

“Discipline yourself for the purpose of Godliness.”
1 Timothy 4:7

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Our History

Building a Team

In January 2011, Life Community Church (LCC) started out with a core group of faithful people who had a vision to be a part of something great in Columbia, IL. With lots of prayer, hard work, and God's amazing grace we are where we are today. Life Community Church officially launched as a congregation on April 23, 2011.

- Kingdom Accountability (Cornerstone Church Network and advisors.)

Starting a church is not easy. We had never done it before and honestly didn't know what to expect. The leaders of Life Community did not want to start a church alone. LCC needed direction, accountability, and stability; therefore, we are part of a church-launching network called Cornerstone Church Network. This Network has been instrumental in the success of LCC.

Furthermore, LCC is equipped with what we call "advisors." These individuals are well seasoned in ministry and can give us great perspective when we need it most. Each advisor is scheduled to speak at LCC once a year in order for the leaders and congregation to stay connected and familiar with them. Here is a list of our advisors:

- Dobie Weasel--Pastor of Life Church, Omaha, Nebraska.
 - Jeff Deyo--Founder of Worship City Ministries and Professor at North Central University in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 - Mike Ploen—Pastor, Communicator and Consultant. President of Progress 0415
- Staff and Board
 - Jamey and Kelly Bridges--Lead/Youth Pastors
 - Shaun and Shelly Williamson--Associate Pastors
 - Jeff and Jodi Miller--Life Kid's Pastors
 - Nichole Schweppe—Finance/ Admin
 - Christine Dormeier—Creative/ Social media Director
 - Dustin Davis—Graphic Design
 - Kevin and Jessica Andrews--Board Members
 - Roger and Anita Johnson--Board Member
 - Jim Schweppe--Board Members

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT SCRIPTURE

We believe the Bible, consisting of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, is the written Word of God. The Bible is the only true record of God revealing His heart to mankind as it leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The Word of God comes in many different forms.

As a Person, Jesus Christ-

- Many times the Bible refers to the Son of God as “the Word of God.” For instance, in Revelation 19:13, John writes about seeing the risen Lord in heaven and declares, “*The name by which He is called is The Word of God.*” We can also see in the beginning of John’s Gospel this reference, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (John 1:1).

As Speech by God-

- God’s words can take the form of **decrees** that cause events to happen and cause things to come into being. Genesis 1 is a perfect example of this type of decree. “*And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light*” (Genesis 1:3).
- Many times God will communicate with people on earth by **speaking directly to them**. In Matthew 3:17, God spoke from heaven to John the Baptist saying, “*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.*”
- God’s words can also be spoken **through a person**. Frequently in Scripture we see God speaking through the prophets. In Scripture, these words are in no way diminished because they were spoken through humans. In fact, in Deuteronomy 18, God says to Moses, “*I will raise up for*

them a prophet like you from among their brothers; and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” See also Jeremiah 1:9, Exodus 4:12, Numbers 22:38

• God’s words are also spoken in **written form**. The Ten Commandments are a perfect example, “*And God gave to Moses...the two tablets of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God*” (Exodus 31:18).

What does Scripture say about itself?

- Given by inspiration of God--2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:19-21
- The very words of God--1 Thessalonians 2:13
- All we need to know about God--Luke 16:29, 31
- A perfect guide for life--Proverbs 6:23
- Pure--Psalm 12:6, 119:140
- True--Psalm 119:160, John 17:17
- Flawless--Proverbs 30:5-6
- Perfect--Psalm 19:7
- Effective--Isaiah 55:11
- Precious--Psalm 19:10
- Powerful--Hebrews 4:12
- Nothing to be taken from or added to--Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32
- For everyone--Romans 16:26
- To be obeyed--James 1:22

What about the Old Testament?

Most Biblical scholars can agree that the Old Testament (OT) is the Word of God. The phrase “thus says the Lord” is repeated hundreds of times as He spoke directly to and through His prophets. What a prophet spoke in God’s name is what God says.

The OT ends with the book of Malachi (around 400 B.C.). This book concludes with a promise that would change the course of redemptive history forever and start something new. Malachi forecasts the coming of John the Baptist who would prepare the way for Jesus (Malachi 3:1, 4:5-6 and compare to Matthew 3:1-17, 17:9-13), Who would then prepare the way for salvation and righteousness.

From the book of Malachi to the start of the New Testament (NT), the Bible is silent for about 400 years. Many books were written during that time, which include history, stories, and end-times speculation. However, these books,

although good (like a Christian book in our bookstore today) are not considered to be part of the Bible as we know it.

We call these the Apocryphal Books and they are not considered Scripture. Why?

1. They do not claim for themselves to be authoritative as the Old Testament writings.
2. They are not regarded as God-inspired words even by the Jewish people from whom they originated.
3. Even Jesus, as well as many of the New Testament authors, does not consider it to be Scripture.
4. They contain teachings that are inconsistent with the rest of the Bible.

