

PHILADELPHIA PRAYER CENTRE

DOCTRINE

CONTENTS

1. STATEMENT OF FAITH	3
2. SCRIPTURE	6
3. HUMANITY AND SALVATION	9
4. THE PERSON, ROLE, BAPTISM AND WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	16
5. BAPTISM	22
6. BIBLICAL MARRIAGE	25
7. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE	27
8. BIBLICAL OFFERINGS	29
9. CHURCH DISCIPLINE	32
10. COMMUNION	34

1. STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in one God as revealed in the Bible, God in three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe that God knows all things, is all-powerful and is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. We believe in a God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His character (holy, merciful, just, loving, powerful, wise and faithful).

(Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19, Genesis 1:1, Isaiah 40:21-31, Isaiah 6:3, Jonah 4:2, Psalm 86:15)

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He was born of the virgin Mary, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and that He was wholly God and wholly Man. We believe that when Jesus condescended himself to become man, He laid aside His divine (and rightful) attributes that He may carry out the will of the Father on earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, we believe that this same Jesus lived His life on earth blameless, without sin. He suffered at the hands of the people He came to save and was crucified as a sacrificial atonement for sin. God the Father then raised Him from the dead on the third day and now reigns at the right hand of the Father in heaven as our high priest, interceding on our behalf. At an unknown time in the future, Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

(Luke 1:31-35, Romans 5:6-8, 1 Peter 2:24, Romans 3:25, 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, Romans 8:34)

We believe the person of the Holy Spirit is fully divine and a member of the trinity. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and brings about the work of sanctification of those that believe in Jesus, that is, the regeneration of every believer to become more and more like Jesus.

In addition to this, we believe that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to all believers for building up the church of Christ, It is our duty to develop and exercise these gifts for the edification of the body of believers.

(John 16:8-10, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12)

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the inspired and infallible word of God, without error in the original writings. It is God-Breathed and the final authority on life and faith in the one, true God. Furthermore, we believe that God was, is and will always be just as He has revealed Himself in the scriptures. In other words, God is exactly who He says He is.

(2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12, 13; 2 Peter 3:15-16)

We believe that humanity was created in the image of God to worship, obey and bring Glory to God. However, humanity chose to be disobedient to God and broke this perfect relationship, thus introducing death and decay into God's creation. Since that time, every living person sins and, despite their best efforts, fall short of the perfection that is required by God.

(Genesis 1:27, Genesis 3:6, Romans 3:9-18, Romans 3:23, Romans 7:18)

We believe that, despite of humanity's rebellion, God continued to love us and desired to restore a covenant relationship between people and Himself. In order to bring about this restoration God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the atoning substitutionary sacrifice for all those who believe in Him ("believe" meaning to confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord and commit to live a life of obedience, worthy of the calling of the gospel). This restoration, or salvation, comes only through faith in Jesus, not because of any "good" things that we do. This does not mean that it no longer matters what we do, for although we are saved by faith, our good works are evidence of a true, obedient faith in Jesus. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:17, 26).

(John 3:16, Romans 5:6-10, 3:22-26, 6:23, 8:1-2, Ephesians 2:8-10)

We believe that God, through the Holy Spirit, is at work in believers making them more and more like Jesus (this is also called sanctification). At the moment when a person makes a commitment to believe in and follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit then takes up residence and dwells within that person. From this point onwards, the Holy Spirit begins the progressive work of sanctification, which is not an "all at once" work but is a continuous process. This process may look different from person to person and we may all have our "ups and downs", however the general direction is

towards Christ-likeness. The outward evidence of this inward work is the manifestation of the fruit of the spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We also have a part to play in this process, being obedient children and empowered by the Holy Spirit we are to strive towards holiness – 1 Peter 1:13-16

(Romans 8:9, Romans 12:2, Philippians 1:6, Galatians 5:22-23,
1 Peter 1:13-16)

2. SCRIPTURE

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New testaments, is the inspired and infallible word of God, without error in the original writings. It is God-Breathed and the final authority on life and faith in the one, true God. Furthermore, we believe that God was, is and will always be just as He has revealed Himself in the scriptures. In other words, God is exactly who He says He is.

