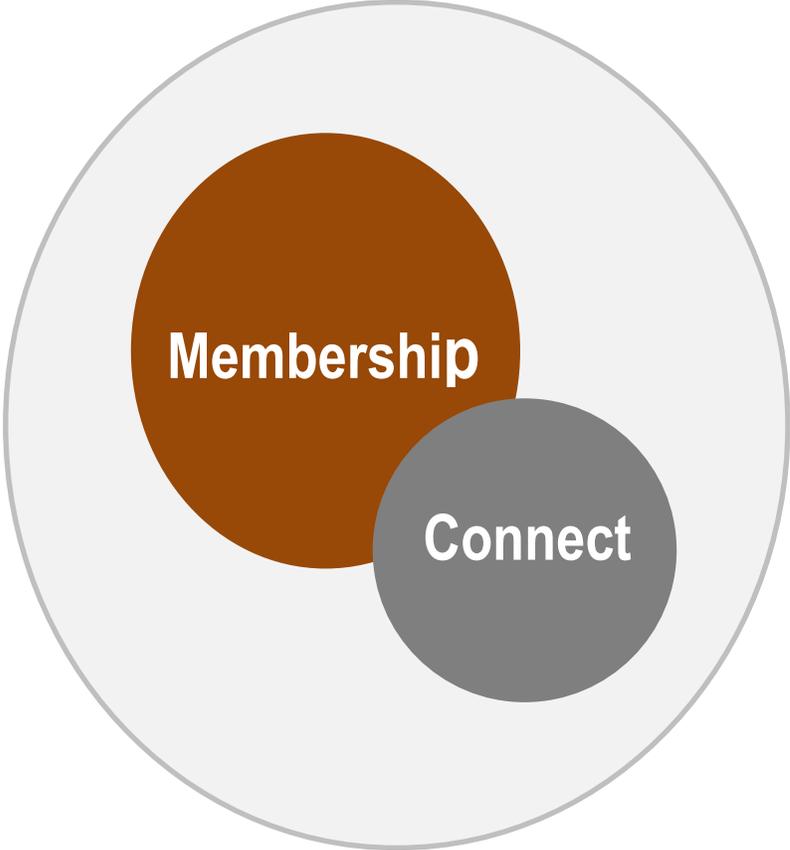


# CALVARY FELLOWSHIP



**CONNECTED IN UNITY**

## II. CONNECTED IN UNITY

### UNIFIED AS FAMILY MEMBERS

In our first lesson, we affirmed that the primary “membership” referred to in the New Testament is our membership in God’s family, the body of Christ.

We were enemies of God because of our sinful rebellion against him. There was a time when we couldn’t come to God with personal knowledge of his love and acceptance of us. But God is full of mercy, and he changed everything for us through Jesus. God showed his love for us in that while we were enemies, he gave his Son to die for us, to make us his dearly loved children. We have been adopted into God’s family so that we are now co-heirs with Jesus Christ. We have been born again by his Spirit, making us the true children of God.



Ephesians 2:19 also affirms that when we trust Jesus as Savior, we are *Connected in Christ*, and become *members* of God’s household.

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household ... (Ephesians 2:19)*

As members of God’s family, the question to begin asking is what does it look like to be living as members of His family?

The remainder of this workbook provides a biblical context for what it looks like to be living as a member of the body of Christ.

The main point in this chapter is that as members of God’s family, we are *Connected in Unity*.

Jesus prayed for His church to be unified in John 17:20-23 ...

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*

Ephesians 4:1-6 tells us ...

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

As family members, God clearly wants His children to get along. Unity does not just happen because people decide to connect with other believers in a local church. This passage reminds us that we can never create unity, but we are called to “keep the unity of the Spirit”.

The life of a Jesus follower should be balanced or unified between what we say we believe and how we actually live. In Ephesians 4:1, the Apostle Paul commands us to live *worthy* of the calling we have received. The word “*worthy*” refers to being in balance, like the two sides to an old fashioned scale. In essence Paul is saying, that our behavior should match our beliefs, our conduct should match our creed, our walk should match our talk.



