

# CORE

## PARTICIPANT GUIDE

GRACE CHURCH  
[whoisgrace.com](http://whoisgrace.com)

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# ABOUT CORE

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## CORE IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOU:

- Find and form meaningful relationships with others that will add value to your life and connect you to new friends.
- Discover your spiritual gifts and how God uniquely designed you to make a difference in your family, community, and church.
- Discover the cultural “DNA” of Grace Church.
- If you are considering becoming a member of Grace church, we want to give you all the material you need to make an informed decision. All new attendees are encouraged to take CORE; however, this course is required for people who want to become members.

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## What Commitment Are We Asking You To Make?

- Attend eight 60-65-minute long class sessions;
- Complete seven independent learning assignments, including an online SHAPE assessment;
- Experience a Ministry Tour to be held immediately before or after Session 6, and connect with a ministry leader in an area of interest;
- Choose an invest opportunity as a class, in which to serve together in the community.

*At the end of CORE, those who attended at least six out of the eight sessions and completed the assignments (on the honor system) will be eligible to pursue membership at Grace Church. You will receive an electronic membership application, and will have a membership interview scheduled with a staff member or elder.*

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## THE CORE CLASS TEAM:

**CORE HOST:** Your host will be a consistent and familiar face each week, helping you connect with Grace Church. If you have any questions, your host is here to help you.

**TEACHING TEAM:** We have assembled a team of energetic teachers, each one passionate about a different aspect of ministry at Grace.

**SITE PASTOR:** The site pastor wants to get to know you better and will be hosting the class during Session 8 to teach and answer your questions.

### CONTACT YOUR HOST:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 1

**Big Idea:** Maturing Christians participate in a local church.

**Key Texts:** *so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

**Romans 12:5**

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

## Introduction

Meet the CORE Host.

Introduce yourself to others at your table.

Brainstorm ideas about having a mission.

## Prayer.

### A. Saved by Grace through Faith

Understand God's plan for people to enjoy a relationship with Him.

### B. Understanding the Church Mission

Understand the mission of Grace Church to make and be fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

### C. Catching the Vision

Review the five-year vision affirmed by Grace Church members in September 2011.

### D. Embracing Core Values

Consider and discuss the five core values of Grace Church

### E. Saved into Community

Consider and discuss scriptures that describe salvation in community terms.

Discover first steps toward living in community.

## Prayer

### Homework for Next Session

Review homework for the coming week.

## GOALS:

1. Understand salvation by grace through faith.
2. Understand what it means to be a "fully devoted follower" of Christ.
3. Understand the vision and core values of Grace Church.
4. Understand that believers in Christ are saved into community.

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## INTRODUCTION

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**Introduce yourself:**

- What is your name and your occupation?
- What brought you to Grace Church and why are you taking CORE?

**Today's BIG IDEA:**      Maturing Christians participate in a local church.

Presenter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

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### A. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH: It all starts with a relationship with Jesus.

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Here's what the Bible says about our connection with God:

1. **God's plan is that we would enjoy a \_\_\_\_\_ with him.**

*<sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

**Ephesians 1:4-6**

2. **We broke that relationship through our drive to control our own lives. The Bible calls this \_\_\_\_\_.**

*<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*      **Romans 3:23**

*but your iniquities have made a separation  
between you and your God,  
and your sins have hidden his face from you  
so that he does not hear*

**Isaiah 59:2**

We may attempt to bridge this gap between ourselves and God on our own –by being either more religious or more moral. But none of our attempts has a chance of being successful.

3. **God made a way to \_\_\_\_\_ the gap.**

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

**John 14:6**

4. **And Jesus tells us to put our faith in \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_.**

*because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*  
**Romans 10:9-10**

Christians call our adoption as children of God “being saved,” because a relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ, His Son, saves us from an eternity spent apart from God. We are saved from a life on this earth that has no meaning.

If you would like to talk with someone about your relationship with God, you can:

- Email your class host or today’s presenter.
- Email Grace Church at [NextSteps@whoisgrace.com](mailto:NextSteps@whoisgrace.com)
- Talk to a member of your Site Pastor Team. Names for Site Pastor Team members are in the Appendix.
- Talk to your Site Pastor or email him at [his first name]@whoisgrace.com.

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**B. UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH MISSION: As a church, our *MISSION* spells out our goal...the primary purpose for what we do.**

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A mission statement keeps us \_\_\_\_\_ and gives us a common \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read the next two Scripture passages and discuss the following questions with people at your table.**

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> 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**

*And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*  
**Acts 4:31**

- In your own words, what did Jesus say the mission of the church was?
- What resources did Jesus promise to His followers in these verses, so that we can accomplish the mission He gave for the church?

**WE SAY OUR MISSION STATEMENT LIKE THIS:**

**Grace Church exists to make and be fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ.**

If our mission is to make and be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, shouldn't we know what that means? What, exactly, *is* a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ?

Someone who takes next steps to:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ about Jesus through \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_ like Jesus through \_\_\_\_\_

L = \_\_\_\_\_

I = \_\_\_\_\_

V = \_\_\_\_\_

E = \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_ like Jesus = \_\_\_\_\_

\*See the Appendix for a more complete description of a fully devoted follower.

**C. CATCHING THE VISION: Our *VISION* is our plan to achieve our mission.**

Grace Church has a plan for fulfilling the mission Jesus gave us, and we call that our \_\_\_\_\_.

**Video Notes:**

**OUR PREVIOUS FIVE-YEAR VISION**

Grace Church laid out a 5-year plan in September 2011 that included the following initiatives:

1. 3 more multi-site locations (plus Grace Online) = Harborcreek, Girard, Online, Center City
2. 50 local churches serving the Erie community together = ServErie
3. 2 global church-to-church partnerships = Haiti, Dominican Republic, Japan
4. 936 weeks - (birth through high-school graduation) of partnering with parents to encourage Christ-centered families = GraceKids, GraceYouth & the Exchange
5. 212 - raising the temperature of life-on-life discipleship to the boiling point, so that people become reproducing followers of Jesus through their own personal growth = Life Groups, Learn to Lead, CORE

**D. EMBRACING CORE VALUES: Our *CORE VALUES* are how we behave as we pursue the vision to achieve the mission.**

If our mission and vision statements tell us where we are going and how we're going to get there, our core values tell us how we are going to \_\_\_\_\_.

## GRACE CORE VALUES

### Accessible Biblical Truth

We value the Bible and won't pull punches or water it down. At the same time, we strive to make the Scriptures clear and applicable for real life.

### Authentic Relationships

We won't just put on our "Sunday best" and pretend everything is okay. We create environments where it's safe to share stories of struggle, triumph, sadness, doubt, and hope.

### Spiritual Vitality

Our gatherings are marked by spiritual energy and passion. We're fueled by our desire to continually take next steps in our relationship with Jesus.

### All In

God created us with unique skills to do ministry. We strongly believe that everyone at Grace is here for a reason. The church doesn't function well unless we're all involved.

### Outward Focus

The stakes are high. Our hearts will beat fast, our hands will be busy, and our wallets will be open for those who are far from God.

### Discuss with your group the following questions about one of the core values:

- What would it look like for an individual person to embody this core value?
  
- How do you see this core value being lived out at Grace Church?
  
- Explore some scriptures that support these values:
 

Accessible Biblical Truth –	<b>2 Timothy 3:6-17</b> and <b>2 Peter 1:20-21</b>
Authentic Relationships –	<b>Matthew 22:36-40</b> and <b>1 Thessalonians 2:7-12</b>
Spiritual Vitality –	<b>John 7:37-39</b>
All In –	<b>Romans 12:3-8</b>
Outward Focus –	<b>Matthew 28:19-20</b>



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## E. SAVED INTO COMMUNITY: There's more to the story...We're told to do it together.

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The following verses give some of the ways we help each other when we're together.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers...<sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.* **Acts 2:42, 46-47**

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

*Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart*

**1 Peter 1:22**

**Discuss as a class:**

- How do these verses describe salvation in communal terms? What verbs describe what these early believers did together?
- While there is much to learn from individual prayer and Bible reading, why do you think Christians were told to be active in their faith and lives *together*?
- What are some of the roadblocks that keep us from living out our salvation in community?
- How can we counteract those barriers to community?

**So, practically speaking, how do we start living in community?**

- a. Participating in this \_\_\_\_\_ class is a great first step toward living in community!
- b. We can start living in community by attending Sunday morning worship \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. We can join a \_\_\_\_\_ – a small group of believers that meets regularly, perhaps weekly or every other week, to support and encourage one another to live every day for Christ.

**HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION:**Devotions:

1. The “**One Another**” verses in the New Testament give instructions on interacting with other believers. (See a list of these verses in the Appendix.) Read **Ephesians 4:32**.

What are the three ways Paul instructs the Ephesians to act towards one another?

Think about Grace Church: do you see these actions happening?

Consider your own heart and attitude: are you treating other Christians this way?

Pray and ask God to help you develop a heart toward other Christians that is more like the one Paul speaks of in **Ephesians 4:32**.

2. During a quiet time with God this week, read some of the Scriptures in the **Be Like Jesus** section of “What is a ‘Fully Devoted Follower’ of Christ?” in the Appendix. Talk to God about how you are doing as a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 2

**Big Idea:** Following Christ includes reading His Word and talking with Him in prayer.

**Key Texts:** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*  
**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

*Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.* **Colossians 4:2**

## Introduction

Check in with the CORE Host.

Review the homework from Session 1

One Another Devotion.

Introduction to L.I.V.E.

Explore family attitudes toward the Bible when you were growing up.

## Prayer.

### A. The Bible on the Bible

Survey what the Bible says about itself.

### B. Connect to God through the Bible

Learn about several Bible study methods.

Practice a Bible study method.

### C. Connect to God through Prayer

Discuss prayer.

Practice using the Lord's Prayer to structure your prayer time.

Practice using the ACTS acronym to structure your prayer time.

Learn practical pointers on prayer.

### D. Common Problems Connecting to God

Brainstorm solutions to common problems people experience when reading the Bible and/or praying.

## Prayer.

### Homework for Next Session

Review homework for the coming week.

## GOALS:

1. Practice different methods of connecting with God through the Bible.
2. Practice different methods of connecting with God through prayer.
3. Learn practical pointers on prayer.

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

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## INTRODUCTION

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### Session One Review:

*Be Kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

**Ephesians 4:32**

- How have you seen the actions in this verse lived out?
- What are ways that you are trying to be more like this verse?

### Session Two Introduction:

L.I.V.E- E = \_\_\_\_\_

### Today's Big Idea:

Following Christ includes two important disciplines:

1. Reading \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Talking with God in \_\_\_\_\_.

### Discussion Questions

- What attitudes about the Bible did you pick up from your family growing up?
- What role, if any, did the Bible have in your family?

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## A. THE BIBLE ON THE BIBLE

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The Bible is unlike reading any other book, since the Bible embodies God's self-disclosure to humanity.

1. **The Bible says it is God's** \_\_\_\_\_.

<sup>16</sup> *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* <sup>17</sup> *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

<sup>20</sup> *knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.* <sup>21</sup> *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* **2 Peter 1:20-21**

The word “inspired” literally means \_\_\_\_\_.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Where else in the Bible did God create with His breath?
- What does this word choice tell us about God’s relationship to His Word?
- According to Peter, what role did human authors have in the writing of Scripture?

2. **The Bible says it is God’s power to \_\_\_\_\_ us.**

*<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. **2 Timothy 3:16-17***

**Discussion Questions:**

- According to this passage, how does the Bible prepare us for “every good work?”
- Paul says in this passage that the primary goals of studying the Bible are spiritual maturity and preparation for doing good works. What are some misguided reasons to read the Bible?

