us a true home in your family through the sacrifice your Son offered on the cross. Thank you. May I proclaim and demonstrate this same Gospel through my words and interactions in my home. Amen.



Neighborhood

Who: Next door, Your street, Your apartment complex, Local businesses

Ask: What are the names of your immediate neighbors? What else do you know about them? How often do you spend time with your neighbors? In what contexts?

Act: In what ways do you invest in the common good of your immediate vicinity/part of town? Invite neighbors into your home for a meal.

Pray: Jesus you drew close to me despite my being broken, annoying, and difficult, for while I was still sinner, you saved me. Thank you. May I put your sacrifice on display by caring for my neighbors and immediate community. Amen.



Workplace

Who: Manager, Managed, Coworkers, Clients, Customers, Suppliers

Ask: Would people around you say you do your work with excellence? What about humility? Why? How has your life at work caused Jesus to have a better reputation with those around you? In what ways can you grow in how you image God in work contexts?

Act: Identify two people at work and pray for their salvation every day for the next month.

Pray: Creator God, you showed forth your goodness, wisdom, and excellence through your work. Further, you have labored for my salvation in Christ. Thank you. May I similarly make use of the opportunities given me to glorify your name in my work. Amen.



City

Who: Alternatives Pregnancy Center, Denver Institute for Faith & Work, Hope in Our City, Providence Network

Ask: Are you familiar with the organizations with which we partner in the city?

Act: Have you considered giving of your time, energy, and/or money to further their work? Consider partnering on a regular basis with one of these organizations as a family or GC.

Pray: Spirit, you make your presence with us in kind, faithful, and sacrificial ways. Thank you. May these ministries make manifest the merciful presence of God to those they serve. And may we as a church be effective partners with them. Amen.



Nations

Who: Acts29 West, Dan & Lisa Bartol, Dan and Rachel Marotta, Austin and Kayla McLaughlin, Matt and Sharon Morginsky, Sam and Rebekah Perez, Jason and Loanne Procopio, Chazz and Stephanie Wolfe

Ask: Are you familiar with the missionaries with whom we partner throughout the world? Have you considered giving of your time, energy, and/or money to further their work?

Act: Consider partnering on a regular basis with one of these missionaries as a family or GC.

Pray: Lord, you are the true Lord of every tribe, tongue, nation, and people, beckoning your church to preach the Gospel to all the world. Thank you. May we listen to your call and support this work and perhaps go ourselves. Amen.

PARK CHURCH: OTHER RESOURCES

WILL YOU BE A HEALTHY CHURCH MEMBER?

Taken from the article "Are You a Healthy Church Member?" by Thabiti Anyabwile on Crossway:
<https://www.crossway.org/articles/are-you-a-healthy-church-member/>

A healthy church member is someone that, in one sense, shares all the sensibilities of a good pastor. They're going to have a concern for the spiritual growth of others, they're going to have a concern for the right teaching of God's Word, and they will have a concern for the church's witness to the community, for reaching their neighbors and friends. They'll do that as people who have a high view of what it means to be a member of a church.

When we talk about being members of a church, we're not at all borrowing from the idea of membership in a rotary club, Sam's Club, or bridge club. We're actually using a term that's distinctively Christian or Christological. It comes from the image that Paul uses of the church being the body of Christ, and we are members of that body. A healthy church member treasures that Biblical reality.

I would also argue that healthy church members commit themselves to a number of disciplines in order to grow.

They are expositional listeners. They read and listen to Scripture, look for the meaning of it, and apply it to their lives. They are Biblical theologians—not necessarily in the ivory tower with academic degrees, but endeavoring to understand how the Bible fits together from beginning to end and to understand how each part fits into that story of redemption. They care about genuine conversion, that people really are turning from sin, turning to Christ, growing in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord, and abounding in thanksgiving.

God intends for all of us to contribute to the mission of the local church and experience profound spiritual growth as a result.

They are people who support godly leadership and know how to humbly submit to it as Hebrews 13 calls us to. And that's going to be part of what leads them to embrace—as a grace from God—the Scriptures on discipline, both the formative discipline of listening to God's Word and also, from time to time, the sad and hopeful corrective discipline of addressing people who are unrepentant of their sin with the hopes of restoring them. In that way, a healthy member is going to have a pastoral or working theology of the local church, and going to eagerly play their part in it.

Questions on *Will You Be A Healthy Church Member?*

1. What are your thoughts on the *Will You Be A Healthy Church Member* article? What stuck out to you or challenged you?
2. Why do you want to pursue membership at Park Church?
3. Part of becoming a member of a local church is a commitment to serve within the church family. Where do you think you'll plug in at Park?

LEADERSHIP AT PARK

ELDERS/PASTORS

Park Church elders are responsible for maintaining sound doctrine and translating the mission of God for our particular local church, providing strategic oversight and shepherding care. The direction and initiatives of Park Church flow out of the leadership of these men.



Erick Frazier
Lay Elder
erick@parkchurchdenver.org



David Hubbard
Lay Elder
davidh@parkchurchdenver.org



Jason Jones
Pastor of Care & Counseling
jason@parkchurchdenver.org



Tony Julianelle
Lay Elder
tony@parkchurchdenver.org



Joel Limpic
Pastor of Liturgy & Arts
joel@parkchurchdenver.org



Gary McQuinn
Lead Pastor
gary@parkchurchdenver.org

STAFF

Park Church staff members carry out the daily work of the local church, according to the direction provided by the elders. While roles and responsibilities vary, the men and women of the staff work together as a team to lead and shepherd the people of Park Church.

