

Grace Christian Fellowship

Confession of Faith and Practice

Thank you for your interest in Grace Christian Fellowship. To help you understand who we are and for clarity among ourselves we have endeavored to express in a simple manner our basic beliefs and practices. This is by no means conclusive, but we hope it can be of some help in answering questions you may have. Feel free to speak with any of our members for additional clarity.

We are an independent, Bible centered, fundamental Christian church. We are loosely affiliated with a number of similar churches scattered throughout the U.S. with whom we send out and support workers in foreign mission fields.

It is our desire to establish and preserve a safe haven for God's people and their families, providing an environment conducive to the raising of children into Godly adults. Toward that end, in addition to our basic beliefs, we have adopted specific practices. Our beliefs are based on the irrefutable Word of God, and are supported by clear scripture. Our practices are our personal applications of those beliefs. While we do not mean to imply that those who disagree with us in practice are not Christians, we do ask that those who choose to fellowship with us, for the sake of unity and a common vision, would be in agreement (in support of) in both beliefs and practices.

1). THE WORD OF GOD: We believe and confess that the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is the final authority for faith and practice and all of life. The Word of God, especially the New Testament, is the standard by which the Christian orders his life. 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 3:2. Old Testament (old covenant) teaching is given as types and shadows of New Testament (new covenant) teaching and practice and is profitable for our admonition and for our learning. It is no longer our rule for living, being under the new covenant, believing in the doctrine of Christ and His apostles which they wrote; consisting of the New Testament. 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4; Gal. 4:21-31; Heb. 8:8-9; Mat. 26:28; 1 Cor.14:37.

In practice, we preach, teach and memorize from the King James Version. In addition, we would give caution against many of the modern translations and paraphrases.

2). THE DEITY OF CHRIST: We believe and confess that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, God in the flesh. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the virgin womb of Mary. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." John 1:1, John 1:14, Matt. 1:23

3). CREATION: We believe in a literal six-day creation as God said he did it in Genesis 1, rejecting the day age theory and false science that seeks to promote the religion of evolution and willingly ignores the evidence of creation and a world-wide flood. Romans 1:20; 1 Peter 3:5-6

We believe the Bible does not go against science, but true science supports the Bible. Man, in their rejection of God, manipulates facts to support their theories and so professing to be wise have become fools. Romans 1:22

4). FALLEN MAN: We believe and confess that man is a fallen creature. Created in the image of God, man fell to a condition of spiritual death. This death passed upon all men. Man is a wretched creature set on wickedness. We believe everyone since the time of Adam has been defiled by sin in some way. (Except for Christ) Mankind needs salvation. Gen. 1:26,27; Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1; Isaiah 53:6.

5). SALVATION: We believe and confess that all who believe in Christ Jesus for salvation shall be saved. John 3:16-17; Rom. 10:13, Acts 20:21 Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. He is the

sacrifice, the payment for the sins of fallen man. 1 Co. 15:1-4 We believe that Christ died for all and is not willing that any should perish, but that all should be saved, 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 2 Pet. 3:9; and that God created man with a free will so that he may choose to obey or disobey God. Gen. 2:16, 17; Gen. 4:7; Mat. 23:37; Rev. 22:17 Man must respond with repentance (a change of heart) toward God and with faith (a heart attitude of belief) in our Lord Jesus Christ, being born again and baptized upon that confession of faith. Believing is a present continuous act of the will and only those who endure to the end will be saved. Mat. 24:13; John 15:6; Rom. 11:22; Rom. 8:13; 2 Pet. 2:20-22

6). HEAVEN OR HELL: We believe and confess that heaven and hell are real places. People who die without Christ will live eternally in a burning lake of fire, being tormented in the flames. People who die in the Lord will live eternally in heaven with Christ, experiencing blessings beyond our comprehension. Matt. 13:49, 50; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 14:11; Mat. 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; Mat. 5:12; Rev. 22

7). THE TRINITY: We believe and confess that God is one God expressed in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. 1 John 5:7, 2 Cor. 13:14, Matt. 28:19, Gen 1:26, John 14:16-26.