Why should I trust the Bible is accurate?

- Eyewitness Accounts
- The Bibliographical Test
- The Internal Test
- The Historical/Archeological Test

For Discussion:

1. Does my faith make the Bible true?

2. We consider the Bible to be free of error. Do you feel the same way? Why or why not? How do we define error?

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

We believe that God is not a human invention. He is not made in our image. In fact, He was not “made” at all. He always was, is, and will be. He is separate from us. He is unlike anything we can create. How do we know this? He told us all about Himself. God went out of His way to tell us who He is and what He’s like. Virtually every misunderstanding of God, Jesus, The Holy Spirit, and Christianity in general, stems from a misunderstanding of what God tells us about Himself in nature (Romans 1:20), in the Bible, and through His Holy Spirit.

The traits that make God who He is are like the many facets of a diamond. Each facet highlights a different aspect of God’s nature and character. Do the individual facets tell the whole story? No, but together they paint a picture of God that helps us to know Him as He wants to be known.

Because we are limited and God is not, we cannot know everything there is to know about Him. However, this is not an excuse for being ignorant. God decided to reveal Himself to our hearts (emotion) as well as our heads (intellect) so we could know Him. It is both our delight and our duty to receive this knowledge as best we can for His glory and for our good.

Below you’ll find the various traits or attributes of God that theologians, over the centuries, have compiled. In addition to the trait you’ll find a brief description of the trait and supporting Bible verses. Please note: These verses are not exhaustive. Further study will uncover more supporting scriptures.

God’s Attributes (With Supporting Scriptures)

1) Personal: God is a self-conscious being capable of thought, will, and interaction with others.

OT: Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:1-17; Job 12:13; Psalm 2:4; Proverbs 3:19; Isaiah 55:8. **NT:** Matthew 6:1-15; 2 Corinthians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3,7.

2) Creator: The whole of creation came into existence through the will, word, and power of God.

OT: Genesis 1:1-31; Nehemiah 9:5; Job 38:1-41; Psalm 19:1; 24:1; 33:6-9; 89:11; 95:6; 102:25-27; Isaiah 44:24; 45:18; Zechariah 12:1. **NT:** Acts 14:15; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11.

3) Life Giver: All of life was created by and is dependent upon God.

OT: Genesis 2:7; Psalm 36:9; Job 12:10; 33:3; Daniel 5:23. **NT:** Acts 17:25; 1 Timothy 6:13; Revelation 22:1.

4) Spirit/Invisible: God's existence can be immaterial, non-physical, and is distinct from His creation.

OT: Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 4:11; Job 9:11; 23:8; 35:14. **NT:** John 1:18; 4:24; Luke 24:39; 6:46; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Hebrews 11:27; 1 John 4:12.

5) Omnipresent: God is present in all places at all times.

OT: 1 Samuel 2:3; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 73:23-28; 139:7; Jeremiah 23:23. **NT:** John 4:20-24; Acts 7:48-50; 17:26-28; Ephesians 4:6; Hebrews 13:5.

6) Omniscient: God knows all things.

OT: 1 Kings 8:37-39; Job 34:21; 37:16; 38:1-3; Psalm 10:11-15; 33:13-15; 59:5-9; 94:4-11; 139:1-6,11,15-18; Proverbs 15:3; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Isaiah 29:15; 40:12-14, 25-28; Jeremiah 16:17; 32:19; Zechariah 4:10. **NT:** Matthew 6:7; 10:30; Acts 15:18; Romans 11:33; Colossians 2:3; Hebrews 4:13; 1 John 3:20.

7) Knows the Future (extension of His Omniscience): God's omniscience includes knowledge of all that will come to pass before it occurs.

OT: Genesis 15:13; Exodus 3:19; Deuteronomy 31:15-21; 1 Kings 13:1; 2 Kings 23:15; 1 Kings 14:12,17; Joshua 6:2, 1 Kings 16:34; Psalm 139:4,16; Isaiah 40:12-14, 27-31; 41:21-24; 44:6-8; 48:3-5; 65:24; Jeremiah 1:5; 32:3-5, Ezekiel 12:13; 2 Kings 25:5-7; Daniel 2:28. **NT:** Matthew 2:4-6; Ephesians 1:3; Acts 3:18; 15:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Revelation 13:8; 17:8.

8) Omnipotent: God can do all things with an unlimited amount of power.

OT: Genesis 17:1; 18:14; Deuteronomy 32:39; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Psalm 33:6-11; 115:3; 135:6; Isaiah 14:24-27; 40:28; 43:13; Jeremiah 32:17,27. **NT:** Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37; 18:27; Romans 8:31; Ephesians 1:11; Revelation 19:6.

9) Sovereign: God is absolute Lord over His creation and all that occurs therein.

