

# Gospel Partnership

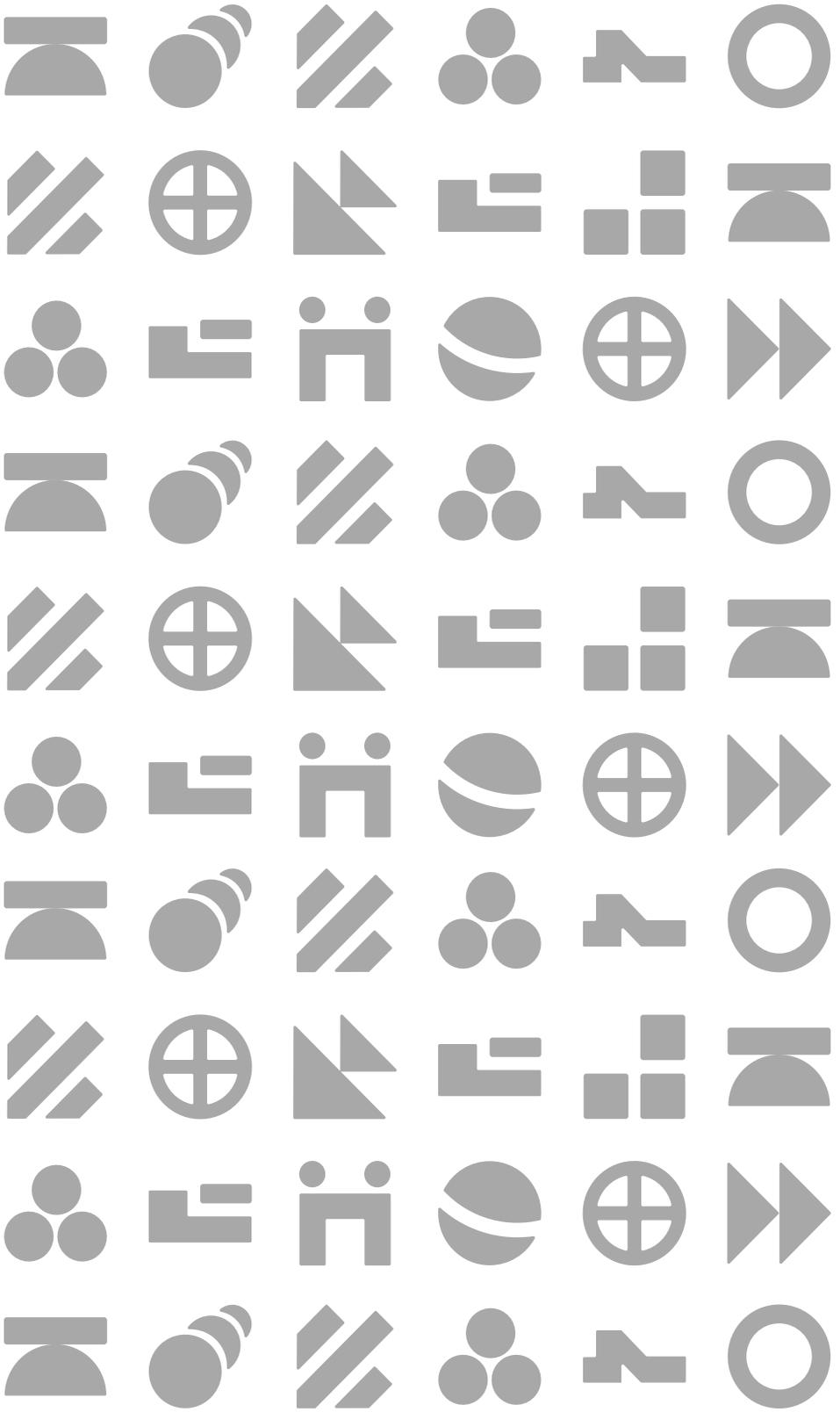
The Vision, Mission, and Values of Brandywine Grace Church





**To the gospel partners of Brandywine Grace Church.**

*“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you... because of your partnership in the gospel” (Philippians 1:3).*



Dear Gospel Partner,

You hold in your hand a tool. I see it on your nightstands and coffee tables—something you pick up when you have a few minutes to yourself. It's an accessible companion that reminds you of our partnership in the gospel. I also see friends discussing this book over lunch. I see parents reading a section to their kids before bed. I see it used in small groups to help you reflect and pray together. I see it read by newcomers who are curious about what we think and believe as a church.