3. **The Bible says God’s \_\_\_\_\_ will help us understand it.**

*<sup>12</sup> “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. **John 16:12-13***

*<sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. **1 Corinthians 2:11-13***

**Discussion Questions:**

- How do these passages describe the Holy Spirit's role in our lives?
- How does the Holy Spirit guide us "into all the truth?"

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## B. CONNECT TO GOD THROUGH THE BIBLE

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### 1. \_\_\_\_\_ to Study the Bible.

(a) Buy and use a good study Bible.

- The ESV and the NIV are excellent choices.
- Youversion.com and Biblegateway.com each provide (for free) several versions of the Bible and access to commentaries, as well as reading plans.

(b) Find a time and place that will work consistently in your schedule for you to read the Bible.

Find your \_\_\_\_\_!

(c) Set aside time. Start with the amount of time you feel comfortable with and work toward increasing that time.

(d) Pick a specific book of the Bible to read. Luke and John (both in the New Testament) are good places to start.

(e) Pray for the Holy Spirit's help.

### 2. **Methods for Reading Scripture**

(a) **Method: Basic Devotional Reading**

Prayerfully read the Bible, talking with the Lord as you are reading, trusting Him to teach you His Word.

(b) **Method: Three Questions Devotional Reading**

Another method to approach your time with God involves asking three questions of every passage you read:

Question 1: What does this passage say about \_\_\_\_\_?

Question 2: What does this passage say about \_\_\_\_\_?

Question 3: What does this passage say about the \_\_\_\_\_ between God and people?

Read one of the following passages and apply the three questions to your study of the passage.

- **Psalm 1**
- **Matthew 8:5-13**
- **Luke 19:1-10**
- **Ephesians 5:1-4**

*Blessed is the man*

*who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;  
<sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.*

<sup>3</sup>*He is like a tree*

*planted by streams of water  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither.  
In all that he does, he prospers.*

<sup>4</sup>*The wicked are not so,  
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.*

<sup>5</sup>*Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;*

<sup>6</sup>*for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.*

**Psalm 1**

<sup>5</sup>When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, <sup>6</sup>“Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” <sup>7</sup>And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” <sup>8</sup>But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” <sup>10</sup>When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. <sup>11</sup>I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, <sup>12</sup>while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” <sup>13</sup>And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

**Matthew 8:5-13**

*He entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup> And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. <sup>5</sup> And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup> So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. <sup>7</sup> And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." <sup>8</sup> And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."* **Luke 19:1-10**

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. <sup>3</sup> But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. <sup>4</sup> Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.*

**Ephesians 5:1-4**

**Discussion Questions:**

**Question 1:** What does this passage say about God?

**Question 2:** What does this passage say about people?

**Question 3:** What does this passage say about the relationship between God and people?

(c) **Method: 15-Minute Devotional Reading**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (1 minute).

Be still and quiet. Prepare your heart. Take a few deep breaths and wait on God.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ the Word (4 minutes).

Read your passage for the day or begin where you left off the day before. Read until you feel that God has told you something. Then stop and think about it.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ on the Word (4 minutes).

Think about what the passage means in your life. Write down your thoughts in a journal.



4. \_\_\_\_\_ the Word (2 minutes).

Write in your journal how this passage applies to you. A good question to ask is, "If I were to take this passage seriously, what would I need to do differently this week?"

5. \_\_\_\_\_ (4 minutes).

Conclude your quiet time by talking to God about what He has shown you and by making requests to Him from your prayer list.

Check out the Grace reading plan each week on the website ([www.whoisgrace.com/read](http://www.whoisgrace.com/read)) or the Grace app under the current sermon series!

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## C. CONNECT TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER

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\_\_\_\_\_ was a necessary part of Jesus' life on earth.

*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, <sup>37</sup> and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." <sup>38</sup> And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."*

**Mark 1:35-38**

### 1. The Lord's Prayer

When teaching His disciples how they were to pray, Jesus said

<sup>9</sup> Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,

<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

**Matthew 6:9-13**

Apply the Three Questions Method for reading the Bible to the Lord's Prayer.

**Discussion Questions:**

**Question 1:** What does the Lord's Prayer say about God?

**Question 2:** What does the Lord's Prayer say about people?

**Question 3:** What does the Lord's Prayer say about the relationship between God and people?

**2. ACTS Acronym**

Many people find it helpful to use the ACTS acronym to structure their prayer time:

**A** – \_\_\_\_\_

**C** – \_\_\_\_\_

**T** – \_\_\_\_\_

**S** – \_\_\_\_\_

Use ACTS to write your own short prayer here.

**3. Practical Pointers on Prayer**

## D. COMMON PROBLEMS CONNECTING TO GOD

- Problems with \_\_\_\_\_: making time to read the Bible and time to pray.
- Problems with \_\_\_\_\_: Bible reading and prayer seem to have little impact.
- Problems with \_\_\_\_\_: keeping your mind from wandering.
- Other Problems:

**BRAINSTORM** with those at your table:

- How can you overcome these challenges to connecting with God?

## HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION:

Personal Devotions: Scripture Reading and Prayer

1. Read Philippians 2.

Read Philippians 2 again: What does this chapter say about who God is?

Read Philippians 2 again: What does this Scripture passage say about who I am?

Read Philippians 2 again: What do these verses say about God's relationship with me?

2. Pray using the ACTS method. Use what God showed you in Philippians 2 to help you pray. Consider writing out your prayer in a journal.

Adoration: Praise God for who He is.

Confession: Confess how you are falling short of being like Christ.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for what He has given you and for what He is doing in your life.

Supplication: Ask God for His will to be done in your life and in the lives of those you love.

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 3

**Big Idea:** We each have a faith story to share, which is part of God's story.

**Key Text:** *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,*

**1 Peter 3:15**

## Introduction

Check in with the CORE Host and review the homework from Session 2  
Review Grace's Mission Statement and Jesus' Great Commission

## Prayer.

### A. Paul's Faith Story

Read Paul's faith story in Acts 26.

### B. Common Barriers to Telling Your Faith Story

Explore barriers that often accompany efforts to introduce friends to Jesus.

### C. Avoid Faith Story "Killers"

Discover common mistakes that could make your testimony ineffective.

### D. Connect Your Faith Story to God's Story

Learn and practice using the Bridge Illustration, so you can easily present the good news of Jesus Christ to an unchurched friend.

## Prayer.

## Homework for Next Session

Review homework for the coming week.

## GOALS:

1. Understand how to use a simple pattern for sharing your faith story.
2. Become familiar with the Bridge illustration.

Presenter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

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## INTRODUCTION

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### Session 2 Review:

- Remember, what is the Three Questions method of Bible reading? What is the ACTS prayer method?
- What did you learn from the devotional reading and prayer time this week?

### Session 3 Introduction:

**Today's BIG IDEA: We each have a faith story to share, which is part of God's story.**

- Why should each of us be prepared to share our own faith story?

The **mission statement** of Grace Church is based on the \_\_\_\_\_.

*Go therefore and make \_\_\_\_\_ of all \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you \_\_\_\_\_, to the end of the age.*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

Grace's mission statement is: To \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ fully-devoted \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.

We are the workers, but we are not on our own. The \_\_\_\_\_ empowers us to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

*<sup>35</sup> And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

**Matthew 9:35-38**

*And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction...<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,<sup>6</sup> but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

**Matthew 10:1, 5-7**

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## A. PAUL'S FAITH STORY

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Read **Acts 26** and fill in the following Faith Story Worksheet with details from Paul's story.

# FAITH STORY WORKSHEET

## **PAUL'S FAITH STORY (Acts 26)**

### **BEFORE**

What kind of person was Paul before he met Christ?

### **ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST**

What were the circumstances surrounding Paul's encounter with Christ?

### **AFTER**

How did Paul's life change after he met Christ?

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## B. COMMON BARRIERS TO TELLING YOUR FAITH STORY

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### Barrier #1- YOU

*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*                      **Philippians 1:21**

<sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, <sup>28</sup> for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.'" <sup>29</sup> Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. <sup>30</sup> The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." <sup>32</sup> Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." <sup>33</sup> So Paul went out from their midst. <sup>34</sup> But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.                      **Acts 17:22-34**

#### Discussion Questions:

- How did Paul share the Gospel with the men of Athens?
- In your own life, have you seen an example of someone who was ready to hear the gospel?
- In our own lives, how can we abide in Christ so that, like Paul, we are ready to respond to every opportunity to share Christ?

### Barrier #2- FEAR

#### Discussion Questions:

- What makes you most nervous about sharing your faith with a friend, family member, or coworker?
- If things do not go well when you share your faith, what is the worst thing that could happen?

The greatest \_\_\_\_\_ a Christian can give an \_\_\_\_\_ friend is an \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Barrier #3 – LACK OF READINESS**

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. <sup>27</sup> And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup> and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup> And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” <sup>30</sup> So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup> And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup> Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

*“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter  
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he opens not his mouth.*

<sup>33</sup> *In his humiliation justice was denied him.*

*Who can describe his generation?*

*For his life is taken away from the earth.”*

<sup>34</sup> *And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”*

**Acts 8:26-34**

**Discussion Questions:**

- What did God do to connect Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch?
- If you were Philip, how would you have felt as you approached this stranger?
- How did God prepare the eunuch for his encounter with Philip?
- How do you know who to have a faith conversation with?

**Barrier #4 - DIFFERENCES**

*At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, <sup>2</sup> a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. <sup>3</sup> About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” <sup>4</sup> And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. <sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup> He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” <sup>7</sup> When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, <sup>8</sup> and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.*

**Acts 10:1-8**

**Discussion Questions:**

- What evidence do you see in this passage that Cornelius was ready to hear about Jesus?



- What risks did Cornelius take in obeying the angel of God?
  
- If the Holy Spirit visited you in a dream, how would that change your attitude toward evangelism?

### **Barrier #5 - DISCOURAGEMENT**

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- How should we define “successful” evangelism?
  
- Have you been unsuccessful in your efforts to share your faith?
  
- Why do we persevere in sharing our faith?

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## **C. AVOID FAITH STORY “KILLERS”**

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**BRAINSTORM:** Conversation mistakes that could undermine a favorable reception to your faith story.

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## D. CONNECT YOUR FAITH STORY TO GOD'S STORY

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*but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect*    **1 Peter 3:15**

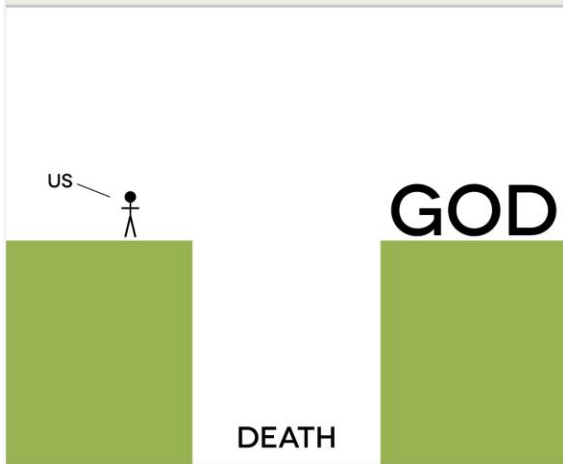
### The Bridge Illustration

Draw the Bridge Illustration in the space below. Be sure to include the Bible verses.

### HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION:

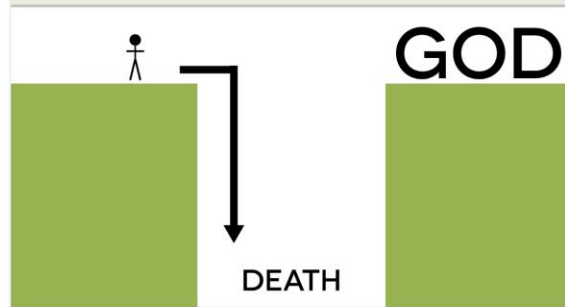
1. Write your own faith story on the following worksheet using the same pattern that we used for Paul's testimony: Before > Encounter with Christ > After
2. Practice drawing and talking through the Bridge Illustration. Consider doing this with a classmate! Also, check out the "Share Your Faith" app which you could use to walk someone through the gospel!
3. View the "Power of an Invitation" video at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) and complete the devotion on the following worksheet.
4. Optional: Watch a creative and powerful Bridge Illustration video on YouTube: search for, "Graffiti Bridge to Life."

We matter to God. He made us, and He wants to have a relationship with us. But we rebelled against God. Both actively and passively, we've all disobeyed Him. And our sins have separated us from Him, and broken off the relationship. (Romans 3:23)

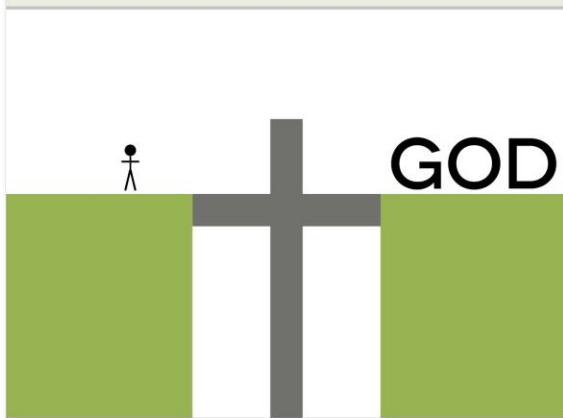


To varying degrees, most of us are aware of our distance from God. I know I was, and you may be, too. And so we start doing all kinds of things to try to get back to Him, like being a helpful neighbor, paying our taxes, going to church, and giving money to charities. There's nothing wrong with these, but the Bible makes it clear that none of them can earn us God's forgiveness or re-establish our relationship with Him.

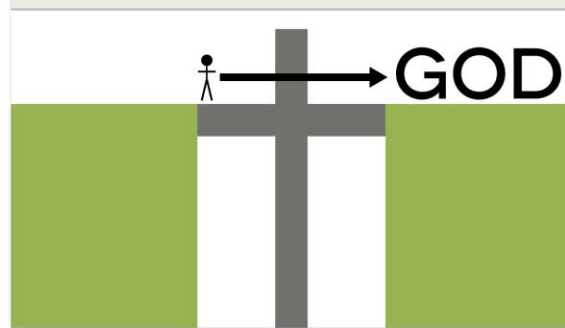
Furthermore, the sins we've committed must be punished, and the penalty we owe is death, which means both physical death as well as spiritual separation from God for eternity, in a place called hell. (Romans 6:23)



The good news, as was referred to earlier, is that we matter to God. In fact, He loves us so much that He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He provided a bridge over which we can find His forgiveness and restore our relationship with Him. He built it by coming to earth as one of us, and dying on the cross to pay the death penalty we owed. (Romans 5:8)



This is a picture of what the central message of the Bible is all about. And that's what God wants each of us to understand. But it's not enough to just know about this or even agree with it. We've got to act upon it. God wants us to move over to the other side. We can move to the other side by humbly admitting to God that we've rebelled against Him and need His forgiveness and leadership. That simple act of trust and obedience results in our sins being pardoned and our debt being paid. Our relationship with God is firmly established, because we're immediately adopted into His family as His son or daughter. (Romans 10:9-10)



# FAITH STORY WORKSHEET

Write two or three names of people in your life for whom you will pray and ask God to give you an opportunity to share your faith: \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR FAITH STORY

### BEFORE

What kind of person were you before you met Christ?

### ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

Describe the circumstances that caused you to submit your life to Christ.

What happened that finally triggered your decision to ask Christ into your life?

What was the most significant thing about your deciding to follow Jesus?

### AFTER

What is the most important difference that Christ has made in your life?

“Since believing the good news about Christ and asking Him into my life, I’ve become...”

# FAITH CONVERSATIONS DEVOTION

Have you made it a point in your walk with the Lord to reach out to people who may not know Him?

- If you have, how has this strengthened your relationship with God?
- If you haven't, what obstacles are standing in your way?

In the video Maggie and Caitlin share how they became really good friends, and it was natural for Maggie to share her faith with Caitlin.

- Why is it easier/harder to share Christ with those closest to you?
- What are the potential consequences of sharing your faith with someone? Worst case scenario? Best case scenario? Is it worth it?
- What are the benefits of waiting for appropriate opportunities to have faith conversations with others?

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 4

**Big Idea:** We are ambassadors for Christ.

**Key Text:** *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.*

*We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

## Introduction

Check in with the CORE Host.

Review Faith Conversations devotion.

Practice sharing your faith story.

Practice using the Bridge Illustration with a partner.

## Prayer.

### A. Rescuing the Lost

Participate in two INVEST activities.

Learn about the Outward Focus of Grace Church.

Evaluate your own concern for the lost.

### B. Renewing the World

Learn that you can be used by God to renew the world by acts of service.

### C. Sacrificing for Christ

Understand why Grace Church asks believers to sacrifice and INVEST in others.

### D. Receiving Power from Christ

Understand the responsibility and power you have to be an ambassador for Christ.

### E. Recognizing Opportunities to Serve Christ

Identify the areas of influence where you can represent Jesus.

## Homework for Next Session

Review homework for the coming week.

## GOALS:

1. Learn to share your faith story and to use the Bridge Illustration.
2. Understand the importance of Outward Focus, a core value of Grace Church.
3. Understand the meaning of the term "INVEST" as used by Grace Church.
4. Brainstorm practical examples of INVESTing.
5. Choose an INVEST opportunity for the CORE class to do together.

Presenter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

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## INTRODUCTION

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### Session 3 review:

- How did the Faith Conversations video and devotion encourage you to share your story?

**Today's Big Idea: We are ambassadors for Christ.**

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## A. RESCUING THE LOST

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### Discussion Questions:

- What images do the words "rescue" and "lost" bring to mind?
- What does it mean to be spiritually lost?
- What responsibility do we have for the people in our lives who seem headed toward an eternity apart from God?

One of the five core values of Grace Church = \_\_\_\_\_

**The stakes are high. Our hearts will beat fast, our hands will be busy, and our wallets will be open for those who are far from God.**

Think about the meaning of **Outward Focus**, then write your response to the following question.

- What kind of emotions do you experience when you think about family members or friends who are far from God?

*And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

**Matthew 4:19**

*I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.*

**1 Corinthians 9:22-23**

**We are ambassadors for Christ.**

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## B. RENEWING THE WORLD

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Two ways we can renew the world:

- 1- \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_
- 2- Getting \_\_\_\_\_ involved in the world around us and performing \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Think about the meaning of **renewing the world**, then write your responses to the following questions.

- In what ways do I spend my time to show that I care about people who are spiritually lost?
- Which activities that I engage in show that I am concerned for the lost?

The following passage of Scripture was written by James, probably to a group of Jewish Christian house churches outside Palestine.

*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

**James 2:14-19**

According to James, the brother of Jesus, having only an intellectual belief in God – without a corresponding change in your life – makes someone no better than \_\_\_\_\_.

**We are ambassadors for Christ.**



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## C. SACRIFICING FOR CHRIST

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INVESTing ourselves in the lives of those around us means making the advancement of \_\_\_\_\_ a higher priority than the advancement of our \_\_\_\_\_. It requires \_\_\_\_\_: giving up what we have for the good of others.

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

**Luke 9:23-26**

**Thought Question:** What does it mean to deny yourself and take up your cross daily and follow Jesus?

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

**Philippians 1:21**

**Thought Question:** What does this verse mean to you?

**We are ambassadors for Christ.**

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## D. RECEIVING POWER FROM CHRIST

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The word "gospel" means \_\_\_\_\_.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

**2 Corinthians 5:17-20**

*Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup> who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

**2 Corinthians 3:4-6**

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

**Philippians 4:13**

**Discussion Questions:**

- How does being in Christ make us a “new creation?”
- How does being a new creation make us an ambassador for Christ?
- What enables us to live for Christ?

**We are ambassadors for Christ.**

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**E. RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE CHRIST**

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As a believer in Jesus Christ, some of the areas of influence I have are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A **Life Group** at Grace Church is a small group of \_\_\_\_\_ who meet \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Brainstorm:** What INVEST opportunity can the CORE class participate in during this next week?

**HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION:**

1. This week pray for courage to share your faith and all that you have with a lost and dying world. Use the scriptures from the session to guide your prayers.
2. Read Grace's story found in the Appendix, "Grace's History of Change" to answer this question:  
Why do we embrace change at Grace Church?
3. Challenge: Memorize the key text of this session:  
*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

4. Participate as a group in an INVEST opportunity.  
LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE/TIME: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Complete the SHAPE assessment if you have not already done so. Find the link at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass).

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 5

**Big Idea:** God designed each of us for a personal ministry.

**Key Text:** *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

*Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it very well.*

<sup>15</sup> *My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

<sup>16</sup> *Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written, every one of them,  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.*

**Psalm 139:14-16**

## Introduction

Check in with the CORE Host.

Report on experience INVESTing in the community, if completed this week.

Recite verse from memory: **2 Corinthians 5:20**.

Review completion of online SHAPE assessment.

Participate in Puzzle activity.

Learn why every church member needs to use their spiritual gifts.

## Prayer.

### A. What is Ministry?

Read and discuss key New Testament passages to understand how you can better serve God and others.

### B. Your Ministry is Determined by Your SHAPE

Learn how the online Spiritual Gifts Assessment (SHAPE) will help you discover your spiritual gifts and your ministry strengths.

### C. God Gave You Spiritual Gifts to Share

Explore the apostle Paul's teaching on believers in Christ receiving spiritual gifts from God.

## Prayer.

### Homework for Next Session

Review homework for the coming week.

Presenter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**GOALS:**

1. Understand that each believer in Christ is designed for a personal ministry.
2. Find out more about your spiritual gifts and ministry strengths by completing the online Spiritual Gifts Assessment (SHAPE).

**INTRODUCTION****Session 4 Review:**

- If your class has completed this, describe your experience during the INVEST opportunity. Now that you have done something like that, does it motivate you to do more?
- After reading Grace's History of Change, who can answer the question, "Why do we embrace change at Grace Church?"

**Session 5 Introduction:**

**Puzzle Activity:** To help you understand how essential your spiritual gifts are to the health of Grace Church.

**Discussion Questions:**

- How does just one missing piece affect the image of the animal?
- How is your incomplete puzzle similar to what happens when some of the spiritual gifts within a church are not being used?

**Today's BIG IDEA:** God designed each of us for a personal ministry.

**Today's key text:**

<sup>14</sup> *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

*Wonderful are your works;*

*my soul knows it very well.*

<sup>15</sup> *My frame was not hidden from you,*

*when I was being made in secret,*

*intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

<sup>16</sup> *Your eyes saw my unformed substance;*

*in your book were written, every one of them,*

*the days that were formed for me,*

*when as yet there was none of them.*

**Psalm 139:14-16**

The proper response to how wonderfully God made you is \_\_\_\_\_.

Knowing your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is an important step in understanding God's will for your life.

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## A. WHAT IS MINISTRY?

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“Ministry” is a Latin word for \_\_\_\_\_.

