



# Discovery Class

*Participant Guide*

*Winter 2021*



**Rocky Point  
Baptist Church**

# **RPBC Discovery Class**

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## Session 1

*Who Is God? Who Is Man? Why Do We Exist?*

### 1. Who Is God?

Theologian A.W. Tozer said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” It is vital we answer the question, “Who is God?” How do we answer this question?

A. \_\_\_\_\_ *Tells Us*

#### 1. The Scriptures

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God. Therefore, all scripture is authoritative, infallible and inerrant. The Scriptures are the only sufficient rule for faith and practice.

Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

#### 2. God

We believe that there is but one God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, infinitely perfect in every way. He is without beginning and without end. In His sovereignty, He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. To Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience that springs forth from faith.

Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 139:7-10; Psalm 145:3; Jeremiah 23:23-24; John 1:3; I Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 1:17

From the very first words of the Bible we see that God exists and there is no effort to prove it. It is a God-inspired assumption that is without debate (See Genesis 1:1).

Key passages about God:

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God (Psalm 90:2).

[13] Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” [14] God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” [15] God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations (Exodus 3:13–15).

**B. There Is Only \_\_\_\_\_**

Christianity does not recognize multiple gods (polytheism). There is only one (monotheism). From the Old Testament to the New Testament, the Bible is very clear that God is only one:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4).

[28] And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” [29] Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [30] And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ [31] The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:28–31).

**C. God Exists in \_\_\_\_\_**

### 3. The Trinity

We believe that the Scriptures reveal that the one true God eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person has distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

Genesis 1:1, 26; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3, 18; John 4:24; Romans 1:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5-6

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most important doctrines in the Christian faith. It is unique to Christianity—no other faith claims a god who is one in three persons. When we think of God as eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, we may have a tendency to think only of God the Father in connection with these attributes. But the Bible teaches that all of God’s attributes are true of all three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

### 4. God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly ordains and foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 23:9; Luke 10:21-22; John 3:16; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

### 5. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. We believe in his sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atonement for sins on the cross, His literal death, His bodily resurrection on the third day, His ascension into heaven to the right hand of God the Father, His perpetual intercession for His people, and His pending and certain personal return to earth on a promised Day in the future.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30-31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9-10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; 10:25; 1 Timothy 3:16

## 6. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to save, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

John 14:16-17, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

### Key Trinitarian Passages:

[16] And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; [17] and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16–17).

[19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20).

### D. *God Is* \_\_\_\_\_

[9] remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, [10] declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' [11] calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it (Isaiah 46:9–11).

## 7. Divine Sovereignty

We believe that God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet He is not in any way the author of or approver of sin, nor does He impede or destroy the free will and responsibility of mankind.

Job 1-2; Isaiah 46:9-11; Proverbs 16:33; Acts 2:22-24; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; James 1:13-15

## 2. Who Is Man?

The most important question known to mankind is, "Who is God?" The second most important question a person can ask is, "Who am I?"

### A. *Our* \_\_\_\_\_ : *Where Did Humans Come From?*

God \_\_\_\_\_ us, and thus He has \_\_\_\_\_ over us, His creatures.

then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature (Genesis 2:7).

**B. Our \_\_\_\_\_ : How Did God Create Man?**

He made us in His \_\_\_\_\_ :

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).

All people are made in the image of God. The Hebrew word for “image” refers to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents. God made man to reflect Him.

**C. Our \_\_\_\_\_ : Why Did God Create Man?**

God created us to \_\_\_\_\_ Him and \_\_\_\_\_ Him forever:

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11).

God created us to exercise \_\_\_\_\_ :

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Humans were created to spread God’s glory throughout the world by building His kingdom on earth. God gave humans the role of stewards, whom He intended to rule His earth His way.

**D. Our \_\_\_\_\_ : Mankind Knows God Exists**

Deep inside every person there is an awareness and an acceptance that there must be a God:

[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. [19] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. [20] For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Romans 1:18–20).

All persons in all cultures have a deep inner sense that God exists, that they are His creatures, and that he is their Creator. We are without excuse.