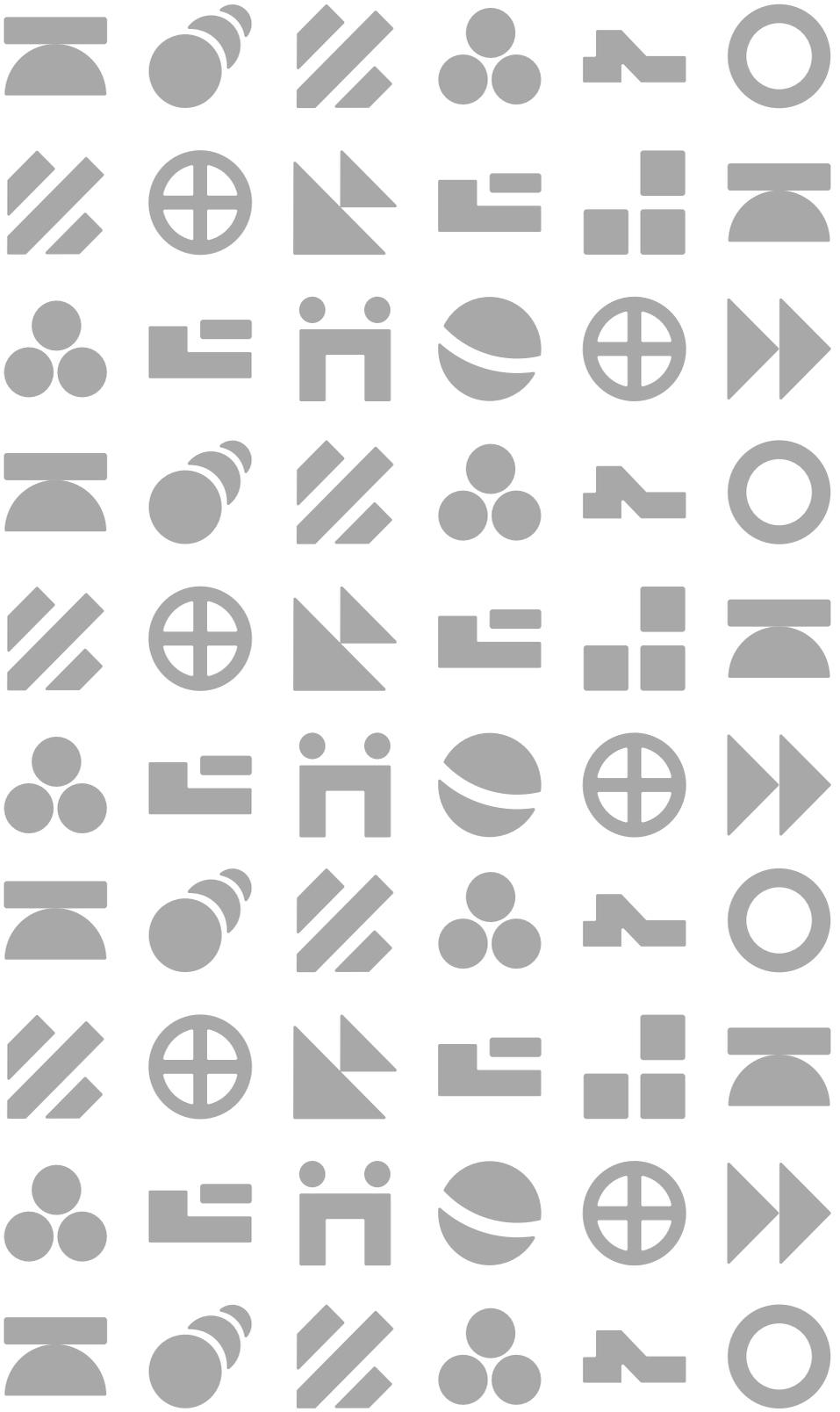
An organization's vision, mission, and values mean nothing if they're only website window dressings. At BGC, we want these to function for us, to form us spiritually, and to shape us in Christ-like maturity.

Here's how the book is laid out: each section begins by defining or describing the topic at hand. Scriptures are listed for meditation and prayer. Then, excerpts from recommended resources are listed to help you explore a concept further.

This book is meant to help you understand our vision, mission, and values and apply them to everyday life. Our vision, mission, and values provide a theological framework for discipleship. They keep us focused. They help us to be intentional. As we pursue them in the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to experience and enjoy gospel culture together for the glory of Christ.

JRus

March 2024



# Glossary of Terms

**Gospel:** the good news about what God did to rescue sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**BGC Gospel Partner:** a Christian committed to making disciples by participating in Brandywine Grace Church's vision, mission, and values.

