



# SOCIAL VALUES STATEMENT

We, the Elders and Pastors of Grace Baptist Church, believe all people are 1) created by God for his glory and 2) are most satisfied when he is most glorified. Further, we recognize our responsibility to lead our church family according to the truth of God's Word. Lastly, and most importantly, we are committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by which every heart can be purified, every sin forgiven, and every life transformed into one of beauty, peace, and eternal life.

We recognize many current social issues are complex and pose a challenge to individuals and to the church. This is a broken world where the deceitfulness of sin with its promised pleasures can too easily lure people into compromised thinking and destructive behavior.

We recognize that some in our family may bear scars from past decisions and actions. We also strongly believe and teach that no behavior lies outside the forgiving grace of Jesus Christ for those who acknowledge and turn from their sin. We also believe that recognizing and resisting temptation in the first place is greatly preferable.

While we intend for Grace Baptist Church to be a safe place for ongoing growth and discussion, we affirm the following convictions concerning the social issues of our day so that all who attend our church will know where we stand and what we will teach on the various subjects. The Scriptural support provided for each section is to be understood in its broader context and also as representative of the vast biblical material that could be presented as grounds for our beliefs.

## The Love of God

We believe our God is known for his relentless love for his creation and especially for the souls of men and women and boys and girls. It was this love that moved him to extend redeeming, forgiving grace to all humanity through the person and work of Jesus Christ. We believe that everyone — regardless of their past — can be forgiven and accepted before Almighty God, and adopted into his eternal family through sincere repentance from sin, and trust in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Psalm 86:15; Ps. 136:26; John 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:4-7; 1 John 3:1*

## Creation

We believe our world was created by God, is separate from God, and reflects the glory of God, even in its fallen state. We believe humanity was created to image the Creator and represent him as rulers and caretakers of his world. As God's new creation, Christ-followers are privileged to care for our environment in a way that testifies to the watching world of God's redemptive plan that one day will result in new heavens and a new earth. Until then, we believe we have a responsibility to God to care for creation in a way that is honoring to our Creator and beneficial for our neighbors.

*Psalm 19:1; Genesis 1:26,27; 2:15; James 3:8,9; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 8:18-23; 2 Peter 3:11-13*

## Humanity

We believe mankind descended from Adam and Eve who were specially and uniquely created and intentionally designed as male and female to bear his image as the crowning work of creation. As such, all human life is sacred and worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-28; James 3:8,9; Psalm 104:10-15, 27-31; Genesis 9:5,6; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 8*

## Sanctity of Life

We believe human life begins at the moment of conception and continues until God's predetermined number of days for that life are completed. Consequently, we are opposed to in vitro and in vivo abortion, and all forms of euthanasia.

*Genesis 2:7; Deuteronomy 30:19; Psalm 139:13-16; Job 30:23; Ecclesiastes 7:14; 8:8; 1 Corinthians 15:26, 54-56; Hebrews 2:9, 14,15; Revelation 21:4*

## Gender

Since we believe mankind is specifically designed as male and female, we stand opposed to intentional actions that would alter or disguise one's gender.

*Genesis 1:26–28, 31; 2:25; Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10*

## Marriage

We believe God ordained marriage to be a covenantal, legal, and lifelong relationship between one man and one woman, as described and prescribed in the Bible. (For more on Grace's position on marriage see our position paper Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.)

*Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4–9; Romans 1:21–32; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; 7:1–4; 1 Timothy 1:8–11*

## Human Sexuality

We believe human sexuality is a natural and honorable part of God's creation and that marriage between one man and one woman is the only context in which sexual relations are God-honoring. All sexual activity outside of marriage, as defined above, is forbidden by God. Additionally, pornography, including all forms of literature, photography, art, movies and songs intended to stimulate illicit sexual thoughts or actions, should have no place in the lives of Christ-followers.

*Genesis 4:1; Matthew 15:19; 1 Corinthians 6:15–18; 7:1–4; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 5:27, 28*

## Race and Imago Dei

We believe when God created Adam and Eve, he started the human race from which all people have descended making all people equal before God in their natural state. We all share the same human genome. The modern idea of 'race' is a social construct that has been used destructively to assign inferiority or superiority based largely on the color of a person's skin. At other times and places artificial discriminatory differences have been predicated on religion or the country of a person's origin. We recognize that this destruction has occurred in our country, at different times and in different ways, and that the effects can still be found. All persons are created as image bearers of God. As such, all human life, of any ethnicity, color or national ancestry is valuable and to be honored and greatly respected as God's handiwork. Consequently, all attitudes and actions, and their results, that do not align with this understanding, perpetrated between and upon ethnic groups by others, are to be confessed as sinful, repented of, repudiated, and replaced with attitudes and actions that reflect and align with God's nature, law, and creative purpose.

*Acts 17:26,27; Genesis 1:26–28; Genesis 10; Matthew 19:19; Luke 6:27*

## Justice

We believe God alone is perfectly just and that true justice in human society reflects and aligns with the nature and law of God as revealed in Scripture. As his image bearers, all humanity is held accountable by God to live and act justly in every arena of life. However, in our fallen state, humanity is unjust by nature. Christians, as those who have been justified in Christ, are called to stand for true justice, living as kingdom-citizens whose very lifestyle proclaims the greatness of their King. Every attempt to bring about justice must do so in ways that reflect and align with the nature and law of God. In the end, final justice will be handed down when all who have ever lived stand before Almighty God to receive either eternal life, having been justified and forgiven in Christ, or eternal condemnation for having transgressed the law of God.

*Genesis 1:26,27; Isaiah 51:4; 61:8; Micah 6:8; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15; Galatians 3:28*

## Common Grace and Law

We believe that, left unchecked, depraved and unjust humanity would make civil society impossible. God in his kindness, restrains the sinful desires of mankind by means of common grace, mediated primarily through civil government and the rule of law. Both those who make the law and those who enforce the law are ministers of God's sovereign rule and are held accountable by him to administer his common grace justly. As representatives of God's authority, they are worthy of great honor and respect even in their imperfect administration of God's rule. Additionally, those who are under the law must see obedience to the law as their contribution to an ordered and safe society, as well as their duty to God who is their Creator and the ultimate lawgiver. We affirm that God alone is worthy of complete obedience in all situations, and thus ultimate allegiance is due him when human law conflicts with or stands in opposition to divine mandate.

*Exodus 20:2–17; Psalm 19:7–14; Isaiah 33:22; 42:4; 51:4; Matthew 5:17–19; Romans 13:1–7; Titus 3:1; Acts 4:17–20; 2 Thessalonians 2:7,8;*