At Grace Church, we define ministry as using \_\_\_\_\_

to \_\_\_\_\_.

### New Testament passages that describe the nature of ministry.

*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. <sup>10</sup> 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.*

**1 Peter 2:9-10**

According to Peter, every person who is in Christ is a \_\_\_\_\_.

### Discussion Questions:

- We tend to categorize people into two groups: ministers and regular people. What do the verses from Peter’s first letter say about that division?
- How does knowing that God views believers as “a royal priesthood” change how we view ourselves? How might it change how we view other Christians?
- Peter says that we are “God’s people” who “have received mercy.” How do God’s mercy and grace toward us shape our service to Him?

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

**Ephesians 2:10**

The word we translate as “workmanship” is “\_\_\_\_\_,” from which we get our word “poem.” The Greeks used this word to describe any artistic masterpiece.

### Discussion Questions:

- How does this verse in Ephesians speak to someone who might be insecure about their gifts and talents?

- What does Ephesians 2:10 teach us about the purpose of our life?

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup> Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness

**Romans 12:3-8**

#### Discussion Questions:

- Why does God distribute different gifts to different believers?
- Why is humility necessary in the effective use of spiritual gifts in a church?

<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**Ephesians 4:11-13**

#### Discussion Questions:

- According to this passage in the book of Ephesians, what is the role of pastoral staff?
- What is the role of church members?
- What do these verses say is the outcome of this division of work?

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## PERSONAL MINISTRY PRINCIPLES

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**1. A person's ministry is determined by his or her \_\_\_\_\_.**

What God made you to be determines what he intends for you to do.

**2. Using your spiritual gifts is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

If people around you benefit from your service, then you're being fruitful. When you are fulfilled while serving, you walk away knowing in your heart that you have done what God called you to do.

**3. Ministry is for \_\_\_\_\_.**

Every believer is created, saved, called, gifted, authorized, and commanded to minister.

**4. Personal ministry finds its expression in \_\_\_\_\_.**

The Holy Spirit has provided our church with all the spiritually gifted people needed to do everything that God wants to do through us.

*"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*

**1 Corinthians 12:7**

**5. The Grace staff members are \_\_\_\_\_, while the people of Grace are \_\_\_\_\_.**

When the church functions correctly, the staff won't be able to give away ministry fast enough to people eagerly wanting to serve!

**6. Ministry is a \_\_\_\_\_.**

The Holy Spirit distributes gifts in a way that promotes interdependency and deep relationships.

**7. Serving \_\_\_\_\_ you.**

You grow when you discover your personal ministry.

**God has designed each of us for personal ministry!**

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## **B. YOUR MINISTRY IS DETERMINED BY YOUR SHAPE**

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The SHAPE acronym was developed by Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, to help its church members discover how they were shaped by God for good works. We use their SHAPE model at Grace Church. Here's what SHAPE stands for:

**S -- for \_\_\_\_\_.**

"What exactly has God gifted *me* to do?"

**H -- for \_\_\_\_\_.**

"What do I love to do?"

**A -- for \_\_\_\_\_.**

"What *can* I do?"



**P – for** \_\_\_\_\_.

“Who am I?”

**E -- for** \_\_\_\_\_.

“What have I been through?”

*...God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3b-4**

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## C. GOD GAVE YOU SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO SHARE

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### Discussion Questions:

- How do you generally respond when you receive a good gift?
- What’s your usual response when you receive a gift you do not like?

*Concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.*

**1 Corinthians 12:1**

*<sup>14</sup>For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*

**1 Corinthians 12:14-20**

### Discussion Questions:

- What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 12 about the value of each gift to the body?
- What does Paul imply would happen to the body of Christ if believers refuse to embrace their gifts?
- What does Paul say about God’s ability to give gifts?
- What might be behind someone’s displeasure over how God has gifted them?

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup> which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

**1 Corinthians 12:21-26**

#### Discussion Questions:

- What caution does Paul give to those who think their spiritual gifts have made them better than those with seemingly lesser gifts?
- At Grace Church, what spiritual gifts tend to be more visible? And what spiritual gifts seem to be less visible?

#### SHAPE Assessment Discussion Questions:

- What surprised you in the results of your spiritual gifts assessment?
- Is God already using one of these gifts in your life and ministry?

#### **HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION:**

1. Complete The Parable of the Talents devotion.
2. Review the Description of the Spiritual Gifts in the Appendix. Consider using the scriptures found under your gifts in your devotional and prayer time.
3. Review your SHAPE assessment results and pray over them. Ask God how He wants to use your life as part of His story.

## THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

### Read Matthew 25.

Here's some background information to help you understand this story told by Jesus. The three servants were given the opportunity of a lifetime. Their master entrusted them with managing his estate during a long absence. The monetary unit in the story -- a "talent" -- was worth about 15 years' wages for a slave, so the three servants were each handling more wealth than they could ever hope to accumulate on their own.

### Re-read Matthew 25:14-18.

- Based on the master's behavior in these verses, what guesses can we make about his character?
- What do we learn about each servant?

### Read Matthew 25:19-30.

- When the master returns to settle his accounts, how does he define success?
- How did the "one talent" servant's attitude toward the master affect his investment strategy?
- How do you think this servant's view of his master came to be so distorted?
- If you were to summarize the main point of this parable in a sentence, what would it be?
- How does this parable speak to the way we handle our gifts and talents today?
- What encouragement does this parable have for those who use their resources for God?

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 6

**Big Idea:** God has made us uniquely to fulfill His purpose.

**Key Texts:** *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.* **Jeremiah 1:5**

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.* **John 15:16**

*... even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.*

**Ephesians 1:4-5**

## Introduction

Check in with the CORE Host.

Share insights from Session 4 homework:

- completing The Parable of the Talents Devotion;
- reading the Description of the Spiritual Gifts;
- praying over SHAPE assessment results.

## Prayer.

### A. Your Ministry Is Determined by your Heart

Use a special deck of cards to begin to discover your passions.

### B. Your Ministry Is Determined by your Abilities

Explore scriptures about God giving people abilities.

Consider how to use the SIGN acronym to identify your ministry strengths.

### C. Your Ministry Is Determined by your Personality

Review the results of the Personality portion of your online SHAPE assessment and discuss how your personality affects your ministry.

### D. Your Ministry Is Determined by your Experiences

Record four types of experiences you have encountered and reflect on how these events might prepare you for ministry.

## Prayer.

## Homework for Next Session

Review homework for the coming week.

Presenter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL:**

Identify the heart, abilities, personality, and experiences in your life that shape your personal ministry.

**INTRODUCTION****Session 5 Review:**

- Share with the class thoughts from completing The Parable of the Talents devotion.
- Share with the class what you learned from reading the Description of the Spiritual Gifts.

**Session 6 Preview:**

- In groups of three, share your SHAPE assessment findings for “H-A-P-E.”

**BIG IDEA: God has made us uniquely to fulfill His purpose.**

**A. YOUR MINISTRY IS DETERMINED BY YOUR HEART**

The “H” in the SHAPE acronym stands for \_\_\_\_\_.

When we talk about the “heart” for SHAPE purposes, we are talking about \_\_\_\_\_.

*Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

**Psalms 37:4**

Amazingly, the Bible teaches that, as we learn to delight ourselves in God, God gives us the things we desire!

**PASSION CARDS**

Get into groups of four or five and use the special deck of cards to help you get in touch with your passions.

This is what I learned about myself in the Passion Card exercise:

God gave you your passions. The choice you have is whether to honor \_\_\_\_\_ or to honor \_\_\_\_\_ with your passions.

**B. YOUR MINISTRY IS DETERMINED BY YOUR ABILITIES**

The “A” in the SHAPE acronym stands for \_\_\_\_\_.

*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...*

**Romans 12:6**

*And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.*

**1 Corinthians 12:6**

\_\_\_\_\_ abilities are God-given and able to \_\_\_\_\_ the church.

*The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup> and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, <sup>4</sup> to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, <sup>5</sup> in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. <sup>6</sup> And behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you: <sup>7</sup> the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, <sup>8</sup> the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, <sup>9</sup> and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, <sup>10</sup> and the finely worked garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests, <sup>11</sup> and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the Holy Place. According to all that I have commanded you, they shall do.”*

**Exodus 31:1-11**

We know Bezalel and Oholiab did not learn how to work with gold or stone in a church. They probably did not view their abilities as particularly spiritual. But that is not how God viewed them.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- How did God describe the source of their abilities?
- How did their so-called “non-spiritual” abilities improve the quality of the entire nation’s spiritual life?
- What are some abilities that you possess that do not seem particularly “spiritual?”

Writer Marcus Buckingham uses the S I G N acronym to help people identify their strengths.

- S is for \_\_\_\_\_.  
When you have engaged in a certain activity, did you have success at it?  
Do other people tell you that you have a gift for it?
- I is for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Does the behavior that the activity requires come naturally to you?  
Do you do it frequently and is it almost a gut instinct?
- G is for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Did you pick this activity up quickly?

Are you naturally looking for ways to grow in it?

- N is for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Do you have a need to exercise this ability?  
Do you think about it often?  
Are you unhappy if you aren't able to exercise the ability?

### MY ABILITIES:

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## C. YOUR MINISTRY IS DETERMINED BY YOUR PERSONALITY

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The "P" in the SHAPE acronym stands for \_\_\_\_\_.

What were the SHAPE assessment findings regarding your personality?

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## D. YOUR MINISTRY IS DETERMINED BY YOUR EXPERIENCES

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The "E" in the SHAPE acronym stands for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Four types of experience God uses:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes God uses "mountain-top" experiences to draw us closer to Him. We hear from God in a meaningful spiritual experience, and then we re-engage with our world in rich, creative ministry.

**Thought question:** When have you felt closest to God? (Write, and then share this experience with a partner.)

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Whatever school you went to, whatever diploma or degree you may have earned; your education has shaped your skills, interests, and outlook on the world.

**Thought question:** What were your favorite educational experiences? (Write, and then share with a partner.)

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Any past ministry experiences you may have had can help you understand the ministry God has for you.

**Thought question:** What past ministry experiences have you had – or what church volunteer opportunities look interesting to you? (Write, and then share with a partner.)

4. \_\_\_\_\_

The problems, hurts, and trials you've endured have taught you very valuable lessons. God can use those lessons! God wants you to be willing to minister to people who are going through what you have already gone through.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

**Thought question:** What painful experience have you endured that God could use to help someone else? (Write down just a word or a symbol. Your privacy is respected.)

God uses all four categories of our life experiences to mold us to be effective in serving Him and others. As we pay close attention to what's happening in our lives, we become better able to set the course of our future in ministry.

## HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION:

Devotions:

1. Nine Truths About Spiritual Gifts

- Read "Nine Truths about Spiritual Gifts" on the following page.
- Write your impressions of each Scripture passage in the space provided.

2. Reflect on the following questions and write down your responses in your Participant Guide.

- How do you picture the use of the spiritual gifts God has given you?
- Why is it important for people who are part of a church to actively use their spiritual gifts?

3. Pray. Talk with God about your use of your spiritual gifts. Journal your thoughts in your Participant Guide.



## NINE TRUTHS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Look up the following verses in your Bible. Write in the space following each passage a phrase or a thought that seems especially meaningful to you.