## **Conclusion**

Think on these questions in light of what we have covered so far:

1. Do you know the God who made everything that has ever been made?
2. Do you know the God who created you in His image?
3. Are you living to glorify God and enjoy Him forever?



## Session 2

### *The Fall of Man, The Salvation of God*

#### 8. Salvation

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are saved from their sins by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life.

Genesis 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

#### 1. What Do We Need To Be Saved From? \_\_\_\_\_.

##### A. *What Is Sin?*

Sin is any failure to conform to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.  
First and foremost, all sin is against God (see Psalm 51:4).

##### B. *What Is the Consequence of Sin?* \_\_\_\_\_ (See Romans 6:23).

[16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:16–17).

#### 2. The First Sin (Genesis 3:1–13)

[1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" [2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, [3] but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" [4] But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

**What is wrong with the serpent's statement?**

**What is wrong with Eve's reply?**

[6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

**What was Eve's reaction?** (see James 1:14-15)

[7] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. [8] And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

**What did Adam and Eve do after sinning and hearing God walking in the garden?**

When we sin, we want to move away from God in shame. In a remarkable act of grace, though Adam and Eve moved away from God, God moved toward them:

[9] But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" [10] And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." [11] He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" [12] The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." [13] Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

**Despite God's gracious response, Adam and Eve did not take responsibility for their sin.**

## 2. All Have Sinned

What we see in Adam and Eve's original sin has been \_\_\_\_\_ in every human being since:

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned (Romans 5:12)

[10] as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; [11] no one understands; no one seeks for God. [12] All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one" (Romans 3:10-12).

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a)

Like Adam and Eve, we all reject what God has said. We all choose not to trust that God wants what is good for us. We all hide from God in shame. And we all deny responsibility for what we have done. We are all sinners, and we all deserve death.

This is really bad news. But there is a solution!

### 3. The Solution: the Gospel

The gospel is the \_\_\_\_\_ of what \_\_\_\_\_ has done to save sinners:

[1] Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. [3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1–4)

God sent His Son to die as a substitute for sinners and to rise again, defeating sin and death. Because of this, He now offers an amazing exchange: our record of sin is credited to Jesus, and He is punished; Jesus' perfect record of obedience is credited to us, and we are declared righteous (See also 2 Corinthians 5:21).

[23] But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, [24] but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, [25] who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Romans 4:23–25).

### 3. How Do We Receive This Solution?

We receive God's free gift of grace in Christ through \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
Jesus said:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk. 1:15)

#### 9. Repentance

We believe that repentance is granted by God to a person who is convicted by the Holy Spirit and made aware of the evil of his sin. This awareness brings about humility with godly sorrow and detestation of the sin. A truly repentant person endeavors to change his ways and to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

Acts 2:37-38; 11:18; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11; 2 Timothy 2:25

Key text on repentance:

[10] For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. [11] For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter (2 Cor. 7:10–11).

#### 10. Faith

We believe that saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is brought about in the heart by the Holy Spirit and leads to a life marked with the pursuit of holiness.

Romans 3:27-28; 4:1-5; 4:17-25; 10:14, 17; Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8; James 2:14-26

Key text on faith:

[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8–9).

**Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin:** repentance is *turning away* from sin; faith is *turning to* Jesus.

## 4. What About Good Works?

Good works are the the \_\_\_\_\_ of faith:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Those who have trusted in Jesus gradually grow more and more like Christ in a process called \_\_\_\_\_. Over time, God gradually makes His people more like His Son (Rom. 8:29), and His people learn more and more how to choose to follow Jesus in faith and obedience.

[12] Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:12–13).

Like good works do not save a person, good works also do not keep a person saved. Ultimately, God will keep all who are His by His power. As He \_\_\_\_\_, He also promises that His people will \_\_\_\_\_:

### 11. Security of the Believer

We believe that all those whom God has saved from their sins will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation into sin, grieve the Spirit, and impair their graces and comforts, yet they shall be renewed again through repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

John 6:37-40; 10:28-29; Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Philippians 1:6

## Conclusion

Think on these questions in light of what we have covered so far:

1. Do you recognize that you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?
2. Have you turned from sin and trusted in Jesus to forgive you of your sin, give you His righteousness, and give you His free gift of eternal life?
3. If you have trusted in Jesus, are you walking in the good works God prepared for you? Are you resting in the security He promises?



