



## The Bible Fellowship Church Biblical Principles for Living

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*These are also contained in the Bible Fellowship Church Faith and Order*

The Bible Fellowship Church has assembled these helpful guidelines for believers desiring to serve Jesus Christ. We pray that it helps you to love the Lord "with all of your heart, all of your soul, all of your strength and all of your mind."

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## **Article 100-1 - PREAMBLE**

**100-1.1** The Bible Fellowship Church sets forth these Biblical Principles for Living to inform and guide disciples of Jesus Christ in making moral decisions and living lives of obedience.

**100-1.2** The BFC acknowledges the Scriptures as the supreme and final authority of faith and conduct and the Holy Spirit as the source of power and guidance for the believer. These principles are summaries of the biblical truth that reveals the Lord's directives in various aspects of life.

**100-1.3** Increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in many of the churches and the prospect of new congregations being formed among various people groups have prompted the BFC to seek to state the principles so that they may be understood and applied by believers in any cultural context.

**100-1.4** These principles are not exhaustive in that they do not cite all that the Bible says in any of the aspects included and that they do not cover all areas of life that the Scriptures address. In the future it may become apparent that additional aspects of life need to be addressed and that the current principles may need to be reconsidered with a view to amending them after further reflection on the biblical truth.

**100-1.5** Every believer is accountable to God for all that the Bible says. Moral choices and actions should be based on the whole counsel of God. Each believer must faithfully read, study and review all parts of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

**100-1.6** In seeking moral guidance, the believer should study the Old Testament books of the Law with special focus on the Ten Commandments (Exo. 20:1-17). The implications of the Law are explained and applied in the rest of the Old Testament.

**100-1.7** The Lord Jesus summarized the Law in the Great Commandments (Mat. 22:34-40; Mark 12:30, 31) and explained the spiritual depth of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5-7). The application of the Law in the individual life of the believer and the corporate life of the church is set forth in the New Testament letters.

**100-1.8** Since each believer is indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit, there is an enabling to obey God's requirements (Rom. 8:3, 4). The Spirit controlled person will demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). He or she will receive and employ the gifts of the Spirit (1 Pe. 4:10, 11; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-11). Where the life and power of the Holy Spirit are present in an individual or church, the three abiding qualities, faith, hope and love, will be evident (1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thes. 1:3, Rom. 5:1, 2). The greatest of these is love, and "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

## **Article 101-1 - Worship**

**101-1.1** Worship is response to God in all of life, whereby, in love, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, praise, and service God's worth is declared.<sup>1</sup> Worship is rooted in reverence for and awe of the Lord and deepens as knowledge of God increases.<sup>2</sup> Worship is the privilege and responsibility of each individual, family, and congregation. For the believer, worship is a life style not limited by location or circumstance.

**101-1.2** Worship is the ultimate purpose of the church. The mission of the church is to declare God's glory and His salvation to all ethnic groups so that some from all the families of nations shall worship Him.<sup>3</sup> Corporate worship is the assembled church celebrating the



glory of God and ascribing to Him praise and honor. Christ, the head of the church, meets with and strengthens His people, who are called out from the world by the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

**101-1.3** God declares that He alone is to be worshiped<sup>5</sup> and this worship must be in spirit and truth.<sup>6</sup> Such worship engages both mind and emotion, listening and responding to God in joyful obedience not simply in routine activity.<sup>7</sup> For disobeying God's instructions and substituting their own form of worship,<sup>8</sup> Israel was severely punished. We therefore seek to learn from the Bible what kinds of worship please the Lord.

**101-1.4** Worship in the Old Testament was a celebration of the mighty acts of the Lord, the covenant God of Israel. Corporate worship was highlighted through prescribed ritual: a priesthood, a sacrificial system looking forward to Christ's atonement,<sup>9</sup> and particular times and places when and where worship should occur.<sup>10</sup> This ritual was not made valuable by its repetition.<sup>11</sup> Its value came through heartfelt, thoughtful response to God, uniting the worshipers.<sup>12</sup>

**101-1.5** Worship in the New Testament is a celebration of the finished work of Christ, His victory over Satan, sin, and death through His own incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus claims for Himself authority over temple, Sabbath, sacrifice, and service.<sup>13</sup> The former place, priesthood, and ritual were set aside<sup>14</sup> as believers now observe<sup>15</sup> a new day, the Lord's Day,<sup>16</sup> and new ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.<sup>17</sup>

**101-1.6** Examples of corporate worship in the New Testament include: the reading of Scripture, prayer, praise, confession, singing, giving, thanksgiving, preaching and teaching, and the ordinances.<sup>18</sup> The expression of these may be shaped by the cultural setting of a particular church and must be done in a fitting and orderly way.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Psa.96:7-9; Rom.12:1

<sup>2</sup> Psa.96:4, 2:11

<sup>3</sup> Psa.96; Rom. 16:25-27; Rev.7:9-10

<sup>4</sup> Eph.1:22,23

<sup>5</sup> Exo.20:1-4

<sup>6</sup> John 4:24

<sup>7</sup> Mat. 15:7-9; 1 Cor. 14:15, 16

<sup>8</sup> 1Ki.12:25-13:10

<sup>9</sup> Heb.9:13,14

<sup>10</sup> Exo.20-40

<sup>11</sup> Isa.29:13

<sup>12</sup> Psa.51:16,17; 84:1,2

<sup>13</sup> Mark 2:18-28

<sup>14</sup> Heb.10:8-18

<sup>15</sup> Heb. 10:19-25

<sup>16</sup> John 20:19,26; Acts 20:7



## Article 101-2 - Spirit World

**101-2.1** God is spirit<sup>1</sup> and has created everything, including the visible and the invisible.<sup>2</sup> The invisible includes a great number<sup>3</sup> of spirit beings. Among these are angels who are without flesh<sup>4</sup> and remain invisible except when supernaturally revealed.<sup>5</sup> Angels surround God's throne to worship and serve Him.<sup>6</sup> They are powerful<sup>7</sup> and are sent as God pleases<sup>8</sup> to provide and care for,<sup>9</sup> to protect and deliver,<sup>10</sup> to instruct and guide,<sup>11</sup> to discipline and punish.<sup>12</sup> They long to comprehend fully the grace of salvation and rejoice over each sinner who repents.<sup>13</sup> God also created human beings who are spirit and flesh to worship and serve Him as God alone.<sup>15</sup>

**101-2.2** A created angelic being, later known as the devil or Satan, rebelled against God.<sup>16</sup> Within limits allowed by the sovereign God,<sup>17</sup> Satan leads a powerful world system of wickedness which is hostile toward God and His purposes.<sup>18</sup> Satan may inflict pain, suffering, emotional problems and may cause death.<sup>19</sup> He can control people to oppose the work of God, blind their minds to prevent their understanding the Gospel, and oppress the servants of God.<sup>20</sup> Anyone not led by the Holy Spirit is open to Satan's influence.<sup>21</sup> He seeks to influence nations and governments.<sup>22</sup> Satan is a masterful deceiver appearing at times as an angel of light and called the father of lies.<sup>23</sup> False prophets, false religions, and cults are instruments of deception.<sup>24</sup> Those blinded and deceived by Satan live a life-style that is opposed to God.<sup>25</sup>

**101-2.3** Other angels followed Satan in his rebellion against God. These fallen angels, also known as evil spirits or demons, serve Satan, the god of this evil world system.<sup>26</sup> Satan and evil spirits can influence the believer<sup>27</sup> and possess unregenerate people and animals.<sup>28</sup> God has enabled believers to cast out demons by His Spirit.<sup>29</sup> God may continue to give this enablement, however, the casting out of demons is not in itself reason for boasting and not necessarily an evidence of an individual's relationship with Christ.<sup>30</sup>