OT: 1 Samuel 2:6-10; Lamentations 3:37-39; Job 9:12; 23:1-7; 34:24-30; 36:22; 37:20; 38:1-4; 40:1-8; 42:1-6; Psalm 2:1-12; 33:10; 37:12; 103:19; 135:6; Isaiah 40:12-17,22; 45:9; 64:8; Daniel 4:35. **NT:** Matthew 10:29; Acts 5:38; 17:24-26; 18:9; Romans 9:20; Ephesians 1:11, James 4:13-15.

10) Incomprehensible: God cannot be fully known.

OT: Job 9:10; 11:7-9; 36:26; Psalm 139:6; 145:3; Isaiah 40:28; 55:8f.
NT: Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 2:11,16; Ephesians 3:9; Philippians 4:7.

Note: God can be known insofar as He reveals Himself: Jeremiah 9:23; Daniel 11:32; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 13:9-12; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20.

11) Eternal: God had no beginning and will have no end.

OT: Genesis 1:1; 21:33; Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32:40; 33:27; Job 36:26; Psalm 10:16; 41:13; 90:2; 93:2; 102:27; 106:48; 117:1; Isaiah 40:28; 43:13; 44:6; 57:15; Habakkuk 1:12. **NT:** Acts 15:18; Romans 1:20; 16:25; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Hebrews 4:3; 11:3; Revelation 1:4; 11:17; 21:6.

12) Self-Existent: God has life within Himself; His existence is not dependent on anything or anyone.

OT: Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:14. **NT:** John 5:26; Acts 17:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16.

13) Immutable: God's nature, character, and dependability do not change.

OT: Genesis 8:22; 9:8-13; Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Lamentations 3:22f; Psalm 33:1; 89:34; 102:24-27; Isaiah 40:28; Malachi 3:6. **NT:** Romans 11:29; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 1:1-3; Hebrews 6:13-20; 10:19-23; James 1:17.

14) Perfect: God is flawless and complete; He does not lack anything or have any moral imperfection.

OT: Genesis 18:14; Deuteronomy 3:3; 2 Samuel 22:31-33; Job 21:22; Psalm 19:7. **NT:** Matthew 5:48; Romans 12:2; 1 John 3:3.

15) Incomparable: God is superior over all in His essence, character, and actions and is worthy of all praise.

OT: Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 33:26; 2 Samuel 7:22; Psalm 35:10; 50:21; 71:19; 86:8-10; 97:9; 113:4-6; Isaiah 40:25; Jeremiah 10:6-16.
NT: 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15; Jude 25; Revelation 4:8-11.

16) Good: The moral character of God.

OT: Exodus 34:6; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 25:8; 34:8-10; 135:3; Lamentations 3:25; Nahum 1:7. **NT:** Matthew 7:11; Acts 14:17; Romans 2:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

17) Holy: God is separate and set apart, from all else, especially from all evil.

OT: Exodus 3:5; 19:10-21; 20:18-21; 33:18-23; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 5:23-27; 1 Samuel 2:2; 6:20; Psalm 22:3; Isaiah 6:1-5; 57:15; Jeremiah 5:22; Habakkuk 2:20. **NT:** James 1:13; 1 Peter 1:15; Revelation 3:7; 4:8-10; 15:3.

18) Righteous and Just: God's nature and actions are always morally right.

OT: Genesis 18:25; Exodus 9:27; Ps 11:7; 19:8; 33:4; 89:14; 97:2-6; 111:3; 119:142,160,172; 129:4. **NT:** Matthew 6:33; Acts 17:30; Romans 1:16; 3:21-26; 3:21-26; 7:12; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5,9; 3:7; Revelation 15:3; 16:4-7; 19:2.

19) Judge: God is the final determiner of what is morally right or wrong; all people give an account to Him and to His standards.

OT: Genesis 18:25; Deuteronomy 32:34-43; 1 Samuel 2:3,10; 1 Chronicles 16:33; Psalm 7:11; 9:7; 10:8-18; 50:1-6; 58:10; 82:8; 94:2; 96:13; 98:9; Isaiah 66:14-17. **NT:** Romans 1:32; 2:2-5; 10:16; Hebrews 10:30; 12:23; 13:4; Revelation 20:11-15.

20) Wrathful: God's moral character leads Him to judge and punish all unrighteousness.

OT: Exodus 15:7-10; 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 4:24; 7:10; 32:21; Isaiah 13:11-13; Jeremiah 10:10. **NT:** Matthew 3:7; Luke 12:2-5; John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 2:5; 5:9; Ephesians 2:3; Colossians 3:6; 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Hebrews 10:26-31; 12:29; Revelation 11:16-19; 15:1,7; 16:1.

NOTE: Examples of immediate judgments: Genesis 38:7-10; Leviticus 10:1-3; 16:13; Numbers 16:1-49; 21:4-9; 2 Samuel 6:1-13; Ezekiel 18:4; Luke 13:1-5; Acts 5:1-11; 12:20-23; Genesis 2:16; 3:1-6; 5:5.