1. Gifts are meant for the benefit of other believers. **1 Peter 4:10** and **1 Corinthians 12:7**
2. Gifts are given to provide unity and maturity in the body. **Ephesians 4:11** and **13-14**
3. Every Christian has at least one gift and no one receives all the gifts. **1 Corinthians 12:7; 27-30**
4. No single gift is given to everyone. **1 Corinthians 12:29-30**
5. Spiritual gifts are given by grace. They are not earned. **Ephesians 4:7**
6. The Holy Spirit decides what gifts I get. **1 Corinthians 12:11**
7. I am to develop the gifts God gives me. **1 Timothy 4:14**
8. It's a sin to waste the gifts God gave me. **Matthew 25:14-30**
9. Using my gifts glorifies God and grows me. **John 15:8**

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 7

**Big Idea:** We grow in our faith by taking next steps.

**Key Text:** *Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,<sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*  
**Philippians 3:13-14**

## Introduction

Check in with the CORE Host.

Review Session 6 homework:

Ten Truths About Spiritual Gifts

## Prayer.

### A. A Look at Our Pathway

Receive an overview of the Next Steps Pathway.

### B. Next Steps Activities: L.I.V.E.

Review what L.I.V.E. represents.

### C. Live in Community

Discuss scriptures that provide this direction for believers.

Understand the importance of Life Groups at Grace Church:

Their structure, how to join one, and how L.I.V.E. activities are organized within Life Groups.

### D. While We're on the Next Steps Pathway

- The role of pastors and staff in the Grace Church community
- Care and Support ministry
- How to get more information about L.I.V.E. activities
- The role of Site Pastor Teams

## Prayer.

### Homework for Next Session

Review homework for the coming week.

Presenter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**GOALS:**

1. Understand the Next Steps Pathway.
2. Know the meaning of L.I.V.E.
3. Learn the importance of Life Groups.
4. Be encouraged to join a Life Group.
5. Understand the role of pastors and staff in the Grace Church community.
6. Know how to access assistance for Care and Support, Next Steps activities, and Site Pastor Team coaching.

**INTRODUCTION****Session 6 Review:**

**Discussion:** Share how the scriptures and truths of last week's homework impacted your thinking about your spiritual gifts.

**Session 7 Big Idea:** We grow in our faith by taking \_\_\_\_\_.

**A. A LOOK AT OUR PATHWAY**

Becoming a fully devoted follower of Christ is a life-long process.

The church word for that process is \_\_\_\_\_.

At Grace Church we have charted a course for that process called: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. [See appendix]

**B. LIFE GROUPS**

The Bible describes how early Christians lived life, and it affirms believers' continuing need for one another.

*<sup>42</sup>And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup>And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup>And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.* **Acts 2:42-47**

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.* **Hebrews 10:24-25**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,  
4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction,  
with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.* **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* **John 13:35**

*The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. 8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

**1 Peter 4:7-11**

### Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the ways we see in these verses that Christian community help us grow?
- Why do we especially need Christian friends and mentors?
- How does living in community and becoming more fully devoted to Christ change our church? Change our community? Change the world?

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## C. WHILE WE'RE ON THE NEXT STEPS PATHWAY

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There are four ways Grace Church offers help to people as they are taking their Next Steps:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the Grace Church community.

### Discussion questions on "Next Steps" DVD:

- Based on this video, what are the responsibilities of the pastors and staff at Grace Church?
- In what ways are people at Grace Church responsible for their own spiritual growth?

2. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ ministries.

Pastor Mike Watson leads a group of people at Grace Church who provide help to hurting individuals in numerous ways. See what Pastor Mike has to say about the Care and Support ministry and find a list of the support groups that meet at Grace by going to our website: <http://whoisgrace.com/resources/gethelp/>

3. **Information about Grace Church Next Steps activities:**

Download the Grace app (search “whoisgrace”)

Ask your Life Group Leader

Visit [whoisgrace.com/next steps](http://whoisgrace.com/next-steps)

Visit the Next Steps Center at your Grace Church location on Sunday mornings

Check the bulletin you receive when you enter the Worship Center

Like Grace Church on Facebook.

4. **Site Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ at every Grace Church location.**

See Appendix for names and contact information.

## HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION:

1. Review on the website:
  - a. Read the story of Grace Church at <http://whoisgrace.com/about/our-story/>
  - b. Go to <http://whoisgrace.com/nextsteps/> and check out the group finder tab under the Live in Community section.
  - c. Go to <http://whoisgrace.com> and click on the full calendar to explore the activities happening at Grace.
  - d. Review Grace Church’s bylaws at <http://whoisgrace.com/about/get-to-know-us/>.
2. Read the Statement of Faith, found in the Appendix, and watch the Statement of Faith video from Pastor Derek Sanford at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass).
  - What are some questions you have after hearing the Statement of Faith?
  - Which faith statement are you most passionate about and hold tightly to?
  - How would you summarize the Statement of Faith?
  - Think on the faith statements. If we believe them to be non-negotiable, how should they affect our actions?
3. Read the Membership page in the Appendix. You will receive an email from your Site Pastor this week with an invitation to begin the membership process if you so choose.
4. Devotion: Pray about being in a Life Group. Ask God to confirm His desire in you to live your faith with other Christians. Ask God to connect you with a group that is relaxed and enjoyable. Ask God to show you a group where you can help others, as well as learn from them.

# CORE CLASS: SESSION 8

**Big Idea:** Following Christ means allowing Him to change us.

**Key Text:** *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

**2 Corinthians 3:18**

## Introduction

Check in with the CORE Host.

Review homework from Session 7:

- checking out Grace Church on website;
- watching the Statement of Faith video by Pastor Derek Sanford;
- praying about being in a Life Group.

**Prayer.**

### A. Seven Life-Changing Statements

Review the seven big ideas covered in CORE sessions so far.  
Reflect on how these ideas impact your life.

### B. Three Experiences that Indicate Ongoing Change

Explore baptism, generosity and tithing, and accountability.  
Consider why these experiences are important to a Christ-follower.

### C. Statement of Faith / Leadership Structure

Understand the importance of the Grace Church Statement of Faith and the strength of the multi-site leadership structure.

### D. Significance of Membership

Understand the value and expectations of church membership.

### E. Q & A with Site Pastor

An opportunity to ask any questions you may have.  
Invitation to begin the membership process at Grace Church.

**Prayer.**

**Site Pastor/Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GOALS:**

1. Understand the benefits of pursuing spiritual growth in the context of community.
2. Become familiar with the Grace Church Statement of Faith and the multi-site leadership structure.
3. Understand the commitment embodied in Grace Church membership.
4. Receive answers to questions about Grace Church.

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**INTRODUCTION**


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**Session Seven Review**

## Life Groups

- During your prayer time this past week, have you felt God pulling your heart toward Life Groups in any way?

## Statement of Faith

- How would you describe the Grace Church Statement of Faith, after watching the video by Pastor Derek?

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**A. SEVEN LIFE-CHANGING STATEMENTS**


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The seven Big Ideas covered so far in the CORE class:

1. Maturing Christians participate in \_\_\_\_\_
2. Following Christ includes \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
3. We each have a \_\_\_\_\_ to share, which is part of \_\_\_\_\_
4. We are \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ.
5. God designed each of us for a \_\_\_\_\_
6. God has made us uniquely to fulfill \_\_\_\_\_
7. We grow in our faith by taking \_\_\_\_\_

**Thought questions:**

- Which of the seven big ideas have you incorporated into your life the most so far?
- Which big idea presents the greatest opportunity for your own personal growth?

**Today's Big Idea: Following Christ means allowing Him \_\_\_\_\_**

The very first CORE session focused on why we join a local church: to change and to become more like \_\_\_\_\_.

Christ-followers continually take \_\_\_\_\_ in their faith, and they experience recognizable change in their lives.

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## B. THREE EXPERIENCES THAT INDICATE ONGOING CHANGE

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Read and discuss with other participants in this CORE session one of the following sections. All three experiences can impact your life and grow your faith.

■ **Baptism**

■ **Generosity and Tithing**

■ **Accountability**

- Why are all three of these experiences necessary for the health of the entire church?
- Which of these experiences makes you the most uncomfortable? Why?
- How can each one of these experiences make a positive change in anyone who practices them?

**Following Christ means allowing Him to change us;** at Grace Church change includes these three experiences.

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## C. STATEMENT OF FAITH/LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

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Grace Church has a Statement of Faith document that describes the \_\_\_\_\_ on which we cannot compromise.

Grace church is a \_\_\_\_\_ to explore faith-- and even to have doubts.  
[www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass)



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## LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

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Grace is a \_\_\_\_\_ Church: one church in multiple locations.

Lead Pastor and \_\_\_\_\_

- Lead Team
  - Central Team
  - Site Pastors
    - Site Pastor Team
    - Site Staff

This leadership structure allows Grace Church to multiply the gifts and resources it has been entrusted with, so as to reach people in many different communities with the gospel and to equip those people to serve and lead in Christ's church.

## Membership

Please see Membership document in the Appendix for more details.

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## D. Q&A WITH PASTOR

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If later you have any other questions or concerns -- especially about the expectations for membership, your Site Pastor or CORE Host will be glad to talk with you.

## HOMEWORK:

- Next Steps: Get in a Life Group! Serve! If you need more information, your site pastor will be glad to help you get connected!
- Prayerfully consider membership. You will receive an email with instructions on completing a membership application if you so desire. Also, be sure to watch the Statement of Faith video if you have not done so. Find it at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass).
- Complete the class evaluation at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass).
- Pray over the Big Idea that you circled on page 59. What is your next step toward growth in that area?

## BAPTISM

If any of you have been at a Grace Church service when someone was baptized, then you have witnessed the joy that comes with baptism. There is an obvious joy on the part of the person being baptized, and there also is visible joy in the entire congregation. As a part of the body of Christ at Grace Church, we rejoice when another part of the body takes this step of obedience.

Many people come to Grace Church having been baptized as infants. They wonder then why one of the membership requirements at Grace Church is baptism as a believer. We definitely do not want to devalue someone's baptism as an infant. At the same time, we hold to believer's baptism as included by Jesus in the Great Commission:

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* **Matthew 28:19**

In the New Testament, all of the people recorded as having been baptized were people who had made a conscious decision to follow Christ. Baptism does not save you. But Jesus commanded believer's baptism, making it an act of obedience and a powerful picture of how our lives are connected to Jesus.

Read the following passage written by the apostle Paul to the Christians at Rome.

*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

**Romans 6:1-4**

Being physically baptized in water as a believer is an action that reminds you and every person who is there that a spiritual reality has already occurred in you. Through the cross of Jesus, your life has been forever connected to the life of Jesus. That, of course, changes everything.

### **BAPTISM: DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:**

- What similarities does the apostle Paul see between Jesus' death and resurrection and baptism?
- What does Paul mean when he writes that we (believers) participate in Jesus' death and resurrection?
- How does being connected to Jesus affect how we relate to sin?

## GENEROSITY and TITHING

Every corporate worship experience at Grace Church includes a time for people to give their tithes and offerings back to the Lord. Scripture teaches that Jesus' followers are generous people who invest in the kingdom of God on earth. The tithe -- giving 10% of one's income to the local church -- is a baseline for generous giving that has biblical support. (Genesis 28:20-22, Luke 11:42)

Throughout Scripture tithing is always shown as a means for those who follow God to worship Him and remember that all we have comes from Him and belongs to Him. The tithe is a way of contributing to the work of God on earth through the local church. A tithe multiplies opportunities for kids, youth and people of all ages all over our region to experience Jesus. A tithe to God through Grace Church helps with the care of widows, single moms, missionaries, and pastors. A tithe helps Grace Church invest in blighted neighborhoods and share the gospel with those who do not yet know Jesus.

Tithing 10% of one's gross income is not a requirement at the time of membership. However, in accepting membership at Grace Church, you are agreeing to work toward that goal as part of your overall generous giving.