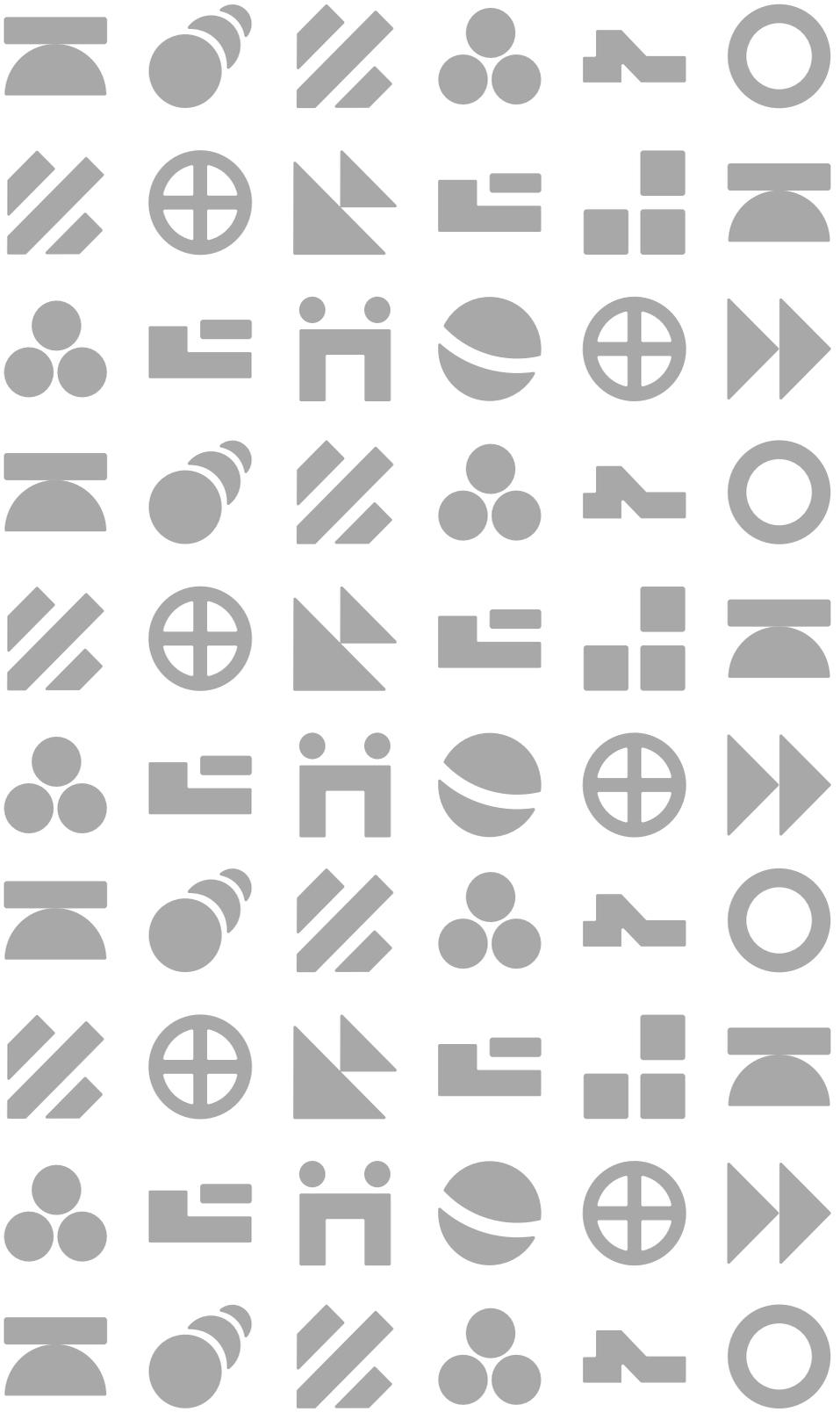
**Vision:** a belief in what could be and a conviction that it should be.

**Mission:** a strategic, focused effort to attain a vision.

**Values:** the guiding virtues and commitments of our church.

**Culture:** the characteristic and shaping features and norms of a particular people, place, and time.

**Gospel Culture:** the shared and shaping enjoyment of God's grace for the undeserving.



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## Section 1

# Vision: *What We Want To See*

The vision of Brandywine Grace Church (BGC) is of disciples continually increasing in *love for God, one another, and the world*. We picture people enjoying the gospel, in gospel community, on gospel mission.

### **Love for God**

We don't just know the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; we cherish this good news. We worship the Father, Son, and Spirit. We rest in the finished work of Christ on our behalf. We remain motivated for godliness by the same grace that saved us. We are confident in God's acceptance of us as his sons and daughters in Christ. We envision gospel partners striving to love God more and more in response to his love for us.

That's gospel *enjoyment*.

### **Love for One Another**

Discipleship involves relationships. In Christ, we are adopted into the family of faith. We are brothers and sisters. God is our Father, Jesus is our elder brother, and we are unified as one body in the Holy Spirit.

We care about one another. We provide for one another. We help one another. We envision a band of disciple-making disciples distinguished by their love for one another.

That's gospel *community*.