## Session 3

### *The Church: Why Does the Church Exist?*

## Introduction

Is the church necessary in today's world or is it becoming an outdated antique from days gone by? What is the purpose of the church? For Christians, is church recommended or required? Are there prescribed structures and methods to which churches should adhere? In this session we will see that the church is God's idea, and being a part of the church is a blessing from God as we await the return of the Savior. Furthermore, as the Bride of Christ, the church will never cease to exist. She will dwell with Him for eternity.

## 12. The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all followers of Jesus Christ are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. The regular officers of a church are Elders (Pastors) and Deacons.

John 10:16; Acts 1:8; 20:17, 28; Ephesians 1:22; 2:19-22; 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-18; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:25

## 1. What Is the Church?

### A. *Who Makes Up the Church?*

All \_\_\_\_\_ for all time who have been saved by God through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus—the true church is built upon a \_\_\_\_\_ of truth:

[13] Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" [14] And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." [15] He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" [16] Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. [18] And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:13–18).

The true church is a gathering of people who "confess" faith in Jesus—believers. Non-believers are welcome to attend our gatherings, hear the gospel in our songs and sermons and watch us portray the gospel in baptism and the Lord's Supper, but a biblical church does not include any person who has not repented and placed faith in Jesus to save them from their sins.

## **B. *Is the Church Visible or Invisible?***

The \_\_\_\_\_ church is the church as God sees it. Only God knows who has truly been saved.

[21] “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ [23] And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness’ (Matthew 7:21–23).

The \_\_\_\_\_ church is as we see it. Local churches are responsible to do their best to bear witness to the gospel by ensuring that they are only made up of those who have genuine faith in Jesus. But because only God can see the heart, the visible church will always include some unbelievers.

[11] But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. [12] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? (1 Corinthians 5:11–12).

## **C. *Is the Church Universal or Local?***

The Bible speaks of the church in a \_\_\_\_\_ sense—all those for whom Christ died, everywhere and for all of time.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25–27).

The Bible also speaks of \_\_\_\_\_ churches—a defined group of believers who commit to gather together for worship, love one another, hold each other accountable, and make disciples together.

[17] That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church (1 Corinthians 4:17).

## **2. What Is the Purpose of the Church?**

### **A. \_\_\_\_\_ *God***

The church exists, first and foremost, to glorify God:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9).

so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3:10).

B. \_\_\_\_\_ *The Body in* \_\_\_\_\_

The church is a body that is to grow into maturity as its members love one another in Christ:

[15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (Ephesians 4:15–16).

C. \_\_\_\_\_ *The* \_\_\_\_\_ *to the World*

The church loves the world by sharing the good news of what Jesus did to save sinners:

[46] and [Jesus] said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:46–49).

### 15. Missions & Evangelism

We believe that the church and those who are in Christ are called by him to go forth and make disciples of all nations. To accomplish Christ’s mission for us, we are to faithfully go across the street and around the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are to financially support Christian missionaries who have been called by God to live amongst the unreached, and we are to pray to God asking Him to build His kingdom through our faithful going and giving.

Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-47; Acts 1:7-8; 13:47-48; Romans 10:11-15

**These purposes are summed up in the Great Commission.** The church’s mission is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus. This involves both taking the gospel to unbelievers and teaching believers how to follow Him:

[18] And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

### 3. What Are the Marks of a True Church?

Historically, it has been recognized that there are two things that mark a true church:

A. *Teaching the* \_\_\_\_\_ *of* \_\_\_\_\_ *Rightly*

The church is to protect and proclaim what Scripture teaches both in word and in action:

[14] I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, [15] if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth (1 Timothy 3:14–15).

**B. Practicing \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ Rightly**

Jesus gave His church two ordinances to practice regularly in order to portray the gospel. Baptism, which is tied to entering into the church, and the Lord's Supper, which is tied to ongoing fellowship within the church.

### **13. Baptism**

We believe that baptism is an ordinance given by the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of remission of sins, and of giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. It is prerequisite to church membership and to participation in the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13

### **14. The Lord's Supper**

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, and to be observed by His churches until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their unity in church membership.

Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-34

## **4. What Is the Future of the Church?**

The Church, the Bride of Christ, awaits the return of Christ, after which She will worship Him, dwell with Him, and enjoy Him for all of eternity in the new heavens and new earth.

### **16. The End Times**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal suffering of the wicked.

Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15

## **Conclusion**

Think on these questions in light of what we have covered so far:

1. Do you appreciate the importance of the Church in the world?
2. Do you celebrate the gift of the church as God has given it to us?
3. Do you desire to be a member of a local church and contribute to the mission of the church?



## Session 4

### *Leadership and Membership at RPBC*

## 1. Biblical Eldership

Scripture records that the leaders in the early churches were referred to by three interchangeable titles: “**Pastor**/ \_\_\_\_\_” (Eph. 4:11), “**Bishop**/ \_\_\_\_\_” (Ti. 1:5–7), and “ \_\_\_\_\_” (Acts 14:23).

[1] So I exhort the **elders** among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: [2] **shepherd** the flock of God that is among you, exercising **oversight** (1 Peter 5:1–2a)

### A. *The \_\_\_\_\_ of Elders*

[1] The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. [2] Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, [3] not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. [4] He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, [5] for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? [6] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil (1 Timothy 3:1–7).

Paul's emphasis is not on *what* an elder *does* but on *who* an elder *is*. Character is king! An elder does not have to be sinless; the expectation is that an elder's life would be marked by patterns of success in these areas with moments of failure, rather than moments of success and patterns of failure. Elders do not have a higher standard to meet than any other Christian, but they do have a greater accountability, due to their noble task (see 1 Timothy 5:19–20).

### B. *The \_\_\_\_\_ of Elders*

- i. \_\_\_\_\_. Overseers are entrusted with the responsibility to care for the souls of church members, and will give an account to Jesus for this stewardship (1 Pet. 5:1–4; Heb. 13:17).
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_. Elders govern the local church. They lead it in carrying out its mission and oversee administrative details, not by domineering but by serving (1 Pet. 5:2–3; 1 Tim. 5:17).
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_. Shepherds feed the flock—they teach God's Word to God's people. The only task an elder must be able to do, to be qualified to be an elder, is teaching (1 Tim. 3:2; Ti. 1:9).
- iv. \_\_\_\_\_. All Christians are ministers, not just pastors. Church leaders are given by Jesus to the church, in order to equip the saints for their ministry (Eph. 4:12).

C. *The \_\_\_\_\_ of Elders*

The Bible shows a consistent pattern for church leadership: multiple elders—a collective form of leadership in which each elder equally shares the position, authority, and responsibility of the office (Acts 11:30; 15:2, 22; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; Phil. 1:1; Ti. 1:5; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-2).

There are three main benefits to shared leadership in the church:

- i. **Balances** \_\_\_\_\_. In a group of qualified elders, one man's strengths contribute to the health of the church, while his weaknesses are covered by the others' strengths.
- ii. **Shares** \_\_\_\_\_. Even a strong leader like Moses wilted under the strain of leading God's people, so Jethro encouraged him to appoint other leaders to spread the work.
- iii. **Provides** \_\_\_\_\_. Qualified elders are still limited in their wisdom, have lapses in judgment, and struggle with sin. A plurality keeps each individual in check.

D. *The \_\_\_\_\_ of Elders*

- i. \_\_\_\_\_. Pastors must first submit to the Chief Shepherd's will as revealed in Scripture.
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_. Elders must be united in seeking the direction of the Chief Shepherd.
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_. Individual elders must be willing to let go of personal preferences and trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Word and the collective wisdom of the group.

## 2. Biblical Deaconship

A. *The \_\_\_\_\_ of Deacons*

[8] Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. [9] They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. [10] And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. [11] Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. [12] Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. [13] For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3:8–13).

B. *What Is the Difference Between a Deacon and an \_\_\_\_\_ ?*

Elders and deacons are both leaders, but they serve in different leadership capacities within the church. Under the authority of Christ, pastors are the primary overseers of a local church, called to protect, feed, lead, and care for God's flock. Deacons are leaders under the authority of the pastors. They are not called to be preachers, decision-makers, or vision-casters like pastors. Pastors lead by teaching and giving oversight, but deacons lead the church in serving.