Read the following passage written by the apostle Paul to the church at Corinth:

*The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup> As it is written,*

*"He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever."*

*<sup>10</sup> He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.*

### 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

#### GENEROSITY and TITHING: DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP

- Why is generosity and tithing pleasing to God?
- Who is impacted when we are generous toward God? In what ways?
- How does seeing yourself as a steward of God's money change your perspective?
- How does generous giving change how God is viewed?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The church is intended to be a loving community in which people experience grace, acceptance, encouragement, accountability, and correction. The body of believers at Grace Church values authentic relationships in which people can be honest about who they really are and what they are going through. We strive to accept one another as we are, while simultaneously challenging each other to grow in our obedience to God and His Word. This combination of encouragement and accountability is essential to our growth as followers of Jesus.

Accountability means accepting support from others who can help us become the person Jesus wants us to be. It works best, and most effectively, when mutual purpose, openness, trust, and love flourish. This is why Life Groups are so vital at Grace Church. They allow us to experience accountability in the context of authentic, caring relationships. Life Groups are most effective when people talk openly about the specific ways God is growing their faith and when they invite their group to support what God is doing in their lives.

Read the following passage written by the apostle Paul to the church at Ephesus:

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*      **Ephesians 4:15-16**

Jesus talks about Christian accountability in the following passage:

*If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*

**Matthew 18:15-17**

Most accountability comes in the form of friends challenging each other to set sin aside in order to become all that Christ asks us to be. Only when this one-to-one process breaks down does the Grace Church staff or elders get involved. On very rare occasions, when the sin is serious and the sinning person refuses to part from it, the matter comes before the members of Grace Church.

No matter what form of accountability someone receives, it should always be based on God's Word, motivated by love – for the good of the person receiving it -- and aimed at restoration in their relationship to God and others.

**ACCOUNTABILITY: DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:**

- Think about a time when a friend or spouse told you a hard truth about yourself. How did you feel at that moment? How did you think about that conversation a week later?
- When someone sins, who does Jesus say needs to be involved in the correcting process?
- Why do you think Jesus described a process with “steps?”
- What is the most important characteristic of accountability?

# APPENDIX

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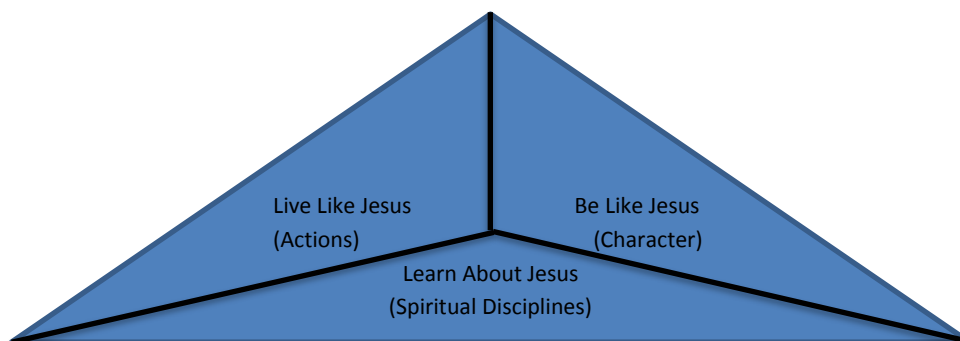
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# WHAT IS A FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWER OF CHRIST?

After we accept God's gift of salvation through Christ, and we've committed our lives to Him, our love for God manifests itself in an ongoing lifestyle in which we continue to learn more about God, we strive to have His character, and we serve Him by the way we live.



Here are some examples (not an exhaustive list):

**Learn and Know God More** –The personal actions we do to stay close to God.

- Prayer and fasting (Luke 6:12; 1 Corinthians 14:14-15; James 5:13-16; I Thessalonians 5:17; Jude 1:20; Matthew 26:41)
- Bible Reading, meditation, memorization (Hebrews 5:12-14; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:23-25; I Peter 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 1:5)

**Live the Way Jesus Lived** --The actions that show our love and obedience to God.

- “L” Live in community
  - Share life with other Christians (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10; Titus 2:3)
  - Be a positive spiritual influence in your family (Ephesians 6:1-4; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-21; I Peter 3:1-7; Matthew 7:9)
- “I” Invest in others
  - Share your faith (Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 6:19-20)
  - Serve the poor, widows and orphans (Galatians 2:10; James 2:14-26; Luke 18:22; Zechariah 7:9)
- “V” Volunteer my time and gifts
  - Exercise spiritual gifts inside and outside the church community (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:6; James 1:22-25)
  - Doing constructive, good works daily (Ephesians 2:8-10)
- “E” Equip myself
  - Engage in life-long learning, and apply Bible teaching to your life (Ephesians 6:10-18; Jude 1:20; 2 Tim 2:15)

**Be Like Jesus**—The character traits we want to develop as we imitate Christ

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39).
- “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” (Galatians 5:6)
- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)
- “Show justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before your God.” (Micah 6:8)

Being a fully devoted follower doesn't mean that we're perfect! But it does mean that we genuinely pursue Christ and His ways as a response to His love for us, and our growing love for Him. If you'd like to learn more, feel free to contact us at [NextSteps@whoisgrace.com](mailto:NextSteps@whoisgrace.com).

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## “One Another”

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The “One Another” verses in the New Testament give instruction on how to live in community and have relationships with other believers.

Below is a list of some of the “one another” verses that are found in the New Testament.

- Mark 9:50 Be at peace with one another [also 1 Thessalonians 5:13]
- John 13:34 Love one another [occurs 20 times in New Testament]
- Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another
- Romans 12:10 Give preference to one another
- Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another [also Romans 15:5]
- Romans 14:19 Build up one another [also 1 Thessalonians 5:11]
- Romans 15:7 Accept one another as Christ does
- Romans 15:14 Admonish one another [also Colossians 3:16]
- Romans 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss [occurs 4 times in New Testament]
- 1 Corinthians 11:33 Wait for one another
- 1 Corinthians 12:25 Care for one another
- Galatians 5:13 Serve one another
- Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens
- Ephesians 4:2 Forbear one another in love
- Ephesians 4:25 Speak the truth to one another
- Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another
- Ephesians 4:32 Be tender hearted to one another
- Ephesians 4:32 Forgive one another [also Colossians 3:13]
- Ephesians 5:19 Speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs
- Ephesians 5:21 Be subject to one another
- Philippians 2:3 Regard one another as more important
- Colossians 3:13 Bear with one another
- Colossians 3:16 Teach one another
- 1 Thessalonians 4:18 Comfort one another
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Encourage one another [also Hebrews 3:13 and 10:25]
- 1 Thessalonians 5:13 Seek for what is best for one another
- Hebrews 10:24 Stimulate one another to good deeds
- James 5:16 Pray for one another
- James 5:16 Confess your sins to one another
- 1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another
- 1 Peter 4:10 Use your gift to serve one another
- 1 Peter 5:5 Be humble towards one another
- 1 John 1:7 Fellowship with one another

# INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

**“Observation Questions”** help you notice the details of the text.

- When and where does this take place?
- Who are the main characters?
- What key words are repeated?
- What major themes are repeated?
- What stands out?
- What comes before and after this passage?
- What do I find difficult to understand?
- Are there specific instructions or warnings?

**“Interpretation Questions”** help you understand what the author intended the passage to mean.

- What does that word/phrase mean?
- What is confusing about this passage?
- What could I know that would help this to make more sense?
- What would the original hearers have heard?
- What would the original readers have read?
- What is the context – what comes before and after this passage that will help to clarify?

**“Application Questions”** ask “What does the passage mean for me?”

**SPACEPETS** - "Is there any . . ."

Sin to confess? Do I need to make any restitution?

Promise to claim? Is it a universal promise? Have I met the conditions?

Attitude to change? Am I willing to work on a negative attitude and begin building toward a positive one?

Command to obey? Am I willing to do it, no matter how I feel?

Example to follow? Is it a positive example for me to copy, or a negative one to avoid?

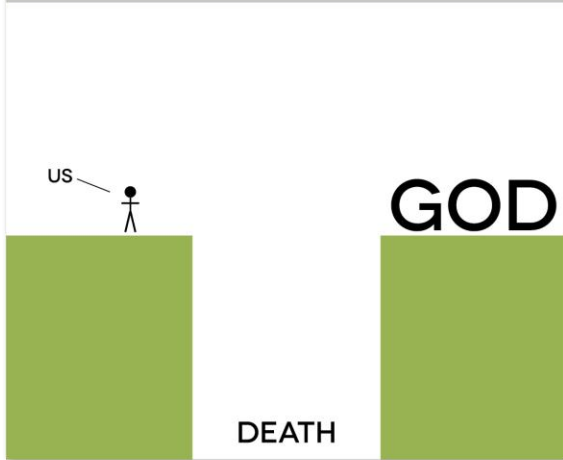
Prayer to pray? Is there anything I need to pray back to God?

Error to avoid? Is there any problem that I should be alert to, or beware of?

Truth to believe? What new things can I learn about God or other biblical teachings?

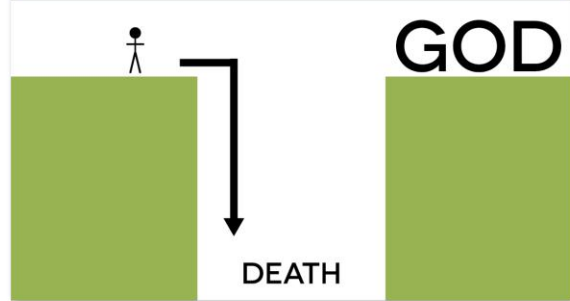
Something to praise God for? Is there something here I can be thankful for?

We matter to God. He made us, and He wants to have a relationship with us. But we rebelled against God. Both actively and passively, we've all disobeyed Him. And our sins have separated us from Him, and broken off the relationship. (Romans 3:23)

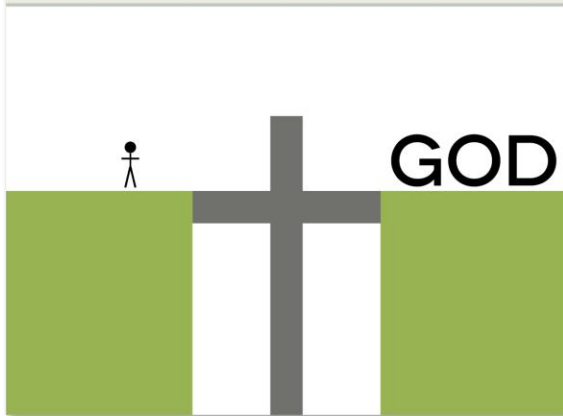


To varying degrees, most of us are aware of our distance from God. I know I was, and you may be, too. And so we start doing all kinds of things to try to get back to Him, like being a helpful neighbor, paying our taxes, going to church, and giving money to charities. There's nothing wrong with these, but the Bible makes it clear that none of them can earn us God's forgiveness or re-establish our relationship with Him.

