



We believe

EXPERIENCE

Affirming our Statement of Faith



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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Discovery Questions	5
Article 1 God	7
Article 2 The Bible	11
Article 3 The Human Condition	15
Article 4 Jesus Christ	19
Article 5 The Work of Christ	23
Article 6 The Holy Spirit	27
Article 7 The Church	31
Article 8 Christian Living	35
Article 9 Christ's Return	39
Article 10 Response and Eternal Destiny	43
Conclusion	47
Appendix 1: Statement of Faith	48
Appendix 2: Tips for a Healthy Group	50
Appendix 3: Group Covenant	52

Introduction

Since 2016, Oakwood has invested 8-10 weeks each winter to “Read big. Read real. Read together.” As a part of the Community Bible Experience (CBE), we completed reading the entire Bible together in early 2020.

It feels as though CBE has become part of our Oakwood DNA, so we’ve decided to creatively continue this adventure in 2021. It’s called the [We Believe Experience](#) (WBE), and it’s a journey through our [Evangelical Free Church of America](#) (EFCA) Statement of Faith. Our Statement of Faith binds us together as a church family, so we regularly invest time to walk through it together. This year’s experience will help us affirm what we believe and confirm the grounding of our Statement of Faith in the Word of God.

Here's what to expect for the WBE journey:

- We will review one article of our Statement of Faith each week for 10 weeks.
- Use your own Bible or the Bible app as you navigate Scripture, familiarizing yourself with God's Word and where to find foundational truths throughout it.
- Sunday messages will be related to themes from each article.
- Every Monday is like New Year's Day! Consider it an opportunity to start fresh with that week's reading—don't feel stressed to go backward, just keep moving forward!
- We encourage you to write down "Parking Lot" questions that come up in group discussions that will be answered from Scripture and during the message series.

This journal will guide you on our WBE journey. It includes our *Statement of Faith*, each individual article, each week's daily readings and room for notes.

We invite you to participate in one of Oakwood's WBE group opportunities on site, in homes, or online. Or host your own group with your friends and family!

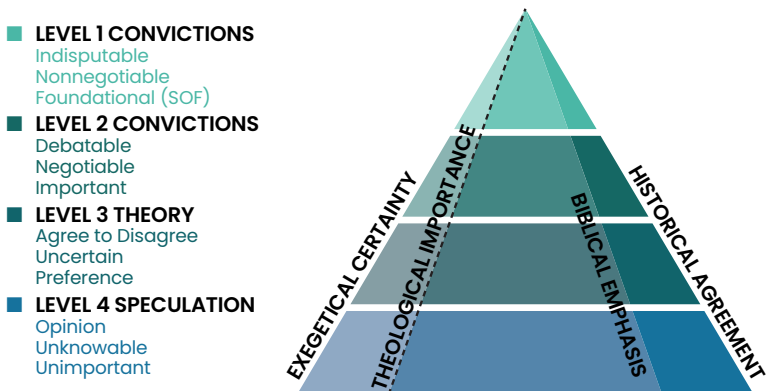
Additionally, we highly recommend adding *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith* of the Evangelical Free Church of America to your personal library.

Are you ready? We are excited for all our Lord will do as we adventure together. And we trust we will be transformed by God's Word and Spirit as we do.

Enjoy the journey!

Comments:

- Our *Statement of Faith* is identical to the 2008 *Statement of Faith* of the Evangelical Free Church of America. Our congregation did not embrace the 2019 revision to the statement that replaced the word “premillennial” with the word “glorious” ([article 9](#)).
- The purpose of a Statement of Faith is to define what a group believes to be foundational, biblical truth. However, a Statement of Faith typically does not address every doctrinal issue because not every doctrinal position or conviction is of equal importance.
- One of the strengths of the EFGA Statement of Faith is that it is intended to help us strive to major-on-the-majors & minor-on-the-minors. The following chart is an attempt to equip us to decide what is foundational and what is not.



Pyramid graphic is adapted from an article entitled *Drawing Doctrinal Lines* by Pastor Michael P. Andrus in *The Ministerial Forum* newsletter of the EFGA Ministerial Association (Fall 1993, VOL 4, No. 2).