8). SATAN: We believe and confess that Satan is real, a fallen angelic being, who through rebellion lost his position in heaven. Ezek. 28:13-17; Is. 14:12-15. We recognize this foe and his kingdom of darkness. We are in a spiritual battle which demands our continual standing in Christ, our power. 1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Job 1:6-12

9). THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: We believe and confess in a physical return of Jesus Christ to the earth. He shall come in like manner as He left. We should look forward to and expect the coming of the Lord. This hope will cause God's people to purify themselves. John 14:1-3, Acts 1:9-11, 1 John 3:2-3.

10). THE KINGDOM OF GOD: We believe and confess that the Kingdom of God or Christ is a spiritual kingdom in the world. Christ and the Apostles presented a high standard of holiness for the kingdom. We believe that citizenship in this kingdom therefore:

A. Enjoins returning good for evil, praying for persecutors, loving your enemies, feeding and clothing the needy and doing good to all men, including enemies. Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:14-21; 1 Thes. 5:15.

B. Forbids speaking evil of anyone, resisting evil or taking vengeance, suing at law, or in any way demanding personal rights. Matt. 5:39,40, John 18:36, 1 Cor. 6:1-8, Titus 3:2; 1 Pet. 2:18-21, Rom. 12:19.

C. Requires the non-swearing of oaths, "Yea, Yea and Nay, Nay" honesty, and absence of idle words in speech. Matt. 5:33-37; Matt. 12:35-37

D. Enjoins an explicit trust in God for material and spiritual maintenance. Matthew. 6:25-34, Jude 24.

E. We further believe that in general we should not participate in the affairs of the state, that it would create an unequal yoke. 2 Cor. 6:14-18, we also believe that we should not serve in the armed forces. Matt. 5:43-45.

F. We also believe that there needs to be a separation from the course of this world in affection, occupation, and organizational yokes and affiliations. Matt. 6:19-21, 24; Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-3, 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

11). DISCIPLESHIP: We believe and confess that discipleship is a characteristic of all true Christians. A disciple willingly bears the cross and denies himself, forsaking all things that hinder his fellowship with God. This crucifixion of the flesh is the operation of God by faith, a moment-by-moment surrender of the will to God. Luke 14:26, 33; Ro. 6:11-16; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:10-12; Gal. 5:24-25.

12). EVANGELISM: We believe and confess that the commission given by Christ to His disciples (Matt. 28:19,20) was a commission to all Christians to go and tell the good news of salvation to a lost and dying world at home and abroad. It is a call to make disciples of Jesus from every kindred, tribe, and nation by teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 8:12; Acts 19:8) by preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47) by the testimony of our own lives (Acts 1:8) by us observing and teaching others to observe the commandments of Christ. (Matt. 28:20; Acts 1:8) We must witness, testify, warn the wicked of the coming judgment and the final consequence of sin, of hell, eternal damnation, preach the wonderful message of God, who is calling all men to repentance. Therefore, we need to take this commission with great urgency. Brothers and Sisters alike are responsible to pursue opportunities to share Christ in daily living. Mark 16:15, Acts 8:4, Acts 5:42.

13). THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE: We believe and confess that the height of Christian experience is attained, maintained, and expressed in a life of devotion to God, which is a continual pressing of the heart in love and fellowship with God. Prayer, a study of the Word, meditations, fastings, and singing from the heart are expressions of devotion to God. We believe then that this heart that is lifted up to God will more and more bring forth the holy actions commanded in the Scriptures. John 4:23,24, 2 Cor. 3:18, Gal. 5:22-23, Rom. 8:4, Col. 3:16, 4:2.

14). CHRISTIAN APPEARANCE: We believe and confess that God's people should regulate their appearance by

clear scriptural principles. The first application to the principle of modesty is in character. The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer will make us to become full of love, joy, peace, goodness, long-suffering, meekness, and temperance.

A. Brethren and sisters wear modest apparel which covers and conceals the body. 1 Tim. 2:9. In practice: Our women wear dresses with intent to modestly cover themselves rather than to draw attention or entice. A long double layered, loose flowing garment is recommended, avoiding low-cut neck lines and form-fitting styles, and stretchy or thin tee-shirt material. Our brethren wear full length trousers and shirts that do not fit too tightly. Thus, modesty without question is the expression.