21) Graceful, Merciful, and Loving: God's moral character leads Him to administer His goodness, generosity, concern, and compassion on unrighteous and undeserving sinners.

OT: Deuteronomy 7:7-9; 10:15-18; 33:12; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 63:3; 86:15; 100:5; 103:8; 119:64; 145:8; Isaiah 63:7-9; Jeremiah 31:3;

Lamentations 3:22-26; Daniel 9:9; Jonah 3:10-4:2. **NT:** John 3:16; Romans 5:8-11; Ephesians 1:6; 2:4-10; Titus 3:3-7; 1 John 4:9; 5:11-13; Revelation 21:4.

For Discussion:

1. “Knowing God” is often described as a subjective, emotional experience. This is true. Do you believe God also wants us to “know Him” in a more objective, intellectual sense too? Yes or no? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think God inspired the writers of Scripture to reveal very specific things about His character and His traits?

3. How does a proper understanding of God’s traits or attributes help us as Christians?

4. How could an improper understanding of God’s traits or attributes hurt us?

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT MAN

We believe that the Bible teaches that mankind was and is the creative work of the one, true God. Contrary to popular belief, man is not the result of an accident or a mindless evolutionary process. If we are just evolutionary accidents, there's no difference between your value and a slug's value and there's no difference between Hitler's mission and Mother Teresa's mission. It's all just evolutionary processes, randomly acting on mobile matter. We know that's not true. Incidentally, the world knows that too (Romans 1:20).

The Bible says that after God had created all other creatures He formed the first man, Adam, from "the dust of the ground" and "breathed life" into him. From Adam, God then formed the woman, Eve, to be his companion and helper. In His image God created them both male and female (Genesis 1:26-27). Unique among all other creatures, only humans were created in the "image of God." What does it mean to be created in His image? Are we mirror images? No, not at all. To be created in His image simply means that we share some of His attributes, but in a lesser way. Unlike other created things, men and women are self-aware, spiritual, logical, rational, reasonable, loving, hating, creative beings with emotions, intellects, wills, and souls.

Mankind was created, in God's image, by God and for God. Mankind was created to share in God's love, to have dominion over the garden, and to bring God glory. No meaning can be found for man's existence outside of loving God, obeying God, and glorifying God.

So, why is all of this important? These truths define not just who we are but also why we are and what we are.

If the Bible is true and God created us for the purposes mentioned above, then chaos is not our creator. We have a purpose, and we are not our own source of authority. To put it differently, we are not our own bosses. From the first humans, all the way to you and me, we were brought into existence by the gracious will and power of God. We do not belong to ourselves but to God who made us for His own purposes and good pleasure. To seek separation from God is to sever ourselves from our meaning, our purpose, and life itself.

Even if you do not believe that you chose to separate yourself from God, you have. We all have.

Think about the first humans. In their original created state, Adam and Eve's wills were in tune with the will of God. There was, at that time, no corruption in their will and no inclination toward evil. In other words, man's desires, in his pre-fallen state, were pure. His desires were free from all defilement and disorder because they were subjected to God. Man was good. However, this state of "goodness" was not fixed and unchangeable. Man's original goodness (some call it "original righteousness") was a goodness that could be lost. That was proven by man's fall.

God gave Adam and Eve sufficient power to resist evil, as well as sufficient power to embrace evil. They had "free will" in the truest sense. Both Adam and Eve, after being tempted by Satan, freely chose to embrace evil. After Adam sinned, the game changed and the fall resulted. Man and creation were corrupted.

The effects and consequences of the fall are too numerous to list but in summary, the fall corrupted:

- Man's relationship with God.
- Man's relationship with man.
- Man's relationship with creation.

In addition to the relational damage, this corruption changed the very core of man's nature. Instead of being naturally good, man became naturally bad. Through his disobedience, Adam willfully traded his original goodness (original righteousness) for **original sin**.

Through Adam, all of humanity fell from total righteousness to **total depravity**. Adam's sin was passed on to all of us. Adam represented the human race, and when he sinned against God, he did it on behalf of everyone (1 Corinthians 15:22, Romans 5:12). **NOTE:** Jesus also represented the human race as a true and better Adam, and through His righteousness, all of mankind was given the chance to be redeemed (see 1 Corinthians 15).

What does it mean to be totally depraved? It means that we are not born neutral. It means that our very nature, as well as our choices, separates us from God. Through our inheritance and our actions, we are rebels.

Paul the Apostle says that, "while we were still without strength, Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). John said that "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son" to rescue them (John 3:16). It's important to recognize that God did not throw us a life preserver in our sin because we had no strength to swim to it. The good news is, God jumped in and pulled us out.