A note to disciplemaking friends and families about the Discovery Group process:

Consider inviting your family and friends to engage in the *We Believe Experience* with you—in person, over the phone, or online.

If we want to grow together as disciples of Jesus, it's essential that we gather with family and friends to get our fingerprints on the Bible, seeking to understand, obey, and share what He's teaching us.

The Discovery Group process is designed to help us practice disciplemaking that multiplies. Around the world, everyday disciplemakers like us are partnering with the Spirit to birth disciplemaking movements, using discovery Bible study as a key tool!

To learn more, visit: disciplemakingmovements.com
More about the discovery group process is on page 50.

Discovery Questions

1. Check-in: Since we last met, how did your "I will..." and sharing go?
2. What are you thankful for? What challenge or stress are you facing?
3. Do you know anyone who needs help at this time? As a group, how can we help?
4. From our reading, what stood out to you and why?
5. If this is God speaking, how will you apply it to your life? (Share a specific: "I will...")
6. Who will you share with before we meet again? (Name a specific person you plan to share with.)





WEEK 1

Article 1

God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.





Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe in one God...

[Deuteronomy 6:1-15](#)

[Mark 12:28-34](#)

...Creator of all things...

[Genesis 1 & 2](#)

[Psalm 19:1-6](#)

[Psalm 33:6-9](#)

[Hebrews 11:1-3](#)

...holy...

[Exodus 15:11](#)

[Isaiah 6:1-7](#)

[Isaiah 45:5-6](#)

[Isaiah 45:21-22](#)

Day 2

...infinitely perfect...

[Deuteronomy 32:1-4](#)

[Psalm 18:30-32](#)

[Psalm 50:1-6](#)

...and eternally existing...

[Psalm 102:23-28](#)

[Daniel 4:34-37](#)

[Acts 17:22-31](#)

...in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons...

[Matthew 3:13-17](#)

[Matthew 28:16-20](#)

[2 Corinthians 13:14](#)



Day 3

...the Father...

[Matthew 6:1-15](#)

[Romans 8:12-17](#)

[1 Corinthians 8:6](#)

...the Son...

[John 1:1-18](#)

[Hebrews 1:1-4](#)

...and the Holy Spirit.

[John 14:16-31](#)

[John 16:5-15](#)

Day 4

Having limitless knowledge...

[Psalm 139:1-6](#)

[Isaiah 46:8-11](#)

...and sovereign power...

[Jeremiah 32:17-20](#)

[Romans 8:26-39](#)

[Revelation 1:8](#)

...God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself...

[Ephesians 1:1-12](#)

[Revelation 13:1-10](#)

Day 5

...and to make all things new...

[Romans 8:18-25](#)

[Revelation 21:1-4](#)

[Revelation 22:1-5](#)

...for His own glory.

[Psalm 19:1-6](#)

[Isaiah 43:1-7](#)

[Romans 11:33-36](#)



WEEK 2

Article 2

The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.





Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors.

[Genesis 1:3](#)

[Matthew 4:1-11](#)

[Hebrews 1:1-2](#)

[2 Peter 3:14-16](#)

[Luke 1:1-4](#)

Day 2

As the verbally inspired Word of God...

[2 Timothy 3:14-17](#)

[2 Timothy 4:1-4](#)

[2 Peter 1:16-21](#)

...the Bible is without error in the original writings...

[Proverbs 30:5](#)

[Psalm 119:89-96](#)

[Matthew 5:17-18](#)

[Titus 1:1-4](#)

Day 3

...the complete revelation of His will for salvation...

[Luke 16:19-31](#)

[Luke 24:25-49](#)

[Galatians 1:6-10](#)

[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)



Day 4

...and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged.

[John 17:13-17](#)

[1 Peter 1:22-25](#)

[Psalm 119:1-24](#)

[Psalm 19:7-14](#)

[Hebrews 4:12-13](#)

Day 5

Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

[Matthew 7:24-29](#)

[Matthew 28:16-20](#)

[1 John 2:1-6](#)





WEEK 3

Article 3

The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.



➤ Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image...

[Genesis 1:26-27](#)

[Genesis 5:1](#)

[Genesis 9:6](#)

[James 3:9](#)

Day 2

...but they sinned when tempted by Satan.

