

West Windsor Baptist Church Values and Descriptions

1. The gospel is central

We seek to teach the gospel with clarity, highlight its importance, and practice its relevance.

Gospel centrality recognizes that the *good news* of Jesus is the point. It's NOT just a message that allows Christians to go to heaven, but the story the whole Bible tells of God rescuing, redeeming, and dwelling with His people (Luke 24:27). The gospel is the power of God to bring about salvation for unworthy sinners (Romans 1:16) through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and it's the power that enables Christians to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). It is what Paul calls of *first importance* (1 Corinthians 15:3). We can never move on from the gospel (Ephesians 2:1-8), because it is the only hope we have—being reunited with our God (Revelation 21:3)!

2. God's Word is final

We seek to make the Bible the foundation for everything—bringing our faith, life, and source of truth into alignment with His Word.

The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to humanity (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Through the Bible we rightly know who God is, who we are, and His design for life. Growing deeper in the gospel impacts our view of God's Word (Psalm 19:7-11). The gospel teaches us that God is greater and more significant than we imagine, while also teaching us about our own human insignificance (Isaiah 6:1-5). As we grow in this truth, it will increase our awareness of God's authority in our life and produce a desire to bring all areas of our lives into submission to His authority (John 17:17).

3. God is worthy of worship

We seek to constantly and consistently acknowledge His worthiness through gathering and scattering as God's people.

Worship is ascribing worth and value to something—directing time and attention to things we deem important. Without exception every human worships something. Growing deeper in the gospel shifts our perspective on what we worship. Specifically, the gospel teaches us that God is the central character of the Bible. He is supremely valuable (Matthew 13:44). He is infinitely worthy (Revelation 4:11). He is to be eternally praised (Phil 2:9). Creation testifies of His greatness (Psalm 19:1-2; Romans 1:20), humanity was made for His glory (Isaiah 43:6), and He is the center of all things (Colossians 1:16). As we grow in this truth, the most natural response is praise. The overflow of our encounter with God should be radical and relentless worship. In other words, with the gospel's transforming work in our lives, this should focus our aim to loving God and enjoying His majesty. This happens both individually and corporately. God's people worship Him in their daily lives through their thoughts, words, and actions, and they prioritize gathering together to edify each other through the rehearsing of the gospel.

4. Prayer is powerful and necessary

We seek to approach God with consistent, dependent, and confident prayer.

Prayer is communication with God that can be expressed in many ways, like adoration, confession, lament, thanksgiving, and supplication. Growing deeper in the gospel impacts our prayer life. The gospel helps us realize how powerless we are to produce change, and how God is the only hope we have. This truth should impact our prayer life in both its frequency and attitude. If God is our only

hope, this truth should drive us to pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and approach Him in humility and faith (James 5:15). We desire that the gospel would transform us into a prayer-dependent people, creating in us an attitude of helplessness and trust in God (1 Peter 5:6-7)—who is the only One powerful enough to produce change.

5. *Growth is a series of next steps*

We seek to take next steps toward becoming like Jesus and helping others do the same.

Growth can be defined as progress over time. For Christians, this should be the natural trajectory of their lives—progress, not perfection. And the great news about the gospel of Jesus is that it provides everything Christians need to grow— including the motivation, power, and necessity. The good news of Jesus is that He rescues rebel sinners (Romans 8:1-2), and adopts them into His family as sons and daughters (Romans 8:15). He empowers them with His Spirit, which both enables and necessitates growth (1 John 2:26-29). God’s gracious love is displayed in the fact that He accepts Christians as they are—broken and imperfect, but promises not to leave them that way—convicting them of sin and calling them to maturity (1 Peter 2:2). God’s power changes people, and yet God has placed the responsibility on believers to take steps toward spiritual maturity (Colossians 2:6-7).

6. *Life is better connected*

We seek to be committed to Christian community that is characterized by confession, unity, and generosity.

God has rescued broken people and formed a new community in the gospel called the church (Acts 20:28). Growing deeper in the gospel impacts how we understand the necessity of His church. We were created for community (Genesis 2:18), and can’t be all we are meant to be without each other (Hebrews 10:24-25). It is God’s plan to use His people to shape each other (Proverbs 27:17), and help one another live a new pattern of life characterized by the gospel (Ephesians 5:1-2). This new way of Jesus involves confessing to one another—regularly bringing dark things into the light because the gospel provides freedom from guilt and shame (James 5:16). It includes a commitment to unity—actively seeking to restore broken relationships because the gospel has made love for one another a primary evidence of salvation (John 13:35). It also entails generosity—living open handed lives because the gospel has provided perspective which frees us to be unselfish (Romans 12:13).

7. *Every believer is called to ministry*

We seek to equip and empower believers to build up God’s people and be a gospel influence in their world.

God has purchased for Himself a people and called them to ministry— which involves efforts both inside and outside the church walls. Growing deeper in the gospel impacts how we view the common believer’s role in these things. Rather than ministry being the responsibility of only Christian professionals, ministry becomes the primary duty of every believer (Ephesians 4:11-13). God has given His people many gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8-28; Romans 12:3-8). God calls His people to use these gifts for the edifying and building up of the church. “Christian professionals” are meant to equip the people of God to use these gifts. Therefore, being built up from within, God’s people go out—seeing their families, friend groups, neighborhoods, and workplaces as their mission fields, actively “going and telling” others through words and actions about the goodness of God (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

8. Godly leadership matters

We seek to have servant-hearted, collaborative, and courageous leadership.

People don't naturally move in the direction they should, but must be intentionally and courageously led. God knew this about the human heart, which is why He empowered certain leaders to guide His church (1 Peter 5:1-3). Growing in the gospel impacts how we view and engage in leadership. First, God's leaders should be servant-hearted. God Himself models servant leadership in His very nature (Philippians 2:6), and Jesus clearly teaches true leadership doesn't use power to benefit self, but rather to be a blessing to others (Matt 20:28). God's leaders should likewise not use their position for their own purposes, but to serve others, and fulfill God's purposes. Second, God's leaders should be team oriented which is first modeled in the nature of God, who throughout all eternity has worked as a team to accomplish the purposes of God. Jesus, in His earthly ministry, also approached leadership this way by recruiting and empowering twelve disciples (Matthew 10:1-4). No one person possesses all the gifts necessary to lead God's church effectively, which is why we are better together and collaborative leadership is so crucial. Lastly, God's leaders must be courageous (Joshua 1:9). Leadership is not easy and presents a lot of significant challenges. Leaders must be willing to confront difficulties, wade into tough situations, and be misunderstood at times.

9. Leaders must be developed and deployed

We seek to develop people and send them out for the purpose of kingdom advancement.

Leadership development and an attitude of selflessness are crucial for God's church to grow. Growing in the gospel produces a greater desire to build God's kingdom over building our own. Like we have already established, the Holy Spirit has given His people gifts in order to build up the body of Christ and advance His mission (1 Corinthians 12:7). However, individuals often need help identifying, developing, and using their gifts in useful and productive ways (Ephesians 4:11-12). Thus intentional time and resources should be invested in helping God's people grow into Godly mature leaders (2 Timothy 2:2). These leaders should be encouraged, supported, given lots of opportunity to grow and fail, and then when ready, selflessly sent out to pursue new gospel works. This process may mean a loss of great people and resources to our small group, ministry, or local church, but it is a win for the kingdom as more gospel efforts are being launched (Matthew 6:10).