C. *What Is the Difference Between a Deacon and a \_\_\_\_\_ ?*

According to Scripture, all the members of a church are responsible for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). Every Christian is given a gift by God, which they are called to use to serve the Body. So what sets a deacon apart from a faithful church member?

Acts 6:1–7 offers a good model of how deacons are to function. That passage records a church in which members were already using their gifts, but seven men were appointed to ethically and efficiently lead the ministry that was already ongoing, so that the apostles could devote themselves to the shepherding ministry only they were responsible for.

Following this example, then, the difference between a deacon and a faithful church member is that a faithful church member ministers, but deacons provide godly, hands-on leadership over the ministry of church members.

### 3. Biblical Membership

A. *What Is Church Membership?*

The term comes from the Bible’s teaching that Christians are members of Christ’s Body:

so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another (Rom. 12:5).

It is a label that encompasses several biblical ideas:

**i. Membership has to do with being \_\_\_\_\_ from the world.** In the Bible, a person is always identified with one of two groups of people: either you are part of the church or you are part of the world. Church membership says, “I’m not of this world.”

[11] But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. [12] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? [13] God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:11–13).

**ii. Membership has to do with being \_\_\_\_\_ to a particular group of Christians.** A member of one church and a member of another church are both part of the universal Church, separate from the world, and called to love one another as brother/sister. But they each have a responsibility to their own local church that they do not have to one another.

[24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Hebrews 10:24–25).

**iii. Membership has a \_\_\_\_\_ aspect.** Jesus has given each local church the authority to determine who is a part of its membership.

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

**iv. Membership has a \_\_\_\_\_ aspect.** Church members give to and receive from one another love, accountability, encouragement, correction, hospitality, and more.

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

**B. Who \_\_\_\_\_ for Church Membership?**

**i. A person who \_\_\_\_\_ faith in Christ, both in word and through baptism**

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)

**ii. A person who \_\_\_\_\_ faith in Christ by ongoing repentance of sin**

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector (Matthew 18:17).

**C. What Are the \_\_\_\_\_ on a Church Member?**

There are many ways the Bible calls church members to live together. Here are a few examples:

- Love one another (John 13:35)
- Attend gathered worship (Heb. 10:25)
- Serve fellow members (1 Pet. 4:10)
- Pray for your church (Jas. 5:16)
- Give financially (2 Cor. 9:7)
- Submit to congregation (1 Cor. 5:12–6:11)
- Pursue unity (Phil. 2:1–4)
- Leave former church well (Eph. 1:15)

**D. What Is the \_\_\_\_\_ Between Church Members and Elders?**

Shepherds are to joyfully watch over the souls of those under their care, and members are to submit to their leaders for the good of their souls:

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you (Hebrews 13:17).

**E. What Is Church \_\_\_\_\_ ?**

Christians are to shine like a light in the world by living out their new life in Christ through good works (Mt. 5:13–16; Rom. 6). So when Christians sin (and they do!), they are to repent. If a Christian continues in sin, though, then one brother or sister should confront him or her privately about that ongoing sin. If he or she still does not repent after a sufficient amount of time, then the brother or sister should bring 1–2 more people along and confront the unrepentant person again. If the person is still unwilling to repent, then he or she should be brought before the whole congregation, who then should pursue their wayward brother or

sister. After the whole church pleads with the unrepentant person, and they give him or her ample time to repent, if he or she still does not repent, the church should remove that person from membership. That final step is called church discipline, and its goal is not to remove people, but to restore unrepentant members to fellowship with their church (Mt. 18:15–20).

If a church allows an unrepentant person to remain a member, (1) that church is not caring for the wayward person who is running full-speed toward hell and away from Jesus, and (2) that church is damaging its witness by effectively saying to the world, “Jesus doesn’t change lives.”

### ***E. How Do I Get More Connected?***

Join a Group. Our Groups meet weekly for Bible Study and monthly for Home Fellowship.

