



Starting Steps



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WhatIsGrace.org

Joining Step

This is the final session in the Starting Steps Series designed to help you take your next step in joining the local church.

Here's The Agenda For Today

- Welcome
- Recap of Mission and Vision
- Top 10 Things We Say and Value at Grace Fellowship
- Convictions and Persuasions
- Controversial Issues
- Lifetime Goals of Grace Fellowship
- Q&A with Pastor Jim Leggett
- Invitation to Join

Grace Fellowship's Vision and Mission

It is the **vision** of Grace Fellowship to be a House of Prayer for all Nations .

- From Isaiah 56:7
- Jesus quotes this verse in Matthew 21:13 when He explains the purpose of the Temple
- 3 major components:



Discipleship

Seeking to make disciples who love God and neighbor through all groups and discipleship relationships.



Seeking God's Presence

Seeking and experiencing the Presence of God through worship, Word, and prayer.



Outreach

Seeking to make disciples of all nations through local and international outreach.

It is the **mission** of Grace Fellowship to _____ of Jesus Christ whose hearts burn to be like Jesus, to love God, and to love others.

At Grace Fellowship, we feel called to make a particular kind of disciple – a “house of prayer for all nations” kind of disciple. A disciple whose heart burns for...

- The Great Exchange (to be like Jesus)
- The Great Commandment (to love God)
- The Great Commission (to love others)



10 Things We Say That Show What We Value At Grace Fellowship

1. **“Christ on the throne”** We value Jesus (period). We value Jesus being in the driver’s seat of our lives and church. We value following His lead.
2. **“Turn with me in your Bible to....”** We value God’s Word. We want to study all 66 books of the Bible in our lifetime. We value obeying God’s Word. We want to “bleed Bible.”
3. **“Can I pray with you right now?”** We value talking to and listening to God. We value praying with and for others. We don’t want to talk about prayer – we want to actually pray.
4. **“Circles are better than rows.”** We value the community and spiritual growth that comes from small groups. We believe that true life change happens in the context of relationships.
5. **“Double dog dare.”** We value taking faith risks for God. We don’t want to play it safe – we want to take a walk on the wild side for God’s Kingdom.
6. **“Unreached people groups.”** We value being strategic in our obedience to the Great Commission. We value adopting and reaching people groups who do not currently have access to the Gospel. We are asking God to give us unreached nations as our inheritance.
7. **“What is your next step?”** We value forward progress in our walk with Jesus. We constantly ask the question: What is my next step in my discipleship journey? And we spur one another to take that step.
8. **“Not a family killing church”** We value emotionally healthy spirituality. We value Sabbath rest. We value running a spiritual marathon at a sustainable pace for 80 years rather than burning out in a mad rush. We value time with family.
9. **“Come as you are but don’t stay as you are.”** Grace Fellowship is a safe place to not be OK. We value grace and truth. We are a safe place for sinners but not for sin.
10. **“ICNU”** We value encouraging one another. We frequently say, “I see in you the gifts and passions to....” We develop leaders by calling forth what we see in you.

What Does Grace Fellowship Believe?

Distinguishing Between Three Levels of Belief

1. Convictions - Core beliefs of the Christian faith that I would die for and break fellowship over

- **Example:** Deity of Christ – Belief that Jesus Christ is 100% God and yet 100% Man, born of a virgin birth.

2. Persuasions - Beliefs that I am persuaded about and would argue for; however, I would not die for these issues or break fellowship over them

- **Example:** Different end times views. If we are in agreement that Jesus Christ is coming back, it is OK for us to disagree on the exact details of the end times scenario: pre-tribulation rapture, mid-tribulation rapture, post-tribulation rapture, post toasties, etc. I will make a strong case (“argue”) for my view, but I will not die for my view or break fellowship over it.

3. Opinions - Issues that I have an opinion on but would not even argue for

- **Example:** Joseph died when Jesus was a teenager.

What Does Grace Fellowship Believe?