Our unity should also be an expression of the love we have for Jesus and His Church. In Ephesians 4:2, we are reminded that if we say we love one another, this should be accompanied with specific behaviors. The apostle Paul provides four examples of love in action ... humility, gentleness, patience and bearing with each other in love.

As family members, we are to put the needs of others ahead of our own, to submit one to another, to serve one another, to put up with the faults and failures of each other and not seek revenge when we are wronged. There should be a willingness to forgive and not hold grudges.

*Read Ephesians chapters 4-6 and then write down some practical ways based on God’s Word that you can help to contribute to unity within our church family?*

This is not an easy thing to do, thus Paul wrote, *make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit*. Through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, we may begin to live and love in this way.



Why is unity so important? Because we have a mission to complete and we can't complete it as individuals. We need one another. We have been designed to live the Christian life in connection with the body of Christ. In the Ephesians 4:4-6 passage, Paul used the word "one" seven times to emphasize the importance of unity.

*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

- Though made up of individuals, the church exists as **ONE** body.
- Within the church you will find great diversity but **ONE** Spirit indwells each of us.
- The Spirit living within us is our guarantee of the **ONE** hope we share. Our common hope is that we who trust in Jesus Christ will spend eternity with Him.
- Christians are bound together by **ONE** Lord, **ONE** faith, and **ONE** baptism. We're united by our common belief that Jesus alone is Lord and Savior and we proclaim this belief publicly through the symbol of baptism.
- All Christians worship the **ONE** God and Father, who is Creator and Sustainer of the universe. The "oneness" or tri-unity of God (Father, Son and Spirit) is the foundation of our unity as the church.

These statements of unity almost sound like a creed that the early church may have repeated to remind each other of what they believed. This and other creeds, like the Nicene Creed (see below), were helpful for the church in those early years to help define the essentials of the faith.

*We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.*

*And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.*

*And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets.*

*We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.*

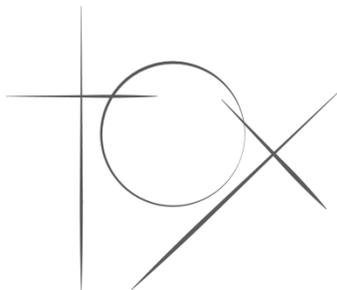
*We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.*

*We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.*

What a blessing that we possess the clear teaching of both the Old and New Testaments to help unify us around what we believe. Through the study of God's Word, we are unified around a biblical understanding of who God is, what He values, and what He teaches us about the essentials of our faith.

At Calvary Fellowship we are unified around our purpose to glorify God in all that we do (Psalm 115:1). We are unified around our mission to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:20-18). And we are unified around our 2 cross vision that was shared in our first session.

As members of Calvary Fellowship we are ...



- Committed to *pointing people to the cross of Christ* – trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- Committed to *guiding people through the cross* – establishing them in the faith and equipping them to serve the Lord.
- Committed to *inspiring people to take up their cross* – living and loving more like Jesus and helping others to do the same as we deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him.

With deep longing our Lord prayed for our unity, knowing that on it rests our own blessing and the credibility of the church's witness for Christ (John 17:20–23). In our age of pluralism and the post-modern, relativistic approach to truth, we need clarity and boldness more than ever regarding the essentials of our faith. We agree with the quote often attributed to Augustine, "*In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things Christ.*"

When looking for a church, the most important element for consideration is what the church believes and teaches. This is why "statements of faith" are helpful. At Calvary Fellowship we are also unified around what God teaches through His Word. All of God's Word is inspired and useful for teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness.

Our Essential Doctrine listed below summarize what we believe about the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Man, Salvation, the Church, End Times, and Eternity. This statement of faith is not exhaustive. It simply states what beliefs are absolutely essential for life in Christ (salvation) and in the body of Christ (the church).