[Genesis 3:1-6](#)

[John 8:44](#)

[Romans 5:12-14](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:3](#)

Day 3

In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice...

[Romans 3:9-23](#)

[Romans 5:15](#)

[Romans 8:5-8](#)

[Genesis 6:5-12](#)

[Jeremiah 17:9](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-2](#)

[Ephesians 4:17-19](#)



Day 4

...alienated from God, and under his wrath.

[Romans 5:6-10](#)

[Romans 1:18](#)

[Romans 2:5](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-3](#)

Day 5

Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

[Acts 4:1-12](#)

[Romans 5:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:12-18](#)

[Philippians 3:13-21](#)

[Colossians 3:12-20](#)





WEEK 4

Article 4

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel’s promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.



➤ Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures.

[John 1:1-5](#)

[John 1:14-18](#)

[John 20:28](#)

[Isaiah 9:6](#)

[Colossians 2:9](#)

[Hebrews 5:7-8](#)

[1 John 1:1-3](#)

Day 2

Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah...

[2 Samuel 7:8-16](#)

[Luke 4:16-22](#)

[Luke 24:25-27](#)

Day 3

...was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

[Matthew 1:18-25](#)

[Luke 1:28-38](#)

[Isaiah 7:14](#)



Day 4

He lived a sinless life...

[Hebrews 4:14-16](#)

...was crucified under Pontius Pilate...

[Matthew 27:17-26](#)

[Acts 4:23-31](#)

...arose bodily from the dead...

[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

[Romans 4:25](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:1-20](#)

Day 5

...ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

[Acts 1:1-11](#)

[Ephesians 1:18-23](#)

[Hebrews 4:14-16](#)

[Hebrews 7:22-25](#)

[Hebrews 10:10-12](#)

[1 John 1:8-2:2](#)





WEEK 5

Article 5

The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ,
as our representative and substitute,
shed His blood on the cross as the perfect,
all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins.
His atoning death and victorious resurrection
constitute the only ground for salvation.





Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute...

[Matthew 4:1-11](#)

[Romans 5:12-21](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:45-47](#)

[Mark 10:42-45](#)

[Hebrews 2:16-18](#)

[1 Peter 2:24](#)

[1 Peter 3:18](#)

Day 2

...shed His blood on the cross as the perfect...

[Matthew 26:26-29](#)

[Hebrews 9:11-22](#)

[1 Peter 1:18-19](#)



Day 3

...all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins.

[Hebrews 9:23-10:1](#)

[Isaiah 53:1-7](#)

[John 1:29](#)

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

Day 4

His atoning death and victorious resurrection.

[Romans 3:24-26](#)

[Romans 4:19-25](#)

[Hebrews 2:14-17](#)

Day 5

Constitute the only ground for salvation.

[Colossians 2:13-15](#)

[1 Peter 1:1-5](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-9](#)





WEEK 6

Article 6

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God.

He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.



➤ Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ.

[John 16:5-15](#)

He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners...

[Ezekiel 36:25-27](#)

[John 3:1-7](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-9](#)

[Colossians 2:8-15](#)

[Titus 3:4-7](#)

Day 2

...and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God.

[1 Corinthians 12:12-14](#)

[Galatians 3:23-29](#)

[Ephesians 1:1-12](#)

[Romans 8:12-17](#)

[Titus 3:4-7](#)

[1 John 3:1-3](#)



Day 3

He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips...

[John 14:16-26](#)

[Romans 8:9-11](#)

[Romans 12:4-8](#)

[1 Corinthians 12:4-10](#)

[1 Peter 4:10-11](#)

Day 4

...and empowers believers...

[Acts 1:1-8](#)

[Ephesians 3:14-21](#)

[2 Timothy 1:3-7](#)

Day 5

...for Christ-like living and service.

[Galatians 5:16-24](#)

[Philippians 2:1-4](#)





WEEK 7

Article 7

The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.





Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that the true church...

[Matthew 16:13-18](#)

[Ephesians 4:1-7](#)

Day 2

...comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone.

[Psalm 103:10-12](#)

[John 3:16-18](#)

[Acts 16:25-31](#)

[Romans 3:20-28](#)

[Romans 4:1-5](#)

[Romans 5:1-2](#)

[Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

Day 3

They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head.