(2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12, 13;
2 Peter 3:15-16)

The reliability of the Scriptures as a historical document needs to be tested by the same criteria as is used on all other historical writings:

1. The Documents Test

- There are more than 24,000 manuscript copies or portions of the New Testament in existence. No other document comes close to such numbers.
- For comparison, The Iliad (By Homer), is second with a meagre 643 manuscripts that are still in existence.
- There are Biblical manuscripts that date less than 90 years after the original date of writing (one, "p 52", is dated 30 years after the original.) Compare this to between 800-1500 years for almost all other ancient writings.

"The interval then between the dates of original composition (of the Bible) and the earliest evidence becomes so small as to be, in fact, negligible. The last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as originally established."

- *Sir Frederick G. Kenyon, Principal Librarian of the British Museum*

2. The Internal Evidence Test

- The Bible was written by people who were either eyewitnesses themselves, or relating the testimony of eyewitnesses of the actual events and teachings of Jesus. (Luke 1:2-3; 2 Peter 3:16; 1 John 1:3)

- The disciples were spreading the message of Jesus at a time when there remained eyewitnesses who were hostile to the message of Jesus. If they strayed from the facts, they would have been quickly denounced.
- Almost every apostle was martyred for their faith, why would they do this if they were peddling a lie?

3. The External Evidence Test

(Using external sources and literature to corroborate the claims of the Bible)

- There has never been an archeological discovery that has disproved or discredited the Bible. (e.g. when the walls of Jericho were excavated, evidence showed that the walls fell outward, not inward. If the walls were being attacked from outside the city, they would have been battered down causing them to fall inward. The fact that they fell outward is evidence of God's intervention, as documented in Joshua 6.)
- We have writings from literature written by numerous historians corroborating the historical facts of the new testament. These include, but are not limited to; Tacitus (Roman historian), Eusebius (ancient historian), Papias (the Bishop of Hierapolis 130), Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyons AD 180) and Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (disciple of John the Apostle).
- Biblical predictions recorded often hundreds of years in advance of their fulfilment are indeed fulfilled in exquisite detail.

In light of this evidence, it is clear that the Bible is trustworthy as a historical text. It is the story of God and His love for mankind, man's rebellion against God, and God's redemption of man through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

God as the author

We believe that God is, through human writers, Himself the author of the Bible. It is God's words, in people's wording, capturing the complete meaning intended by God without distortion in the original text. In this context, the human authorship is not of paramount importance; indeed many authors are not identified.

God is not a liar; in fact it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore we believe in a literal¹ interpretation of the Bible, e.g. Adam and Eve, a talking donkey and Jonah being swallowed by a fish and 3 days later being spewed onto dry ground, alive.

Answering the JEDP theory (Documentary Hypothesis)

It has been proposed that the first 5 books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) were not authored by Moses but were edited together from 4 sources around about 400BC. These sources being:

1. Jahwist source
2. Elohist source
3. The Deuteronomist
4. The Priestly source (Hence the acronym – JEDP)

There are numerous issues with this hypothesis and, therefore, numerous counter arguments against this theory – the most compelling of which are detailed below.

Firstly, the vast majority of those that hold to this theory, approach the subject with the presupposition that the miraculous is impossible. From the outset, this convinces them that Moses could not have possibly written all 5 books of the pentateuch and they must search for an alternative hypothesis. This does not allow for an unbiased and proper examination of the documentary evidence and thus leads to inaccurate conclusions.

Secondly, Jesus himself, along with Luke and Paul, attributes the first 5 books of the Bible to Moses. If the JEDP theory were true, they would all be mistaken or liars.

We believe that the Bible was not redacted (edited) or post-written, but was indeed inspired and without error in the original writings.

We believe that the Bible must be accepted in its entirety if we are to call ourselves Christians and followers of God. Otherwise we must acknowledge that we do not believe in the God of the Bible at all.

¹ Literal meaning: as it was written. E.g: poetry as poetry, narrative as narrative. The literal interpretation of a psalm or proverb would, therefore be different to the literal interpretation of passages in the gospels, epistles or narrative books such as Genesis or Exodus.

3. HUMANITY AND SALVATION

Humanity is God's greatest creation; we are made for God and to reflect Him in all we do. God's plan has always been for us to be in relationship with Him.

