

Statement of Faith

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members:

- A. The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and, therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. For the purposes of consistency and uniformity, the King James Bible will be the official translation used in all ministries of Grace Baptist Church (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- B. The Godhead. We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10, 26).
- C. The Person and Work of Christ.
 1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8).
 2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5).
 3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2).
- D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.
 1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ and indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14).
 2. We believe that He is the divine Teacher who instructs believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27). 3

3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12).
 4. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit, and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22).
- E. The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19).
- F. Salvation. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- G. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.
1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 8:38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5).
 2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word and witness of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Tit. 2:11-15, Rom. 8:16).
- H. The Church.
1. We believe that the local church is made up solely of born-again persons whose purpose is fulfilling the Great Commission and practicing the Scriptural ordinances (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27).
 2. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
 3. We recognize water baptism and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

- I. Separation. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner so as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and immoderate appearances (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; Lev. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- J. The Second Advent of Christ. We believe in that Blessed Hope: the personal, imminent coming of Christ in the air who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints to the earth to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Tit. 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).
- K. The Eternal State.
1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13).
 2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6).
 3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).
- L. The Personality of Satan. We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the tempter of man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).
- M. Creation. We believe that God created the universe in six literal, twenty-four (24)-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11).
- N. Civil Government. We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).

O. Human Sexuality.

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. We believe that all forms of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).
2. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one naturally-born man with XY chromosomes and one naturally-born woman with XX chromosomes for life. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)
 - No other kinds of marriages will be recognized by Grace Baptist Church.
 - No other kinds of marriages or unions will be performed on or off the church property by church staff or members.
 - All marriages will follow the guidelines of Family Relationships (Statement of Faith, Section 2.01, [P]).
3. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Grace Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Grace Baptist Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Grace Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage and Human Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).
4. Gender Roles in the Church - We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the church. Men are to be the leaders of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for the office of pastor, elder, or deacon, for licensure or ordination by the church, and for the position of teaching adult men (Genesis 1:26,27; I Timothy 3:1-13, Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15). Women may hold the offices of church clerk, financial secretary, treasurer, mission treasurer, committee member, and Bible teacher of pre-adults (under 18) male and female, and teacher of adult women.

P. Family Relationships

1. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home. The husband is to be the leader of the home (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18,19; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).

2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

Q. Divorce and Remarriage. God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). “Divorce in the Scripture is permitted as an accommodation to man’s sin for the protection of the innocent party. Since divorce is only a concession to man’s sin and is not a part of God’s original plan for marriage, all believers considering divorce should have the same attitude toward divorce as does God. In Matt. 19:5-9, Christ teaches that divorce is an accommodation to man’s sin and is in violation of God’s purpose for intimate unity of the marriage bond (Gen. 2:24). It was a concession for the ‘innocent party’ due to the insensitivity of the other partner to God. This is defined biblically as the ‘hardness of heart’ (Matt. 19:8). Dissolution meant that the ‘innocent partner’ no longer had to remain in a hopeless and intolerable situation (Matt. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:12-15). It is to be expected that a believer will have the same attitude toward divorce as does God and will see it as a violation of God’s expressed purpose for marriage (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Mk. 10:1-12; 1 Cor. 7:10-15; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Tit. 1:6).” – John Mac Arthur, *Divorce and Remarriage*.

1. “Innocent Partner.” There is a dual responsibility in marriage. Very seldom is one partner totally innocent. Believers must search the Scriptures and themselves regarding their responsibility in marriage before placing themselves in the category of the “innocent party.”
2. Biblical Grounds for Divorce.
 - a. Fornication (any sinful sexual activity, including adultery – unfaithfulness of a marriage partner, homosexuality, and incest (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 5:1).
 - b. Abandonment by a nonbelieving partner who refuses to live with his or her believing spouse, especially because of his or her Christian testimony (1 Cor. 7:12-15).
 - c. It is essential to keep in mind that the Bible merely permits divorce in these limited circumstances but never commands divorce.
3. Biblical Grounds for Remarriage.
 - a. Remarriage is permitted for the innocent party when the divorce was on biblical grounds [Article II, Section 2:01, (Q), (2)].

