



life together as a
CHURCH

Begin > Connect > Grow > Engage

FBC Membership Class



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BEGIN with the Gospel

Description: The right beginning is critical. Our beginning in this world began with being born in sin. We must be born again. We have new life – a new beginning – through faith alone in Jesus Christ. This new life in Christ is expressed in believer's baptism.

What is the Gospel?

A. *Why is it important to begin a membership class with an overview of the gospel?*

We believe in **regenerate** church membership ("regenerate" means to be made spiritually alive – to be born again):

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit

John 3:6-7 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

"Membership is the church's endorsement of a person's salvation."

Mark Dever, *What is a Healthy Church?*

In order for someone to become a member of First Baptist Church they must be a born-again Christian. When we accept someone into our membership we are saying that based on what we have **seen** and **heard** we believe this person is born-again – they are a follower of Jesus Christ.

B. *What is the Gospel?*

*There is only **one** true gospel: Galatians 1:6-8* I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

Scripture alone is our infallible authority for what we believe and practice. Scripture teaches we are saved by **grace** alone through **faith** alone in **Jesus Christ** alone for the **glory** of **God** alone.

We are not saved **by good works** but **for good works**.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Four crucial questions:

1. *Who made us, and to whom are we accountable?*
2. *What is our problem? In other words, are we in trouble and why?*
3. *What is God's solution to that problem? How has he acted to save us from it?*
4. *How do I – myself, right here, right now – how do I come to be included in this salvation? What makes this good news for me and not just for someone else?*

The answers to these questions may be summarized like this: **God, Man, Christ, Response**. (Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?*)

What is Believer's Baptism?

Going Public with Your Faith

Through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit we are regenerated – born again. We have repented of our sin and have received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. *What now?* Obey Christ by being baptized by immersion.

It is not true that a person is not born again/saved until they are baptized. Baptism is an outward act of obedience (not optional) showing that one has already been regenerated/saved.

- Abraham was declared by God to be righteous (justified) by faith alone *before* he received circumcision – the sign of the Old Covenant: **Romans 4:10** “How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised”.
- Believers today receive the sign of the New Covenant – the Holy Spirit – when they believe: **Ephesians 1:13** “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit”.
- Those who have been born again by a repentant faith in Jesus, express this turning to Christ and new way of living through **believer's baptism**: **Acts 2:41** “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”

Clarity: Believers *are* baptized. Baptism is for **believers**, not **babies**.

Remember What Your Baptism Communicates

Sometimes the gospel may seem too good to be true. Someone might even think that if we are saved by grace then we have a license to sin. If you are ever asked this or tempted to think this way **remember what your baptism communicates.**

1. I am **United** with Jesus by Grace through Faith (Romans 6:3a)

*Baptism does **not** communicate water-regeneration.
Baptism is an **outward** expression of an **inward** reality.*

2. My Old Life of Sin is **Dead** and **Buried** with Jesus (Romans 6:3b-4a)

3. I've Been **Raised** with Jesus to **Walk** with God (Romans 6:4b-5)

The same power that raised Jesus will in the future glorify us.

- We are freed from the **penalty** of sin
- We will be free from the **presence** of sin.
- Yet this same resurrection power has entered the present time and has broken the **power** of sin so that we now walk in newness of life!

CONNECT through Church Membership

Description: Church Membership *begins* with the gospel – you must be born again. The first step of obedience for the Christian is to express their new life in Christ by going public with their faith in believer's baptism by immersion. In order for followers of Jesus to grow it is essential that they *connect* with a local church family.

WHO ARE WE?

First Baptist Church is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). We cooperate with other Southern Baptist churches to spread the gospel across the street and around the world. In order to understand why FBC chooses to be part of the Southern Baptist Convention it will be helpful to take a step back into church history.

I. Why are We Protestants? What are We Protesting? – It's all about authority.

Protestant denominations, like the SBC, are not products of theological evolution, (as if to say we are in the process of discovering and understanding new truths about God which have progressively unfolded over the past 2,000 years), but rather of getting *back* to the Bible. The term "Protestant" refers to the ongoing protest against the teachings and practices of Roman Catholicism (which includes the denial that we are justified by faith alone in Christ).