## **Love for the World**

We have one life to live. We want to be diligent disciples who make disciples in our families, neighborhoods, and among the nations. We want Jesus' fame to spread to everyone everywhere. We want to be continually transformed by the gospel and share this powerful good news with others. We envision loving the world by preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth, beginning in Downingtown, PA.

That's gospel *mission*.

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- **Love was God's motivation for sending Jesus into the world.**

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

- **Jesus summarized the entire Law by commanding us to love.**

"And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27).

- **Love is the hallmark of the Christian community.**

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

- **Disciples are to embody particular characteristics of love.**

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

- **God loves sinners, and so should we.**

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8).

- **The Holy Spirit assures and empowers us with God’s love.**

“... God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).

### **Further reading:**

*“In Christ’s death, God is confronting our dark thoughts of him and our chronic insistence that divine love must have an endpoint, a limit, a point at which it finally runs dry. Christ died to confound our intuitive assumptions that divine love has an expiration date. He died to prove that God’s love is, as Jonathan Edwards put it, ‘an ocean without shores or bottom.’ God’s love is as boundless as God himself. This is why the apostle Paul speaks of divine love as a reality that stretches to an immeasurable ‘breadth and length and height and depth’ (Eph. 3:18) – the only thing in the universe as immeasurable as that is God himself. God’s love is as expansive as God himself... In the death of Christ for us sinners, God intends to put his love for us beyond question.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“Christian love (or divine love) is the inner goodness and outer actions that flow from genuine salvation in Christ, distinguishing true Christians from others.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Dane Orlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 192-193.

<sup>2</sup> Jason Dollar, *The 21st Century Adaptation of Charity and Its Fruits: The Voice of Jonathan Edwards in Today’s Language* (Independently published, 2022), 18.

*“Do not let your happiness depend on something you may lose. If love is to be a blessing, not a misery, it must be for the Beloved who will never pass away.”*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960), 154.



## Section 2

# Mission: *What We Want To Do*

BGC's mission is to *reach* people with the gospel, *build* them up in the gospel, and *release* them with the gospel.

Reach, build, release, and repeat.

### **Reach**

Someone *reached* us with the gospel. A friend, family member, neighbor, or stranger noticed us, cared about us, and shared the gospel with us. We also want to cultivate this others-centered mindset. Individually and as a church, we want to help meet the practical and spiritual needs of those around us. We do this by developing friendships, hosting parties in our homes, worshiping together, participating in community events, and adopting a lifestyle that demonstrates and communicates our faith in Christ. We don't live in isolation. We enjoy fellowship with believers and intentionally befriend not-yet followers of Jesus, hoping they'll know the joy of loving and living for him.

Our mission is to *reach* people with the gospel.

### **Build**

OK, now what? Is our only goal to see people converted? No. Discipleship involves more than simply sharing the message of Jesus. It also entails baptizing and teaching disciples to understand and

obey all Jesus commands us. It involves gospel permeation in every facet of life. The Bible describes the church as a body. As each gospel partner (or body part) functions properly, we grow and mature over time. Using our spiritual gifts, natural abilities, time, resources, and experiences, we help each other apply the gospel through the ups and downs of life. Although Western culture prizes individualism, Christ-followers pursue the biblical model of a flourishing, interconnected, gospel-saturated community.

Our mission is to *build* people up in the gospel.

## **Release**

The name Epaphras may or may not be familiar to you. He's mentioned by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossians. Basically, Epaphras heard the gospel from Paul and then took it to his hometown, where he led others to Christ. Gospel proclamation to Epaphras led to gospel transformation in Epaphras, resulting in gospel multiplication through Epaphras. Every Christian has a role to play. Together, under the guidance of the Spirit and God's word, we discern the unique work God calls and energizes us to do. Then, we help and encourage each other in that work. We desire each Christian life to be one of fruitfulness for God's glory.

Our mission is to *release* people with the gospel.

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- **Jesus told stories about God's joy in seeking sinners.**

“So he told them this parable: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found

my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:3-7).

- **Jesus commissioned his church to make disciples.**

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

- **The early church models a vibrant and compelling gospel community.**

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 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).

- **The church’s maturity depends on every Christian’s participation.**

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 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, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human

cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 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 4:11-16).

- **The Holy Spirit empowers each disciple to testify of Jesus.**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

- **The gospel bears fruit in and through disciples who continually grow in understanding it.**

“Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant” (Colossians 1:5-7).

### **Further reading:**

*“Consider these four questions: Who is God? He is our Father. What has he done? He has loved us by sending his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. Who are we? We are dearly loved children of God – God’s family. If we believe this, what do we do? We love one another as brothers and sisters in the same way God has loved us”<sup>1</sup>*

*“... we must conclude that the gospel isn’t just for evangelism, the initial making of disciples. It is also for discipleship, the continual making of disciples. Jesus’s view of discipleship is radically gospel*

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<sup>1</sup> Jeff Vanderstelt, *Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 136.