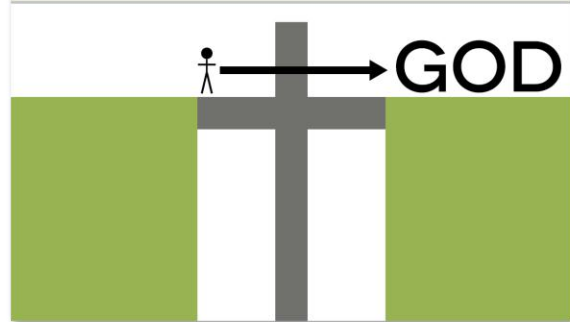
Furthermore, the sins we've committed must be punished, and the penalty we owe is death, which means both physical death as well as spiritual separation from God for eternity, in a place called hell. (Romans 6:23)



The good news, as was referred to earlier, is that we matter to God. In fact, He loves us so much that He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He provided a bridge over which we can find His forgiveness and restore our relationship with Him. He built it by coming to earth as one of us, and dying on the cross to pay the death penalty we owed. (Romans 5:8)



This is a picture of what the central message of the Bible is all about. And that's what God wants each of us to understand. But it's not enough to just know about this or even agree with it. We've got to act upon it. God wants us to move over to the other side. We can move to the other side by humbly admitting to God that we've rebelled against Him and need His forgiveness and leadership. That simple act of trust and obedience results in our sins being pardoned and our debt being paid. Our relationship with God is firmly established, because we're immediately adopted into His family as His son or daughter. (Romans 10:9-10)



# GRACE'S HISTORY OF CHANGE

**(From whoisgrace.com)**

We hear a lot of good feedback about Grace's capacity to adapt and change. These compliments feel good to hear, but we can't take credit for it. The ability to adapt to change is part of our church's DNA. Grace Church has been navigating change for over a century, so we'd be foolish to take credit for it.

On May 1, 1895, nineteen immigrants banded together in a home at the intersection of 7th and Holland to meet and worship in their native tongue. These immigrants didn't legally incorporate as a church but they referred to themselves as the Swedish Baptist Church.

In 1906, those Swedes made their first major change. The house no longer met their needs, so they tore it down and built a new church building on the same lot where they could better serve the needs of the Swedes who continued to immigrate to the area.

By 1939, the founders of the church had passed on and the Swedish population had adapted to their surrounding English-speaking culture. The congregation found themselves facing a dilemma. They could either preserve their rich cultural identity or they could continue impacting the community. But they couldn't do both. The congregation changed their name to Grace Baptist Church and began to hold their services in English. They embraced a hard change and possibly disappointed a few people along the way. But the change was faithful to the mission of the church.

The '50's brought more change and upheaval. The economy was booming and Americans could afford to build a home and move to the suburbs. The families Grace Church was called to reach were quickly leaving the neighborhood. So in 1959, the members of the church made a risky move and bought two acres of undeveloped, rural land on the corner of 38th and Colonial Avenue with the expectation that the farmland would eventually become a booming community. It was a risky change and ultimately the right one.

The '70s marked the beginning of steady growth for Grace Church. In 1974, Pastor Cornell Haan led the congregation to innovate new initiatives that knew the needs of families. New Christians were being added to the church regularly. Pastor Al Detter assumed leadership in 1978 and the church underwent more changes. The congregation grew from 250 people to the nearly 2000 people who call Grace Church their home today.

During those years, the congregation embraced several more changes. The facility went through multiple expansions, new services were added, a church was planted, modern music was embraced, and the church learned that it had to organize and govern itself differently as it grew. In 1978, Grace had two staff members. Today, the pastoral and ministry staff has grown to nearly 90 people including volunteer staff leaders.

Growth in the 2000's forced Grace to change its location one more time. Grace purchased a 41 acre parcel of land on Grubb Road and built a 45,000 square foot facility in 2007. This was another risky move, but the church acted boldly and embraced a change that would allow us to be a better resource of hope and healing for generations to come. Then in the fall of 2010 Sr. Pastor Al Detter sensed God's calling him to transition into a

supporting role while promoting Pastor Derek Sanford to the Lead Pastor position. This sacrificial decision was yet another example of the “mission first” philosophy that has marked our history.

This leadership transition opened the door for Grace to embrace a new change and develop a multisite strategy –one church in multiple locations. And on Easter 2011, Grace Harborcreek opened its doors while meeting at Harborcreek High School. After a year of meeting at the school, Grace was gifted a church building in Harborcreek to be our permanent home! God did an amazing thing and used the generosity and selflessness of a handful of people to bless hundreds more.

Then in the fall of 2014 Grace opened another location in the West County in Girard High school – Grace Girard was born. That same year, we committed to launching Grace Online, an online worship experience, so that we could expand our reach to the ends of the earth.

So, yes, we’re constantly changing how we do church so we can continue to present the unchanging gospel to our neighbors. The Scriptures demand it and so does our history.

# DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Bible does not lock us into tight restrictions as to the number of spiritual gifts, or even their definitions. The four major lists of gifts are found in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and 27-31, Ephesians 4:11-12, and 1 Peter 4:8-11. There also are other passages that mention or illustrate gifts that are not included in these four lists.

As you read through the gifts described below, make a check mark by each gift that, upon initial impression, seems to apply to you. Remember you can have many gifts.

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## GIFTS THAT COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORD (to both unbelievers and believers):

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**PROPHECY ("Preaching")** *1 Corinthians 14:3; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 13:2; 2 Peter 1:19-21*

The ability to publicly communicate God's word in an inspired way that convinces unbeliever and both challenges and comforts believers. The ability to persuasively declare God's will.

**EVANGELISM** *Acts 8:26-40; Ephesians 4:11; Luke 19:1-10*

The ability to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to unbelievers in a positive, non-threatening way. The ability to sense opportunities to share Christ and lead people to respond with faith.

**APOSTLESHIP** *Romans 15:20; 1 Corinthians 12:28-29; Ephesians 4:11-12*

The ability to start new churches and oversee their development.

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## GIFTS THAT EDUCATE GOD'S PEOPLE:

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**TEACHING** *Ephesians 4:12-13; Acts 18:21-24; 1 Corinthians 12:28-29*

The ability to educate God's people by clearly explaining and applying the Bible in a way that causes them to learn. The ability to equip and train other believers for ministry.

**ENCOURAGEMENT ("Exhortation")** *Acts 14:22; Acts 11:22-24; Acts 15:30-32; Romans 12:8*

The ability to motivate God's people to apply and **act on** Biblical principles, especially when they are discouraged or wavering in their faith. The ability to bring out the best in others and challenge them to develop their potential.

**WISDOM** *1 Corinthians 2:1, 6-16; James 3:13-18; Jeremiah 9:23-24*

The ability to understand God's perspective on life situations and share those insights in a simple, understandable way. The ability to explain what to do and how to do it.

**DISCERNMENT** *1 John 4:1-6; Acts 5:1-4; Matthew 16:21-23*

The ability to distinguish right from wrong, truth from error, and to give an immediate evaluation based on God's Word. The ability to discern whether the source of an experience is Satan, self, or God's Spirit.

**KNOWLEDGE** *Daniel 1:17; 1 Corinthians 12:8; Mark 2:6-8; John 1:45-50*

The ability to discover, collect, analyze, and organize information that is vital to individual believers or the entire church family. The ability to comprehend a large amount of information and provide it when needed for effective decision-making.

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## GIFTS THAT DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE

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### **SERVICE/ HELPS** *Acts 6:1-7; Romans 16:1-2; Romans 12:7*

The ability to recognize unmet needs in the church family, and take the initiative to provide practical assistance quickly, cheerfully, and without a need for recognition

### **MERCY** *Luke 10:30-37; Mark 10:46-52; Romans 12:8*

The ability to detect hurt and empathize with those who are suffering in the church family. The ability to provide compassionate and cheerful support to those experiencing distress, crisis, or pain.

### **HOSPITALITY** *1 Peter 4:9-10; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:1-2*

The ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted, and comfortable in the church family. The ability to coordinate factors that promote fellowship

### **SHEPHERDING ("Pastoring")** *1 Peter 5:2-4; John 10:1-18; Ephesians 4:11-12*

The ability to care for the spiritual needs of a group of believers and equip them for ministry. The ability to nurture a small group in spiritual growth and assume responsibility for their welfare.

### **GIVING** *2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 2 Corinthians 6:8; Luke 21:1-4*

The ability to generously contribute material resources and/or money beyond the 10% tithe so that the Body may grow and be strengthened. The ability to earn and manage money so it may be given to support the ministry of others.

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## GIFTS THAT CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE (worship or prayer-related gifts):

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### **CREATIVE COMMUNICATION** *Psalms 150:3-5; 2 Samuel 6:14-15; Mark 4:2, 33*

The ability to celebrate God's presence by using the arts (writing, art, drama, music) to communicate God's truth. The ability to use variety and to captivate people and cause them to consider God's message.

### **CRAFTSMANSHIP** *Exodus 31:3-11; 35:31-35; 2 Kings 22:5-6; Acts 9:36-39*

The ability to build, maintain, or beautify the place of worship for God's glory. The ability to express worship through a variety of art forms.

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## PRAYER-RELATED GIFTS:

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### **INTERCESSION** *Colossians 1:9-12; Romans 8:26-27; John 17:9-26*

The ability to pray for the needs of others in the church family over extended periods of time on a regular basis. The ability to persist in prayer and not be discouraged until the answer arrives.

### **\*\*HEALING** *James 5:14-16; Mark 2:1-12; Acts 3:1-16*

The ability to pray in faith specifically for people who need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing and see God answer. The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

**\*\*MIRACLES** *Mark 11:23-24; Luke 5:1-11; John 2:1-11*

The ability to pray in faith specifically for God's supernatural intervention into an impossible situation and see God answer. The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

**\*\*Tongues/ Interpretation** *1 Corinthians 14:13-15; 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; 1 Corinthians 14:1-33; Acts 2:1-11*

The ability to pray in a language understood only by God or one who is given the gift of interpretation at that time.

\*\*Not in the spiritual gift assessment because those who have these gifts do not need an assessment tool to discover it.

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## GIFTS THAT SUPPORT THE WHOLE CHURCH:

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**LEADERSHIP** *Romans 12:8; Hebrews 13:17; Luke 22:25-26*

The ability to clarify and communicate the purpose, direction, and vision of a ministry in a way that attracts others to get involved. The ability to motivate others by example to work together in accomplishing a ministry goal.

**ADMINISTRATION** *1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 6:1-7; Exodus 18:13-26*

Also called the gift of organization, it is the ability to recognize the gifts of others and recruit them to ministry. The ability to organize and manage people, resources, and time for effective ministry. The ability to coordinate many details and execute the plans of leadership.

**FAITH** *1 Corinthians 12:9, 13; Hebrews 11:1; Romans 4:18-21*

The gift of faith is the ability to trust God for what cannot be seen and to act on God's promise, regardless of what the circumstances indicate. The willingness to risk failure in pursuit of a God-given vision, expecting God to handle the obstacles.



# PASSION CARD QUESTIONS

**What makes you smile?**

**What would you do for free?**

**What do you find easy?**

**What sparks your creativity?**

**What do you like to talk about?**

**What would you regret having not tried?**

**What makes you unafraid of failure?**

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

## A. THE TRIUNE GOD

There is one God who exists in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each person being fully God. God the Father, along with Jesus the Son, is the Creator and Lord of the universe who both governs all things according to His will and is accomplishing His purpose in the world and in the church. Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly human, the only mediator between God and humanity. The Holy Spirit is necessary for the individual's new birth and growth to maturity. The Holy Spirit empowers and indwells the church as well as each individual believer.

*Gen. 1:1, 26; Isaiah 45:21-22; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:4-6; Luke 10:21-22; John 1:1-4; Revelation 4:11; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 2:9; Colossians 1:16-17; John 3:16; Titus 3:5,6; Jude 20-21; John 14:16-17, 26*

## B. THE BIBLE

The Holy Scripture in its entirety is inspired by God's Spirit through human authors and constitutes the revelation of God's truth to humanity. It is trustworthy and without error in its original manuscripts in all that it affirms. Whatever the Bible, rightly interpreted, teaches followers of Christ are bound to believe and obey. It is the supreme authority in every matter of belief and conduct, and it establishes moral absolutes for the human race.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21; Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; John 17:17; I John 2:5*

## C. THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

All human beings are created in God's own likeness and therefore have inherent value and equality before God. All human life is in the image of God and is sacred.

*Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 1:4-13; Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1:4-5; Acts 17:28*

## D. THE HUMAN CONDITION

Humanity is hopelessly lost by imputation of sin as a result of Adam's sin as well as by personal sinful acts. This sin and guilt have rendered mankind subject to God's wrath and condemnation and have resulted in humanity's alienation from God's life, suppression of God's truth, and hostility to God's law. God's love desires all to come to repentance and to be reconciled rather than condemned.

*Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Jeremiah 17:9; Acts 3:19; Acts 16:31*

## E. SALVATION

Salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin has been achieved solely through the work of Jesus Christ – his perfect obedience, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection and exaltation to heaven as Lord. Apart from Christ, there is salvation through no person, church, creed, process, or power. Each sinner is justified before God and reconciled to God only by divine grace appropriated by faith alone, apart from human merit or good works. Authentic salvation is evidenced by a transformed life.

*Romans 5:12-19; Romans 10:9-10; John 3:16; John 14:6; John 1:12-13; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:3-9; 2 Corinthians 13:5-6; James 2:14-26*

## F. THE NATURE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

There is one, holy and universal church, which is the Body of Christ, and to which all true believers belong. As

the Father sent the Son into the world, so the Lord Jesus Christ sends his church to participate in God's mission by words and works. In this mission the church is called to proclaim the gospel of God's grace, to baptize and make disciples among all nations, to exhibit God's character through compassionate care for the needy; to push back the forces of evil, and to demonstrate to humanity the reality of God's kingdom.

*Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 16:16-18; Matthew 22:37-40; Isaiah 61:1-3; Acts 1:8; Matthew 25:34-45*

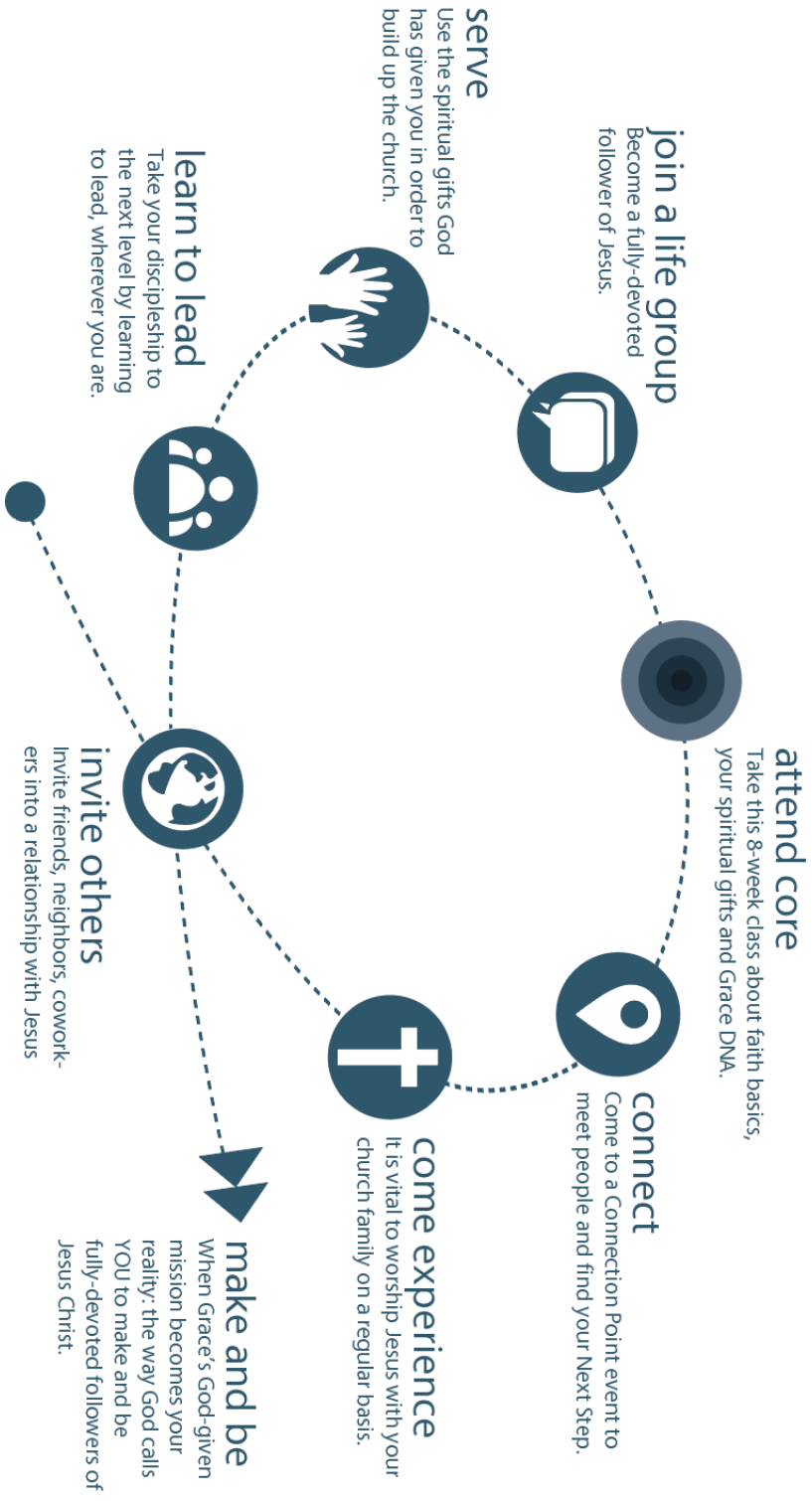
#### **G. LAST THINGS**

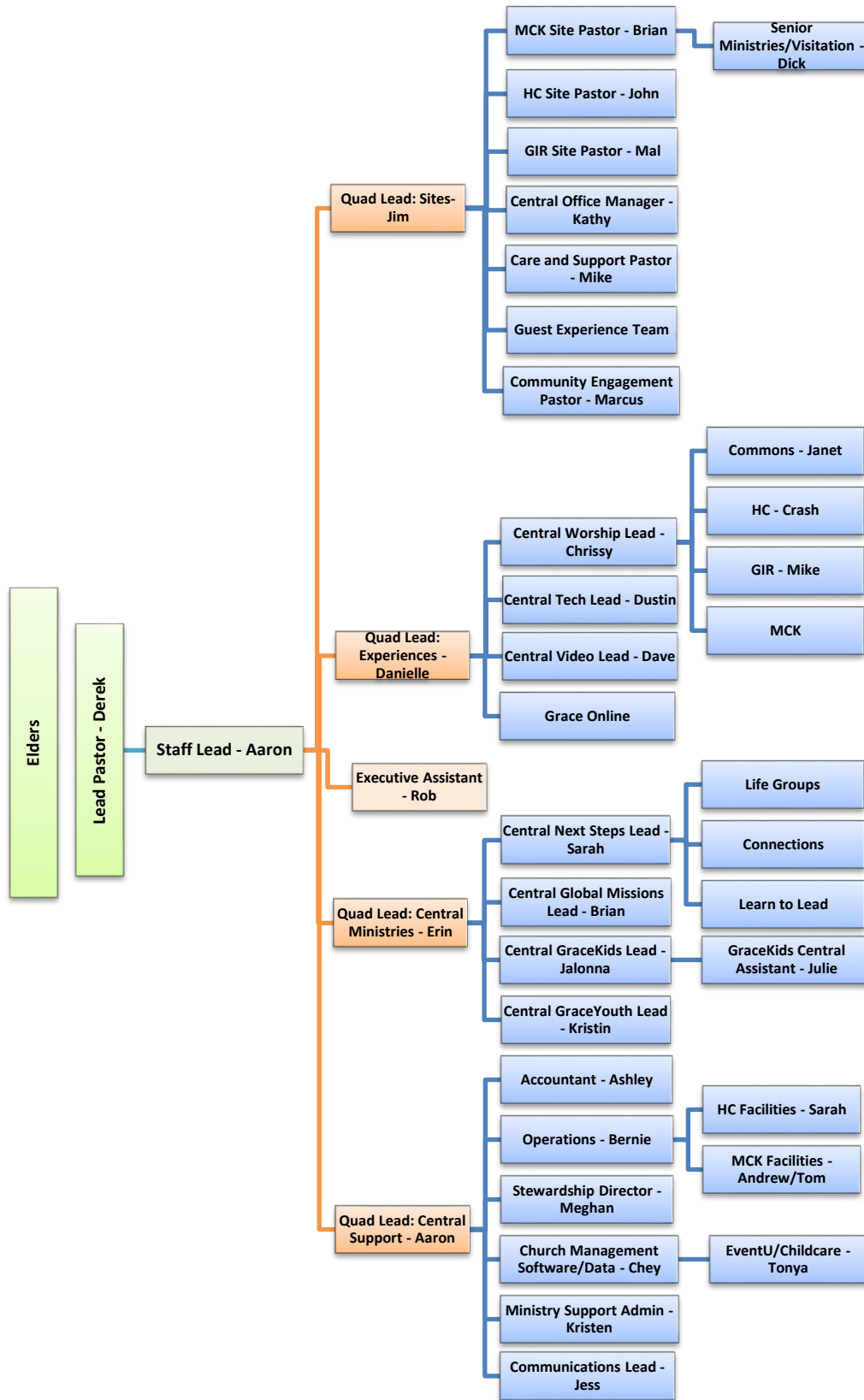
As the Lord Jesus ascended to his Father, so He will return literally, physically, and in glory. He will raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to final completion. All humanity will be resurrected for judgment and entrance into either eternal life or eternal hell. There is no second opportunity for salvation after death and all who did not trust Christ will stand condemned. God will then fully establish his Kingdom and finish the new creation - a new heaven and a new earth from which all evil and evildoers, all suffering and death, will be excluded and in which God will be glorified forever.

*Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 11:15; Revelation 20:4-6; I Corinthians 15:42-44; 51-52; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:11-15; Matthew 25:46*



# PATHWAY







### Ways to Give:

#### 1. **Electronic:**

a. **On-Line Giving:** Make a one-time gift or set up automatic, recurring gifts.

b. **By Smart Phone Text:** Text any \$ AMOUNT and GRACE to 45888 using a debit/credit card.

2. **Weekend Service:** Give by cash or check during any weekend service.

3. **On-Line Banking:** Set up a one-time or recurring gift through on-line bill pay. Use memo line for any special giving instructions.

4. **Mail:** Send gift by mail to Grace's central office: Grace Church, 7300 Grubb Rd., McKean, PA 16426, Attn: Giving.

5. **Legacy:** Make a gift through your Will or Estate Plan, designate Grace as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, IRA or 401k, or utilize a Charitable Gift Annuity or Charitable Trust. **What Can I Give To?**

### What Can I Give To?

**Ministries & Operations:** We encourage you to direct most of your giving to this fund, because this is the fuel that drives everything we do in ministry at Grace.

**Missions (Haiti, DR partnerships, missionaries)**

**The Forward Project**

**Debt Reduction Fund**

**Benevolent Fund**

For more information, go to [www.whoisgrace.com/giving](http://www.whoisgrace.com/giving) or contact Stewardship Lead Meghan Waskiewicz by phone 814-790-4973 x229 or email [meghan@whoisgrace.com](mailto:meghan@whoisgrace.com).