Community & Formation



Neil Long
Director of Formation & Missions
neil@parkchurchdenver.org



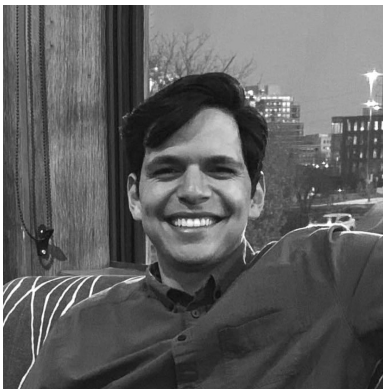
Kyle Nelson
Director of Women's Ministry & Interns
kyle@parkchurchdenver.org



Kaitlin Saenz
Director of Family Ministry
kaitlin@parkchurchdenver.org



Miguel Warren Jr.
Director of Community
miguel@parkchurchdenver.org



Josh De Leon
Assimilation Coordinator
josh@parkchurchdenver.org



Melanie Fenwick
Family Ministry Coordinator
melanie@parkchurchdenver.org



Zack Foster
Park Teens Coordinator
zack@parkchurchdenver.org

Operations



Christopher Frierson

Director of Strategic
Development

christopher@parkchurchdenver.org



Ryan Gannett

Director of Operations

ryang@parkchurchdenver.org



Todd Bright

Director of Finances

todd@parkchurchdenver.org



Randi Cleaver

Pastoral Assistant

randi@parkchurchdenver.org



Taylor Derrick

Bookkeeper

taylor@parkchurchdenver.org



Margie Keith

Office Manager

taylor@parkchurchdenver.org



Christa Parry

Pastoral Assistant

christa@parkchurchdenver.org



John Petterson

Facilities & Liturgy
Coordinator

john@parkchurchdenver.org



JD Raab

Communication Coordinator

jd@parkchurchdenver.org

Campus Outreach



Chuck McElroy

Director:
Campus Outreach Denver
chuck.mcelroy@campusoutreach.org



David Maselli

Campus Director:
University of Denver
david.maselli@campusoutreach.org



Dirk Tanner

Campus Director:
Colorado School of Mines
dirk.tanner@campusoutreach.org



Ryan Williams

Resource Director
ryan.williams@campusoutreach.org



Jennifer Greenhaw

Campus Staff:
University of Denver
jennifer.greenhaw@campusoutreach.org



Chase Megyeri

Campus Staff:
University of Denver
chase.megyeri@campusoutreach.org

FOR YOUR INBOX

- *Institute for Faith Work and Economics* eNewsletter • ***tifwe.org***
- *Slice of Infinity* eNewseletter from Ravi Zacharias International Ministries • ***rzim.org/a-slice-of-infinity***

PODCASTS

- Park Church
- The Gospel Coalition
- The Briefing
- Culture Matters

WEBSITES

- Park Renew • ***parkrenew.org***
- Love5280 • ***love5280.org***
- The Gospel Coalition • ***thegospelcoalition.org***
- Stand to Reason • ***str.org***
- BiblicalTraining • ***biblicaltraining.org***
- Ligonier Ministries • ***ligonier.org***
- Desiring God • ***desiringgod.org***

STUDY RESOURCES

- ESV Study Bible
- Gospel Transformation Bible

WHO WE ARE

We are a community making disciples of Jesus for the glory of God and the joy of all people. In the Gospel we meet a God who has acted decisively in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to redeem and restore people to Himself. Jesus lives the life we could not live, dies the death that we deserve to die, and is raised from the dead and revealed to be the King over all creation. This was no arbitrary event in history; it is the decisive work of God through which He is redeeming everything that is broken in our world.

OUR VISION FOR MINISTRY

WE BELIEVE THE GOSPEL IS CENTRAL TO EVERYTHING.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God..." (Romans 1:16–17). We believe the Gospel to be the most wonderful and powerful news in the world. We believe the Gospel to be not merely our way into salvation, but the defining mark of the whole of the Christian life. The Gospel tells the whole story of Biblical history and how God has acted decisively in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to redeem the world for His glory. Preaching the Gospel means showing how Jesus is the fulfillment and goal of every Biblical text.

The Gospel is the power of God. When it is declared compellingly from the Scriptures, amazing things happen. Lives are changed, hardened idolatries flee the human heart, families are restored, neighborhoods are renewed, and whole cities can be changed. So we will preach the Gospel. We will counsel with the Gospel. We will celebrate the Gospel in song. We will remember the Gospel with bread and cup. We will learn to live in light of the Gospel in every sphere of life. From our personal lives, to our homes, to our neighborhoods, to the vocations we take in the city. The Gospel not only saves us, it changes us, and its goal is not merely a saved people, but a redeemed creation (Romans 8). It is through this Gospel that the sovereign Lord accomplishes His great work of salvation. Therefore the Gospel will be central to all that we do as a people. Our desire is to see a people whose personal lives, families, and vocations are marked by the work of Christ on the Cross.

WE PRACTICE HOSPITALITY TOWARDS OUTSIDERS AND LIVE PUBLICLY IN THE MIDST OF THE CITY.

"Do not neglect to show hospitality towards strangers..." (Hebrews 13:2) We believe that the greatest evangelistic strategy in the world is the combination of a deep faith in the message of the Gospel coupled with the practice of loving hospitality towards those who live around us. It is our prayer that the homes of Park Church's people will be filled with the aroma of coffee and food and filled with our neighbors and co-workers. The lines between those inside the church and those outside will be intentionally blurred as we avoid the deadly temptation to lock our lives away. We will both practice hospitality and engage in the public life of our neighborhoods.