*centered. The gospel is for not-yet disciples and already disciples. The gospel people believe to be baptized is the same gospel people believe to be sanctified (through the work of the Spirit). Followers of Jesus make and mature disciples by going with the gospel, baptizing disciples into gospel community, and teaching the gospel. We are to go in the power of the gospel, baptize into the grace of the gospel, and teach the Person of the gospel. Jesus is the ground of our going, the goal of our baptizing, and the gospel of our teaching. Making disciples is radically Jesus centered. This is how we make disciples – gospel going, gospel baptizing, gospel teaching.”<sup>2</sup>*

*“There is always a danger that church leaders and ministers will conceive of the gospel as merely the minimum standard of doctrinal content for being a Christian believer. As a result, many preachers and leaders are energized by thoughts of teaching more advanced doctrine, or of deeper forms of spirituality, or of intentional community and the sacraments, or of ‘deeper discipleship,’ or of psychological healing, or of social justice and cultural engagement... Though we may have an area or a ministry that we tend to focus on, the gospel is what brings unity to all that we do. Every form of ministry is empowered by the gospel, based on the gospel, and is a result of the gospel.”<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Keller, *Center Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 36.





### Section 3

## Values: *What We Want to Be*

In March 2023, the BGC elders gathered to do an exercise. We answered two questions. First, “If you could clone a healthy, mature, thriving gospel partner at BGC, who would you choose?” Secondly, “What characteristics, values, or traits does he or she embody?” We had a blast doing this! So many names and faces came to mind. It reminded us of God’s goodness and the privilege of pastoring the people Jesus has bought with his blood.

We jotted these characteristics down on a whiteboard and grouped similar characteristics under specific headings. Seven traits emerged, and we had an ah-ha moment.

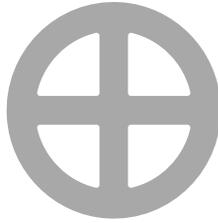
Thriving gospel partners at BGC are Christ-centered, Spirit-filled, biblically formed, meaningfully connected, joyfully generous, humble, and missional.

Why did we do this exercise? We believe that God is powerfully and graciously at work in the lives of his people. We want to discern what God is doing and join him there. The values we pursue in our church are not randomly chosen. We observe and pursue what the Holy Spirit uniquely does in this local body.

Let's review. Vision is what we want to see. Mission is what we want to *do*. Values are what we want to *be*.

At BGC, we desire to be

- Christ-centered,
- Spirit-filled,
- biblically formed,
- meaningfully connected,
- joyfully generous,
- humble, and
- missional.



## Christ-centered

The Lord Jesus Christ is at the very center of our faith. His life, death, and resurrection are the apex of God’s love displayed to the world; this is the central message of the Bible. Therefore, we want Christ to be front and center in our lives. We strive to abide in Christ and proclaim his gospel in our discipleship, worship, preaching, counseling, and mission.

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- **Jesus alone is worthy of being the center of all worship.**

“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,

‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and blessing!’” (Revelation 5:11-12)

- **The Bible commands a Christ-centeredness by prioritizing the gospel.**

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve” (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

- **A disciple's highest hope and joy is centered on Christ.**

“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

**Further reading:**

*“Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God’s grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God’s grace. Every day of our Christian experience should be a day of relating to God on the basis of His grace alone. We are not only saved by grace, but we also live by grace every day. This grace comes through Christ, ‘through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand’ (Romans 5:2).”<sup>1</sup>*

*“In the New Testament, the gospel is several times referred to as ‘the gospel of God.’ Such an expression should be understood in the fullest sense possible. The gospel is called ‘the gospel of God,’ not simply because it is from God, nor merely because it is accomplished through God, but also because ultimately it leads me to God, who is Himself its greatest Prize. Indeed, what makes the gospel such great news is God, who brings me to Himself and then gives Himself so freely to me through Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>*

*“... justification is both final and complete. It is final because it is the eschatological justification of the last day brought forward into the present day. It is complete because in justification we are counted as righteous before the Father as Christ himself, since the only righteousness with which we are righteous is Jesus Christ’s righteousness. When faith thus grasps the reality of this inheritance,*

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<sup>1</sup> Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer for Christians* (Bemidji: Focus Publishing, 2008), 49.

*then Christ himself looms large. This is the key to the enjoyment of assurance precisely because assurance is our assurance that he is a great Savior and that he is ours.”<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Sinclair Ferguson, *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance – Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 200.



## Spirit-filled

Jesus said, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He could not have been clearer. The Holy Spirit must give us spiritual life and empower us to live lovingly, joyfully, and faithfully as disciples of Christ. Together, we seek a constant filling of the Holy Spirit so that we may abide in Christ, obey his word, and evidence the presence and power of God in our lives.