**101-2.4** Believers are commanded to stand against the evil spirit world<sup>31</sup> and are warned against such detestable things as divination, witchcraft, sorcery, interpreting of omens, casting of spells, and consulting the dead. These things are devices that Satan uses to lure people toward destruction. People who practice these things are under the condemnation of God.<sup>32</sup> Because of Satan's power, victory is possible only through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>33</sup> Through the blood of Christ that was shed on the cross, God has provided victory over this world system for those born of God.<sup>34</sup> In prayerful dependence upon God, they are protected from and victorious over the powers of darkness as they use all the armor God provides, submissively draw near to Him, and resist the devil.<sup>35</sup>

**101-2.5** The sovereign God is in control of the entire social, political, and spiritual realm.<sup>36</sup> God will cast Satan and all his followers into the lake of fire which has been prepared for them where they will remain forever.<sup>37</sup> The kingdom of this world will one day become the kingdom of our Lord and He will reign forever and ever.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John 4:24

<sup>2</sup> Neh. 9:6; Psa. 148:2-6; Col. 1:16

<sup>3</sup> Dan. 7:9-10; Rev. 5:11

<sup>4</sup> Luke 24:39; Eph. 6:12; Heb. 1:14



- <sup>5</sup> Gen. 28:12; Luke 2:8-13; Mat. 28:1-6
- <sup>6</sup> Psa. 89:5-7; Isa 6:1\_8; Rev. 7:11-12
- <sup>7</sup> 2 Chr. 32:21; Acts 12:5-11; 2 Pe. 2:11
- <sup>8</sup> Psa. 103:20-21
- <sup>9</sup> Gen 24:7, 40; 1 Kgs. 19:5-8; Gen. 21:17-19; Luke 22:43
- <sup>10</sup> Exo. 23:20; Psa. 91:11-13; Dan. 6:22; Num. 20:15,16;  
Psa. 34:7; Acts 5:19-20
- <sup>11</sup> Luke 1: 26-37; Acts 27:23-26;  
Rev. 1:1; Mat. 2:13; Acts 8:26; 10:3-6
- <sup>12</sup> Luke 1:18-20; 2 Sam. 24:16-17; Acts 12:23
- <sup>13</sup> 1Pe. 1:10-12; Luke 15:10
- <sup>14</sup> Rom. 8:16; 1Thes. 5:23
- <sup>15</sup> Exo. 20:3-5; John 4:23-24
- <sup>16</sup> Eze. 28:13-16; Rev. 12:9
- <sup>17</sup> Job 1:10-12; Psa. 103:19; Pro. 21:1; Col.2:9-10
- <sup>18</sup> Eph. 6:11-12; 1Jo 2:15-17; 5:19
- <sup>19</sup> Job 1:8-20; Luke 13:10-16; John 8:44
- <sup>20</sup> Mat. 16:23; Luke 22:3\_4; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:25-26
- <sup>21</sup> Mat. 12:43\_45; Acts 5:3; Eph. 4:27
- <sup>22</sup> Acts 4:25\_26; Rev. 20:3
- <sup>23</sup> 2 Cor. 11:13-15; John 8:44
- <sup>24</sup> Acts 13:6-11; 2Thes. 2:9-10
- <sup>25</sup> John 8:37-38, 41; Eph. 2:1-3
- <sup>26</sup> Mat. 25:41; Eph. 6:11-12; Rev. 12:9
- <sup>27</sup> 2 Cor. 11:12-15; Eph. 4:25-27; 1 Pe. 5:8, 9
- <sup>28</sup> Mat. 8:28-32; Mark 5:2, 6-13
- <sup>29</sup> Mark 3:14\_15; Acts 8:6-7; 16:18, Mat.12:28
- <sup>30</sup> Mat. 7:22-23; Mark 9:38-40; Luke 10:20
- <sup>31</sup> Eph. 6:10-14; James. 4:7; 1Pe. 5:8-10
- <sup>32</sup> Exo. 20:4, 5; Lev. 19:26; Deu. 18:10-14, 20; Isa. 8:19,20
- <sup>33</sup> Rom 8:37-39; 2 Thes. 3:3; 1 Pe. 1:3-7
- <sup>34</sup> 1 Cor. 15:57-58; Col. 2:13-15; 1Jo. 5:4\_6
- <sup>35</sup> Eph. 6:13-18; James 4:7-8; Rev. 12:10\_11
- <sup>36</sup> Job 1:1 - 2:13; Psa. 2:1-12
- <sup>37</sup> Mat. 25:41, 46; Rev. 20:10, 14-15
- <sup>38</sup> Dan. 7:13-14; Zec. 14:9; Rev. 11:15



## Article 102-1 - Holiness

**102-1.1** God is holy.<sup>1</sup> He is separate from and superior to all creation.<sup>2</sup> He is absolutely pure and good.<sup>3</sup> He cannot sin and hates sin.<sup>4</sup> Because He is holy, He calls people to holiness.<sup>5</sup>

**102-1.2** Holiness involves a setting apart, a dedicating or devoting, of someone or something for a special purpose.<sup>6</sup> Believers are set apart for God and called saints, or holy ones.<sup>7</sup> The Bible reveals the holiness of God and declares His standard for a holy life.<sup>8</sup> God's law teaches all people are sinners and His Spirit convicts of sin.<sup>9</sup> All those who belong to God are, through the work of Christ, declared holy and are responsible to live holy lives.<sup>10</sup> God's purpose is that every believer through the experiences of this life be changed into the likeness of His Son.<sup>11</sup>

**102-1.3** Sanctification, or holy living, is progressively realized by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> For Christians, there is to be a separation from all forms of evil, and a full surrender to the Lord.<sup>13</sup> Believers should not participate in any group which demands behavior or an affirmation of beliefs that are opposed to our allegiance to Christ.<sup>14</sup> They are not to continue any longer in the sinful ways of the world but should rather seek to have all thoughts and actions conformed to the revealed will of God.<sup>15</sup> Sin's control and its continued practice must cease.<sup>16</sup>

**102-1.4** The church is also called to holiness.<sup>17</sup> Believers are to encourage one another to live righteously,<sup>18</sup> warn against the dangers of all sin,<sup>19</sup> confess and repent of all individual and corporate sin,<sup>20</sup> and submit to discipline as taught by the Lord.<sup>21</sup> Christian leaders have a particular responsibility to set proper examples of holy living.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exo.15:11; Psa.99:9; Isa.6:3

<sup>2</sup> Psa. 89:5-8; Isa.57:15; Rev.15:4

<sup>3</sup> Psa.33:5; Hab.1:13; James 1:13

<sup>4</sup> Exo.34:6-7; Psa. 5:4-6; 1Jo.1:5

<sup>5</sup> Lev.10:3; 19:2; Acts 17:30, 31

<sup>6</sup> Exo.20:8; Deut.7:6; 1Pe.2:9-10

<sup>7</sup> 1Cor.1:2; Rom.1:7; Heb.12:14

<sup>8</sup> Exo.20:1-17; Mat.22:37-40; James.2:10

<sup>9</sup> Rom.3:19-20; John16:7-14; 1Tim.1:8-11

<sup>10</sup> Rom.3:23-26; Rom.8:1-17; Heb.10:10

<sup>11</sup> Rom.8:28-29; Phil.1:6; 2Pe. 1:3-4

<sup>12</sup> Rom.8:26-30; 2Cor.3:18; 2Thes.2:13

<sup>13</sup> 2Cor.6:14-7:1; Eph.4:17-5:14

<sup>14</sup> Mat. 6:24; Acts 4:19, 20; Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 7:23; Eph. 5:11

<sup>15</sup> Rom.12:1-2; Col.3:9-10; 1Pe.1:13\_16

<sup>16</sup> Rom.6:1-14; Tit.2:11-14; 1Pe.2:11-12; 1Jo.2:13

<sup>17</sup> 1Cor.3:16-17; Eph.5:25-27

<sup>18</sup> Gal.6:1-2; Heb.10:23-25

<sup>19</sup> 1Thes.5:14; James 5:19-20

<sup>20</sup> Pro.18:13; 1Cor.5:1-2; 2Cor.2:5-8; 1Jo.1:9; Rev.3:19



<sup>21</sup> Mat.18:15-17

<sup>22</sup> Phil.3:17; Heb.13:7; 1Pe.5:1-3

## **Article 102-2 - Justice**

**102-2.1** By nature God is morally perfect and righteous in every way. To say that God is just is to affirm the rightness of His law and His faithful and consistent adherence to that law in His judgments.<sup>1</sup> Justice is the perfect application of His law in the lives of human beings. Both human law and the application of that law can distort God's justice and therefore be sinful and produce sin. Sin causes human beings to enact and apply laws in ways that are unjust.<sup>2</sup> Because God is just, He abhors the distortions of His law.<sup>3</sup>