Man was created for God's glory. In our original state we were perfectly righteous with the ability to choose or reject evil. Man, corporately and individually, chose evil. In so doing, we forfeited our original righteousness and gained original sin. Adam, through his rebellion, became totally depraved and every human to follow remains totally depraved. Our minds, bodies, and souls are all marred by the corruption of sin. Fallen men and women prefer rebellion to obedience. However, God so loved the world that He sent His Son to live the life we should have lived, to die the death we should have died, and to restore all things at the proper time.

For Discussion:

1. Why is it important to look at humanity through a Biblical lens?

2. The old sinful nature "old man" and the new Christian nature "new man" do battle every moment of our earthly lives. What ways does our "new man" win these battles? How can we encourage each other to keep fighting?

3. The Bible is clear, "No one is righteous, not even one (Romans 3:10)." However, a believer is confident, that in Christ Jesus alone we are made righteous. How are we to respond to the worldly belief that says, "being good, nice, and sweet" is good enough for eternal life?

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT SALVATION

We believe that because we are made right in Jesus, God has saved us from all His wrath and condemnation (Romans 5:9). God is holy, perfect, and righteous in every way, shape, and form. Because of our sins, God should pour down His wrath on each and every one of us (Romans 1:18-32, Psalm 11:4-7, John 3:36). However, because He is holy, perfect, and righteous He made salvation possible through His Son Jesus Christ.

The Bible is clear that there is no salvation apart from Jesus:

- John 3:17-18, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”
- John 14:6, “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”
- Acts 4:12, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”
- Regeneration: The Bible teaches us that we can be “born again.”
 - John 1:12-13, “But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
 - Ezekiel 36:26-27, “And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.”
- Conversion: This is **our willing response to the call of God**. This is the time when we truly and sincerely repent of our sins and give our life over to Jesus Christ. The word conversion means, “to turn away” and in the context of salvation, it means our turning away from sin to a life of trusting and embracing Christ.

- God calls all of us to repentance and Romans 2:4 tells us that because of God’s mercy and kindness, He leads us to repent and He tells us this repentance leads us to salvation.
 - 2 Corinthians 7:10, “For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.”
- Justification: Justification is **God’s response to our faith and, in turn, He promises to declare that our sins are forgiven in Jesus**. This must be a legal declaration of forgiveness in light of God’s laws, stating that we are completely forgiven and stand righteous before a righteous God.
 - Romans 8:29-30, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”
 - Romans 3:23-26, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a *propitiation* (def. a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath once and for all and in turn this wrath is transformed into favor towards us) by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”
- Adoption: This is an act of God where He **makes us members of His family!**
 - 1 John 3:1-2, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”
 - The Bible tells us that we are God’s children, however we will not receive the full benefits and privileges of His adoption until Christ returns and we have our new resurrected bodies. Romans 8:23,

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we **wait eagerly for adoption** as sons, the **redemption of our bodies.**”

- Sanctification: Sanctification is **progressive and continuous** in nature. It happened when we became a Christian and it is happening right now, and will happen tomorrow, and so on until the day we are present with the Lord. **It is the process of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more and more like Christ every day.**
 - 1 Corinthians 6:11, “...you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”
 - Ephesians 4:15, “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.”
- Glorification: The day we are present with the Lord is **the day when we are glorified in our heavenly bodies**. It is the final step in the working of our salvation.
 - Romans 8:29-30, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”
 - Psalm 49:15, “But God will redeem my soul from the grave, He will surely take me to Himself.”
 - 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, “So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in **glory**. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.”

For Discussion:

1. 1 John 5:11, “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” Our salvation is powerful when others hear it. Take a few moments to share your testimony with the group.

2. Salvation is free, but following Jesus will cost you everything. Think of a few costly moments in your life and share them with your group.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

We believe the gospel message in its simplest form is this: It is the birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We Believe:

1. The gospel message is eternal. The Apostle Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:3, “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” We can easily see that this message was a message planned from eternity and written by our Father in Heaven.
2. The gospel message is an event in history. Jesus Christ was sent by Father God, born on this earth of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:35), was born divine and as a Man, and He knew His mission. We believe Jesus is the Ultimate Sacrifice for our sins and the one and only Mediator between man and God. He is our ultimate example and pattern on how we are to live our lives. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are all historical accounts of Jesus’ life and ministry, as well as various historical documents confirming His life on earth.
3. The gospel message is an achievement in history. John 19:30 shows us a picture of Christ on the cross just before His death. Jesus mentions these few, but very powerful words, “It is finished.” Up until this time, a complicated system of sacrifices compensated for our sins. Sin separated man from God, and only through the sacrifice of an animal (a substitute) could people be forgiven by God. However, this was only temporary and only an ultimate sacrifice would redeem us from our sin.
4. The gospel message is about the free offer of salvation. (See more in the “Salvation” section of this booklet.)
5. The gospel message is about knowing the end, our forgiveness in Christ and our coming to God. 1 Peter 3:18 tells us, “For Christ died for sins once and for all, the righteous and the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” Jesus wants the world to come to know Him, love Him, and trust Him as Lord and Savior for the final purpose of bringing us before God, a place where we belong.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10, “For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether you are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.”