### ***G. Where Can I Serve at RPBC?***

There are limitless informal ways to serve, but here are just some of our organized ministries:

- Nursery/Children
- Youth
- Hospitality Team
- Music/Media
- Safety Team
- Men/Women
- Missions
- Biblical Counseling

### ***H. How Do I Join RPBC?***

- Complete Discovery Class
- Embrace the RPBC Statement of Faith (*please feel comfortable approaching the elders with any questions, confusions, or points of disagreement*)
- Provide a one-page written testimony including:
  1. A summary of your life before Jesus
  2. How you came to place faith in Jesus
  3. Your understanding of the gospel
  4. How your life has been changed by Jesus
  5. Your baptism story (*if you have been baptized*) or why you want to be baptized (*if not*)
- Meet with two elders to discuss membership questions and qualifications
- Be presented by the elders to the church body in a corporate worship service, that you may commit to the congregation and the congregation may commit themselves to you

# **RPBC Statement of Faith**

## *What We Believe*

### **1. The Scriptures**

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God. Therefore, all scripture is authoritative, infallible and inerrant. The Scriptures are the only sufficient rule for faith and practice.

Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

### **2. God**

We believe that there is but one God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, infinitely perfect in every way. He is without beginning and without end. In His sovereignty, He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. To Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience that springs forth from faith.

Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 139:7-10; Psalm 145:3; Jeremiah 23:23-24; John 1:3; I Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 1:17

### **3. The Trinity**

We believe that the Scriptures reveal that the one true God eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person has distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

Genesis 1:1, 26; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3, 18; John 4:24; Romans 1:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5-6

### **4. God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly ordains and foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 23:9; Luke 10:21-22; John 3:16; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

## **5. Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. We believe in his sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atonement for sins on the cross, His literal death, His bodily resurrection on the third day, His ascension into heaven to the right hand of God the Father, His perpetual intercession for His people, and His pending and certain personal return to earth on a promised Day in the future.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30-31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9-10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; 10:25; 1 Timothy 3:16

## **6. The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to save, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

John 14:16-17, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

## **7. Divine Sovereignty**

We believe that God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet He is not in any way the author of or approver of sin, nor does He impede or destroy the free will and responsibility of mankind.

Job 1-2; Isaiah 46:9-11; Proverbs 16:33; Acts 2:22-24; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; James 1:13-15

## **8. Salvation**

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are saved from their sins by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life.

Genesis 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

## **9. Repentance**

We believe that repentance is granted by God to a person who is convicted by the Holy Spirit and made aware of the evil of his sin. This awareness brings about humility with godly sorrow and detestation of the sin. A truly repentant person endeavors to change his ways and to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

Acts 2:37-38; 11:18; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11; 2 Timothy 2:25

## **10. Faith**

We believe that saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is brought about in the heart by the Holy Spirit and leads to a life marked with the pursuit of holiness.

Romans 3:27-28; 4:1-5; 4:17-25; 10:14, 17; Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8; James 2:14-26

## **11. Security of the Believer**

We believe that all those whom God has saved from their sins will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation into sin, grieve the Spirit, and impair their graces and comforts, yet they shall be renewed again through repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

John 6:37-40; 10:28-29; Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Philippians 1:6

## **12. The Church**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all followers of Jesus Christ are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. The regular officers of a church are Elders (Pastors) and Deacons.

John 10:16; Acts 1:8; 20:17, 28; Ephesians 1:22; 2:19-22; 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-18; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:25

## **13. Baptism**

We believe that baptism is an ordinance given by the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of remission of sins, and of giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. It is prerequisite to church membership and to participation in the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13

## **14. The Lord's Supper**

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, and to be observed by His churches until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their unity in church membership.

Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-34

## **15. Missions & Evangelism**

We believe that the church and those who are in Christ are called by him to go forth and make disciples of all nations. To accomplish Christ's mission for us, we are to faithfully go across the street and around the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are to financially support Christian missionaries who have been called by God to live amongst the unreached, and we are to pray to God asking Him to build His kingdom through our faithful going and giving.

Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-47; Acts 1:7-8; 13:47-48; Romans 10:11-15

## **16. The End Times**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal suffering of the wicked.

Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15