**102-2.2** In a world of sinful people, injustice results when human beings are judged by such things as color of skin, ethnicity, gender, age, social, economic and occupational status. To evaluate people based on such external characteristics is inconsistent with faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> Those who value people in this way are acting out of ungodly cultural biases and sinful pride.<sup>5</sup> Injustice also results when persons allow their own sinful motivations, such as greed,<sup>6</sup> jealousy,<sup>7</sup> and envy,<sup>8</sup> to shape their relationships with other people. In Jesus Christ such wicked and false distinctions or motivations are abolished.<sup>9</sup>

**102-2.3** God's love for humankind knows no racial, national, economic, age, or gender boundaries and God's people must demonstrate this same impartial love.<sup>10</sup> The proclamation of the gospel to every person regardless of location or status will be a matter of great priority among those who love justice.<sup>11</sup>

**102-2.4** Those who value justice will seek consistent and upright applications of human law so that no one is denied due process because of sinful distinctions.<sup>12</sup> Those who love justice will seek truth and act with integrity in all relationships.

**102-2.5** The quest for justice in a world distorted by sin will often yield imperfect and incomplete results. The people of God who love justice will repent when they recognize their failure to do justice and will renew their efforts to bring justice to those who have been denied it.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deut.10:17,18; Isa.5:6

<sup>2</sup> Deut.16:19,20

<sup>3</sup> Isa. 10:1, 2

<sup>4</sup> James 2:1-4

<sup>5</sup> Lev.19:5

<sup>6</sup> Col. 3:5

<sup>7</sup> James 3:14

<sup>8</sup> Gal. 5:25, 26

<sup>9</sup> Gal.3:28; Eph.2:14-16

<sup>10</sup> Acts 10:34-36

<sup>11</sup> Rom.3:9; 1Tim.2:3,4

<sup>12</sup> Gen.18:19

<sup>13</sup> Mic.6:8



## Article 102-3 - Mercy

**102-3.1** Mercy, the unmerited response to human need,<sup>1</sup> finds its source and highest expression in God, in Whom justice and mercy meet in perfect harmony.<sup>2</sup> Rather than overlook sin, God showed His mercy most clearly and fully by giving His beloved Son to die in our place.<sup>3</sup>

**102-3.2** God the Father, demonstrated His mercy in providing salvation.<sup>4</sup> God the Son, became the supreme example of that mercy in offering Himself for our sins.<sup>5</sup> Jesus offered forgiveness to the sinner,<sup>6</sup> acceptance to the rejected,<sup>7</sup> healing to the afflicted,<sup>8</sup> food to the hungry,<sup>9</sup> comfort to the bereaved,<sup>10</sup> and life to the dead.<sup>11</sup>

**102-3.3** God's intention is that mercy characterize His people.<sup>12</sup> In extending mercy, we should pattern ourselves after our Head, Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> The church and its individual members are called to a ministry of mercy-giving,<sup>14</sup> which aids in our growth and assurance of salvation.<sup>15</sup>

**102-3.4** Our ministry of mercy may be limited by our resources, our discernment, and the Word of God,<sup>16</sup> but it must never be limited by our bias against any group or individual.<sup>17</sup> In all humility, each congregation ought to search itself for the presence of any cultural arrogance, of social or racial prejudice, or of ungodly complacency, all of which will hinder the offering of mercy. In some cases a congregation will need to repent of its sinful attitudes.

<sup>1</sup>Titus 3:5-7

<sup>2</sup>Exo. 34:6,7; Psa. 89:14

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 3:21-26

<sup>4</sup>Eph. 2:4,5

<sup>5</sup>Heb. 2:17

<sup>6</sup>Mat. 9:2-6

<sup>7</sup>Mat. 9:9-13

<sup>8</sup>Mat. 9:35,36

<sup>9</sup>Mat. 14:13-21

<sup>10</sup>John 11:32-38

<sup>11</sup>John 11:25,26,43,44

<sup>12</sup>Micah 6:8; Matthew 23:23

<sup>13</sup>Phil. 2:1-4

<sup>14</sup>Mat. 25:34-40; Gal. 6:10; James 1:27

<sup>15</sup>1 John 3:17-19

<sup>16</sup>2 Thes. 3:10; 2 John 10,11

<sup>17</sup>Luke 10:30-37; Mat. 5:44-46

## Article 102-4 - Humility

**102-4.1** Humility is an attitude of heart and mind perfectly exemplified in the person and life of Christ.<sup>1</sup> It characterizes those united with Christ,<sup>2</sup> pleases God,<sup>3</sup> and shapes both the

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life of the community of faith<sup>4</sup> and the ministry of the Lord's servants.<sup>5</sup> The opposite of humility is pride which meets divine resistance and anger.<sup>6</sup>

**102-4.2** Humility is an acceptance of one's true position in relationship to God,<sup>7</sup> authorities, other believers,<sup>8</sup> society,<sup>9</sup> and all of creation.<sup>10</sup> Its reality is demonstrated in joyful service and appropriate submission seen most clearly in the willing self-sacrifice of Christ.

**102-4.3** In the individual Christian, humility recognizes the grace of God which has made each believer to be accepted in Christ. This viewpoint becomes a source of forgiveness and patience within the Christian community.<sup>11</sup> The Christian's love for others is greatly aided by the development of godly humility.

**102-4.4** The unique servant quality of Christian leadership is a direct result of godly humility. Elders of the church do not dominate the congregation but are servants to the whole body.<sup>12</sup> They do not desire to control, but rather to promote the development and enrichment of every member. As heirs of grace together with their brothers and sisters, Christian leaders must renounce the pride which creates divisions and factions<sup>13</sup> based on secondary theological issues,<sup>14</sup> on areas of Christian liberty,<sup>15</sup> or merely on personalities.<sup>16</sup>

**102-4.5** Humility encourages each church to cooperate with believers in gospel outreach,<sup>17</sup> compels us to seek to meet needs of others,<sup>18</sup> and causes us to be advocates for those who have none.<sup>19</sup> Concern shown for the disadvantaged in our world must be expressed through ministries of mercy<sup>20</sup> and efforts to promote the growth of the congregation among all kinds of people.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Phil.2:5-11

<sup>2</sup> Phil.2:1-3

<sup>3</sup> James 4:6

<sup>4</sup> Eph.4:1,2

<sup>5</sup> 1Cor.3:6-9

<sup>6</sup> Prov.3:34; James 4:6; 1Pet.5:5

<sup>7</sup> 1Pet.5:6; Luke 18:14

<sup>8</sup> Eph.4:2; Phil.2:3

<sup>9</sup> Luke 14:11

<sup>10</sup> Psa. 8

<sup>11</sup> Col.3:12,13

<sup>12</sup> 1Pet.5:2,3

<sup>13</sup> 1Cor.1:10

<sup>14</sup> Gal. 5:6; Eph.4:2,3

<sup>15</sup> Rom.14,15

<sup>16</sup> 1Cor.3:5; 4:6,7

<sup>17</sup> Luke 9:49,50; Phil.1:15-18

<sup>18</sup> Gal.6:9,10

<sup>19</sup> Psa.82:3,4; Pro. 31:8, 9; Isa.1:17

<sup>20</sup> Rom.12:14-16

<sup>21</sup> Luke 10: 25-37; James 2:5-10



## Article 102-5 - Truth and Integrity

**102-5.1** The Triune God — God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit — is the only true God.<sup>1</sup> God the Father is the God of truth,<sup>2</sup> who has never lied,<sup>3</sup> and never will. He is absolutely truthful.<sup>4</sup> Jesus, who is God the Son, is the truth.<sup>5</sup> He is full of grace and truth.<sup>6</sup> He always tells the truth.<sup>7</sup> God the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.<sup>8</sup> He is the truth<sup>9</sup> and He guides believers into all truth.<sup>10</sup>