1. Convictions – Core beliefs of the Christian faith that I would die for and break fellowship over.

- **Authority Of Scripture** – The Bible is the Word of God, fully true, and is our authority for all that we
- **Eternal Security** – God empowers a believer to believe to the end of his or her life (John 10:27-29; Romans 8:28-39; Philippians 1:6; Jude 24).
- **Supernatural Spiritual Gifts** – Supernatural spiritual gifts still exist today. Speaking in tongues is a valid gift for the church today (1 Corinthians 14:39) and should operate under the boundaries of 1 Corinthians 14. One such boundary: Speaking in tongues tends to confuse unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:23) and therefore should be expressed in believers’ settings such as prayer groups and personal prayer. Speaking in tongues may accompany being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6) but is not THE sign that a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31; 8:17; 9:17-18; Ephesians 5:18).
- **Baptism** – Grace Fellowship offers to those who have placed their faith in Christ any of the 3 modes of water baptism that have been practiced in church history: immersion (Romans 6:3-4), pouring (Acts 2:17-18), and sprinkling (Ezekiel 36:25-27). Grace Fellowship offers either infant dedication (1 Samuel

believe and do (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18).

- **God** – There is one true God who exists eternally in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19; John 14:9; Acts 5:4,9; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
- **Deity of Christ** – Jesus Christ is 100% God and yet 100% human, born of a virgin birth (John 1:1,14; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-38).
- **Substitutionary Atonement** – Jesus Christ died on the cross as our substitute – taking upon Himself the penalty for our sins (Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18; Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- **Resurrection of Christ** – Jesus rose from the dead in a bodily resurrection defeating sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:3-6; Romans 6:4-9).
- **Second Coming** – Jesus Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead (Matthew 24-25; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19-21).
- **Salvation by Grace through Faith** – A person is saved from eternal separation from God as a free gift when that person places their faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; Revelation 21:27).

2. Persuasions – Beliefs that I am persuaded about and would argue for; however I would not die for these issues or break fellowship over them.

- **End Times View** – Jesus will rapture His church (believers) before the tribulation period described in Revelation 6-19 (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:1-11; Titus 2:11-14; Revelation 3:10). Jesus will return in a glorious appearing to set up a 1000-year Kingdom before throwing Satan into the lake of fire and ushering in a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 19-22).
- **Predestination** – All have sinned and cannot save themselves (Romans 3:11-12; 5:12). Jesus died for all (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1). God is wooing all people to Himself (Matthew 23:37; John 1:9; 12:32; 16:8; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 3:20). Before the foundation of the world, God knew ahead of time who would place their faith in His Son Jesus Christ (Romans 4:4-5; 8:29; 1 Peter 1:1-2). God has predetermined that the Church will be saved (corporate election; all election passages use plural pronoun; Ephesians 1:4-5,11; Colossians 3:12). One becomes a part of the Church by placing their faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Romans 10:9).

1:24-28) or infant baptism (Acts 16:15,33; 1 Corinthians 1:16; Luke 18:15-17; Genesis 17:10-14) to parents. We believe that water baptism does not save anyone but rather is an act of obedience (Luke 3:13-17; Acts 2:38-39; Luke 23:39-43). Faith in Jesus Christ is what saves a person (Ephesians 2:8-9).

- **Communion** – Communion is an outward sign or symbol of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). We believe that God is active in the Communion ritual imparting His grace to us. To participate in Communion is more than just a picture—it is to actually participate (commune) with Christ (1 Corinthians 10:14-22). We do not believe that the bread and juice turn literally into the actual flesh and blood of Christ.
- **Spiritual Warfare** – Satan and demons exist. They were defeated through the cross but will not be thrown into the lake of fire until the Second Coming (Revelation 20:10). Believers have authority in Jesus' name over demonic powers. Believers may be oppressed by demons but not possessed (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:15). Prayer is an essential weapon for the church in this on-going

battle (Mark 11:17; Acts 12:5, 12).

- **Women in Ministry** – God has established authority in the home based on gender (Ephesians 5:22-33) but has established authority in the church based on office. God does call and equip women for pastoral ministry offices. (Judges 4:4-9; 1 Samuel 25; 2 Kings 22:14; Esther 4:16; Micah 6:4; Luke 13:13; 24:10; John 4:28-30; Acts 18:18,26; 21:9; Romans 16:1,3,7; 1 Corinthians 1:11; 11:5; Hebrews 11:2,11,13,23, 31,35; 2 John 1).
- **Church Government** – Several different church government configurations can fulfill the Bible's description of church government. Grace Fellowship has chosen to adopt a configuration involving the Senior Pastor as presiding elder and a bishop as the overseer of that elder. The lay leadership consists of the Church Council of Grace Fellowship, which in turn is made up of the administrative lay committees of the church (Trustees, Finance, and PPRC).

