

LET'S GET ACQUAINTED SERIES

GOSPEL GRACE 101

Welcome to our get acquainted series! We like to call this series GOSPEL GRACE 101. We are thrilled that you are interested in learning about Gospel Grace Church and how you can connect with us. You have joined an exciting journey through some of the foundational beliefs and core objectives of our church. If you have been a Christian for some time, much of the territory will be refreshingly familiar. If you are still searching for spiritual answers or have come to Christ recently, you are in for some exciting new discoveries.

When you are about to take a trip, you typically are guided by an itinerary that helps orient you for the journey. In the weeks ahead we will make three important stops to explore key components of our church.

At our first stop, we will explore **Gospel Grace Church's Mission and Identity**. Who are we, and what has God called us to do as a body of believers? By the time we move on to the next stop, we hope you will have answers to these questions. Our goal in this segment is to help you understand our mission and expose you to the values and vision God has given us to fulfill for His glory.

THE
MISSION &
IDENTITY

The next stop is perhaps the most important of the three. We will spend several weeks together talking about **Gospel Grace's doctrinal Message**.

We will explore the core beliefs and doctrines we hold from the New Testament. While this will not be a full-orbed doctrinal class, we do feel it is important that you know what we believe and where we stand on several primary doctrines of the Christian faith. An important part of our discussion will be the implications these beliefs have for our daily living as we try to live out what we believe in ways that honor God and reflect Christ accurately and attractively to a spiritually darkened world.

THE MESSAGE

On the final section of our trip, **we will explore the Ministry side of Gospel Grace Church**. This will give you a good flavor of the atmosphere and culture you will find here at Gospel Grace Church.

THE MINISTRY

We look forward to meeting together with you each week, and if you have any questions, don't feel that you have to wait week to week for answers. You can contact any of the pastoral team members by email at **info@gospelgracechurch.com**, or you can text or call us at **(801) 508-4610**.

We look forward to getting to know you better,

The Pastoral Team
Gospel Grace Church

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GOSPELGRACE101

week #1

UNDERSTANDING OUR MISSION

The Importance of Our Mission

Churches today expend great amounts of energy and resources pursuing success. However, not everyone agrees on what success in the church looks like. Multitudes of books have been written in an attempt to help pastors and church leaders define success and build successful churches. Interestingly, there are almost as many ideas as to what success looks like as there are books on the topic.

Some church leaders equate success with the numeric increase of the congregation. These leaders believe that growth in size is one of the primary evidences of spiritual success. They contend that as long as the church is growing and people are coming, they must be doing something right, and God must be pleased or else He would not be blessing them.

Other church leaders equate success not so much with size but with accomplishment. As long as programs are organized and carried out effectively and things are running smoothly, the ministry is succeeding. Effective outreach strategies for ministry in the community, number of foreign missionaries supported, social ministry to the poor and hungry, and programs to entertain or minister to families in the membership are all benchmarks by which some churches measure success.

Some churches even equate success with mass evangelism and will do almost anything to get more decisions. Sadly, at the end of the day, many that make decisions in these churches are nowhere to be found as healthy growing disciples.

In the midst of this confusion, **what will help Gospel Grace Church achieve biblical success in the eyes of God?** How will we avoid the pitfall of pursuing the wrong type of success and thereby end up missing God's design and desire for His church?

The answer is amazingly simple. **Gospel Grace Church will only succeed if we can accomplish the goals and objectives God has set for His church.** Furthermore, not only must we accomplish the right goals and objectives, we must strive to reach them in right ways. And God clearly identified His mission for the Church in His Word, the Bible.

Since biblical success is measured by how well a church accomplishes the right mission in the right ways, getting the mission right is one of the most important things you need to understand if you desire to connect with our church family.

We believe God is the only One who has the right to set the mission for Gospel Grace Church, and we believe He has given us very clear and direct statements that leave no question about the nature of that mission.

Identifying Our Mission

We exist as a church to glorify God...