For Discussion:

1. In what ways does our culture show that it is “religious” (even if they don’t profess a faith) according to the Religion vs. Gospel descriptions above?

2. The Gospel message is the most powerful message ever to be told and is totally sufficient for today. Why then in today’s culture does this message appear not enough?

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT STEWARDSHIP: MONEY

We believe it is important to have a God-perspective of money.

- 25% of Jesus' words in the Gospels are related to our resources and stewardship of them.
 - 28 passages in the four Gospels.
 - In the OT and NT combined there are over 800 verses on the topic of money alone dealing with a wide variety of financial issues including planning, budgeting, saving, giving, investing, debt, and tithing.
- Money is one of the greatest idols in the world, especially in American culture.
- Money is a critical component to the growth and health of the church.

God does bless us, but it is for the purpose of giving Him the glory and not ourselves. It is so easy to fall prey to the love of money. At Life Community Church we teach on this subject because the Bible has much to say about our money and possessions.

What is the function of money?

- Loving and glorifying God--Proverbs 3:9, "Honor the Lord with your wealth."
- Advancement of the Gospel
- Providing needs for your family--1 Timothy 5:8
- Loving people--through generosity, hospitality, and blessing others.
- Enjoying God

We believe God owns everything we have. Nothing good that we have or do originates with us, it all comes from the hand of God (see James 1:16-18; John 1:1-5; Haggai 2:8; Psalm 50:10; Psalm 139:13; and Luke 12:6-8). We also believe that we are stewards of all that God gives us. A "steward" is a person, who by God's grace, belongs to God. Because they belong to God they recognize that ultimately everything they are and have belongs to God and has been given to them as a gift. Therefore, stewardship means we seek to enjoy the gifts that God has given to us, as well as investing those gifts in other people. We should all steward our time, talents, and treasures to glorify God.

Money and Worship

Our money is linked to our worship both corporately and individually. As a body of believers, we worship corporately by contributing financially to our local church. We respond to God's gifts and kindness by giving in return, so that the Gospel can continue to reach others through the work of the church. We worship by loving our family and loving others with our money. Our whole lives are to be marked by worship; and, how you use your money plays a role in this every day. Worship does happen on the weekend, but it does not stop there. It is giving God every aspect of our lives, including money.

The Bible has a lot to say about giving. Often, you will hear the word tithe.

Old Testament:

- Tithing was basically (but not technically) a law. There is no punishment in the OT for not giving a tithe.
- 10% of earned money was given to fund the Levite Priest's ministry (Numbers 18:21-29, 27:30). Another 10% paid for festivals to build community and celebration (Deuteronomy 12:10-11, 12:17-18).
- 3.3% was given to the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29).
- There was additional tithes above and beyond regular giving (Nehemiah 10:32-33). It was not uncommon for a family to tithe 25% or more on a regular basis.

New Testament:

- Giving in the New Testament is centered around grace, not law.
- The word "tithe" is rarely used in the NT. It is used when Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and when relating to OT stories.
- The grace of giving: 2 Corinthians 8 and 9
 - Giving is a joy and an honor.
 - Giving is a heart issue; there is no standard.
 - Giving should come from your first fruits.
 - Giving should be done regularly, cheerfully, and sacrificially.
 - Giving is tied to your proportion of faith.
- The amount is between you and God.

Proverbs 3:9-10, “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-8, “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

For Discussion:

1. Preach it, teach it, or ask for it. When it comes to the topic of money in church, people cringe. Why does this happen? Has the church abused money? Are people just uneducated about a Biblical worldview of finances? Or both?

2. No matter how much or little you have, as a believer you can discipline yourself to use money for the greatest purpose on earth: for the glory of God and for “the purpose of godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7). In what ways can we glorify God with the money He has given to us?

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS ROLE IN THE WORLD TODAY

We believe in the Holy Spirit and the power He gives us to walk out our everyday lives. The Trinity is made up of the Father (God), His Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit is no less important in our lives than God or Jesus Christ. Jesus promised us before He was to be crucified that He would never leave us or forsake us. In Jesus' absence, the Holy Spirit has been given to us to guide us, comfort us and give us direction. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible not only translates "Holy Ghost" as "Holy Spirit", but it also translates "the Comforter" as "the Counselor". The Holy Spirit plays all of these roles in the lives of believers. Following is a list of some of the roles that the Holy Spirit fills in us:

- The Holy Spirit seeks to bring greater glory to the Lord through every believer. Jesus said, "He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." (John 16:14)
- The Holy Spirit intercedes for believers in ways that He pleads our concerns to the heavenly Father. Paul wrote, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." (Romans 8:26)
- The Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt. Jesus said, "When He comes, the Spirit will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in Me." (John 16:8,9)
- The Holy Spirit guides believers into truth. Jesus said, "But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears and He will tell you what is yet to come." (John 16:13)
- The Holy Spirit comforts us in times of affliction and hardship. Paul wrote, "Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." (2 Corinthians 1:4)

- The Holy Spirit cleanses, sanctifies and justifies us. Paul wrote, "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- The Holy Spirit refreshes us daily with hope and love. Paul wrote, "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us." (Romans 5:5)
- The Holy Spirit gives us new life. "Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.'" (John 3:3-5)
- The Holy Spirit reminds us of important truths we forget. Jesus said, "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26)
- The Holy Spirit helps us prioritize. Jesus said, "You shall be my witnesses, first in Jerusalem, then Judea, Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for the common good of the church and to draw attention to God. That being said, if you see a spiritual gift being used for a purpose outside of "the common good" it's likely that the gift is either being misused or the gift is counterfeit. Also, if a gift is only helping the individual or is drawing more attention to the individual than to God, it's likely that the gift is being misused.

1 Corinthians 12: 28-31 says, "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrators, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts."

At Life Community Church, you'll find both family and leaders who come to slightly different conclusions with regard to the how's, the when's, and the why's of these supernatural gifts. That's ok. The how's, when's, and why's of these gifts are mysterious. Our hope is that we can help our family and leaders to stay away from the far left and the far right. This, of course, is more difficult than drifting one

way or the other but with the Scriptures, the Spirit's guidance, humility, and "earnest desire", we hope to stay as centered as possible.

For Discussion:

1. Why is it important to be informed of spiritual gifts by scripture first, experience second, and church tradition last?

2. Does the administration of spiritual gifts during a weekend service make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE CHURCH

When we hear the word “church” our minds automatically picture a building. Life Community Church has a building and we call it a church. However, in the more biblical form, the word “church” refers to the body of believers.

The word "church" comes from the Greek word "ekklesia" which means "gathering" or "assembly." Therefore, the church is the gathering of the believers who come together to participate in fellowship with one another as they worship God and hear from His Word, the Bible.

In Ephesians 5:25, the Apostle Paul tells us, “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” God’s plan for the church was so great that He exalted Jesus to a position of highest authority for the sake of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Jesus is the foundation of the church and He continues to build on it. Matthew 16:18 clearly shows us this truth. Jesus says, “I will build my church...” Luke adds even more clarity to Jesus building the church as he writes, “the Lord added to their numbers day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2:47).”

The church is invisible, yet visible.

- In its truest sense, the church of all genuine believers is invisible. This is because we as humans cannot know the true spiritual condition of someone else’s heart. Only God can do that. We can see those who outwardly attend the church. We can see their lives changed for good and hope for inward spiritual change, but only God really knows.

The church is local and universal.

- The church can be applied to a group of believers at any level. It can range from a small group of dedicated Christians meeting in a home, to a congregation meeting in a large building, to all believers everywhere on earth.

Metaphors for the Church

In the Bible you will see the church mentioned as many other names and images to describe to us what the church is like.

- A Family--1 Timothy 5:1-2
- The Bride of Christ--Ephesians 5:32

- A Branch on The Vine--John 15:5
- A Harvest--Matthew 13:1-30, John 4:35
- Living Stones--1 Peter 2:5
- A Holy Nation/ Holy Priesthood--1 Peter 2:5
- God's House--Hebrews 3:6
- The Body of Christ--1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 4:15-16

Communion and Baptism

They are an outward expression that Christ uses to communicate to us the meaning and benefits of His redemption. They are also used to reinforce and remind us of the true meaning and content of the gospel. Communion and baptism are signs of participation in God's covenant, and they certify a true reality for us as God's sons and daughters.

Communion:

- Communion is a tangible means of grace whereby our senses (taste, sight, touch, hear, smell) connect to the promises of redemption in Jesus Christ through the drinking of the blood (wine) and the eating of the body (bread). This is a command issued by Jesus Himself at His last Passover meal with His disciples (see Matthew 19-20, 26-28 and Luke 22:14-20).
- Jesus says, "Do this in remembrance of Me." This means communion is a memorial act and proclamation of Christ's death (1 Corinthians 11:26) and, in turn, it means fellowship with the risen Christ.
- We believe that communion is open to those who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and desire to celebrate and remember His death and resurrection. It is open to all those who believe, not just regular attendees of Life Community Church. We also believe that communion should NOT be taken lightly and without self-examination. 1 Corinthians 11:28 tells us, "A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks the cup."