3. **Opinions** – Issues I have an opinion on but would not even argue for.

- Joseph died when Jesus was a teenager.
- The ESV translations is best for preaching. The NLT is best for devotional reading.

Where Grace Fellowship Stands on Some Controversial Issues

1. **Homosexuality** – God loves homosexuals (John 3:16) and we welcome and want homosexuals to attend Grace Fellowship (Mark 2:17). At the same time, we believe the practice of homosexuality is a sin (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Genesis 19; Jude 7; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Timothy 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). After repenting of sin and turning to Christ, any person (including a homosexual) is encouraged to join Grace Fellowship and become a member. Any former homosexual considering leadership at Grace Fellowship is welcomed and encouraged to do so. In keeping with 1 Timothy 3, we would ask such a person to wait for a period of time in order to demonstrate a track record of freedom over their former life of sin. We would ask this of any new believer. We do not believe in the ordaining of self-avowed, practicing homosexuals. We do not believe in ceremonies that celebrate same-sex unions.
2. **Abortion** – We believe that the life inside a mother's womb is a real human being (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:4-5) and, therefore, that abortion is murder and is wrong/sin (Exodus 20:13). We believe that God offers full forgiveness to an abortive mother/father who have turned to Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:13-15; Ephesians 1:7).
3. **Money** – We believe that everything belongs to God (Job 41:11; Haggai 2:8; Psalm 50:10). We believe that all that we have has been given to us by God and that we are merely stewards entrusted with His resources (Matthew 25:14-30). Therefore, we believe that how we use our money (both individually and as a church) matters. As a sign of surrender and worship, we believe that God calls believers to give the first portion of their income back to God (Proverbs 3:9; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; 1 Corinthians 16:2). Although it is not required for our salvation, we believe giving a tithe (10%) of our income to Christ's church is the starting place for believers (Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:30; Matthew 23:23). We believe that the Bible discourages debt and holds up the goal of being debt-free (Proverbs 25:28; Ecclesiastes 6:9; Proverbs 6:1-5; Psalm 37:21; Romans 13:8).

Seven Reasons Why Our Senior Pastor and His Wife have Practiced Tithing for their Entire Married Life

1. Because we see tithing in the Bible.
2. Because it acknowledges God's ownership of all that we have.
3. Because it is a tangible way of trusting God with our life by trusting Him with our finances.
4. Because it is a tangible way of placing Christ as Lord over our finances.
5. Because it causes money to lose its grip on us.
6. Because we wildly believe in the investment we are making into the Kingdom of God by giving to His church.
7. Because all of the years that we have been tithing God has blessed us beyond what we could ever have imagined.

Lifetime Goals

What Are the Long-Term Priorities that God has for Us?

By 2045, we will trust God to fulfill the vision of being a House of Prayer for All Nations, Grace Fellowship commits to the these **SIX LIFETIME FAITH GOALS**:

HOUSE *Discipleship*

2500 SMALL GROUPS: Trust God to disciple 50,000 people in 2500 small groups led by 2500 godly, well-trained leaders.

WHOLE BIBLE: Trust God to teach these people all 66 books of the Bible.

PRAYER *Seeking God's Presence*


KNOW HIM: Trust God for a whole congregation to actually know Him personally by intimately connecting with Him in worship, Word, and prayer.

24/7: Tap into the power source by trusting God for 24/7 corporate prayer and worship.

NATIONS *Outreach*

50,000 PEOPLE: Trust God to reach 50,000 people for Christ locally through our church and its church plants.

10 UPGs: Trust God to reach 10 unreached people groups globally and take them to 5% believers.



Here are some wonderful online and mobile resources to help you in YOUR discipleship journey.

What Grace Fellowship Believes: whatisgrace.org/about

Reading The Bible Daily:

- Use the Quiet Time Journal and S.O.A.P. method
- biblegateway.com
- The Bible App - Life.Church
- Bible in One Year App - Alpha International
- YouVersion App

Right Now Media: whatisgrace.org/adults for login

Spiritual Gifts Assessment: spiritualgiftstest.com

Care Ministry Groups: whatisgrace.org/careministry

- Marriage Matters
- Parenting with Grace
- GriefShare
- DivorceCare
- Recovery with Grace
- Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University