A mission doesn't just happen. It must be intentionally identified and implemented. Everything we do as a church must help advance the goals and objectives set by God as our mission. The New Testament book that best explains God's mission for His Church is Ephesians. Here God reveals He has determined to accomplish His objectives and goals in His universe through a group of people He has redeemed, forgiven, and formed into a body called the Church. **The ultimate end or objective to all God is doing in His Church is expressed in the final words of Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Christians.**

*"...to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen." **Ephesians 3:21***

According to this verse, the ultimate measure of success for Gospel Grace Church is how well we bring glory to God through Christ. In other words, our mission is to glorify God by causing others to come to a right opinion of God.

This means at the end of the day it will not matter how big our church gets, or how many decisions we can point to, or how many programs we have developed and implemented. If we have not glorified God and caused others to come to right opinions about Him, then we have failed.

Implementing Our Mission

...by making gospel-centered, grace-saturated disciples of Jesus Christ.

DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Ephesians does not just identify God's primary mission as His glory; Paul goes on to reveal some important ways God has determined to use to bring Himself glory through the Church.

- 1. First, God wants to glorify Himself in this age and in the age to come by redeeming and saving wicked, rebellious people who are hopelessly lost in sin.** He extends saving grace to these individuals to display His exceeding rich grace in one glorious expression of kindness to undeserving sinners.

*"[4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." **Ephesians 2:4-7***

- 2. A second important way God intends to magnify His glory is by displaying His unmatched, multi-faceted wisdom to all created intelligences in the universe. God displays His rich grace by redeeming lost sinners and forming them into His Church.** The marvelous plan God designed to accomplish this gracious goal without violating His righteous character serves as a permanent glorious display of His brilliant wisdom.

"[8] To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [9] and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, [10] so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. [11] This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord," **Ephesians 3:8-11**

The mission of the Church is to bring God glory by serving as a permanent, living display of both His redeeming grace and His sovereign wisdom. **This mission happens practically when born again members of God's Church live transformed lives that display this grace and wisdom in glad obedience to His word.**

*How do believers display
the grace and wisdom of God?*

...BY LIVING GOSPEL-CENTERED LIVES

The Scriptures teach that the Christian life is not lived out through self-centered religious performance but through a passionate pursuit of and deep security and satisfaction in Christ. The reality of the forgiveness and grace experienced at salvation is lived out daily as the center of the believer's life. We have new life because of the Gospel, and we center our lives on that same Gospel. The reality is that we cannot live the Christian life on our own.

"[20] I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. [21] I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose." **Galatians 2:20-21**

...BY LIVING GRACE-SATURATED LIVES

This gospel-centered living is also evidenced in a life that is experiencing and demonstrating the grace of God. This grace demonstrates itself through a life that is growing in grace, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, and expressing authentic love towards others. The believer experiences this saving grace of God when he is born again and continues to live in that grace as he matures into the likeness of Jesus Christ. **Grace is God's divine enablement to live more like Christ and less like the world.** This grace is accessed and displayed as we give ourselves to the daily discipline of spending time alone with God through Scripture reading and prayer.

"[2] May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. [3] His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, [4] by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. [5] For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, [6] and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, [7] and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. [8] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. [10] Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. [11] For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." **2 Peter 1:2-11**

"[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." **Galatians 5:22-23**

*"[9] Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. [10] Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. [11] Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. [12] Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. [13] Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. [14] Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. [15] Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. [16] Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. [17] Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. [18] If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. [19] Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' [20] To the contrary, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.' [21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." **Romans 12:9-21***

Communicating Our Mission

By now you should have a fairly clear picture of the mission God has established for Gospel Grace Church. We have included several important passages of Scripture to help you understand that this mission was not informed by our leadership team. We did not decide what our mission would be as a church. Our mission was established for us by the Head of the Church Himself. That is how important it is. Our job is to identify God's mission from His Word and then implement it in our lives as growing, obedient members of Gospel Grace Church. We don't have to grow as a church numerically, but we do have to obey God and glorify His Name!

Both the congregation and the leadership team must articulate the mission clearly, concisely, and consistently. Remember, we didn't come up with the mission, God did, but we do have the responsibility as a local church to come up with a way to communicate and articulate that mission clearly.

To help all of us stay on the same page, our leadership team has crafted two ways to communicate our mission.

Our Mission Statement

"We exist as a church to glorify God by making gospel-centered, grace-saturated disciples of Jesus Christ."

Our Clarifying & Connecting Motto

*Live the Gospel...
Channel Grace...
Be the Church...
For the Glory of God.*