WE SEE THE CHURCH AS THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

"...you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth." (1 Timothy 3:15) The Church is to be marked by a deep love for her Lord, and a deep love for one another. This isn't a mere sentimentality but rather a love rooted in the Gospel itself that knits us together as brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers. Just as the Gospel reconciles believers to God, so it also calls us to be reconciled to one another. And it calls us to live with a deep unity that must find tangible expression in our day to day lives. This will involve not only serving one another in times of need, but also learning, in a culture that worships autonomy, to share our very lives with one another. So we will seek to practice this love by integrating our lives with one another. We will share meals, help raise one another's children, and bear one another's burdens.

WE EMPHASIZE EVERYDAY CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP.

"...that we may live a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior..." (1 Timothy 2:2-3). The everyday language of the Bible in describing the life lived in line with the Gospel is sometimes shockingly mundane. The glorious weight of the Gospel is embodied in everyday lives. Lives spent at work and play. A father taking care of his family, a mother loving her children, and children respecting their parents. Paul describes it as a peaceful and quiet life. It involves quietly and patiently enduring hardship and suffering, as well as deep contentment in all circumstances. Contentment rooted in the knowledge of Christ's great work on our behalf. Becoming a disciple of Jesus has far too often been held up as something beyond the mundane, when it is precisely in the mundane that the Gospel changes everything. It is our desire to see all of our lives transformed by the Gospel.

WE LOVE THE CITY AND SEEK ITS WELFARE.

"...seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:1-9). The cities of the United States have become one of the most neglected mission fields in the world. While the world is becoming increasingly urban, Christians have largely avoided the urban heart of U.S. cities for numerous reasons. We believe God has called us into the heart of the city to work for its good and to love it well. We believe that a church committed to the Gospel can be more effective than any social program imaginable. We will buy homes, take jobs, and invest our lives in the good of the city. Working professionally not simply for our own profit, but for the good of those around us, raising families in neighborhoods with a visible concern for all those who live there, and seeking earnestly to see the Gospel touch every part of life in the city.

What questions do you have about the “Who We Are” statement?

If you affirm this document, please initial here: _____

DOCTRINE

We embrace a fundamentally evangelical and reformed identity and are thus in agreement with historic confessions such as the Nicene Creed, the Second London Baptist Confession, and the Heidelberg Catechism (while taking exception to the practice of infant baptism), as well as the affirmations and denials set forth by Together for the Gospel.

Our confessional statement is adapted from the foundational documents of The Gospel Coalition.

1. THE TRIUNE GOD

(Deuteronomy 6:4–7; Isaiah 40:26; Matthew 10:29–30; Colossians 1:16–17; Job 37:6–13; Psalm 147:15–18; Mark 4:39–41; Psalm 33:10–11; Amos 3:6; Lamentations 3:37–38; Proverbs 21:1; Proverbs 16:33)

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in His love and in His holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, He perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about His eternal good purposes to redeem a people for Himself and restore His fallen creation, to the praise of His glorious grace.

2. REVELATION

(Deuteronomy 6:4–7; Psalm 12:6; Psalm 119; Matthew 24:35; Matthew 22:29; 1 Corinthians 2:12–16; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:19–21)

God has graciously disclosed His existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed Himself to fallen human beings in the person of His Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by His Spirit has graciously disclosed Himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of His saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of His will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the Gospel.

3. CREATION OF HUMANITY

(Genesis 1–3; Ephesians 5:15–33; 1 Peter 3:1–7; Ephesians 4:25–32; Colossians 3:18–4:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12)

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in His own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God Himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and

are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and His church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive leadership role within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

4. THE FALL

(Romans 5:1–19; Romans 1:18–3:20; Ephesians 2:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:21; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:7–8; Romans 8:20)

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and all his progeny—by falling into sin through Satan's temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God's own gracious intervention. This alienation has not been limited to the realm of humanity, but has infected the creation itself, as it too has been subjected to futility. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

5. THE PLAN OF GOD

(Romans 8:28–30; Ephesians 1:3–14; Isaiah 46:9–10; Romans 9:11–18; John 10:25–29; John 3:16)

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that He will one day glorify them—all to the praise of His glorious grace. It is, therefore, all of God's gracious and sovereign action to foreknow, predestine, call, justify, and glorify His people by His Spirit, even giving saving faith to those whom He has chosen. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set His saving love on those He has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer. And it may truly be said, that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

6. THE GOSPEL

(1 Corinthians 15:1–4; 1 Corinthians 2:1–5; Romans 1:15–17; Ephesians 2:3–6; Mark 1:14–15)

We believe that the Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God's very wisdom. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is Christological, centering on the cross and resurrection: the Gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if His death and resurrection are not

central (the message is “Christ died for our sins . . . [and] was raised”). This good news is Biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

7. THE REDEMPTION OF CHRIST

(Isaiah 53; Romans 3:21–26; John 1:1–18; Philippians 2:5–11; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18; John 1:29; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; Colossians 2:13–14; Revelation 5)

We believe that, moved by love for and in obedience to His Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed His heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God’s sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross He canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By His resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by His Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all His people; by His ascension He has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, no human being can ever boast before him—Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

8. THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS

(Romans 4:3–8; Romans 3:26; Galatians 2:16–17; Titus 3:5–7; Philippians 3:8–9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:1; Psalm 51)

We believe that Christ, by His obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By His sacrifice, He bore in our stead the punishment due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God’s justice on our behalf. By His perfect obedience He satisfied the just demands of God on our behalf, since by faith alone that perfect obedience is credited to all who trust in Christ alone for their acceptance with God. Inasmuch as Christ was given by the Father for us, and His obedience and punishment were accepted in place of our own, freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. We believe that a zeal for personal and public obedience flows from this free justification.

9. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Galatians 3:5; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 5:18-21; Ephesians 1:11-14 1 Corinthians 12-14; John 16:4-15; Romans 12; Joel 2:28-32; Numbers 11:29)

We believe that this salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to His people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as the “other” Paraclete, is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by His powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, baptizing them into union with the Lord Jesus, such that they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the Spirit’s agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God’s family; they participate in the divine nature and receive His sovereignly distributed gifts. The Holy Spirit is Himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living, service, and witness. We believe that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the New Testament are still at work today and are essential for effective ministry and mission. They are to be pursued earnestly, exercised lovingly and in an orderly manner, in accordance with the teachings of Scripture, for the edification and equipping of the body for ministry.

10. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

(Isaiah 58:6-14; Mark 1:15; Matthew 18; Luke 17:20-22; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:19-21; Revelation 12:10)

We believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it: rather, we are to do good to the city, for all the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God’s kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God. The kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God’s sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan’s dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith in the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

11. GOD’S NEW PEOPLE

(Isaiah 56:1-8; Isaiah 54:1-3; Galatians 3-4; 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 4:1-16; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:4-12; 1 John 3:11-24)

We believe that God’s new covenant people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each “local church” is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of His eye, graven on His hands, and He has pledged Himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her Gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and,

above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another and for the world. Crucially, this Gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: He has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in Himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self-focus. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

12. BAPTISM AND THE EUCHARIST

(Matthew 28:18–20; 1 Peter 3:21–22; Colossians 2:11–15; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–23; 1 Corinthians 11:23–27)

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of His return and of the consummation of all things.

13. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

(Isaiah 65:17–25; Isaiah 66:18–24; Revelation 21; Romans 8:18–25; Matthew 10:28; 2 Peter 2:4–22; Hebrews 10:26–31)

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with His holy angels, when He will exercise His role as final Judge, and His kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord Himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and His people will be enthralled by the immediacy of His ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of His glorious grace.

What questions do you have about the “Doctrine” statement?

If you affirm this document, please initial here: _____

THEOLOGICAL VISION

Our confessional statement is adapted from the foundational documents of The Gospel Coalition. This is not an outline of our doctrinal beliefs (see Doctrine), but a statement of how we intend to discharge Christian ministry and interact with our culture in Biblical and theological faithfulness.

1. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO THE CULTURAL CRISIS OF TRUTH?

(The epistemological issue)

For several hundred years, since the dawning of the Enlightenment, it was widely agreed that truth—expressed in words that substantially correspond to reality—does indeed exist and can be known. Unaided human reason, it was thought, is able to know truth objectively. More recently, postmodernism has critiqued this set of assumptions, contending that we are not in fact objective in our pursuit of knowledge, but rather interpret information through our personal experiences, self-interests, emotions, cultural prejudices, language limitations, and relational communities. The claim to objectivity is arrogant, postmodernism tells us, and inevitably leads to conflicts between communities with differing opinions as to where the truth lies. Such arrogance, they say explains, in part, many of the injustices and wars of the modern era. Yet postmodernism's response is dangerous in another way: its most strident voices insist that claims to objective truth be replaced by a more humbly "tolerant" and inclusively diverse subjective pluralism—a pluralism often mired in a swamp that cannot allow any firm ground for "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." Such a stance has no place for truth that corresponds to reality, but merely an array of subjectively shaped truths. How shall we respond to this cultural crisis of truth?

A. WE AFFIRM THAT TRUTH IS CORRESPONDENCE TO REALITY.

We believe the Holy Spirit who inspired the words of the apostles and prophets also indwells us so that we who have been made in the image of God can receive and understand the words of Scripture revealed by God, and grasp that Scripture's truths correspond to reality. The statements of Scripture are true, precisely because they are God's statements, and they correspond to reality even though our knowledge of those truths (and even our ability to verify them to others) is always necessarily incomplete. The Enlightenment belief in thoroughly objective knowledge made an idol out of unaided human reason. But to deny the possibility of purely objective knowledge does not mean the loss of truth that corresponds to objective reality, even if we can never know such truth without an element of subjectivity.

B. WE AFFIRM THAT TRUTH IS CONVEYED BY SCRIPTURE.

We believe that Scripture is pervasively propositional and that all statements of Scripture are completely true and authoritative. But the truth of Scripture cannot be exhausted in a series of propositions. It exists in the genres of narrative, metaphor, and poetry which are not exhaustively

distillable into doctrinal propositions, yet they convey God's will and mind to us so as to change us into His likeness.

C. WE AFFIRM THAT TRUTH IS CORRESPONDENCE OF LIFE TO GOD.

Truth is not only a theoretical correspondence but also a covenantal relationship. The Biblical revelation is not just to be known, but to be lived (Deut 29:29). The purpose of the Bible is to produce wisdom in us—a life wholly submitted to God's reality. Truth, then, is correspondence between our entire lives and God's heart, words and actions, through the mediation of the Word and Spirit. To eliminate the propositional nature of Biblical truth seriously weakens our ability to hold, defend, and explain the Gospel. But to speak of truth only as propositions weakens our appreciation of the incarnate Son as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the communicative power of narrative and story, and the importance of truth as living truly in correspondence to God.

HOW THIS VISION OF TRUTH SHAPES US.