Baptism:

- The Bible teaches that those who are to be baptized are those who already have a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:47-48). The Bible also teaches that every act of

baptism in the New Testament was by full immersion in water. The Greek word *baptizo* means “to plunge, to dip, immerse” something into water. Furthermore, the Greek language has very clear words for sprinkling (*rantizo*) and pouring (*epicheo* or *proschusis*). Both words are never used in the Bible within the context of baptism. It seems clear that the New Testament teaches us that the preferred method of baptism is by full immersion.

What does it mean?

- Baptism is an outward expression of an inward working of the Holy Spirit on our heart (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). These verses help us understand that baptism is a step of faith for those who have responded to the word of Christ and their desire to make a further public profession of this faith through this act.
- When a believer is baptized they are professing their faith in Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. Before being immersed in water, they make a declaration that they are “putting to death” their old life and old ways. Once they are immersed in water, they are identifying with Christ’s burial basically symbolizing that their old life has died and has been put away. When they are pulled up from the water, it symbolizes their risen life with Christ as a new creation and he/she proclaims to the world that they belong to Jesus.

For Discussion:

1. What do you believe is the most important reason(s) to go to church?

2. There are so many great churches to be a planted in? Why do you believe God has placed you at Life Community?

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

It is the belief of Life Community Church that the Scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may serve the church in the teaching of the Word of God during services, as well as being a part of the leadership board. We understand that there are a few scriptures that seem to contradict our belief, but we are convinced those scriptures serve a cultural significance of the time of the early church and not necessarily an overall admonition stopping women from teaching the Word of God and holding leadership positions in our church.

We believe that the Word teaches the headship of man and the submission of women in the marriage relationship, not to imply domination or the relationship of an inferior to a superior, but as God's order of responsible authority. We believe the judgment pronounced upon Eve at the fall was not the original order and design in creation. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law and thus, He restored the mutual and complementary relationship which Adam and Eve shared before the Fall; men and women, working together for the glory of God. We believe the complete truth of the entire Word of God and what it teaches us, and so we search the Old and New Testaments for the answer to this controversial question.

The Old Testament had its share of prophetesses (Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Isaiah's wife). In the New Testament, Anna, a prophetess, spoke publicly of Christ to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Both are examples of women proclaiming the Word of God publicly. Peter made it clear on the day of Pentecost that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled (daughters, as well as sons, would prophesy and the outpouring would be upon handmaids as well as servants). In the book of Acts, women were numbered with those who were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues. Also, in Acts Philip's daughters prophesied and were recognized as prophetesses. All of these women were leaders and teachers of their day and time.

The bulk of the controversy comes from verses in I Corinthians when Paul was writing to the church of Corinth with some admonitions about the lack of order in their church services. We believe the issue at Corinth was not about the right of women to pray and prophesy in church; but rather, the proper manner in which it should be done. The key to Paul's meaning in 1 Corinthians 14:34 (in asking women to be silent in church) refers to Paul speaking of disorder and confusion in their church service. This undoubtedly resulted from women being segregated from the men and their undisciplined manner of speaking out publicly, therefore causing disturbances. It is clear from the text that the subjection Paul speaks of is subjection to their own husbands because of the reckless way they addressed

their questions and concerns, not total subjection to men.

Often, throughout the New Testament, Paul recognized women in ministry roles. In Romans 16:1-2, Phoebe, the bearer of the letter Paul wrote to the Roman Christians from Corinth, is called a servant (literally meaning “a minister or deacon” from the Greek word diakonos). She is also called a succorer of many, with a meaning of “one who stands before, a front rank person, chief, leader.” Another woman Paul recognizes often in the New Testament is Priscilla (Aquila’s wife). Paul called both Aquila and Priscilla “helpers” (fellow workers), a term he also applied to Timothy as well as other companions of his. Priscilla and Aquila both taught a man by the name of Apollos the Word of God and explained Scripture to him. They often opened their home as a meeting place for the church and taught out of their home. Paul spoke of Priscilla and Aquila six times throughout the New Testament, using Priscilla’s name first, four of the six times. Finally, we concur that when Paul indicates in Galatians 3:28 that “in Christ there is neither male or female” he means that in Christ sex discrimination and racial and social distinctions are abolished. Manifestations of the Spirit and ministry gifts are bestowed upon all members of Christ’s body with no distinction as to sex. Likewise, all believers, both men and women, are made priests unto God and as such have a ministry in service and the offering up of spiritual sacrifices to the entire household of faith.

In conclusion, this is a short excerpt of the reasons we believe the doctrine of women being able to teach in church and to hold leadership roles to be true. For a more thorough dialogue and/or a source of Scriptures pertaining to our beliefs on this subject, feel free to contact our pastor or a leader of Life Community Church.

For Discussion:

**1. What has been your opinion about a woman’s role in the church?
Leadership?**

2. Was that opinion based on the Bible or how you were raised? What you were taught?

FOUNDATIONS

how we got here | who we are | what we believe