A. Positive Contributions of the Roman Catholic Church.

B. Pervasive Corruption of the Roman Catholic Church.

- Growth of monarchical bishops and emergence of the Pope. Now *his* word ruled the church.
- The people were largely oblivious. *Why?* They did not have access to the only infallible authority for what we believe and practice – the Bible.

C. Martin Luther

- October 31, 1517 – 95 Theses (95 objections to the Pope and Roman Catholicism).
- Converted in 1519 – Luther came to understand that we are justified by faith alone.
Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."
 "There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith . . . Here I felt that I was altogether born again and entered paradise itself through open gates."
- Tried before the Diet of Worms (April 1521)
 "Unless I am convinced by testimonies of the Scriptures or by clear arguments that I am in error—for popes and councils have often erred and contradicted themselves—I cannot withdraw, for I am subject to the Scriptures I have quoted; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. It is unsafe and dangerous to do anything against one's conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. So help me God. Amen."

II. Where Did the Baptists Come From?

A. English Descent

The Puritan movement began to emerge in the late 1500s. It is from the Puritans, along with English Separatists and Independents that the two streams of Baptist in England originated (General Baptists and Particular Baptists). In the early 17th century, some in the Church of England began to question whether **infant** baptism was biblical and were subsequently called “Anabaptists” or the “**re-baptizers**”. By 1641 the practice of believer’s baptism by **immersion** arose from Particular Baptists who understood that the Greek word in the New Testament for baptism (*baptize*) literally means “to immerse”.

B. Baptists in America

- Northern Baptists refused to appoint **slaveholders** on boards to mission societies or as missionaries. As a result, the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845.
- A resolution was passed in 1995 at the SBC’s annual meeting – on the 150th anniversary of the SBC – acknowledging our past and declaring racism a deplorable sin.
<http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/899/resolution-on-racial-reconciliation-on-the-150th-anniversary-of-the-southern-baptist-convention>

C. Coming Full Circle – It’s all about **authority**. Haven’t we been here before?

1. Late 19th century: Christianity encounters another formidable threat in theological liberalism.

- At heart: questioning authority of **Scripture** → rejects virgin birth, deity of Christ, miracles, and bodily resurrection.
- By 1930, almost every Protestant denomination in America had been captured by theological liberalism. How have Southern Baptists responded?

2. The Southern Baptist Convention’s Battle for the **Bible**

Resource for further study – *The Baptist Reformation* by Jerry Sutton; *A Hill on Which to Die* by Paul Pressler

- The doctrine of biblical inerrancy states that the Bible is without error. This includes areas of science and history as well as matters of faith.
- The first modern crisis over inerrancy among Southern Baptists can be pinned to the publication of Midwestern seminary professor Ralph Elliot’s *The Message of Genesis* in 1961. A similar dispute erupted in 1970 with the publication of the “Genesis-Exodus” volume of the Broadman Commentary series.
- In the late 70s a grassroots effort within the SBC eventually led to the election of conservative SBC Presidents and officers. During this time a large group of liberal and moderate SBC churches broke away from the convention to form the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Gradually a trickle-down effect took place and the SBC’s seminaries and various agencies began to be led by those who strongly affirmed the inerrancy of Scripture.
- A significant indication of the success of the conservative resurgence of the SBC took place in 2000 when messengers to the SBC’s Annual Meeting overwhelmingly approved the SBC’s revised statement of faith – the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*

D. First Baptist Church of Mt. Carmel

With eleven original members, FBC was constituted May 7, 1891 as the First Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of the Rev. W.H. McCann. The meeting place was a small upper room located at the Uptown Theater. Due to financial reasons the church relocated several times in its early beginnings.

In 1894 the church constructed a frame building at 218 W. Seventh St. where its membership was recorded at 42 members in 1895. Under the leadership of Rev. A.M. Kirkland the church joined the Southern Baptist Convention in 1907 and changed its name to First Baptist Church.