**102-5.2** The Word of God is truth<sup>11</sup> and is the standard for truth. Truth does not change<sup>12</sup> and the opposite of truth is falsehood. God desires<sup>13</sup> and requires<sup>14</sup> that all people speak the truth. His directives for truthfulness are found in the third<sup>15</sup> and ninth<sup>16</sup> commandments. Truth is truth even if it is not understood or fully disclosed.<sup>17</sup> The failure to be truthful, including deceitfulness, is sin.<sup>18</sup> Lying is among the sins of unbelievers that will be judged in hell.<sup>19</sup> Believers who lie are disciplined by the Lord, possibly even to the point of death.<sup>20</sup>

**102-5.3** The believer and the believing community are commanded to be truthful.<sup>21</sup> This includes keeping promises and honoring contracts, whether written or oral. In speaking the truth believers may formally call God to witness with an oath or simply affirm the truth of their statements.<sup>22</sup> The Christian and the church must keep their promises even when it is costly to do so.<sup>23</sup>

**102-5.4** In the Scriptures, truth and integrity stand together.<sup>24</sup> Integrity is soundness, wholeness, consistency of character. Without truth there is no integrity.<sup>25</sup> God is pleased with integrity<sup>26</sup> and judges accordingly.<sup>27</sup> Integrity protects believers<sup>28</sup> and upholds them through difficult times in life.<sup>29</sup> It provides security and guidance for a believer's life.<sup>30</sup> All teaching of God's truth must show integrity.<sup>31</sup> Truth and integrity must be lived out in love so that the body of Christ might mature.<sup>32</sup>

**102-5.5** To fail to keep one's word is a lack of integrity betraying the trust of others and dishonoring the God of truth.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John 17:3

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 65:16

<sup>3</sup> Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2

<sup>4</sup> Isa. 45:23; John 3:33

<sup>5</sup> John 14:6

<sup>6</sup> John 1:14; Eph. 4:21

<sup>7</sup> John 8:40, 45, 46; 16:7; Rev. 3:7, 14

<sup>8</sup> John 14:16, 17; 1 John 4:6

<sup>9</sup> 1 John 5:7

<sup>10</sup> John 14:16, 17, 26

<sup>11</sup> John 17:17

<sup>12</sup> Psa. 119:89, 160

<sup>13</sup> Psa. 51:6

<sup>14</sup> Exo. 23:1; Psa. 34:12-14; Eph. 4:15, 25

<sup>15</sup> Exo. 20:7; Lev. 19:12

<sup>16</sup> Exo. 20:16



<sup>17</sup> Mark 4:33, 34; John 16:12

<sup>18</sup> Mark 7:22; Rom. 1:29

<sup>19</sup> Psa. 5:6, 9, 10; Rev. 21:8; 22:14, 15

<sup>20</sup> Jer. 9:4-9; Acts 5:1-10

<sup>21</sup> Col. 3:8, 9

<sup>22</sup> Matt. 26:63, 64; 2 Cor. 1:23; Heb. 6:16, 17; James 5:12

<sup>23</sup> Psa. 15:1-4

<sup>24</sup> Job 27:4, 5; Matt. 22:15, 16; 2 Cor. 1:17-20

<sup>25</sup> Isa. 59:3, 4

<sup>26</sup> 1 Chr. 29:17

<sup>27</sup> Psa. 7:8

<sup>28</sup> Psa. 25:21

<sup>29</sup> Psa. 41:12

<sup>30</sup> Pro. 10:9; 11:3

<sup>31</sup> Titus 2:7

<sup>32</sup> Eph. 4:14-16

<sup>33</sup> Matt. 5:33-37

## **Article 103-1 - Humanity in God's Image**

**103-1.1** The human race exists as a result of an instantaneous creative act of God.<sup>1</sup> Humanity shares many characteristics with other creatures, but is unique in that each individual bears the image or likeness of God.<sup>2</sup> This image makes possible the worship of God,<sup>3</sup> relationships between persons,<sup>4</sup> and responsibility to rule over God's creation.<sup>5</sup> Only God confers this image, and it cannot be removed by any created being. Originally God's image in humanity included true righteousness and holiness; but by the entrance of sin into humanity these have been lost<sup>6</sup> and the image distorted yet not destroyed.<sup>7</sup>

**103-1.2** Because human beings are made in God's image, every person has a unique identity, individual worth, and purpose to live for God's glory.<sup>8</sup> The image of God is also the basis for the dignity of every person. All human life should be cherished and protected, not neglected, despised or abused. God forbids the unlawful destruction of human life, both murder and suicide, and provides the strongest of sanctions, including capital punishment, to protect it.<sup>9</sup> The killing of the weak and defenseless by means of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia is a crime against both those persons and the God whose image they bear. Christians should exert every effort to oppose these evils in society, and other evils as defined and condemned by Scripture, including racism,<sup>11</sup> cultural bias,<sup>12</sup> gender discrimination,<sup>13</sup> ignoring the poor,<sup>14</sup> disabled<sup>15</sup> and aged;<sup>16</sup> and every other form of injustice against human beings.<sup>17</sup> They should respect the image of God in every person despite the sins of that person or the consequences of those sins.<sup>18</sup> They should also work to protect the dignity of every human being.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Gen.1:26, 27; 2:7

<sup>2</sup>Gen.5:1

<sup>3</sup>Gen.3:8-9; Acts 17:26-28



<sup>4</sup>Gen.2:18,23

<sup>5</sup>Gen.1:28; 2:15; Psa.8:3-8

<sup>6</sup>Eph.4:24; Col.3:10

<sup>7</sup>James 3:9

<sup>8</sup>Psa.139:1-18

<sup>9</sup>Ex.20:13; Gen.9:6

<sup>10</sup>Prov.24:11-12

<sup>11</sup> Deut. 10:17-19; Gal. 2:6

<sup>12</sup> Acts 10:27, 28; 1 Cor. 9:19-23

<sup>13</sup> Mark 10:6, 10-12; Gal. 3:28, 29

<sup>14</sup> Prov. 14:31; 21:13; James 2:1-4

<sup>15</sup> Lev. 19:14; Deut. 27:18

<sup>16</sup> Lev. 19:32; 1 Tim. 5:1,2

<sup>17</sup> Deut. 27:19; Acts 20:35

<sup>18</sup>1 Cor.6:9-11; James 3:9

<sup>19</sup>Rom.13:8-10; Rom. 12:10

## **Article 103-2 Repentance and Restitution**

**103-2.1** God commands every person to repent.<sup>1</sup> Without repentance there is no salvation.<sup>2</sup> Repentance is a work of the Holy Spirit producing change of mind and heart that leads to a changed life.

**103-2.2** For the believer, repentance is a daily obligation to live according to the Word of God. When believers sin, they should repent and confess their sins. When they do this, the Lord promises forgiveness and cleansing.<sup>3</sup>

**103-2.3** People who repent are to produce fruit of repentance in their lives.<sup>4</sup> One fruit of repentance for the believer who has sinned is to make restitution for any loss the sin caused other people. Restitution is a demonstration of repentance. Believers should make restitution<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the Word of God to satisfy the righteousness of God.

