



DISCIPLESCHURCH

Membership Class

Session 2

What We Believe - Part 1

Glorifying God Through Lives Transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ

SESSION 2: What We Believe - Part 1

I. Why theology matters

“I’ve come to learn that theology matters, and it matters not because I want a good grade on a test, but because what we know about God shapes the way we think and live. What you believe about God’s nature – what He is like, what He wants from you, and whether or not you will answer to Him – affects every part of your life.” – **Joshua Harris, *Dug Down Deep***

In 1 Timothy, Paul is emphasizing to Timothy the need to know, teach, practice, and protect sound doctrine:

... being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. **1 Timothy 4:6-8**

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching [doctrine]. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. **1 Timothy 4:16**

When it comes to theology and doctrine, Disciples Church trusts fully in the authority and teaching of the holy Bible. We affirm **2 Timothy 3:16-17**: “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.”

Since the first few centuries, the Christian Church has found it helpful to summarize its biblical doctrine--its core beliefs and teachings--through summarized points in creeds and confessions (also called Statements or Affirmations). Over the many centuries, this approach has proven to be helpful in communicating God’s truth, clarifying biblical convictions, and protecting from/refuting false teaching. Disciples Church has been blessed by the historic and longstanding orthodox teachings of those throughout church history. We have come to increasingly benefit from the faithful work of the historic Baptist Confession of 1689.

In the next section, you will find the *Statement of Beliefs* of the members of Disciples Church.

In addition to Disciples Church’s *Statement of Beliefs*, we have supporting resources that we use to expound upon the Statements in various ways:

- **Disciples Church Position Papers**
Disciples Church has found it helpful throughout the years to write position papers on various topics as an accessible resource to further expand on a teaching of the church.
- **Word of Truth Catechism**
Disciples Church enjoys using and promoting the use of a Christian catechism in the church and for singles and families within the church. This *Word of Truth Catechism* contains short questions and answer responses, biblical references for seeing the doctrine taught in God’s word, and additional points and definitions.

Together, these statements and other resources help promote theological understanding and Christian unity within Disciples Church. Church members must understand the importance of honoring church leadership in these matters and not being divisive over teachings or influencing others contrary to these teachings.

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II. Our Core Beliefs: Statement of Beliefs (Part 1)

God

We believe God is the almighty Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of everything. He is perfect and the standard by which all things are measured. There is only one true God. God exists eternally as one God, three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. God is eternal, self-existent, and self-sufficient. He has ordained all things that come about, is all-knowing, and is in control of all things.

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Isaiah 6:3 “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory”

Matthew 5:48 “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Deuteronomy 6:4 (NASB) “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”

Isaiah 46:9 “... for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me”

John 5:26 “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you.'"

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Ephesians 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will

Daniel 4:35 (NASB) “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”

Isaiah 45:7 “I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.”

Isaiah 46:10 “declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’”

The Bible

We believe the Bible is God’s inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative, written word.

The Bible is completely true and without error in its original manuscripts.

The holy Bible is sufficient and the final authority for our understanding of God and His will for His creation.

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

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

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 “Test all things; hold fast what is good”

Romans 15:4 (NASB) For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Creation, Sin, and Humanity

We believe God created humanity and every other created thing.

God made all things to glorify Him, so His glory would be known and praised. God created Adam and Eve in His image. They were created good, blessed, and with no sin.

Sin is any disobedience in heart or deed to God's perfect law and commands.

God chose Adam to act as the representative of the entire human race. Adam disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden fruit, which brought about the fall of mankind. As a result of the sin of Adam, all people are guilty: born sinful by nature, enslaved to sin, and practice sin willingly and continually; therefore, all are due the just penalty of God's perfect wrath. In and of oneself, a person can do nothing that honors God and has no will that longs to trust in Jesus, apart from effective saving grace exerted by God to transform them. In addition to the curse on mankind, creation is also cursed and broken because of sin. It does not function in the "good" way in which God created it.

Isaiah 43:7 "everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Psalms 96:1-3 (NASB) Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.

Psalms 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Romans 5:12 (NASB) Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned

Romans 3:10-12 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Romans 8:8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Isaiah 64:6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment ...

Genesis 3:17-18 (NIV1984) ... "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field."

Romans 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it ...

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

2 Peter 3:13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

God's Law

We believe God's law is the requirements on man often expressed through commands that God has given. God's law displays His perfections and glory, informs mankind what is required of us, and reveals our sin and our desperate need for Jesus. Throughout time, God has given certain commands for a particular people, a particular purpose, and a particular time, while all people in all times are accountable to His eternal, unchanging moral law.

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple

Romans 3:20 (NIV1984) Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Romans 2:14-16 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Romans 3:31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.