The church moved from this location in 1927 to the basement of our current educational wing at 6th & Chestnut. The auditorium built over the basement was built under the Rev. J.C. Greer and was dedicated in October, 1950 where its membership was about 400. An educational building was added in 1962. Two new sanctuaries were later constructed – our current activities center was one of them and the other is our present nursery-preschool and church offices area. Renovations and the construction of the present sanctuary took place in 2008 under the leadership of Rev. Scott Farmer.

III. Why Are We a Southern Baptist Church? – *It's all about cooperation.*

We can do more together with other like-minded churches than we can independently.

Philippians 1:3-5 ESV - "3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."

The Southern Baptist Convention is a group of autonomous churches *voluntarily* banded together to engage in missions activities designed to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord. The Southern Baptist Convention is *not* a church. It is a set of ministries supported by a network of cooperating Baptist churches. Churches which practice believer's baptism by immersion have been "denominated" by others and by themselves as *Baptists* for many centuries.



The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant missionary sending organization in the world. We support SBC missionaries all over the world by financially supporting the ministry of the SBC's *International Mission Board*. We also support missionaries in North America through the SBC's *North American Mission Board*. Each year our church body approves a percentage of our total offerings to be sent through the SBC's *Cooperative Program* which funnels out to support these mission boards and other SBC ministries as well as ministries of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

Eleven Convention ministry entities and the SBC Executive Committee fulfill the specific ministries assigned by the messengers to the Convention. Each local SBC church is allowed to send messengers to the annual 2-day meeting of the SBC. Anyone can attend the meeting, but only the messengers can vote. Each local SBC church is eligible to elect messengers to the annual SBC convention as well as their local and state annual meetings.

- Our church is the only SBC church in Wabash County, but we cooperate to do missions locally through the Greater Wabash Baptist Association which currently consists of 25 Southern Baptist churches in Edwards, Hamilton, Wayne, and White Counties. www.greaterwabash.org
- We also cooperate with the Illinois Baptist State Association through ministries such as the Baptist Children's Home, located in Carmi, campus ministries, the planting of new churches throughout Illinois, etc. www.ibsa.org

What Do We Believe?

Prior to becoming a member it is important that, for the sake of **unity**, you agree with our doctrinal beliefs. The doctrinal statement, which FBC affirms, is the *Baptist Faith & Message 2000* (you should carefully review this statement prior to proceeding with a request for church membership).

We do not think this document is **inspired** by God, but we think it is useful to summarize words which are inspired (all of the Bible) so that as a church we can all agree that we are reading Scripture the **same** way about the most **important** things. Part of joining this church is agreeing with the rest of the congregation on the most important teachings in the Bible.

Theological Triage

An article written by Dr. Albert Mohler, President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, entitled *Theological Triage*, is helpful for understanding how to work through doctrinal issues that both unite and divide. You can read the full article at this link. <https://albertmohler.com/2004/05/20/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity-2/> Here is a brief summary:

1st-Level Theological Issues: “Those doctrines most central and essential to the Christian faith”.

2nd-Level Theological Issues: “Believing Christians may disagree . . . though this disagreement may create significant boundaries between believers. When Christians organize themselves into congregations and denominational forms, these boundaries become evident”.

3rd-Level Theological Issues: “Doctrines over which Christians may disagree and remain in close fellowship, even within local congregations.”

It is clear in reading through any statement of faith, like the *Baptist Faith & Message 2000*, that “theological triage”, to some degree, was conducted as the words of each article were carefully chosen so as to unite on the essentials by using **precise** language, yet maintain **unity** on less essential issues by refraining from precise language.

FBC’s Doctrinal Statement - *The Baptist Faith & Message 2000*

1. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21

2. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The

eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:1ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11;23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17;1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33;16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38;11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11;Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15;5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14;

Acts 1:8; 2:14,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6;Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16;4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

3. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

4. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29;15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

5. God's Purpose of Grace

*Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

**All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6, 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

Note #1: regarding the doctrine of predestination and election:

Dr. Daniel Akin, President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, writes about the issue of election and predestination: "Recognize that our Baptist Faith and Message 2000 is a well constructed canopy under which varying perspectives on this issue can peacefully and helpfully coexist. Pelagians, Arminians and Open Theists will not find a home in our Southern Baptist family. We will love them while also disagreeing with them. Is there a place for differing positions on the issues of election, the extent of the atonement and calling, as well as how we do missions, evangelism and give the invitation? I am convinced that the answer is yes."