**103-2.4** Restitution involves restoration to the offended party that which was lost through injury to reputation, life, limb or property which has been destroyed, lost, stolen, or damaged due to one's sin, negligence or carelessness. Restitution was commanded by the Lord God in the Law.<sup>6</sup> It is reiterated in the Proverbs<sup>7</sup> and the prophets.<sup>8</sup> It was advocated by John the Baptist<sup>9</sup> and practiced by Zacchaeus the chief tax collector.<sup>10</sup> Jesus directed His followers to settle any claims that anyone had against them even before going to the Lord in worship.<sup>11</sup> Such settlement would include restitution of any loss suffered by others. Restitution is taught by the Apostle Paul in his letter to Philemon<sup>12</sup> and implied in his letter to the Ephesians.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30

<sup>2</sup> Luke 13:3, 5

<sup>3</sup> 1 Jo. 1:9; Prov. 28:13

<sup>4</sup> Mat. 3:8; Acts 26:20



<sup>5</sup> Rom. 13:7-10

<sup>6</sup> Exo. 21:26-36; 22:1-15; Lev. 6:1-7; 24:18; Num. 5:5-8

<sup>7</sup> Pro. 6:30, 31

<sup>8</sup> Eze. 33:14-16

<sup>9</sup> Luke 3:7-14

<sup>10</sup> Luke 19:8, 9

<sup>11</sup> Mat. 5:23, 24

<sup>12</sup> Philemon 18, 19

<sup>13</sup> Eph. 4:28

### **Article 103-3 - Marriage and Singleness**

**103-3.1** Marriage is the joining together of one man and one woman in a covenant union instituted and ordained by God.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this union is to glorify God, demonstrate the relationship between Christ and the Church,<sup>2</sup> provide companionship, and perpetuate the human race.<sup>3</sup> It is holy in God's sight and is to be a bond until the death of one partner.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, marriage partners are commanded to be committed to each other physically, emotionally, and sexually, and to have no other than their marriage partner.<sup>5</sup> Although God did not specifically condemn polygamy in every instance and sometimes blessed the individuals involved in polygamous relationships in the Old Testament, the Old Testament standard is always one man married to one woman.<sup>6</sup> This standard is reinforced by the teaching of our Lord during His earthly ministry and the New Testament writers.<sup>7</sup> The intimacy of marriage includes mutual rights and mutual obligations of each partner to the other.<sup>8</sup> Sexual relations outside of the marriage bond by either of the marriage partners is adultery and degrades the spiritual and physical oneness and permanence God reserved for marriage.<sup>9</sup> For a Christian to marry a non-Christian is a violation of the Word of God.<sup>10</sup>

**103-3.2** God has revealed in Scripture that His will is for some people to remain single; in such cases singleness fulfills the plan of God.<sup>11</sup> Those who can control their sexual desires may remain unmarried to the glory of God.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the single believer may have undivided loyalty and may be more free to serve the Lord and His church.<sup>13</sup> Abstinence from impure sexual activity prior to marriage and outside of the marriage union is the Biblical standard.<sup>14</sup> Sexual intercourse is to be experienced only in the marriage union; all sexual intercourse outside that union, including homosexual relations, is sin in God's eyes.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Gen.2:23-24

<sup>2</sup>Eph.5:22-23

<sup>3</sup>Gen.1:26-28; 2:18-25

<sup>4</sup>Rom.7:2; 1 Cor.7:39

<sup>5</sup>Heb.13:4

<sup>6</sup>Eph.5:31

<sup>7</sup>Mat.19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Cor.6:16; Eph.5:31-33

<sup>8</sup>1 Cor.7:1-5

<sup>9</sup>1 Cor 6:16-18

<sup>10</sup>1 Cor.7:39; 2 Cor.6:14-16



<sup>11</sup>1 Cor.7:7,8,17

<sup>12</sup>Mat.19:11-12; 1 Cor.6:13; 7:9

<sup>13</sup>1 Cor.7:32-35

<sup>14</sup>1 Thes.4:3-8

<sup>15</sup>1 Cor.6:18; Eph.5:3; Heb.13:4

## **Article 103-4 - The Family**

**103-4.1** The family was divinely ordained by God at creation and is basic in God's dealings with man. God's revealed pattern for the family is the marriage of one man and one woman and includes their children and others who may reside with them. Each marriage establishes a new family.<sup>1</sup>

**103-4.2** The foundation for right relationships in the family is submission one to another out of reverence for Christ.<sup>2</sup> The husband is the head of the family as Christ is the head of the church.<sup>3</sup> As such, he should fear the Lord; love, nurture, and encourage his family; provide materially for them; take the lead in burden bearing and problem solving; and through godly living and prayer give them wise and effective spiritual leadership.<sup>4</sup> He is to love his wife and live with her in a compassionate and understanding way.<sup>5</sup> The wife should fear the Lord,<sup>6</sup> submit to and respect her husband as the church is to submit to Christ,<sup>7</sup> and demonstrate loving and diligent concern for her household.<sup>8</sup>

**103-4.3** The biblical pattern for a married couple is to have children and to manage the home.<sup>9</sup> Some may elect not to have children for valid reasons. Other couples may choose to adopt children. Adoption is a God-honoring way to demonstrate unconditional love by building families and bringing up children in a loving and godly home.<sup>10</sup> Some couples may be providentially prevented from having children. In each of these cases the church must not be judgmental.<sup>11</sup> Where married couples choose to use artificial birth control, great care must be exercised to use only those forms which clearly do not cause an abortion.<sup>12</sup>

**103-4.4** When more than one income seems necessary and added employment is considered, the couple must carefully evaluate the impact on their relationship and children.<sup>13</sup> The decision should be made only after prayer, interaction, counsel,<sup>14</sup> and mutual consent.<sup>15</sup>

**103-4.5** Within the church there exist family units that require special attention and mercy from the church. With prayer, loving support, wise counsel, and God's abundant grace these families can be nurtured.<sup>16</sup> The church should gladly and unwaveringly supply comfort, encouragement, affirmation, and deep fellowship for all family units.

**103-4.6** Children are gifts and blessings from God.<sup>17</sup> The family is the primary setting in which to nurture children in the faith. Great care is to be exercised by parents, and by fathers in particular, to build Christian families and lead them in worship.<sup>18</sup> The father is not to exasperate his children,<sup>19</sup> but to bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.<sup>20</sup>

**103-4.7** The instruction and guidance of children is the duty of parents.<sup>21</sup> Fathers are primarily responsible for exercising leadership in the maturing of children,<sup>22</sup> and preparing them for service in the church and for living all of life for the glory of God.<sup>23</sup> Mothers share with husbands the bringing up of children.<sup>24</sup> The Scriptures also encourage grandparents to assist in the training and instruction of their grandchildren.<sup>25</sup>



**103-4.8** Children are to obey their parents in respect and love.<sup>26</sup> As long as they live, sons and daughters are to honor their parents with loving concern and material care.<sup>27</sup>

**103-4.9** Christian homes are manifestations of the kingdom of God and each believing family member is an ambassador of the King, to call lost men, women, and children to reconciliation.<sup>28</sup> We should open our homes in vigorous and sustained hospitality to the unsaved as well as to the saved.<sup>29</sup> Genuine compassion and Christian service will involve taking carefully measured risks,<sup>30</sup> but such risks are never a legitimate excuse for cold-heartedness.

<sup>1</sup> Gen.2:23, 24; Mat. 19:4-6

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 5:21

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 11:2, 3

<sup>4</sup> Pro.4:1-4, 10, 20-23; Eph.5:22-33; 1 Tim.5:8

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet.3:7; Eph.5:25

<sup>6</sup> Pro.31:30

<sup>7</sup> Eph.5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1

<sup>8</sup> Pro.31:27

<sup>9</sup> Gen.1:27, 28; 1 Tim.5:14; Tit.2:3-5

<sup>10</sup> Esther 2:7; Psa. 68:4-6; Eph. 1:4, 5

<sup>11</sup> Rom.14:1-23; 1 Cor.7:1, 7, 8

<sup>12</sup> Exo.20:13

<sup>13</sup> 1 Tim.5:8

<sup>14</sup> Pro.11:14; 15:22

<sup>15</sup> 1 Pet.3:1-9

<sup>16</sup> Psa.10:14; Rom.15:1, 2; Gal.6:10

<sup>17</sup> Gen.4:1; 33:5; Psa.113:9; 127:3-5

<sup>18</sup> Josh.24:15

<sup>19</sup> Eph.6:4; Col.3:21

<sup>20</sup> Pro.22:6; 29:15; Eph.6:4; Col.3:21

<sup>21</sup> Deu.5:28, 29; 6:1-9

<sup>22</sup> Isa.38:19; Eph.6:4; Col.3:21

<sup>23</sup> 1 Tim.3:4, 5, 12; Col. 3:17,23

<sup>24</sup> Pro.1:8; 6:20

<sup>25</sup> Deu.4:9; Psa.78:4-7; 2 Tim.1:5

<sup>26</sup> Exo.20:12; Eph.6:1-3

<sup>27</sup> Mark 7:9-13; 1 Tim.5:4, 8

<sup>28</sup> 2 Cor.5:18-21

<sup>29</sup> Pro.11:30; Gal.6:10; Heb.13:2; 1 Pet.4:7-11

<sup>30</sup> Mat.25:14-30

## Article 103-5 - Divorce



**103-5.1** Divorce is the breaking of the marriage covenant instituted and ordained of God. God hates it because it is inconsistent with His purpose<sup>1</sup> and creates problems for all those associated with it. It is not permitted for any reason other than adultery,<sup>2</sup> and should be considered only after careful and prayerful attempts for forgiveness and reconciliation.<sup>3</sup> Scripture permits but never requires that a person divorce a marriage partner who has committed adultery.<sup>4</sup>