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- **The Holy Spirit assures us that we are God’s children.**

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Romans 8:16-17).

- **The Spirit within us is better than Jesus beside us.**

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7).

- **A constant filling of the Holy Spirit is needed to love God and one another.**

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the

Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:18-21).

- **The Holy Spirit produces God-honoring fruit in our lives.**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

**Further reading:**

*“It is the Holy Spirit who... gives us confidence so we can enjoy intimacy with our Creator. Though I do not believe God gives us His Spirit solely for our personal benefit, it is undeniable that one of the greatest aspects of being in a relationship with the Holy Spirit is the intimacy, security, and encouragement He brings us. It is then we can serve God as a beloved child rather than a stressed-out, guilt-ridden slave.”<sup>4</sup>*

*“The Spirit indwelt life is not a special deluxe edition of Christianity to be enjoyed by a certain rare and privileged few who happen to be made of finer and more sensitive stuff than the rest. Rather, it is the normal state for every redeemed man and woman the world over.”<sup>5</sup>*

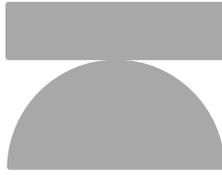
*“The central role of the Spirit is to reveal Christ and to unite us to him and to all those who participate in his body. Just as the indwelling of Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit are two aspects of one and the same reality in the New Testament, so to sustain us ‘in Christ’ (an expression which, with its variants, Paul uses around 160 times) is the heart and soul of the Spirit’s ministry.”<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Francis Chan, *Forgotten God* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2009), 104.

<sup>5</sup> A.W. Tozer, *God’s Pursuit of Man* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1950), 140.

<sup>6</sup> Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 100.



## Biblically Formed

We believe that God is a speaking God. In the pages of Scripture, God has made himself known to us. He teaches us his ways. He guides us in his wisdom. He compels us to trust and obey Christ. In so doing, he means to shape our lives and conform them to the way of Jesus. Minds saturated with the Bible are renewed by the Holy Spirit, which results in the transformation of lives and communities. This is why we're eager to submit to the Bible as the ultimate authority for our lives.

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- **When the Bible speaks, God speaks.**

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,  
‘Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,  
on the day of testing in the wilderness,  
where your fathers put me to the test  
and saw my works for forty years’” (Hebrews 3:7-9).

- **Saturating our minds with Scripture is in keeping with the way of Jesus.**

“But he answered, ‘It is written,  
‘Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’”  
(Matthew 4:4).

- **God’s word wisely shapes disciples in godly maturity.**

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

**Further reading:**

*“The Bible is meant to transform us. The Holy Spirit authored the Bible not just so that we could know things but so that we could know God and be transformed by Him.”*<sup>7</sup>

*“Discussion of inerrancy is merely an academic exercise unless it concerns the individual Christian on the level of his growth in God. This is precisely what it does. Confession of the full authority and inerrancy of Scripture should lead us to increasing conformity to the image of Christ, which is the God-ordained goal of every Christian.”*<sup>8</sup>

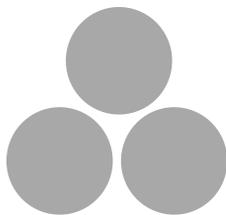
*“... the single most serious problem people have with the Bible is not with a lack of understanding, but with the fact that they understand most things too well! The problem with such a text as ‘Do everything without complaining or arguing’ (Phil. 2:14), for example, is not with understanding it, but with obeying it – putting it into practice.”*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jen Wilkin & J.T. English, *You Are a Theologian: An Invitation to Know and Love God Well* (Brentwood: B&H Publishing Group, 2023), 78.

<sup>8</sup> R.C. Sproul, *Can I Trust the Bible?* (Sanford: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), 57.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: Fourth Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 21.



## Meaningfully Connected

We believe that the church is family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ with God as our Father. Our identity as disciples necessitates participation in gospel community. In other words, no Christian can live apart from meaningful, relational connections within the local church. Our goal is to know and be known by fellow BGC partners as we mature in faith together.

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- **Christians are unified in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

- **Relationships in the family of faith are a gift from God.**

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

- **Perseverance in faith requires a consistent connection with fellow believers.**

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 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 10:23-25).