1. We adopt a "chastened" correspondence-theory of truth that is less triumphalistic than that of some in the older evangelicalism. But we also reject a view of truth that sees truth as nothing more than the internally coherent language of a particular faith-community. So we maintain, with what we hope is appropriate humility, the principle of sola Scriptura.
2. Though truth is propositional, it is not only something to be believed, but also to be received in worship and practiced in wisdom. This balance shapes our understanding of discipleship and preaching. We want to encourage a passion for sound doctrine, but we know that Christian growth is not simply cognitive information transfer. Christian growth occurs only when the whole life is shaped by Christian practices in community—including prayer, baptism, the Lord's Supper, fellowship, and the public ministry of the Word.
3. Our theoretical knowledge of God's truth is only partial even when accurate, but we nevertheless can have certainty that what the Word tells us is true (Luke 1:4). It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we receive the words of the Gospel in full assurance and conviction (1 Thess 1:5).

2. HOW SHOULD WE READ THE BIBLE?

(The hermeneutical issue)

A. READING "ALONG" THE WHOLE BIBLE.

To read along the whole Bible is to discern the single basic plot-line of the Bible as God's story of redemption (e.g., Luke 24:44) as well as the themes of the Bible (e.g., covenant, kingship, temple) that run through every stage of history and every part of the canon, climaxing in Jesus Christ. In this perspective, the Gospel appears as creation, fall, redemption, restoration. It brings out the purpose of salvation, namely, a renewed creation. As we confess in CS-(1), [God] providentially brings about His

eternal good purposes to redeem a people for Himself and restore His fallen creation, to the praise of His glorious grace.

B. READING “ACROSS” THE WHOLE BIBLE.

To read across the whole Bible is to collect its declarations, summons, promises, and truth-claims into categories of thought (e.g., theology, Christology, eschatology) and arrive at a coherent understanding of what it teaches summarily (e.g., Luke 24:46-47). In this perspective, the Gospel appears as God, sin, Christ, faith. It brings out the means of salvation, namely the substitutionary work of Christ and our responsibility to embrace it by faith. As we confess in CS-(7), Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

HOW THIS READING OF THE BIBLE SHAPES US.

1. Many today (but not all) who major in the first of these two ways of reading the Bible—that is, reading along the whole Bible—dwell on the more corporate aspects of sin and salvation. The cross is seen mainly as an example of sacrificial service and a defeat of worldly powers rather than substitution and propitiation for our sins. Ironically, this approach can be very legalistic. Instead of calling people to individual conversion through a message of grace, people are called to join the Christian community and kingdom program of what God is doing to liberate the world. The emphasis is on Christianity as a way of life to the loss of a blood-bought status in Christ received through personal faith. In this imbalance there is little emphasis on vigorous evangelism and apologetics, on expository preaching, and on the marks and importance of conversion/the new birth.
2. On the other hand, the older evangelicalism (though not all of it) tended to read across the Bible. As a result it was more individualistic, centering almost completely on personal conversion and safe passage to heaven. Also, its preaching, though expository, was sometimes moralistic and did not emphasize how all Biblical themes climax in Christ and His work. In this imbalance there is little or no emphasis on the importance of the work of justice and mercy for the poor and the oppressed, and on cultural production that glorifies God in the arts, business, etc.
3. We do not believe that in best practice these two ways of reading the Bible are at all contradictory, even though today, many pit them against each other. We believe that on the contrary the two, at their best, are integral for grasping the meaning of the Biblical Gospel. The Gospel is the declaration that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has come to reconcile individuals by His grace and renew the whole world by and for His glory.

3. HOW SHOULD WE RELATE TO THE CULTURE AROUND US?

(The contextualization issue)

A. BY BEING A COUNTER-CULTURE.

We want to be a church that not only gives support to individual Christians in their personal walks with God, but one that also shapes them into the alternative human society God creates by His Word and Spirit. (See below, point 5c.)

B. FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

It is not enough that the church should counter the values of the dominant culture. We must be a counter-culture for the common good. We want to be radically distinct from the culture around us and yet, out of that distinct identity, we should sacrificially serve neighbors and even enemies, working for the flourishing of people, both here and now, and in eternity. We therefore do not see our corporate worship services as the primary connecting point with those outside. Rather, we expect to meet our neighbors as we work for their peace, security, and well-being, loving them in word and deed. If we do this we will be “salt” and “light” in the world (sustaining and improving living conditions, showing the world the glory of God by our patterns of living; Matt 5:13-16). As the Jewish exiles were called to love and work for the shalom of Babylon (Jer 29:7), Christians too are God’s people “in exile” (1 Peter 1:1; James 1:1). The citizens of God’s city should be the best possible citizens of their earthly city (Jer 29:4-7). We are neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic about our cultural influence, for we know that, as we walk in the steps of the One who laid down His life for His opponents, we will receive persecution even while having social impact (1 Peter 2:12).

HOW THIS RELATIONSHIP TO CULTURE SHAPES US.

4. We believe that every expression of Christianity is necessarily and rightly contextualized, to some degree, to particular human culture; there is no such thing as a universal a-historical expression of Christianity. But we never want to be so affected by our culture that we compromise Gospel truths. How then do we keep our balance?
5. The answer is that we cannot “contextualize” the Gospel in the abstract, as a thought experiment. If a church seeks to be a counter-culture for people’s temporal and eternal good, it will guard itself against both the legalism that can accompany undue cultural withdrawal and the compromise that comes with over-adaptation. If we seek service rather than power, we may have significant cultural impact. But if we seek direct power and social control, we will, ironically, be assimilated into the very idolatries of wealth, status, and power we seek to change.
6. The Gospel itself holds the key to appropriate contextualization. If we over-contextualize, it suggests that we want too much the approval of the receiving culture. This betrays a lack of confidence in the Gospel. If we under-contextualize, it suggests that we want the trappings of our

own sub-culture too much. This betrays a lack of Gospel humility and a lack of love for our neighbor.