[1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)

[Ephesians 1:22-23](#)

[Ephesians 4:14-16](#)



Day 4

The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers.

[Acts 9:31](#)

[Matthew 18:15-20](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:1-9](#)

[1 Corinthians 12:12-14](#)

[Ephesians 1:1-6](#)

[1 Peter 2:1-10](#)

Day 5

The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

[Matthew 28:18-20](#)

[Acts 8:30-39](#)

[Romans 6:1-9](#)

[Matthew 26:26-29](#)

[1 Corinthians 11:23-30](#)

[John 6:46-58](#)





WEEK 8

Article 8

Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.



➤ Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose.

[Matthew 7:15-27](#)

[Ephesians 2:8-10](#)

[Colossians 3:1-17](#)

[Philippians 2:12-13](#)

[James 2:14-26](#)

Day 2

God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially...

[Deuteronomy 6:1-9](#)

[Leviticus 19:18](#)

[Mark 12:28-34](#)

Day 3

...and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed.

[Romans 12:9-21](#)

[Ephesians 4:25-32](#)

[Deuteronomy 15:7-11](#)

[Psalm 82:1-4](#)

[Proverbs 14:21](#)

[Proverbs 14:31](#)

[Micah 6:6-8](#)



Day 4

With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.

[Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:1-5](#)

[2 Timothy 4:1-8](#)

[1 John 4:1-4](#)

Day 5

In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

[Matthew 28:16-20](#)

[Matthew 5:13-16](#)

[Acts 1:6-8](#)

[Revelation 7:9-12](#)





WEEK 9

Article 9

Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.



➤ Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe in the personal, bodily...

[Matthew 24:29-31](#)

[Matthew 26:57-64](#)

[John 14:1-6](#)

[Acts 1:1-11](#)

[Revelation 1:4-8](#)

Day 2

...and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Revelation 19:11-21](#)

[Revelation 20:1-10](#)

Day 3

The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy...

[Matthew 24:32-37](#)

[Mark 13:28-37](#)



Day 4

...and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer...

[Titus 2:11-14](#)

[Hebrews 9:27-28](#)

Day 5

...to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

[1 John 3:1-3](#)

[2 Peter 3:8-15](#)





WEEK 10

Article 10

Response & Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord, in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.





Each day of the week, spend time reading the verses below. The Scripture relates to specific wording in the *Statement of Faith* article in its entirety. As you're reading, think about how these words were carefully written and how they confirm the Statement of Faith.

Day 1

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Acts 17:22-31, 20:17-21](#)

[Mark 1:15](#)

[Isaiah 55:6-11](#)

[John 1:9-13, 3:16-18, 5:24, 8:24, 11:25-26, 20:26-31](#)

[Romans 2:1-8](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:8-10](#)

Day 2

We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world...

[1 Corinthians 15:1-14, 50-58](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)

[Revelation 20:11-15](#)

Day 3

...assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment...

[Matthew 25:46](#)

[Luke 16:19-31](#)

[2 Thessalonians 1:1-10](#)

[Revelation 14:9-11](#)



Day 4

**...and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord,
in the new heaven and the new earth...**

[Job 19:23-26](#)

[Matthew 25:34](#)

[John 14:1-3](#)

[Revelation 21:1-6](#)

Day 5

...to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

[Ephesians 1:1-12](#)

[Romans 11:33-36](#)



Conclusion

Thank you for joining us on this *We Believe Experience* journey. Indeed, our Statement of Faith is rooted and grounded in the Word of God. It is our prayer that this study has better equipped you to:

- Contend earnestly for the faith ([Jude 3](#)).
- Encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it ([Titus 1:9](#)).
- No longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching ([Ephesians 4:14](#)).
- Delight in the Word of God ([Jeremiah 15:16](#); [Psalm 119](#)).
- Seek to be an encouragement to others ([Romans 1:12](#)).
- Be a source of unity ([John 17:20-26](#)).
- Learn and grow in practicing a disciple-making way of life ([Matthew 28:16-20](#)).