## Further reading:

*“Because God has already laid the only foundation of our fellowship, because God has bound us together in one body with other Christians in Jesus Christ, long before we entered into common life with them, we enter into that common life not as demanders but as thankful recipients. We thank God for what he has done for us. We thank God for giving us brethren who live by His call, by His forgiveness, and His promise.”<sup>10</sup>*

*“We tend to have permanently casual relationships that never grow into real intimacy. There are things we know about each other, but they fool us into thinking that we know the human beings who live within the borders of those details. So we fail to pursue them with good questions. This sets the stage for all kinds of misunderstandings. Our effectiveness as ambassadors is blunted because we don’t know others well enough to know where change is needed or where God is actively at work.”<sup>11</sup>*

*“Jesus has said that when we become perfectly one, the world will believe that Jesus was sent by God and that God loves the world even as He loves His Son. And so, no matter how hard or illogical or uncomfortable it gets, I can’t quit pursuing this. I’m not necessarily saying we shouldn’t do any other forms of outreach, but they need to be accompanied by an equal if not greater effort to encourage the church toward this oneness that Scripture promises will reach the lost. The gospel message is incomplete without the picture of the unified church. There is no plan B.”<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1954), 28.

<sup>11</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People In Need of Change Helping People In Need of Change* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2002), 163.

<sup>12</sup> Francis Chan, *Until Unity* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2021), 96.



## Joyfully Generous

In Christ, we see the generosity of God on full display. Jesus spent himself entirely; he paid the debt of our sin with his blood and made us eternal heirs of his kingdom. No inheritance on earth compares to this. Since God has been immeasurably generous to us, it is our joy to practice this same sacrificial generosity. The partners of BGC are committed to investing our time, talents, and money for God and others. God has entrusted material resources to us so we can enjoy them and steward them for his eternal kingdom.

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- **God’s joyful generosity is at the heart of the gospel.**

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

- **God loves it when we’re joyfully generous.**

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

- **Generosity helps those in need and results in thankfulness to God.**

“For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God” (2 Corinthians 9:12).

- **Generosity should be proportionate to a person's wealth.**

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life” (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

### **Further reading:**

*“God designed us to be generous. And He designed us to be generous in ways that expand His Kingdom. God designed us not to be hoarders but to be conduits through which His generosity flows.”<sup>13</sup>*

*“The gospel should change how we live. Paul’s conclusion in 2 Corinthians 8 is that those of us who have received such grace should imitate Christ by being compassionate and generous toward those in need. Because he willingly gave up his life for us, we should gladly use our earthly resources to bless our brothers and sisters who are in need.”<sup>14</sup>*

*“The reason the use of your money provides a good foundation for eternal life is not that generosity earns eternal life, but that it shows where your heart is. Generosity confirms that our hope is in God and not in ourselves or our money. We don’t earn eternal life. It is a gift of grace (2 Timothy 1:9). We receive it by resting in God’s promise. Then how we use our money confirms or denies the reality of that rest.”<sup>15</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Art Rainer, *The Money Challenge* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 16.

<sup>14</sup> Jim Newheiser, *Money, Debt, and Finances: Critical Questions and Answers* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Company, 2021), 285.

<sup>15</sup> John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1996), 167.



# Humble

We are who we are by the grace of God, not because of our moral achievements. The gospel constantly reminds us of this. So, we strive to live humbly before God and others. We seek to surrender our lives to God's will daily. We value service to others above simply living for our needs and wants. We honestly acknowledge sins, faults, and failures in hopes of growing in Christlikeness. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. This grace continually empowers our love for God, one another, and the world around us.

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- **Humility is the appropriate posture of those created and redeemed by God's grace.**

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5).

- **Jesus is our example of humility.**

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being

found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:3-8).

- **Humility leads to greatness in God’s kingdom.**

“The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:11-12).

**Further reading:**

*“... the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less.”<sup>16</sup>*

*“Humility is more than simply one more virtue to aim at – it is to be the atmosphere and quality in which we experience all of life. Humility is not just another thing to do: it is the way we should do everything.”<sup>17</sup>*

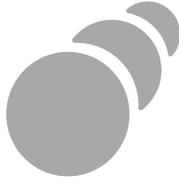
*“Humility is the only soil in which the graces take root; the lack of humility is the reasonable explanation for every defect and failure in the Christian life. Humility is not so much a blessing or attribute along with others; it is the root of all. It alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him to sanctify.”<sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>16</sup> Timothy Keller, *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness: The Path to True Christian Joy* (Leyland: 10Publishing, 2018), 32.

<sup>17</sup> Gavin Ortlund, *Humility: The Joy of Self-Forgetfulness* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2023), 40.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew Murray, *Humility: The Journey Toward Holiness* (Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers, 2001), 17.



# Missional

Jesus has given us a clear mandate: to make disciples of all nations. We want to take that seriously. We're about the work God empowers his Church to do. Whether locally or abroad, we are each called to be witnesses of Christ. We tell and show others the love of Christ. God loves lost people, so should we.

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- **The Church's mission is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.**

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20).

- **The gospel moves us from passive recipients to active participants in Jesus' mission.**

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you’” (John 20:21).