**103-5.2** People divorced for reasons other than that allowed by Scripture ought not marry another, but be reconciled, and seek God's resolution for the breakdown of the marriage.<sup>5</sup> Divorced persons must seek forgiveness for any sin that led to, or is associated with, their divorce. They should seek the grace of God for their spiritual growth and healing.<sup>6</sup>

**103-5.3** The church should seek to prevent divorce by offering both premarital counseling and on-going opportunities for marital instruction.<sup>7</sup> The principles that make for a godly marriage should be evident in the life and example of every Christian family, especially the leadership of the church.<sup>8</sup>

**103-5.4** By the grace of God, those who have been divorced and those who have married divorced persons, if they give evidence of forgiveness and Christian living, may be admitted to church membership and do not forfeit the privilege of serving within the Church.<sup>9</sup> The elders of each particular church should evaluate the circumstances surrounding a divorce or remarriage in order to assure obedience to Scripture and confirm or establish the legitimacy of any remarriage.<sup>10</sup>

**103-5.5** The church should counsel those considering divorce to seek other solutions to the problems in their relationships. There are times when a church is called upon to exercise discipline towards those who are seeking, or who have obtained a divorce. There are also times when a church is called upon to exercise discipline towards those who are seeking to remarry, or who have already remarried. Remarriage is permissible for those who have been legitimately divorced or whose return to the former partner is determined by the elders to be impossible.<sup>11</sup> Individuals involved in these circumstances must submit themselves to the Word of God in their present situation.<sup>12</sup>

**103-5.6** The responsibility of the church toward people considering divorce, remarriage, or those who have been divorced or remarried, is always to apply the Word of God in love.<sup>13</sup> The goal of this ministry is to restore any break in their fellowship with God and with the life of the church, to preserve the purity of the church<sup>14</sup> and to clear the reputation of a person.

<sup>1</sup> Gen 2:24; Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14-16

<sup>2</sup> Mat. 5:32; Rom. 7:2

<sup>3</sup> Mk. 10:6-9; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11

<sup>4</sup> Mat. 19:9

<sup>5</sup> Psa. 139:23, 24; Rom. 7:2, 3; 1 Pet. 3:7-9

<sup>6</sup> Gal. 5:14-23; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12, 13

<sup>7</sup> Pro. 11:14 (15:22,23); Titus 2:3-8

<sup>8</sup> 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Heb. 2:11

<sup>10</sup> Heb. 13:4

<sup>11</sup> Dt 24:1-4; Mk. 10:11, 12; 1 Cor 7:39

<sup>12</sup> 1 Cor. 7:17-24



<sup>13</sup> Eph. 4:15, 16

<sup>14</sup> 1 Thes. 4:3-7

## **Article 103-6 - Shared Life**

**103-6.1** Each believer belongs to Jesus Christ and to every other believer.<sup>1</sup> This belonging is a relationship to God the Father,<sup>2</sup> God the Son,<sup>3</sup> God the Holy Spirit<sup>4</sup> and to all who belong to God.<sup>5</sup> This relationship is not the result of human effort, but begins with being born from above<sup>6</sup> and is the living out of the divine nature<sup>7</sup> under the Lordship of Christ and the authority of His revealed Word.<sup>8</sup> It unites all believers to one another and causes them to be different from their world.<sup>9</sup>

**103-6.2** The union with the Lord and with one another is spiritual. The relationship of each believer with the Lord is the basis for the relationship between believers<sup>10</sup> in sharing truth,<sup>11</sup> love,<sup>12</sup> and possessions.<sup>13</sup> It is dependence not self-sufficiency and interdependence not independence.<sup>14</sup> Participation in this life affects every believer and church<sup>15</sup> and impacts their ministry in the world and to the world.<sup>16</sup>

**103-6.3** Shared life is a privilege and a responsibility.<sup>17</sup> The life of the church, therefore, must be a renewing, God-glorifying celebration of life in Christ and a spiritual participation with other believers.<sup>18</sup> Sharing this life in the presence of God is worship<sup>19</sup> and demands the loving exercise of spiritual gifts<sup>20</sup> as well as realization that we are responsible to one another before God.<sup>21</sup> The exercise of these gifts builds up one another and equips the saints for the Lord's work.<sup>22</sup> Because this responsibility and accountability are necessary for the church to grow in godliness,<sup>23</sup> discipline must be practiced in every community of believers.<sup>24</sup> Not to do so brings the very name of Christ into dishonor.<sup>25</sup>

**103-6.4** Responding in mercy, carrying each other's burdens,<sup>26</sup> is also a responsibility and privilege of all believers to one another, and causes them to love, care, share, and be involved with one another.<sup>27</sup> All believers, and the church as a body, must recognize, accept, and practice the spiritual responsibilities of being one in Christ, no matter how deeply a fellow believer has fallen into sin or the miseries of this world.<sup>28</sup>

**103-6.5** Every believer is a member of the body of Christ and must be joyfully and personally responsible to live a life of loyalty to the Lord of the church,<sup>29</sup> to His Word<sup>30</sup> and involvement in its ministry<sup>31</sup> and purpose.<sup>32</sup> This responsibility, although primarily focused on the local body, extends beyond the particular church to other bodies of believers.<sup>33</sup> Because this is true, the shared life of the church breaks down the barriers of race, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, and geography, for all believers are one in Christ.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom.1:6; 12:4,5

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 1:3

<sup>3</sup> Rom.6:3,4

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor.12:13

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet.2:9,10

<sup>6</sup> John 3:3,5

<sup>7</sup> 2 Pet.1:4

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 1:7

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor.10:14-22; 2 Cor.6:14,15



<sup>10</sup> Eph.2:11-16; Rom.15:5-7

<sup>11</sup> Eph.4:14-16

<sup>12</sup> 1 John 3:13-18

<sup>13</sup> Acts 4:32-35; 2 Cor.8:1-5

<sup>14</sup> 1 Cor.12:14-27

<sup>15</sup> Acts 2:44-47

<sup>16</sup> 2 Cor.8:23; Phil.1:5; Phi.6; Heb.13:16

<sup>17</sup> Gal.5:13-16

<sup>18</sup> 1 John 1:1-4

<sup>19</sup> Rom.12:1,2

<sup>20</sup> 1 Pet.4:10

<sup>21</sup> Rom.12:3-13:10

<sup>22</sup> Eph.4:11-16

<sup>23</sup> 1 Tim.6:11,12

<sup>24</sup> 1 Cor.5:12,13

<sup>25</sup> Acts 5:11

<sup>26</sup> Gal.6:2; Heb.13:16

<sup>27</sup> Eph.4:31-5:2

<sup>28</sup> 2 Cor.2:7,8; Gal.5:25-6:2; Phi.10,11,15,16

<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor.12:6-11

<sup>30</sup> John 10:3-5

<sup>31</sup> Phil.1:27

<sup>32</sup> Acts 11:19-26; Phil.4:14-16; Col.2:1,2;