## STATEMENT OF CALVARY FELLOWSHIP ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

**We believe** the Holy Scriptures, all 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, to be verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life, and that they will be used to settle all matters not specifically addressed in this statement of faith. [2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21]

**We believe** in only one living and true God, eternally existing in three distinct, equal, and fully divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each member of the Godhead works together and is holy, sovereign, all-knowing, all-powerful, and present everywhere. [Deuteronomy 6:4; John 14:16]

**We believe** that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived without sin, and is fully God and fully man. [Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-11]

**We believe** that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and are therefore sinners in thought, word, and deed, subject to God's righteous wrath, and in desperate need of a Savior. [Romans 5:12; Romans 6:23]

**We believe** that the Lord Jesus Christ died and fully paid the penalty for our sins as our substitute to make atonement before God. He was raised from the dead on the third day and justifies all who believe on Him by faith alone. Salvation is found in none other than Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 15:3-5; 1 John 2:2]

**We believe** in two ordinances of the church as given in scripture: water baptism and the Lord's supper. Water baptism is the public testimony of a believer's salvation identifying with Jesus. It is found in scripture to be an initial act of obedience of a Christ-follower. It declares faith in Jesus to all who are watching and is not a means of salvation. The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the Lord's death "til He comes." [Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26]

**We believe** God has given every believer the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our salvation. The Holy Spirit enables us to live a holy life and uses us to accomplish His purposes in the world by gifting us to serve His church. [Ephesians 4:30; Galatians 5:22-25 ]

**We believe** in the imminent, visible, and personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ and in His literal reign of 1,000 years on earth. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 22:20]

**We believe** in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the eternal blessedness of the saved in a literal heaven, and the eternal punishment of the lost in a literal hell. [Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46]

You are encouraged to look up the Scriptures that support each statement. We should each be able to explain what we believe and why we believe it based upon the truth of God's Word.

*What questions if any do you have regarding our Essential Doctrine?*

*If you have any questions, send Pastor Mike an email and he will respond and/or set up a meeting to discuss in more detail.*

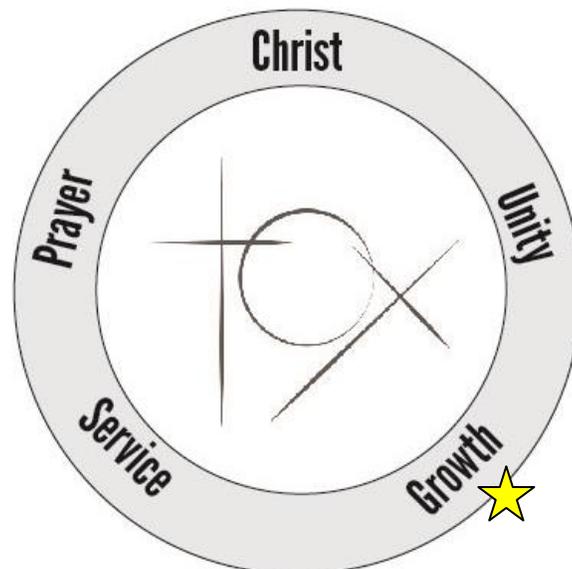
## DOCTRINE CLASS

You may watch Pastor Lee's teaching on our Essential Doctrine in 16, one-hour sessions that were offered January 21- May 13, 2015. You may access this teaching on the Sermon page of our website: Doctrine Class. If you have this document open while connected to the internet, you may click on any of the links below and you will be directed to that session on our website.

- Session 1: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/the-bible/>
- Session 2: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/the-bible-ii/>
- Session 3: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/god-the-father/>
- Session 4: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/jesus-christ-and-the-trinity/>
- Session 5: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/the-trinity/>
- Session 6: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-of-jesus/>
- Session 7: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-holy-spirit/>
- Session 8: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-alan-schafer--questions/>
- Session 9: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-spiritual-gifts/>
- Session 10: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-class-angels/>
- Session 11: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-class-satan--demons/>
- Session 12: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-class-hamartiology-study-of-sin/>
- Session 13: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-class-soteriology-study-of-salvation/>
- Session 14: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-class-ecclesiology-study-of-the-church/>
- Session 15: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-class-end-times/>
- Session 16: <http://cfdowningtown.com/resources/sermons/doctrine-class-final-session/>

As members of God's family, we are *Connected In Christ* and thus *Connected in Unity*. As we gather together in this local church we have the privilege of glorifying God and submitting to one another as we live a life worthy of our calling by the power of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, the world will see Jesus in us and know that the Father sent Him to be the Savior of the world.

In the next chapter, you'll learn more about how as members of God's family, we are *Connected in Growth*.



*Complete pages 4-5 in your Membership Application at this time.*