B. Clothing and personal appearance shall maintain distinction between the sexes. Mark 10:6; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Cor. 11:4-5, 14-15; Deut. 22:5

C. Clothing shall exemplify gospel simplicity and be free of all evidence of pride and display. Brethren and sisters shall not adorn themselves with gold, pearls or costly array. 2 Cor. 1:12, 1 Peter 3:3-4, 1 John 2:16, 1 Tim. 2:9.

D. Brethren are to be free from the shame of long hair. Sisters are to have long hair and cover their heads with a distinctive Christian veiling. 1 Cor. 11:2-16.

E. The Bible forbids following the changing fashions of the world. Rom. 12:2, 1 Thess. 5:22, Titus 2:11-12, 1 Pet. 1:14. Some fashions and fads of this day include but are not limited to: tightfitting cowboy shirts, cowboy fads, short crotch pants, baggy, long crotched pants, long shaggy hair, spiked hair, goatee beards, or long side burns. We believe Gospel order and purity promotes neatness and cleanliness.

15). THE CHRISTIAN HOME: We believe and confess the importance of the godly home in the promotion of moral purity and faith. It is a haven of mutual love and godliness, a shelter from the corruption of the society. The home should be ordered according to the dictates of Eph. 5:22-33, Eph. 6:1-4, and Col. 3. We believe that godly parents who see their responsibility will strive to rear faithful children not accused of riot or unruliness. Titus 1:6, 2 Tim. 3:14-15. We believe God has set forth a plan of order in the home and that fathers must assume final responsibility for the direction of worship, for decisions, and the discipline of the children (1 Cor. 11:3). Wives be in submission to their husbands (Eph. 5:22); children obey and honor their parents. Eph. 6:1-4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

16). THE CHURCH: We believe and confess that the church is the Body of Christ and is to be subject to Him, both local and worldwide. 1 Co. 12:27, Eph. 1:22-23. The church consists of those persons from all nations who are redeemed by the blood of Christ and have responded to the call of salvation with the obedience of faith. John 3:16; Acts 10:34-35; Acts 20:28; Rom. 10:13; Rev. 5:9. We also recognize a great apostasy in these last days. Not all who name the name of Jesus are true Christians, but only those who manifest true scriptural fruit. (see 1 John). We stand in opposition to the liberal theology that leads to worldliness and the traditional theology that leads to formalism and deadness. 2 Tim. 3:1-5

In practice, we have plural eldership as much as possible. Titus 1:5. The differing gifts should complement each other in ministry and the church body. We seek to develop and employ the spiritual gifts in the church. Men that are ordained as elders, bishops, or deacons are to be qualified according to the direction given in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:7-9.

In practice, the committed brotherhood meets regularly to discuss and discern a Biblical course to follow and to unite in oneness. This is the proper place to discuss present issues the church faces. and needs to be done in accordance to Titus 3:1-11; and in true humility as prescribed in 1 Peter 5. These meetings need to be conducted under the watchful eye of the church's elders. 1 Timothy 6:20-21.

17). CHRISTIAN ORDINANCES: We believe and confess that ordinances were instituted by divine authority for the purpose of expressing heavenly thoughts and meanings, given to draw attention toward spiritual pictures of divine truth. These ordinances are as follows:

A. Baptism. Rom. 6, Matt. 28:19, 1 Pet. 3:21

B. Communion. We commemorate the death and suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, breaking bread and partaking of the cup, in purity of conscience; and in oneness with fellow believers who likewise have experienced the same. 1 Co. 11:23-26

C. Feet washing. We wash one another's feet as Jesus taught, blessing each other in the spirit of servitude. John 13:14-16

D. The headship covering. The covered (veiled) head of the sisters shows forth their desire to be subject to the man. We believe the veil should also cover the glory of their long hair; and is a power to her with the angels. 1 Co. 11:2-16

E. The holy kiss. We greet one another, men to men and women to women, with the kiss of charity and good

will; blessing each other. Rom. 16:16, 1 Peter 5:14

F. Anointing with oil. James 5:14-15

18). MARRIAGE: We believe and confess that marriage is an institution ordained of God between one man and one woman. It was set apart, or sanctified, in the creation. It was set forth by God for the benefit of mankind, for the propagation of the human race, for the purity of the human family and for the bringing up of Godly children. Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 2:18; Gen. 2:24; Heb. 13:4; Mal. 2:14-15.