- b. According to the Old Testament pattern, remarriage was allowed after the divorce (the exception is found in Deut. 24:1-4). The New Testament allows for remarriage when the divorce was based upon biblical grounds (1 Cor. 7:15).
4. Non-biblical Grounds for Remarriage.
- a. In cases where a divorce was obtained between believers on nonbiblical grounds, the person who remarries first commits “adultery” (Matt. 19:9) and the person who marries a person who was divorced on nonbiblical grounds also commits adultery (Lk. 16:18) In cases where the divorce was not for the two reasons stated above, the believer is exhorted to (1) seek for reconciliation, or else (2) remain unmarried (1 Cor. 7:10,11).
 - b. When one party remarries after a divorce which was on nonbiblical grounds, that person has committed adultery because God did not recognize the validity of the divorce (Matt. 5:32; Mk. 10:11). Since the remarried partner has “committed adultery,” the marriage bond is now broken and the remaining partner is free to remarry.
 - c. If the divorce was not on biblical grounds, the person who marries the divorcee is considered an adulterer (Mark 10:12).
 - d. Believers who pursue divorce on nonbiblical grounds are subject to church discipline because they openly reject the Word of God. The one who obtains a divorce on nonbiblical grounds and remarries is living in a state of “adultery” since God did not recognize the validity of the original divorce (Matt. 5:32; Mk. 10:11,12). That person is subject to the steps of church discipline as outlined in Matt. 8:15-17 (Article 3, Section 3:05) and as illustrated in 1 Cor. 5:1-13.
 - e. Where the divorce took place on nonbiblical grounds and where the guilty party repents, it is assumed that the repentant party will endeavor to restore the marriage whenever possible as a sign of true repentance. A true sign of repentance will be a desire to implement 1 Cor. 7:11. This involves a willingness to remain unmarried or else to be reconciled to their mate. If a believer obtained a divorce on nonbiblical grounds and remarried, the second marriage union is recognized as living in “adultery” (Mark 10:11,12). If repentance takes place, it is recognized that to obtain a second divorce would disobey Scripture (Deut. 24:1-4); hence, they are to remain in the second marriage.
 - f. If the innocent party in a divorce is seeking remarriage, it is preferable that he/she wait until the spouse has remarried or a sufficient amount of time has passed so as not to preclude any possibility of reconciliation.

5. Divorce before Salvation. Salvation means that a person begins a new life. The believer is responsible to live up to what God has revealed about marriage and divorce from the point of his or her salvation. A sign of saving faith will be receptivity and a willingness to obey what Christ has revealed about marriage and divorce through the Word. The Apostle Paul's counsel in 1 Cor. 7:20, 27 is that a believer is to see every circumstance that they are in when they became a believer as from God. If they were called while married, they are not to seek a divorce (except on the grounds allowed in Matt. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:12-16). If they were called while divorced, they are free to be remarried to another believer. (2 Cor. 6:14).
 6. The Possibility of Church Leadership (Pastor and Deacon). The church has a responsibility to uphold the biblical ideal of marriage, especially as exemplified by its leadership. In cases where there has been a divorce in a person's past, the church has an obligation to restrict, for a period of time, the person's involvement in leadership until it can be proven that the present marriage exemplifies Christ's relationship to His church. 1 Tim. 3:2, 12 sets the marital qualification for leadership within the church. The phrase "the husband of one" does not mean that a person cannot have had a divorce in his past since none of the other qualifications listed refer to specific acts in the past (prior to salvation or subsequent to salvation) but rather to qualities which currently characterize a man's life. It is especially important, in cases where there has been a divorce in a man's past, that there be a period of careful observation to see that his present marriage is characterized by devotion and sacrificial love; this period of time should be sufficient for him to prove and be known as the "husband of one wife."
- R. Sanctity of Human Life. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44; John 9:1-3).
- S. Abortion. We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions or pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

- T. Euthanasia. We believe that the personal choice to take an innocent human life, including one's self, is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)
- U. Love. We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers and those who oppose us. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Tit. 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18).
- V. Lawsuits between Believers. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).
- W. Missions. We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that they may believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, we must use all biblical means available to bring the Gospel to the foreign nations (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20).
- X. Giving. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially for the spread of the Gospel and relief of those in need. Once a gift has been designated and given, the designation cannot be changed (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17).
- Y. Stewardship of the Physical Body.
1. We believe that Christians are to possess their vessel in sanctification and honor (1 Cor. 6:19,20; 1 Thess. 4:4). Thus we would encourage them to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the abuse of drugs.
 2. Although the Bible seems to allow the consumption of alcohol while condemning drunkenness, we believe that a member of Grace Baptist Church should abstain from the use of alcohol for the following reasons:
 - a. Wine is a mocker (Pro. 20:1).
 - b. Wine has the power to enslave oneself (1 Cor. 6:12).
 - c. Wine has the power to be a stumblingblock (Rom. 14:3, 1 Cor. 8:9).