- **Like Jesus, disciples take action, feel compassion, and pray for lost people.**

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the

laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:36–38).

### **Further reading:**

*“Sent begins from a starting point of our identity in Christ; evangelism flows from who we are rather than inviting us into something more to do. As a result, we live as sent people not out of guilt, shame, or a sense of duty. Sent people naturally enter into evangelism the same way they eat breakfast or walk down the street. It’s simply a part of who they are.”*<sup>19</sup>

*“The gospel comes to you on its way to someone else. There are people who have carried it before you, and there are unreached peoples among the nations who are awaiting its arrival. The gospel comes to you on its way to people in your city and eventually to people in every nation.”*<sup>20</sup>

*“Radically ordinary hospitality begins when we remember that God uses us as living epistles and that the openness or inaccessibility of our homes and hearts stands between life and death, victory and defeat, and grace or shame for most people.”*<sup>21</sup>

*“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.”*<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Heather Holleman and Ashely Holleman, *Sent: Living a Life That Invites Others to Jesus* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2020), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Claude Hickman, *Live Life on Purpose* (Enumclaw: WinePress Publishing, 2011), 65.

<sup>21</sup> Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 109.

<sup>22</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 35.



## Section Four

# Gospel Culture

Pursuing our vision, mission, and values should result in a thriving gospel culture. We want the atmosphere of our church to reflect God’s kingdom in every possible way. Ray Ortlund describes gospel culture in this way:

*“The shared experience of grace for the undeserving: the corporate incarnation of the biblical message in the relationships, vibe, feel, tone, values, priorities, aroma, honesty, freedom, gentleness, humility, cheerfulness – indeed, the total human reality of a church defined and sweetened by the gospel.”<sup>1</sup>*

Together, we pursue a “beatitudinal” way of life (Matthew 5:1-12). We openly admit our inadequacy and trust in God, who is eager to provide. We keep first things first; the gospel is of primary importance, and secondary issues do not divide us. Our time together is marked by unity, peace, and joy from the word of truth, the gospel. We freely confess sin and point each other to the Lord and his mercy. There is celebration and enjoyment of the good gifts God provides for us in this world. We commit to pursuing and helping each other grow in holiness. We don’t take ourselves too seriously; neither do we neither criticize, sinfully judge, or mock each other. We express a genuine respect for one another based on the identity we’ve received from Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/static-blogs/ray-ortlund/files/2017/07/GDGC2.pdf>

- **Jesus teaches the traits of disciples living in a flourishing gospel culture.**

“And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:  
‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.  
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they shall be satisfied.  
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons  
of God.  
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:2-10).

- **A gospel culture maintains faith in the transformative power of the gospel.**

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith’” (Romans 1:16-17).

- **The gospel permeates and transforms every area of life within gospel culture.**

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2).

- **Gospel culture is born from our identity in Christ.**

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Romans 8:28-30).

### **Further reading:**

*“The goal is not to make the church safe for sin; it’s to make it safe for confession and repentance. When the gospel of Christ’s grace defines both the doctrine and the culture of a church, its members can safely confess and forsake sin. Even ‘extreme’ sinners find themselves wonderfully forgiven and freed.”<sup>2</sup>*

*“Among the most vital means of grace are other Christians. Neither the Bible nor the sacraments will leave the shelf or the sanctuary to rescue a Christian who is too discouraged or backslidden to pray or worship. But a concerned brother or sister will do this again and again! For this reason, Acts indicates that living in community is still another way of continuing to ‘abide in Christ:... Evidently, there is something so spiritually healthy about this level of community that it is irresistibly attractive to outsiders – or, as the text suggests, it provides a culture so nurturing that God can safely add new converts every day.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“We are summoned from the outset to combine as creatures with our Creator, as mortals with immortal, as redeemed sinners with sinless Redeemer. His presence, the interaction between Him and*

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<sup>2</sup> Ray Ortlund, *The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 73.

<sup>3</sup> Richard F. Lovelace, *Renewal as a Way of Life: A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1985), 178-179.

*us, must always be the overwhelmingly dominant factor in the life we are to lead within the Body, and any conception of Christian fellowship which does not mean primarily fellowship with Him is out of court.”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1949), 166.

# Epilogue

To all who are weary and need rest;  
To all who mourn and long for comfort;  
To all who feel worthless and wonder if God even cares;  
To all who are weak and fail and desire strength;  
To all who sin and need a Savior -

This church opens wide our doors with a welcome from Jesus,  
the mighty Friend of sinners,  
the Defender of the indefensible,  
the Justifier of those who have no excuses left.

We want you to know, you just walked in to grace.

You can relax.

You can own up.

You can be honest.

You can face the living God through the blood of Christ and let him  
speak to you.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A modified version of Ray Ortlund's welcome at Immanuel Church in Nashville, TN.



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