

Assimilation and Church Membership

We believe in the importance of serving the body of Christ by offering clear paths for people to start and develop healthy and growing relationships with Jesus Christ and others in the church body. We have developed an intentional plan to help every interested person enjoy godly relationships in the church. Although we do not have Church membership, as we feel there is one church universal and our organization is just part of the body of Christ, We offer clear sequential growth environments for training and spiritual growth. Our congregants are challenged to grow in Christ by entering into progressively smaller and more committed environments of Biblical study and Christian fellowship. When a person matures we find that they naturally want to use their gifts and resources to serve others in the local church.

Baptism and Communion

Baptism and communion are the two ordinances commanded by Christ in the church. We believe that Christian baptism by immersion in water is a public identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Although baptism is not required for salvation, it is commanded of all believers and is for believers only (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 18:8). Scripture shows that a person was baptized after personally receiving forgiveness of sin through accepting Jesus Christ. The waters of baptism are a symbol of our death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life that happens when we become new creations in Christ (Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:1-4).

Communion is the commemoration by believers of Christ's death, and a reminder—through the bread and the juice—of the Savior's broken body and shed blood. Communion is to be a time of confession of our sin and should be preceded by careful self-examination according to Acts 4:13; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29. We believe that Communion is a joyous time where we celebrate the wonderful gift of grace that Jesus so freely gave.

Because it is important not to take the elements in an unworthy manner, or for the non-believer to participate, we hold communion in our fellowship groups so as to not put the non-believer in a position to take Communion inappropriately.

Charismatic Movement

- Calvary Fellowship is a charismatic, conservative, fundamental fellowship that welcomes all who know Jesus Christ as their Savior and all who are seeking Him. We believe that the Christian

life is supernatural and that the Lord continues to perform miracles. We also believe that current displays of the gift of tongues when performed indecently and out of order distract from the main task of the local church, which is to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20, 1 Corinthians 14:33).

Concerning the gift of tongues:

- We emphasize that the supernaturally transformed Christian life is the primary manifestation of the Spirit's work in a person's life, (2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Timothy 1:9)
- We suggest that a loving attitude and the outward signs of the Galatians 5:22 fruit of the spirit is a required proof of being Spirit-filled or of possessing salvation in Christ, not that you must speak in tongues only.

Calvary Fellowship seeks to prevent the propagation of doctrines that would cause divisions (such as extreme versions of Calvinism, Armenianism and replacement theology, etc.) Although, we do believe that the sign gifts are for today, we do not believe that speaking in tongues and other sign gifts are to be overtly expressed at corporate gatherings.

Counseling Philosophy

The Lord changes lives and accomplishes His purposes directly through reading and applying the Scriptures, meditating on the truths of the Scriptures, and prayer. The Lord also uses those who minister His Word as they encourage, exhort, admonish, edify, implore, reprove, rebuke, and console others toward godliness. God needs no new or unique insight into the human condition in order to change lives, regardless of whether that insight is gained through psychology or some other tool of human origin. Problems that are approached by integrating the Scriptures with psychological theories tend to deceive individuals into diminishing the God of the Scriptures and into believing that He has not provided and cannot provide sufficient truth, insight, and wisdom that will change their lives (Colossians 2:8-10).

When psychology and other social sciences step beyond observing human behavior and seek to explain the causes of human behavior, they enter spiritual territory. Only the God of the Scriptures can explain causes and offer solutions that lead to godliness and a fruitful, joyful life. God has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). He changes us as we discipline ourselves through obedience to the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Peter 1:5-11).

Each Christian's passion should be to become more like Christ and fulfill the Great Commandment to love the Lord with the entire heart, soul, mind, and strength (Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2, Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37-38).

The Christian who learns and applies the Word becomes mature and, in turn, can help others mature (2 Timothy 2:2).

Creation, Evolution, and God's Sovereignty

We believe God created the universe in six twenty-four hour days and that before He created the universe, nothing except God existed (Genesis 1; Exodus 31:17; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16).

God chose to create the universe and all that is in it to reveal His glory, divine nature, eternal power, infinite wisdom, and supreme authority (Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 19:1-2; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11).

We deny the theory of evolution, which states that nonliving substances gave rise to the first living material, which then reproduced and diversified to produce all living creatures. We believe that all people are descendants of Adam and Eve, whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). The fall of Adam and Eve infected all people with sin and death, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives the opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

God rules over His creation and cares about and is involved in the lives of individual people (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25; Acts 25:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:13; Ephesians 4:6).

God's Sovereignty, Man's Free Will and Eternal Security of the Believer

For a person to be saved they must be first drawn by God through the Holy Spirit and it is God's kindness, forbearance, and patience that lead that person to repentance (Romans 2:4). All glory for the salvation and security of every believer belongs to God alone (Romans 3:21-31; Ephesians 1:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-9, Jude 1:24-25). At the same time we see that the Bible clearly teaches that man at some level must accept the free gift of salvation. (Matt 23:37, John 5:40, John 12:46-48, Acts

7:51, Joshua 24:15). We believe that while man is completely lost and can't save himself that God by his word pierces the sinful heart of man making the person aware of their need for a savior. (Romans 10:17) Love by its definition must be bi-directional not one sided. We believe that God first reaches toward us a hand of relationship in love and we must at that time lay down our lives and except the free gift of salvation offered through Jesus Christ at the cross. (Luke 9:23-26) We believe that this area of God's sovereignty versus Man's free will is a mystery and not fully comprehensible by our finite minds. At Calvary Fellowship we believe that this area of doctrine should not divide us as the body of Christ. While most believers lean toward one side or the other concerning this area of scripture, if you lean so far to either side of this argument that you can not recognize the other you will not be able to be a teacher at Calvary Fellowship.