**Note #2: regarding the doctrine of Eternal Security/Once-saved-always-saved:

A key southern Baptist distinctive – "All true believers endure to the end". Southern Baptists do not believe the Bible teaches that a person can lose their salvation. The phrase "once-saved-always-saved" is true, but can easily be misunderstood as an "easy-believism" faith which leads to a "license-to sin" mentality. Better said, "Once saved, always saved, *if saved*". Even better yet, "Once justified by faith alone, always justified by faith alone". See Romans 8:30; 1 John 2:19.

6. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord.

*Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

*NOTE: A vote will take place at the 2024 SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis to approve the ratification of an amendment to this article which would change the wording from "its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons" and "the office of pastor is limited to men" to "Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

8. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

9. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

10. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

11. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

12. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

13. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

14. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary

cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

15. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

16. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

17. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

18. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Why Become a Church Member?

When we speak of joining a church, we are *not* talking about joining or becoming a member of an organization. We are talking about becoming a visible member of a body – an organism. We are *not* talking about joining a club – we are talking about submitting to a King and through a commitment to His people in a local church family:

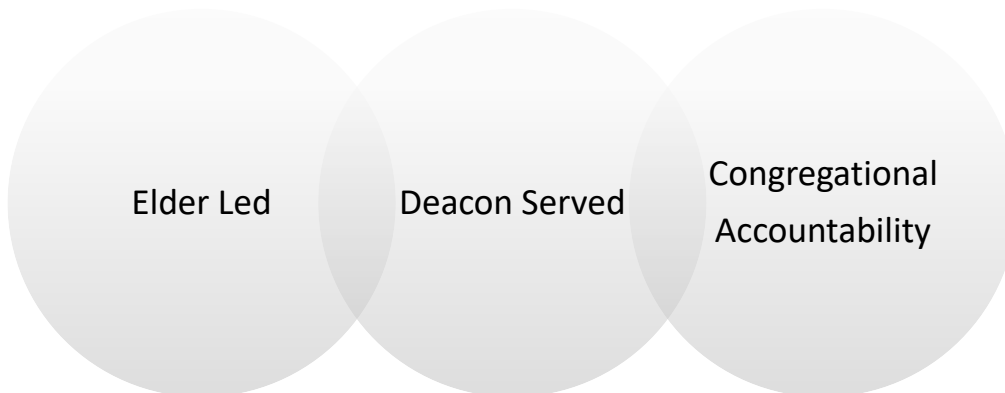
1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth (*the local church*), to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place (*the global church*) call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

We believe God's intention for the local church family is **most effectively** carried out through formal church membership.

"No church drifts toward health. This is why we need extra-biblical structures and processes that attempt to reflect and enact biblical teaching. Membership classes, lists of members . . . none of this is in the Bible. Instead, they're attempts to distill the wisdom of the Bible into prudential processes" (Alex Duke, Staff Member, Third Avenue Baptist, Louisville).

Church membership enables us to answer extremely important biblical questions. In fact, it's hard to see how these questions could be answered without church membership.

1. Church Membership Answers the Question "Who Do Church Leaders Lead?"



Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."

1 Peter 5:2-3 "2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."

QUESTION: *To whom are the pastors/elders whom I have made it known that I wish to be under their watch and care for my soul as part of their flock?*

2. Church Membership Answers the Question “Who is in and who is out?”

1) *The early church knew who they were responsible to discipline:*

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 "12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you.""

2) *The church knew who the “majority” was. It appears they may have even voted:*

2 Corinthians 2:6 For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough,"

3) *The church had some way of keeping track of who the widows were that they were to care for:*

1 Timothy 5:9 Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband,"

3. Church Membership answers the questions: “Who will I commit to regularly encourage and serve with my spiritual gift? Who will love me enough to hold me accountable in my Christian walk?”