4. IN WHAT WAYS IS THE GOSPEL UNIQUE?

This Gospel fills Christians with humility and hope, meekness and boldness, in a unique way. The Biblical Gospel differs markedly from traditional religions as well as from secularism. Religions operate on the principle: "I obey, therefore I am accepted," but the Gospel principle is: "I am accepted through Christ, therefore I obey." So the Gospel differs from both irreligion and religion. You can seek to be your own "lord and savior" by breaking the law of God, but you can also do so by keeping the law in order to earn your salvation.

Irreligion and secularism tend to inflate self-encouraging, uncritical, "self-esteem"; religion and moralism crush people under guilt from ethical standards that are impossible to maintain. The Gospel, however, humbles and affirms us at the same time, since, in Christ, each of us is simultaneously just, and a sinner still. At the same time, we are more flawed and sinful than we ever dared believe, yet we are more loved and accepted than we ever dared hope.

Secularism tends to make people selfish and individualistic. Religion and morality in general tend to make people tribal and self-righteous toward other groups (since their salvation has, they think, been earned by their achievement). But the Gospel of grace, centered on a man dying for us while we were His enemies, removes self-righteousness and selfishness and turns its members to serve others both for the temporal flourishing of all people, especially the poor, and for their salvation. It moves us to serve others irrespective of their merits, just as Christ served us (Mark 10:45).

Secularism and religion conform people to behavioral norms through fear (of consequences) and pride (a desire for self-aggrandizement). The Gospel moves people to holiness and service out of grateful joy for grace, and out of love of the glory of God for who He is in himself.

5. WHAT IS GOSPEL-CENTERED MINISTRY?

It is characterized by:

A. EMPOWERED CORPORATE WORSHIP.

The Gospel changes our relationship with God from one of hostility or slavish compliance to one of intimacy and joy. The core dynamic of Gospel-centered ministry is therefore worship and fervent prayer. In corporate worship God's people receive a special life-transforming sight of the worth and beauty of God, and then give back to God suitable expressions of His worth. At the heart of corporate worship is the ministry of the Word. Preaching should be expository (explaining the text of Scripture) and Christ-centered (expounding all Biblical themes as climaxing in Christ and His work of salvation). Its ultimate goal, however, is not simply to teach but to lead the hearers to worship, individual and corporate, that strengthens their inner being to do the will of God.

B. EVANGELISTIC EFFECTIVENESS.

Because the Gospel (unlike religious moralism) produces people who do not disdain those who disagree with them, a truly Gospel-centered church should be filled with members who winsomely address people's hopes and aspirations with Christ and His saving work. We have a vision for a church that sees conversions of rich and poor, highly educated and less educated, men and women, old and young, married and single, and all races. We hope to draw highly secular and postmodern people, as well as reaching religious and traditional people. Because of the attractiveness of its community and the humility of its people, a Gospel-centered church should find people in its midst who are exploring and trying to understand Christianity. It must welcome them in hundreds of ways. It will do little to make them "comfortable" but will do much to make its message understandable. In addition to all this, Gospel-centered churches will have a bias toward church planting as one of the most effective means of evangelism there is.

C. COUNTER-CULTURAL COMMUNITY.

Because the Gospel removes both fear and pride, people should get along inside the church who could never get along outside. Because it points us to a man who died for His enemies, the Gospel creates relationships of service rather than of selfishness. Because the Gospel calls us to holiness, the people of God live in loving bonds of mutual accountability and discipline. Thus the Gospel creates a human community radically different from any society around it.

Regarding sex, the church should avoid both the secular society's idolization of sex and traditional society's fear of it. It is a community which so loves and cares practically for its members that Biblical chastity makes sense. It teaches its members to conform their bodily being to the shape of the Gospel—abstinence outside of heterosexual marriage and fidelity and joy within.

Regarding the family, the church should affirm the goodness of marriage between a man and a woman, calling them to serve God by reflecting His covenant love in life-long loyalty, and by teaching His ways to their children. But it also affirms the goodness of serving Christ as singles, whether for a time or for a life. The church should surround all persons suffering from the fallenness of our human sexuality with a compassionate community and family.

Regarding money, the church's members should engage in radical economic sharing with one another—so "there are no needy among them" (Acts 4:34). Such sharing also promotes a radically generous commitment of time, money, relationships, and living space to social justice and the needs of the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant, and the economically and physically weak.

Regarding power, it is visibly committed to power-sharing and relationship-building among races, classes, and generations that are alienated outside of the Body of Christ. The practical evidence of this is that our local churches increasingly welcome and embrace people of all races and cultures. Each church should seek to reflect the diversity of its local geographical community, both in the congregation at large and in its leadership.