God recognizes all first marriages. In God's eyes, only death can break the marriage covenant. We further believe that God forbids divorce, except for fornication (Greek- harlotry), or any marriage with divorced persons having former companions still living. Any such marriage is an adulterous relationship. Matt. 19:8-9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39

19). THE BROTHER HOOD: We believe and confess that the church is a brotherhood, submitting one to another in the fear of God. Each individual is set for the edification of the whole. Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:5

A. Christian love is a servant. It seeks opportunities to help all men and to inspire courage and faith in others. Matt. 20:26-28, Acts 20:35, Gal. 6:10, Luke 10:25-37.

B. Brethren desire to honor and esteem others before themselves and live in humble submission. They readily forgive and rejoice in the blessings of others. Rom. 12:10, 1 Cor. 13:4-7, Col. 3:12-14, Phil. 2:1-4. The Brotherhood should be known for its love. Herein lies the strongest appeal of truth to the world. John 13:34-35.

C. Love guards its speech. The brethren should not gossip, slander or even speak ill of one another or of any other person. 1 Tim. 5:13, Titus 1:10, Titus 2:7-8, Titus 3:2, James 4:11, 1 Peter 2:1, 1 Peter 3:10.

D. In practice we encourage openness, transparency, and accountability in the brotherhood. Brethren address each other privately, in true humility and love, concerning inconsistencies or error that they may observe in one another. Heb. 3:13, 2 Tim. 3:16, 1 Peter 5:5, John 13, Matt. 18:15-17. Church discipline must be exercised. The Bible gives specific guidelines for different types of discipline.

The motivation for such discipline is love, restoration and purification of the church. James 5:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:4-7; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Gal. 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:20.

E. All property is held in stewardship as God's. There is a conscious effort made to discern the needs of others and to share as the need arises. The Bible warns of the danger of accumulating riches and teaches a willingness to share. Matt. 6:19-21, 1 Tim. 6:17-19, 1 John 3:16, 17

F. The Brothers sense their responsibility to the hungry and naked. Matt. 25:35-36, Luke 3:11, Luke 14:13,14; Gal. 2:10

20). GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: We confess the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit found in 1 Co. 12 to be valid through the New Testament dispensation.

21). DIVINATION AND WITCHCRAFT RENOUNCED: Brethren are to be free from all types of witchcraft, sorcery, divining and other occultism and New Age practices. These practices shall be renounced in the name of Jesus to maintain church purity. Eph. 5:11-12, Gal. 5:19-21

22). Applications to Present day Activities: The Bible encourages us to love and good works (James 2:14-26); to work so we have to give to those in need (Eph. 4:28); feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, the fatherless and widows, do good to all men and in everything that we do, do all to the glory of God. Heb. 10:22-25, Matt. 25:34-36, Luke 14:12-14; Gal. 2:10; Gal. 6:9-10; 1 Cor. 10:31.

In contrast, Paul, in 1 Cor. 10 gives us examples of the children of God in Old Testament times of apostasy, where after they experienced many spiritual blessings, still fell away into idolatry, lusting after evil things, eating and drinking and rising up to play. These were written for our example and for our admonition in New Testament church life.

We believe the sports craze, the entertainment and pleasures of this world, is idolatrous and is to be avoided. The Bible condemns living in immorality, lust, feasting, drunkenness, wild parties, luxurious living, and idolatries. 1 Peter 4:3; James 5:1-6; Revelations 3:15-19; 1 John 5:21.

When anything other than God becomes our greatest love and passion, including hunting, fishing, skiing, water sports, tournaments, hobbies, work etc., it becomes an idol to us and will lead us away from our blessed relationship with our heavenly Father and blest fellowship of Christ and his church and unless repented of, into perdition. Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 10:14; Revelations 2:4-5

Also, when families meet together, sports and entertainment should not become the main priority of our purpose in meeting together. To meet as families to fellowship and play some games can be good exercise and can be useful to develop coordination and skills that may be helpful in work and life in general, if done in charity and in noncompetitive ways. Bodily exercise profits little, but spiritual exercise is profitable in all things. 1 Tim 4:7-8.