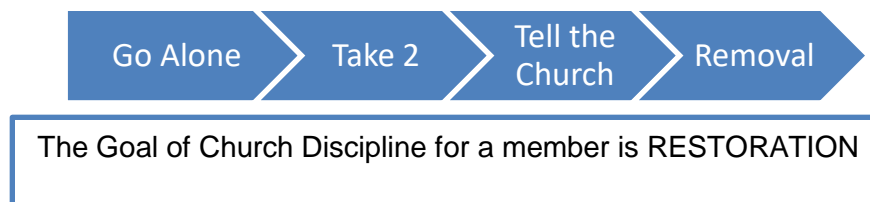
Like a wedding ring as a visible expression of my commitment to my wife, so church membership is a visible expression of my commitment to a particular local church. “This action certainly involves a commitment, but it’s more than a commitment. It’s a bending or bowing of the whole person around these other people in love.” (Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love*).

A. “I commit to serve, and be served, by this church family.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 "24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 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."

B. “I submit myself to be held accountable by this church family.”

Matthew 18:15-17 "15 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."



Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

QUESTION: *To whom are the people I am committed to meet with regularly? To whom are the people that I am committed to love and be loved by the mutual use of our spiritual gifts? To whom are the people that I am committed to for mutual accountability, even if it should require church discipline?*

Becoming a Covenant Member of FBC

We refer to our members as “Covenant Members”. We do as way of reminding ourselves that we have made formal commitments to one another at First Baptist as stated in our *Church Covenant*. FBC’s covenant is a summary of our commitments before God and one another of what we believe the Bible teaches in relation to living out the Christian life together as a local church family.

In order for these covenant commitments to be carried out, one must *regularly* attend our worship services and be involved in the life of the church which is made clear in Scripture (Hebrews 10:24-25) and is stated in the membership section of our church’s by-laws: “Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life, to attend the services of this Church, to give regularly for its support and cause, and to share in its organized work. All members shall continue learning the faith through discipleship and Bible study.”

FBC’s Covenant Membership Process:

1. *Membership Class*: While this class is *not* required, it is highly encouraged.
2. *Membership Interview*: Informal meeting to discuss the gospel, your personal testimony, and to answer any questions you might have.
3. *Membership Affirmation*: A formal vote by our members to receive you as a new member.

FBC’s CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, and the relief of the poor, and to the spreading of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other Church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.

GROW with believers

Description: The goal of this class is to help us see the value and purpose of *true* biblical fellowship.

“How do we keep from being an unaccountable crowd of informal friendships where no one is formally responsible for anyone else, and where each person is left to define the gospel and gospel faithfulness for himself?” (Mark Dever, *Discipling*). It is through fellowship with other believers, centered around the Word of God where we are equipped and encouraged to grow not only in holiness and in our understand of the gospel, but how to proclaim this gospel to others.

Growing With Other Believers

1. *Sanctification:*

“Regeneration is birth. Sanctification is growth . . . Sanctification is an ongoing process, dependent on God’s continuing action in the believer, and consisting of the believer’s continuous struggle against sin” (*Ligonier Ministries*, Jason Bingham).

2. *How are we sanctified? How do we grow spiritually?*

A. *By God’s grace*

Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

B. *in God’s Word*

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

C. *with God’s church*

Hebrews 3:12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 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.

3. *FBC’s Discipleship Pathway: How can I grow spiritually at First Baptist Church?*

Many of our members enjoy friendships within our church family which come naturally and informally and lead to the mutual benefit of one another’s spiritual growth. We celebrate and encourage such friendships! We also seek to provide a context for those kind of critical friendships and relationships to take place by encouraging members to commit to a small group, Sunday School class, or one-on-one mentoring relationship with another believer from FBC.

Gather at least once a week for corporate worship.

This is where we hear the Word of God preached. We pray together. We sing to God and one another. We observe the Lord’s Supper and the baptism of new believers.