D. THE INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND WORK.

The good news of the Bible is not only individual forgiveness but the renewal of the whole creation. God put humanity in the garden to cultivate the material world for His own glory and for the flourishing of nature and the human community. The Spirit of God not only converts individuals (e.g., John 16:8) but also renews and cultivates the face of the earth (e.g., Gen 1:2; Psalm 104:30). Therefore Christians glorify God not only through the ministry of the Word, but also through their vocations of agriculture, art, business, government, scholarship—all for God's glory and the furtherance of the public good. Many Christians have learned to seal off their faith-beliefs from the way they work in their vocation. The Gospel is seen as a means of finding individual peace and not as the foundation of a worldview—a comprehensive interpretation of reality affecting all that we do. But we have a vision for a church that equips its people to think out the implications of the Gospel on how we do carpentry, plumbing, data-entry, nursing, art, business, government, journalism, entertainment, and scholarship. Such a church will not only support Christians' engagement with culture, but will also help them work with distinctiveness, excellence, and accountability in their trades and professions. Developing humane yet creative and excellent business environments out of our understanding of the Gospel is part of the work of bringing a measure of healing to God's creation in the power of the Spirit. Bringing Christian joy, hope, and truth to embodiment in the arts is also part of this work. We do all of this because the Gospel of God leads us to it, even while we recognize that the ultimate restoration of all things awaits the personal and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ (CS-[13]).

E. THE DOING OF JUSTICE AND MERCY.

God created both soul and body, and the resurrection of Jesus shows that He is going to redeem both the spiritual and the material. Therefore God is concerned not only for the salvation of souls but also for the relief of poverty, hunger, and injustice. The Gospel opens our eyes to the fact that all our wealth (even wealth for which we worked hard) is ultimately an unmerited gift from God. Therefore the person who does not generously give away his or her wealth to others is not merely lacking in compassion, but is unjust. Christ wins our salvation through losing, achieves power through weakness and service, and comes to wealth through giving all away. Those who receive His salvation are not the strong and accomplished but those who admit they are weak and lost. We cannot look at the poor and the oppressed and callously call them to pull themselves out of their own difficulty. Jesus did not treat us that way. The Gospel replaces superiority toward the poor with mercy and compassion. Christian churches must work for justice and peace in their neighborhoods through service even as they call individuals to conversion and the new birth. We must work for the eternal and common good and show our neighbors we love them sacrificially whether they believe as we do or not. Indifference to the poor and disadvantaged means there has not been a true grasp of our salvation by sheer grace.

CONCLUSION

The ministry we have outlined is relatively rare. There are many seeker-driven churches that help many people find Christ. There are many churches seeking to engage the culture through political activism. There is a fast-growing charismatic movement with emphasis on glorious, passionate, corporate worship. There are many congregations with strong concern for doctrinal rigor and purity and who work very hard to keep themselves separate from the world. There are many churches with a radical commitment to the poor and marginalized. We do not, however, see enough individual churches that embody the full, integrative Gospel balance we have outlined here. And while, in God's grace, there is an encouraging number of bright spots in the church, we see no broad movement yet of this Gospel-centered ministry. We believe such a balance will produce churches with winsome and theologically substantial preaching, dynamic evangelism and apologetics, and church growth and church planting. They will emphasize repentance, personal renewal, and holiness of life. At the same time, and in the same congregations, there will be engagement with the social structures of ordinary people, and cultural engagement with art, business, scholarship, and government. There will be calls for radical Christian community in which all members share wealth and resources and make room for the poor and the marginalized. These priorities will all be combined and will mutually strengthen one another in each local church.

What could lead to a growing movement of Gospel-centered churches? The ultimate answer is that God must, for His own glory, send revival in response to the fervent, extraordinary, prevailing prayer of His people. But we believe there are also penultimate steps to take. There is great hope if we can unite on the nature of truth, how best to read the Bible, on our relationship to culture, on the content of the Gospel, and on the nature of Gospel-centered ministry. We believe that such commitments will drive us afresh toward Scripture, toward the Christ of Scripture, toward the Gospel of Christ, and we will begin to grow in our ability, by God's grace, as churches, to "act in line with the truth of the Gospel" (Gal 2:14). We are ashamed of our sins and failures, grateful beyond measure for forgiveness, and eager to see afresh the glory of God and embody conformity to His Son.

What questions do you have about the “Theological Vision” statement?

If you affirm this document, please initial here: _____

PARK CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Park Church exists to make disciples of Jesus for the glory of God and the joy of all people.

WHAT IS A MEMBERSHIP COVENANT AND WHY DO WE ASK YOU TO SIGN IT?

When God calls an individual and gives the gift of faith, that person places personal trust in Him for salvation and he or she becomes part of God's spiritual family, His unified people that spans geography and time; this is called the universal church. The pattern in the New Testament is the universal church manifested in particularized contexts, made up of believers in that area; this is called the local church. Commitment to and accountability within a localized community of believers and under the care of its leaders is the Biblically assumed model for our ongoing growth as disciples of Jesus (Acts 2:42–47; Heb 10:23–25).

This Membership Covenant articulates what Park Church elders commit to be and do in relationship to the members of this church so that it will “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:15). It also spells out what members of Park commit to be and do as people who trust Jesus as Savior, submit to Him as Lord, and seek to faithfully communicate and display the truth of Christ to one another and to the world. Signing this document commits both elder to member and member to body of believers in the pursuit of God's mission.