1Pet.5:9

<sup>33</sup> Acts 13:1-4

<sup>34</sup> Gal.3:27,28; Eph.2:14-16

## **Article 104-1 - Stewardship**

**104-1.1** God owns everything because He is God and created all things.<sup>1</sup> Believers belong to God not only by creation but also by redemption.<sup>2</sup> They are, therefore, to be good stewards or managers of all God has entrusted to them.<sup>3</sup>

**104-1.2** Believers have the responsibility to proclaim the message of redemption and reconciliation to the unredeemed.<sup>4</sup> Spiritual gifts, skills and abilities are given by God<sup>5</sup> and are to be used for the benefit of others, especially the body of Christ.<sup>6</sup> Children<sup>7</sup> and all others needing care call believers to exercise stewardship.<sup>8</sup> All the believers' relationships provide opportunities to bring people to Christ and to strengthen believers in the Christian life.<sup>9</sup> The earth and all things in it are for God's glory.<sup>10</sup> People are given the responsibility to conserve and manage the earth and its natural resources.<sup>11</sup>

**104-1.3** A believer's possessions are to be used for God's glory. The Bible teaches that a portion of all resources is to be willingly and cheerfully returned to God through tithes and offerings. Tithing,<sup>12</sup> the giving of a tenth, was practiced since the time of Abraham<sup>13</sup> and was required by God after the law was given.<sup>14</sup> The New Testament teaches that our giving

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is to be systematic, proportionate, cheerful, and generous.<sup>15</sup> Such giving is an act of worship<sup>16</sup> and a means of supporting the work of Christ's Church.<sup>17</sup>

**104-1.4** Good stewards live all of life in submission to the Creator/Redeemer. This life should be used to please God and glorify Him in thought, word, and action.<sup>18</sup> The believer's body is the temple of God<sup>19</sup> and is to be acceptable to Him.<sup>20</sup> This wonderful creation is meant to glorify God,<sup>21</sup> in ways such as abstaining from sexual immorality,<sup>22</sup> maintaining a healthful diet<sup>23</sup> including not over eating,<sup>24</sup> proper exercise,<sup>25</sup> and adequate rest.<sup>26</sup> Believers are called to resist worry<sup>27</sup> and to be clear-minded and self-controlled by purifying themselves from everything that contaminates body, mind, and spirit.<sup>28</sup>

**104-1.5** Before physical or mental disability occurs, believers should take steps to provide for children, health care, assets, payment of debts and other personal responsibilities. Good stewardship includes developing an adequate plan to avoid unnecessary loss of resources and to distribute assets in a God-honoring manner.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1-2; Deu.10:14; Psa.24:1, 2

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 3; Rom. 5; 1 Cor. 6:20

<sup>3</sup> Deu. 8:11-18; Luke 12:41-48

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 9:16, 17; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; 1 Thes. 2:3, 4

<sup>5</sup> Exo. 35:30-35; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Pe. 4:10

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:12

<sup>7</sup> Psa. 127:3

<sup>8</sup> Luke 10:25-37; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 5:8

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 12:4, 5; 15:7; Phil. 1:12-14

<sup>10</sup> Psa. 19:1-6; Rev. 4:11

<sup>11</sup> Gen. 1:28; 2:15; Psa. 8:6-8; Lev. 25:23

<sup>12</sup> Mal. 3:8-10; Mat. 23:23; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7

<sup>13</sup> Gen. 14:20

<sup>14</sup> Lev. 27:30; Deu. 14:22; Mal. 3:8

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. 16:2

<sup>16</sup> 2 Cor. 9:12-15; Phil. 4:14-18

<sup>17</sup> Num. 18:21, 24; 1 Cor. 9:7-14; 1 Tim. 5:17,18

<sup>18</sup> 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9; Col. 3:17

<sup>19</sup> 1 Cor. 6:19

<sup>20</sup> Rom. 12:1, 2

<sup>21</sup> Psa. 139:13, 14; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Phil. 1:20

<sup>22</sup> 1 Cor. 6:18

<sup>23</sup> Gen. 1:30, 31; 9:3; Psa. 107:9

<sup>24</sup> Pro. 23:2, 3, 21; Phil. 3:18, 19

<sup>25</sup> 1 Tim. 4:8

<sup>26</sup> Psa. 127:2

<sup>27</sup> Mat. 6:25-34; Phil. 4:6

<sup>28</sup> 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pe. 4:7

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<sup>29</sup> Pro. 13:22; 19:14; Ecc. 2:18-21

## **Article 104-2 - Work and Rest**

**104-2.1** Human work and rest find their origin in the work and rest, or sabbath, of God.<sup>1</sup> The original cycle of God's work and rest at creation sets the pattern for human work and rest.<sup>2</sup> Work and rest are therefore an essential part of God's design for the human race.<sup>3</sup> Humanity's fall into sin brought a curse upon work and rest, resulting in pain, difficulty, and futility.<sup>4</sup>

**104-2.2** Redemption lays the groundwork for the restoration of human work and rest to their place in the original creation.<sup>5</sup> Christians are therefore to engage in work with honesty,<sup>6</sup> diligence,<sup>7</sup> and excellence,<sup>8</sup> seeing their labor as an aspect of worship,<sup>9</sup> service,<sup>10</sup> and witness.<sup>11</sup> Laziness is condemned in Scripture,<sup>12</sup> as is poor and dishonest work<sup>13</sup> and unjust treatment of workers.<sup>14</sup>

**104-2.3** Christians should do their work both as a service to the Lord<sup>15</sup> and as a calling from God,<sup>16</sup> undertake it with dependence on Him,<sup>17</sup> and enjoy its fruit as His blessing on their labors.<sup>18</sup> Christians who supervise the work of others are responsible to treat them justly and pay them fairly, without threat or intimidation, realizing that they will answer to God for any injustice to those under them.<sup>19</sup> Work is given both to supply the worker's needs, and to allow the worker to provide for the needs of others.<sup>20</sup>

**104-2.4** Christians should also observe the principle of rest in reverence for God,<sup>21</sup> Who mercifully provides a weekly rest for weary workers. The law of Moses also required rest during the three annual feasts, and during the sabbatical and jubilee years.<sup>22</sup> These establish a precedent for occasional opportunities of extended rest as the Lord provides.<sup>23</sup> The principle of rest is violated when people fail to take proper physical and emotional rest.

**104-2.5** Human work and rest will be consummated at the return of Jesus Christ, when He rewards Christians for their labor and invites them into His rest.<sup>24</sup> In heaven, where the Christian will be completely free from sin's curse, meaningful work for the Lord and glorious rest in His presence will continue forever.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gen.1:31; 2:1-3

<sup>2</sup> Exo.20:8-11

<sup>3</sup> Gen.1:28, 2:15

<sup>4</sup> Gen.3:17-19; Ecc.2:17

<sup>5</sup> Rom.8:18-25; 1Cor.15:57-58

<sup>6</sup> Pro.11:1

<sup>7</sup> Pro.12:24

<sup>8</sup> Pro.22:29

<sup>9</sup> Col.3:17,22

<sup>10</sup> Col.3:23-24

<sup>11</sup> 1The.4:11,12; Tit.2:9,10

<sup>12</sup> Pro.6:6-11; 2The.3:10-12

<sup>13</sup> Pro.18:9; Amos 8:4-6

<sup>14</sup> James 5:1-6



<sup>15</sup> Eph.6:5-7

<sup>16</sup> 1Cor.7:17

<sup>17</sup> Psa.127:1,2

<sup>18</sup> Ecc.2:24; 5:18,19

<sup>19</sup> Eph.6:9; Col.4:1

<sup>20</sup> Pro.16:26; Eph.4:28

<sup>21</sup> Deut.5:12-15

<sup>22</sup> Lev.23,25

<sup>23</sup> Mark 6:31

<sup>24</sup> Matt.25:19-21; Heb.4:9-11

<sup>25</sup> Rev.22:3

## **Article 104-3 - Civil Government**

**104-3.1** God, the King of Kings, has established civil government to be under His authority, over people for the public good, and to carry out His sovereign will.<sup>1</sup> He has revealed in His Word how this government should function in order to provide for a peaceful, orderly society in which the Gospel might spread;<sup>2</sup> protect the law-abiding people from the law-breakers by punishing the evildoers;<sup>3</sup> and bring justice and help to the defenseless, poor, and needy of society.<sup>4</sup>

**104-3.2** God requires all people to submit to the civil government. People must pay required taxes for the support of government functions;<sup>5</sup> they must give respect and honor to government officials;<sup>6</sup> and they must be obedient and helpful citizens of society.<sup>7</sup> God also requires governments to be accountable to Him for violation of His law and lawless governments come under His judgment.<sup>8</sup>

**104-3.3** Christians may serve in the various positions of civil government including the police and military.<sup>9</sup> Christians have special responsibilities toward the civil government, including praying for those in authority over them,<sup>10</sup> exposing corruption and wickedness in government,<sup>11</sup> and bringing a godly influence to bear upon the government.<sup>12</sup> This means setting a godly example as a citizen, raising a biblical voice on issues, accepting positions of leadership when appropriate, and, under a democratic government, voting wisely. The exercise of these responsibilities should demonstrate a Christian's sensitive consideration of the views of others in love without violence and without forsaking biblical principles or the priority of glorifying God.