Grow with believers from FBC in small groups and serve them with your spiritual gifts:

Adults: Sunday School: Small Groups; One-on-one discipling relationships. Women’s & Men’s Bible Studies.

Children & Youth: The discipleship and pre-evangelism of children and youth is primarily the responsibility of parents, yet we are blessed to have the opportunity to reinforce this through the discipleship ministries of our church. Parents are encouraged to follow their convictions regarding the best way to disciple their children.

ENGAGE Unbelievers

Description: If we are truly making disciples at First Baptist, this means that individuals will *begin* with the gospel and follow Jesus in believer's baptism, *connect* with our church family by becoming an active member, and *grow* in their relationship with Jesus as they gather together for worship and grow through friendships with other members of our church family.

One of the best ways to grow in your faith is to proclaim the gospel to others! The end-goal in all of this is that God would be glorified in our true worship going public as we engage unbelievers with the good news of Jesus Christ! This is what the Samaritan woman did in John 4 . . .

Everywhere, Every Day, Every Member On Mission

1. Everywhere

John 4:34-35 "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. "

Jesus is saying, "This is a mind-set I have and you must have."

The Samaritans, whom the Jews avoided, were savable! The mindset Jesus has is the mindset we must have. Everywhere we go we are on mission because everywhere we go there are people who are savable!

2. Every Day

John 4:35a Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'?

Jesus is saying, "This is an urgency I have and you must have."

3. Every Member on Mission

John 4:36-38 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

Jesus is saying "This is a work I must do and you must do."

Everyone either sows or reaps. No one gets a pass. 4:37b "one sows and another reaps".

Walk out the gospel with the intent to talk about the gospel.

1. The Necessity of "Walking" Out the Gospel

Walk in love toward one another.

Eph. 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Walk as light in the world.

Eph. 5:8 Walk as children of light for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

2. Our Mission-Minded Intent

1 Peter 3:15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

3. The Necessity of “Talking” About the Gospel

True False “Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.”

The answer is False – words *are* necessary! Romans 10:13-14 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

“If you want a burden for lost people, go and talk to lost people and find out how lost they really are.”

Mark McCloskey *Tell It Often, Tell It Well*

Romans 9:1-3 I am speaking the truth in Christ--I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit-- that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.



“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.” Charles Spurgeon

“I’ve always said that I don’t respect people who don’t proselytize. I don’t respect that at all. If you believe that there’s a heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it’s not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward—and atheists who think people shouldn’t proselytize and who say just leave me along and keep your religion to yourself—how much do you have to hate somebody to *not* proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?” (Atheist Penn Jillette, of the magician duo *Penn & Teller*).

Go and Make Disciples Across the Street



- We believe the most effective way to evangelize our community is by equipping and encouraging members to identify and be involved on their unique local mission fields, where they live work and play.
- We also seek to do this at First Baptist together through local outreach ministries, like FBC’s Food Pantry, and special events.

Go and Make Disciples Around the World

We encourage our members to support missions work both through our prayers and our regular offerings through the Cooperative Program. We also promote special offerings each year such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, which supplements the work of the International Mission Board, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, which supplements the work of the North American Mission Board.

We also want to encourage hands-on involvement in making disciples of *all* nations. In the past we have been involved in missions work in Mexico, Argentina, and other places. Since 2015 many of our members have been involved in ministering to Bosnians both here and abroad.



The Affton/St. Louis area is home to more than 70,000 Bosnian Muslims. Bowling Green, Kentucky is home to 5,000-10,000 Bosnians. The Bosniak are considered an unreached and unengaged people group by the International Mission Board. While we have sought to minister with other believers in St. Louis and in Bowling Green to the Bosnian populations there, we have also been hands-on involved in Sarajevo, Bosnia by partnering with the Baptist church there - Kairos Baptistička Crkva. FBC sends a team each summer to help lead an English school, lead a children's camp, and share the gospel. Members who like to give above their regular tithes and offerings to support the work in Bosnia can do so by giving through FBC's designated account for Bosnia.