23). Applications of present day technology: Communication devices; cell phones, computers, the internet, and videos are part of the technology we face in today's world.

We have endeavored to abstain from worldly influence for many years by refusing the radio and TV in our homes. But today the predominate way of communication is with the new technology of cell phones, computers, and web related means; which have potential for much good but have also subjected us to many ungodly and wicked influences.

Though cell phones are very handy to be able to call or text someone, they also are become a source of wicked and ungodly influence in our pockets.

We believe parents should guard technology's influence upon our youth. Preventive measures should be used to keep our young ones from pornography, videos (this includes almost all entertainment videos and DVDs), foolish and worldly jokes, etc. We need to also stay away from video games, entertainments that are fantasies, acting, wicked, hypocritical, etc. These are influences that steal away the virtues of serious Godly behavior and that steal away the purity of a cleansed mind and blest life.

Even though computers, phones, etc. can be useful, they can quickly become a source of entertainment, destroy godly convictions, and choke out the Word. Deut. 11:16-17; Mark 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:1-7

There are a few useful video tools that can help us to learn a valuable skill or purpose. But everything we view and read needs to be run through the filter of Philipians 4:8.

We need to be aware of the dangers and negative influences coming in the form of Social Media. Some of these influences, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., should be avoided because they often promote a self-centered, hypocritical image which violates the principles mentioned in the following verses. Prov. 20:6; Prov. 25:27; Prov. 27:2; 2 Cor. 10:12, 18.

We believe the church and its pastors and elders, who are to be watchmen, need to discern and be very wary of our present day environment of technology and we need Holy Spirit guidance to withstand this evil day and its influence. Acts 20:17-31; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:2

In practice, we ask that any device that will be used for internet connection of any kind have Compass Foundation's filter or a similar accountability program installed on them and the reports sent to the accountability team that has been designated by the brotherhood. Home PC's that do not have internet connection available are an exception. However, fathers should not assume they do not have connection from their family computer as the possibility of accessible wireless connections exists almost anywhere. Filtering or blocking internet service to a mobile device does not eliminate the need for accountability. Smartphones and tablets must have protection software installed unless internet service is locked down. In order for the lock down to work properly, some apps and browsers on mobile devices may need to be uninstalled or locked. A parent, spouse or committee member can hold the password for app locking and downloading. Fathers should also be aware that many regular cell phones (dumb phones) have internet service and/or Wi-Fi capability. Check that data service is not set up because there is no way to apply filtering to these varied devices. Cell phones are used as tools, not as toys.

24). Applications of Music: The New Testament is a covenant of New Life. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ who has delivered us from the old sinful life into a clean, clear, and pure life of peaceful co-habitations.

Eph. 5:18-20 says, "Let us not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Music has a very meaningful part in the Christian's Life. We should sing a lot ourselves; being filled with the Spirit of God, we are to edify each other and bless each other with melodies in our heart; being forever grateful! Amen!
Col.3:16

The worldly music such as rock music, sensual music, country music, contemporary music (including so-called Christian contemporary music), most radio and concert music, and music with a heavy beat exalt evil and are influences that destroy the blessedness of our redeemed thought life in Christ Jesus. Even some a cappella singers and singing groups are being influenced by the worldly music styles of our day and by the desire to perform.

Therefore, we reject those songs and music that defile the purity of our minds. Many are corrupted in heart and mind, discouraged, defiled, and darkened by worldly music. Beware of Satanic influence through music.

Instead of filling our minds, ears, and hearts with ungodly music, we should feed on good sound music. Music that is based on good solid Bible principle and that teaches us to live a godly, holy life. Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:5; Matt. 7:15-20; Phil. 4:7-8 The music we sing or listen to should bring glory to God. 1 Cor. 10:13; Col. 3:17

Godly parents must know what music their children listen to. Elders or pastors need to be alert also. May the music in our homes be sweet influences of the Holy Spirit inspired joys of our hearts! Amen!

This is not a comprehensive list of our beliefs and practices; it is not our intent to restate the entire Bible. However, we hope this is helpful in answering questions regarding our walk with God.