**104-3.4** A Christian's ultimate allegiance must be to God, for the government's authority over the believer is limited by God's prescribed boundaries.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, a believer may find it necessary at times to disobey human authority in order to heed God's higher laws, bearing the cost or sacrifice involved.<sup>14</sup>

**104-3.5** All Christians have dual citizenship; they are citizens of an earthly nation, and of the kingdom of God.<sup>15</sup> Both of these citizenships have their privileges and responsibilities, and it is possible to cooperate with civil government without compromising biblical principles.<sup>16</sup> Yet, when the believer is forced to choose between the two, he must submit to Jesus as Lord. One day, every knee will bow to Him, and even today, He rules sovereignly over the affairs of civil government.<sup>17</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Psa.24:1; Pro.21:1; Dan.4:31-37; Mat.28:18; John 19:11; Acts 17:24; Rom.13:1-4; 1Pet.2:13, 14

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim.2:1-4

<sup>3</sup> Gen.9:6; Rom.13:3-5; 1 Pet.2:14; Pro.24:23-25

<sup>4</sup> Pro.29:14; 31:8-9

<sup>5</sup> Rom.13:6, 7; Mat.22:15-22

<sup>6</sup> Rom.13:7; 1 Pet.2:17

<sup>7</sup> Gen.41:46-57; Jer.29:7; Tit.3:1, 2

<sup>8</sup> Psa. 2:1-5; 9:17; 75:6-7; Dan. 2:21; Luke 1:52

<sup>9</sup> Pro. 8:15, 16; Luke 3:14; Acts 10:1, 2; Titus 3:1

<sup>10</sup> 1 Tim.2:1, 2

<sup>11</sup> Pro.25:5; Dan.4:27; Luke 3:19

<sup>12</sup> Pro.11:11; Dan.2:40-49; Mat.5:13-16; Luke 3:12-14

<sup>13</sup> Exo.20:1-7; Deu.6:4-5; Luke 20:25; Rom.13:1, 2

<sup>14</sup> Dan.3:8-18; Acts 5:29

<sup>15</sup> Jer.29:7; Phil.3:20

<sup>16</sup> Dan.1-6

<sup>17</sup> Pro.21:1; Isa.43:13; Phil.2:9-11; 1 Pet.3:22

## **Article 104-4 - Christian Liberty & Servanthood**

**104-4.1** Christian liberty is the freedom of the believer to practice everything that is not sin; it is the freedom of the believer to serve God without human restraint.<sup>1</sup> This privilege is obtained by the obedience of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> The believer's authority for faith and conduct is the Holy Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> revealing the unchanging holiness of God. With Jesus Christ as Lord, every thought and action of the believer should be submitted to Him.<sup>4</sup> Christ's death has broken the believer's slavery to sin<sup>5</sup> and has freed the believer to yield obedience to Christ in all things.<sup>6</sup> Though all things apart from sin are permissible, the believer should direct his actions according to what will please the Lord and what will benefit others.<sup>7</sup> Liberty should not be used as a cover-up for evil!<sup>8</sup>

**104-4.2** Believers will find that there are issues of lifestyle and worship not clearly addressed in scripture. On these issues they may disagree due to differences in spiritual maturity, varieties of cultural or economic backgrounds, personal conscience or associations with their past.<sup>9</sup> In these instances, believers should come to their convictions through studying the scripture, prayer, and godly counsel, knowing that they will give an account to God.<sup>10</sup> They must not look down upon or withhold acceptance of those who differ.<sup>11</sup> In love they must be willing to limit their actions for the sake of building up rather than harming their brothers and sisters.<sup>12</sup> In so doing, they follow the example of their Lord who laid aside His rights for their good.<sup>13</sup>

**104-4.3** Occasionally, concerns may arise that will trouble the life and witness of the church. Clear and consistent teaching of the scriptural principles that govern the life of the believer should prepare the church for a peaceful consideration and resolution of these issues. The particular church or the fellowship of churches may counsel concerning that which is beneficial and that which may well be avoided in a particular setting and time.<sup>14</sup> Church leaders must be careful to avoid unnecessarily burdensome rules, communicate

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clearly this counsel and provide the biblical basis for their thinking.<sup>15</sup> They should be ready to acknowledge and accept the sometimes temporary nature of such decisions.<sup>16</sup>

**104-4.4** Secular notions of freedom imply unlimited exercise of desires and rights. Christian liberty, on the other hand, includes submission to divinely established authorities and to the needs of others. Obedience to God's appointed overseers<sup>17</sup> does not limit freedom but is an active exercise of it. Great care must be taken to discern what are rightful directives of authority under God for good<sup>18</sup> and what are improper attempts to curtail Christian liberty.<sup>19</sup>

**104-4.5** Christian liberty may be set aside voluntarily for the sake of others or the exercise of one's own spiritual discipline.<sup>20</sup> Glorifying God,<sup>21</sup> edifying fellow believers,<sup>22</sup> growing in grace<sup>23</sup> and avoiding all sin<sup>24</sup> justify yielding up one's rights and desires in keeping with the call to servanthood in the Christian faith.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Gal. 2:4; 5:1; Col. 2:20-22

<sup>2</sup>. Col. 2:13-14; 1 Pe 2:24

<sup>3</sup>. Deu. 6:1-3; Mat. 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17

<sup>4</sup>. 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27

<sup>5</sup>. Rom. 6:5-7, 11; Col. 3:3-5

<sup>6</sup>. Rom. 6:11-14, 19

<sup>7</sup>. 1 Cor. 9:15, 23; Phi. 2:4-5; Col. 3:1-2

<sup>8</sup>. Gal. 5:13; 1 Pe 2:16

<sup>9</sup>. Rom. 14:1, 2, 14, 23; 1 Cor. 8:7; 10:27-30

<sup>10</sup>. Rom. 14:5-12; 1 Jn. 3:21-22; Col. 3:16

<sup>11</sup>. Rom. 14:1, 3, 4, 13; Rom. 15:7

<sup>12</sup>. Rom. 14:13-21; 1 Cor. 8:9-13; 1 Cor. 10:32, 33

<sup>13</sup>. Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Pe 2:21-25

<sup>14</sup>. Mat. 28:18-20; Acts 15:13-30

<sup>15</sup>. Acts 15:19-21; 28-29; 1 Cor. 11:14, 15

<sup>16</sup>. Acts 15:29; 1 Cor. 7:25-28; 8:4, 8

<sup>17</sup>. Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pe. 5:1-4

<sup>18</sup>. Acts 15:19, 20, 28; 2 Cor. 1:12

<sup>19</sup>. Mark 7:7, 8; Gal. 2:3, 4

<sup>20</sup>. Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:9-13; 10:23, 24

<sup>21</sup>. 1 Cor. 10:31 - 11:1

<sup>22</sup>. 1 Thes. 5:11

<sup>23</sup>. James 4:6; 2 Pe. 3:18