We believe that everyone who is born again by the Spirit through Jesus Christ is eternally assured of salvation from the moment of conversion. This assurance relies on God's decisive grace rather than on the works of the Christian. Obedience, good works, and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation but indicate the reality of the person's love of Christ and profession of faith (Luke 6:46; John 14:21; James 2:17-18).

Eternal security in salvation relies on the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7), His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14), and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer as a down payment toward future bliss in heaven (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41; Acts 16: 30-34), and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (John 10:27-29). Having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own. They are Christ's possession (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This assurance is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, protected by God's unlimited power (1 Peter 1:4-5).

Process of Sanctification and Maturity

Mature disciples walk with Christ, worship Christ, and work for Christ. A person committed to a relationship with Christ focuses on a personal walk with Him, worshipping Him, and working for Him. That person will experience significant growth in personal sanctification and, therefore, will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become "complete in Christ" (Colossians 1:28). A picture of maturity can be found in the qualifications for leadership found in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. To be Christ like is to be filled with the Spirit which is described as bearing good spiritual fruit as defined in Galatians 5. We are committed to multiplying the godly

characteristics of leaders' lives into others (2 Timothy 2:2). This multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church. We believe the disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Spiritual Warfare

Satan and his demonic servants viciously oppose the work God performs in and through His people (1 Peter 5:8; Genesis 3:1-7; Ephesians 6:12). God, who by His nature is infinitely more powerful than Satan, in due time will have complete and total victory over Satan (1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-10).

Although it is appropriate to pray in Jesus' name for protection against demonic activity, the Scriptures do not instruct the Christian to "bind Satan in Jesus' name." Rather, the Scriptures instruct the Christian to combat Satan by:

- Humbly drawing near to God, knowing that He will give grace, mercy, and strength (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 4:8; 1 Peter 5:6-10).
- Resisting Satan's temptations (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9).
- Rightly applying the truth of the Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:24-27).
- Forgiving offenses (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).
- Putting on the armor of God's truth, righteousness, readiness to share the Gospel, faith, salvation, and prayer (Ephesians 6:11-20).
- Demonstrating faithfulness to the Lord by enduring trials (Revelation 2:10; Revelation 2:13; Revelation 3:9-10).

Sufficiency of Scripture

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that they contain all the words of God that we need in order to completely trust and obey Him. The Scriptures are inerrant in their original writings (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16), and are infallible in their instruction (Proverbs 6:32; 2 Peter 1:19), eternal in duration (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25); the final authority and the standard for faith and practice (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119); and sufficient for counsel in every issue of life (Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16). We believe that the very words of Scripture in the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic are

inspired by God. Therefore, we believe that the Bible versions which translate God's Word most literally into modern English should be preferred.

Women in Ministry

Calvary Fellowship affirms the God-ordained and significant role that women should play in establishing and leading the local church. Every leadership opportunity is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. The Scriptures clearly state that men are to serve in the office of Elder and that women are not to serve in church positions in which they exercise authority over men or in which they teach doctrine to men (1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:6-9). We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God. The Bible is clear that men and women do not have the same roles. Qualified women should serve in any leadership position that is not forbidden in the Scriptures.

Worship

The chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God by loving Him with the entire heart, soul, mind, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37). All believing men, women, and children are to glorify God and thus fulfill the purpose of their existence. Worship glorifies God through adoration (Psalm 95:6), praise (Psalm 99:5), prayer (Daniel 6:10-11), thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:46), and a complete yielding to Him (Romans 12:1). Worship declares His worth, pays Him homage, and celebrates Him in a life of devotion. We seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (Exodus 15:1-21; 2 Samuel 6:14-16; Psalm 5:7; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:11; 5:12).

Several tenets guide our worship. We seek to:

- Lift high the name of Jesus Christ (John 4:22-26; John 12:32; John 14:6).
- Lead God's people to lift their hearts and voices to Him, giving Him praise and thanks in music and lyrics (Nehemiah 12:45-46; Psalm 66:1-4; Psalm 95:1-2).
- Prepare hearts to hear the Lord speak through the proclamation of Scripture (Psalm 95:6-9; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42).
- Emphasize fresh and contemporary expressions while retaining traditional elements that recognize the richness of our heritage in the faith (Deuteronomy 32:7; Psalm 33:3; Isaiah 46:8-9; Matthew 13:32, Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 5:9).
- Pursue excellence in worship, knowing that God is worthy of our best (Exodus 12; Deuteronomy 17:1; Psalm 33:3; 1 Timothy 4:14-15; Hebrews 11:4).