If you still have questions, please feel free to reach out to your group leader or our Oakwood pastoral team:

Roger Ellis, *Lead Pastor* | roger@oakwoodnow.org

Nate Stenholtz, *Staff Development* | nate@oakwoodnow.org

Marcus Constantine, *Groups & Prayer* | marcus@oakwoodnow.org

Becci Terrill, *Children* | becci@oakwoodnow.org

Myles Hanson, *Students* | myles@oakwoodnow.org

Tom Hooper, *Worship & Creative Arts* | tom@oakwoodnow.org

Sarah Hayden, *Women & Guest Care* | sarah@oakwoodnow.org



Appendix 1

Statement of Faith

God. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

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Christian Living. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord, in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.



Appendix 2

Tips for a healthy group:

- As a group facilitator, consider asking the questions for no more than 1-3 meetings. After this, invite other group members to ask the questions at each subsequent meeting. This will help everyone embrace the discovery process and create a sense of shared ownership in the group.
- Throughout each week, we will be reading several passages that touch on various themes. When you get together with your group, you have two options for choosing your discovery text. Using the discovery questions, you can:
 1. Welcome discussion on any of the verses read throughout the week.
 2. Choose a specific passage from the week to read together and focus discussion on those verses.
- As a group leader, remember that God's Word is our authority and His Spirit is the best Teacher ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), [John 6:44-45](#), [16:13-14](#)). As questions come up, direct your group back to the Scripture for answers. You are also encouraged to keep a "Parking Lot" list of questions that come up, which can be shared with our Oakwood pastoral team and answered from Scripture later.
- A discovery group usually requires about 10-15 minutes per person (e.g., a group of four would require 40-60 minutes). If time is limited and you have a larger group, consider breaking into smaller groups for portions of the discussion and coming together to share highlights.
- Be sure to leave adequate time toward the end of your discovery group for each member to identify an "I will..." (a next step to apply what we've discovered) and a plan to share (someone with whom we will tell something we learned). The "I will..." is critical to ensure we are pursuing obedience-based discipleship and not just acquiring head knowledge. Sharing what we learn helps us make new disciples and start new discovery groups.
- Some groups have found it helpful to pause for a moment or two of silence to allow group members to write down their "I will..." statements and the names of the people they plan to share with. Space for notes is provided here in our *We Believe Experience* journal.



- At the beginning of each subsequent meeting, take some time to begin with a check-in about how our “I will...” and sharing went that week. This helps hold one another accountable to apply and share what we’re discovering weekly.
- We encourage you to review the Group Covenant ([page 52](#)) together at your first meeting. Ask your group if there are any additional items that group members would like to commit to be and do for one another. You can add these at the bottom of your Group Covenant list. Some groups choose to also sign the bottom as a statement of commitment to one another. Review your Group Covenant at subsequent meetings as needed.
- If you’d like to learn more about the discovery process or to continue this conversation, connect with marcus@oakwoodnow.org.

Discovery Questions

1. Check-in: Since we last met, how did your “I will...” and sharing go?
2. What are you thankful for? What challenge or stress are you facing?
3. Do you know anyone who needs help at this time?
As a group, how can we help?
4. From our reading, what stood out to you and why?
5. If this is God speaking, how will you apply it to your life? (Share a specific: “I will...”)
6. Who will you share with before we meet again? (Name a specific person you plan to share with.)



Appendix 3

Group Covenant

These statements are used for those exploring the *We Believe Experience* in groups.

Our Purpose

The purpose of our group is to relationally experience the truths of Scripture, to apply biblical principles to our daily lives, to pray for each other and, to encourage one another.

Our Guardrails

Confidentiality

I will hold in confidence all that is shared here.

We will talk about ourselves and our situations...avoiding conversation about other people.

Grace & Sensitivity

I understand that every person in this group is on his or her own personal spiritual journey with God.

I will speak with sensitivity regarding family members, health choices, political views and other churches.

Safe Environment

I will respect each individual's right to an opinion and will encourage and respect questions, so that our group will be a safe place where we can be heard and feel loved.

I'll strive to give no quick answers, snap judgments or simple fixes.

I acknowledge that the Bible itself is our final authority.

Presence

I will do my best to attend as I'm able.

Within our limited time, I'll value others' sharing enough to self-manage my own contributions.





*We*believe
EXPERIENCE
Affirming our Statement of Faith

 **OAKWOOD**
CHURCH
LOVE GOD LOVE OTHERS MAKE DISCIPLES