COVENANT COMMITMENTS OF PARK CHURCH ELDERS TO MEMBERS

The elders of a local church are charged by God to faithfully shepherd the church through four primary responsibilities: **know** the people under their pastoral care; **feed** them with the truth of God; **lead** them in accordance with God's will; and **protect** them from spiritual threats, both internal and external. Park Church elders have covenanted by the power of the Holy Spirit to seek to diligently and humbly exercise oversight according to the following four responsibilities:

KNOW THE PEOPLE UNDER PASTORAL CARE

1. Seeking to be pastorally accessible to and available for members of Park Church. (John 10:11–15; 1 Pet 5:1–3)
2. Praying faithfully for the specific needs and requests that arise in the church community. (Acts 2:42; 6:4; Jas 5:13–15)

FEED THEM WITH THE TRUTH OF GOD

1. Providing teaching and counsel that comes from the whole of Scripture. (Acts 20:27–28; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 4:1–5; Titus 2:1)
2. Caring for the church and seeking her growth in grace, truth, and love. (Matt 28:16–20; Eph 4:15–16; Col 1:28; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1–4)
3. Equipping the members of the church for the work of ministry. (Eph 4:11–16)

LEAD THEM IN ACCORDANCE TO GOD’S WILL

1. Prayerfully seeking God’s will for our church community and stewarding her resources to the best of our ability based on studying Scripture, following the Spirit, and—when necessary—outside counsel. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1–4)
2. Setting an example and joining other members in fulfilling the Covenant Commitments of Members listed below. (Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7–8; 1 Pet 5:3)

PROTECT THEM FROM SPIRITUAL THREATS, BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

1. Appointing leaders in the church according to the criteria assigned in Scripture. (1 Tim 3:1–3; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet 5:1–4)
2. Guarding against false teachers and teachings on behalf of the church. (Matt 7:15; Acts 20:28–31; 1 Tim 1:3–7; 1 John 4:1)
3. Working with other members and leaders in the church to lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the protection of the church as a whole. (Matt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5; Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19–20)

COVENANT COMMITMENTS OF MEMBERS TO PARK CHURCH

A Christian disciple is someone who has been made alive by the God of grace and is learning to follow Jesus in rhythms of worship, community, and mission. The local church is the primary context in which God has designed us to grow as disciples of Jesus. Through the local church we are to grow in grace—setting our hope fully on God’s grace for us in Christ and progressively learning to follow Jesus in submission to Him as our Savior and Lord. Because of God’s grace and by the power of the Holy Spirit, Park Church Members seek to:

FOLLOW JESUS IN RHYTHMS OF GOSPEL-CENTERED WORSHIP

1. Participating in the life of Park Church by weekly attending Park Church corporate worship as my normative practice. (Acts 2:42–47; Heb 10:23–25; Titus 3:14)
2. Submitting to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues. (Ps 119; 2 Tim 3:14–17; 2 Pet 1:19–21)

3. Pursuing the Lord Jesus Christ through investing regular time in Bible reading, prayer, and other spiritual disciplines. (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor 9:24–27; Eph 5:1–21; 1 Thess 5:12–22)
4. Participating in the sacraments that Jesus gave to His church: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. (Matt 26:26–29; John 6:53–58; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:1–4)
5. Avoiding divisiveness and teaching in contradiction to the full Park Church Doctrinal Statement. (Eph 4:3–6; Heb 13:17–19)

FOLLOW JESUS IN RHYTHMS OF GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY

1. Living in consistent Biblical community, investing in the rhythms of the community and sacrificing for the good of the church. (Acts 2:42–47; Heb 10:23–25; Titus 3:14)
2. Pursuing purity and holiness in my personal life and in all relationships, whether inside or outside the church family, by:
 - a) Seeking to be above reproach—with all respect, humility, grace, and kindness—in every relationship. (Matt 19:1–12; Mark 10:1–12; Luke 16:18; Rom 13:11–14; 1 Cor 6:15–20; 7:10–11, 10:8; Eph 5:3; 1 Thess 4:1–8; Heb 13:4)
 - b) Refraining from activities that the Scriptures deem sinful and/or foolish. (Rom 1:28–32; 12:1–2; 13:13; 14:14–23; Gal 5:16–26; Eph 5:1–21; Jas 3:3–18).
 - c) Taking seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, by it seeking the glory of God and the good of others (Gen 1:26–31; 1 Cor 8:1–13; Phil 2:1–11)
3. Submitting to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by receiving the righteous and loving confrontation when approached Biblically by fellow believers and by following the Biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is clearly evident in another. (Ps 141:5; Matt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5:9–13; Heb 12:5–11)
4. Seeking the unity of the church, speaking and interacting in ways that build up the body, and will avoid disunity through speech and conduct. (Ps 133:1; John 17:20–26; 1 Cor 1:10–17; Eph 4:1–16)
5. Serving the church consistently with my time, gifts, and energy. (Rom 12:3–8; 1 Cor 12:1–11; Eph 4:11–16)
6. Stewarding my finances and resources for the purpose of spending, investing, and giving in ways that are God-honoring and sacrificial, including faithful financial giving to support the mission of Park Church (Matt 6:19–34; 2 Cor 8:1–15; 1 Tim 6:6–10, 17–19; Gen 14:20; 28:22; Deut 14:22–24; Mal 3:6–12; Matt 23:23; Heb 7:1, 4–10)

FOLLOW JESUS IN RHYTHMS OF GOSPEL-CENTERED MISSION

7. Participating in the ongoing mission of Park Church to seek the spiritual, cultural, and social renewal of the people and places to which God has called me. (Jer 29:1–9; Matt 5:13–16; 1 Pet 2:11–12)
8. Engaging others with the Gospel through both deed (living a transformed life because of the Gospel) and word (talking about Jesus and His Gospel with others). (Matt 28:18–20; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet 2:9–10)

Having believed the Gospel and thus received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and being in agreement with the Park Church Membership Covenant and the Statement of Basic Beliefs, I feel led by the Holy Spirit to commit myself to the Park Church body. If God calls me elsewhere, I will process this decision with a Park Church elder and provide advance notification to church leadership as to when I will be leaving.

New Member Signature _____ Date_____

New Member #2 Signature (if applicable) _____

New Member(s) Printed Name(s)_____

Staff/Elder Signature _____