Humanity's creation and fall

(Genesis 1:25-27, Romans 3:22-23; 5:12, Ephesians 2:1-3, 12)

“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

Man and woman were created in the image and likeness of God. However, through the sin and fall of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, humanity became alienated from God, acquired a sin nature, and came under the judicial sentence of death both physical and spiritual.

Sin

All people, from birth, have inherited from this both the sin nature and its death sentence. No part of our being escapes sin's infection, and, therefore, no action of ours is left untouched by sin. In this sin nature, humanity is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) and, therefore, totally helpless to rescue or remedy their lost condition.

Question: Is mankind generally moral and safe from God's wrath?

No. Though a spiritually dead person is capable of some good moral actions, (from a human perspective) this person is still dead and unable to enter life on his own. No matter how good we think we are, we must compare ourselves to God's standard of righteousness. Surrendering in humble obedience to Jesus Christ is the only pleasing response to God.

Question: How does one receive Salvation from this sentence?

We believe that Jesus rescues His people from sin, a rescue which required His dying and rising again. This salvation is the gift of God offered to people by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died for the

forgiveness of our sins, the total pardon of our sentence; He rose again after three days, conquering death, enabling Him to live in us now.

“Regeneration is the beginning of all saving grace in us, and all saving grace in exercise on our part proceeds from the fountain of regeneration. We are not born again by faith or repentance or conversion; we repent and believe because we have been regenerated.”

- John Murray

We believe that we enter this salvation through being born again (John 3:3), something that God initiates by His Spirit (John 3:8). Only when we have this new birth are we then able to be brought to repentance and faith. Repentance is seeing sin for what it is (rebellion against God’s authority), our turning from sin, changing our behavior, and starting to live a new life. Only being sorrowful for sin is not the same as repentance.

Faith is interdependent with repentance in that we turn towards Christ as Lord and Saviour when we turn away from sin. By faith (whole-hearted trust) we enter into a covenant relationship with God through Christ. We believe that where there is genuine repentance and faith there will be an active commitment to follow after Christ. At Philadelphia Prayer Centre we believe that those who are saved have submitted to Jesus as their Lord, and are living fully for Him.

Question: What if I sin and “mess up”, am I still saved?

If you grieve your breach of faith and turn back to God then: YES!

We believe we are saved by grace and not by good works. Likewise, we believe that sins committed after conversion cannot ‘undo’ that work of God in our hearts. Jesus’ sacrifice was once-for-all-time. He died for our sins – past, present, and future. At the same time, we believe that faith without works is dead (James 2:17) and that the life of one with a new heart in Christ will show fruit (Gal 5:22) of a transformed life. Someone whose life tends toward fruitlessness may need to examine themselves to see if they are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5).

We believe that there is an element of our salvation that is ongoing, called sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3). The Holy Spirit is continuing to transform believers to be Holy, which is already our standing in God's sight because of Christ.

Certainty

Question: Can we ever be certain of our salvation?

Yes. We believe that our salvation in Christ is secure and that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit as our guarantee (2 Corinthians 1:22). Jesus also said that no one can snatch us from the Father's hand (John 10:29).

Human beings are accountable to respond to the forgiveness, pardon and reconciliation offered to them through Jesus Christ. When a person trusts in Him, they are justified by God and adopted into His family. (Romans 8:15)

Those who have truly regenerated hearts will exhibit transformed lives evidenced by purity, holiness, obedience, and growth in Christ-like character and can expect to be in the Father's loving presence forever. Those who give only lip service to Christ cannot expect this same salvation.

Jesus and salvation

Jesus Christ, the God-man, is the source of salvation available for all people. His death ransomed many from God's judgment by paying the penalty for our sins and made salvation possible to those who receive it. Through Jesus, God's wrath is turned from us and He now sees us as 'not guilty' of the crime we committed. Thanks be to Jesus!

The requirements of God's holy laws were fully met in Jesus - first in His holy life, one of complete obedience and sinlessness, and second, in His suffering the wages of sin on the cross. His sacrifice was perfect, as the true Passover Lamb, and was sufficient to completely satisfy the wrath of God towards repentant sinners.

"Jesus' humanity means that his atoning death is applicable to human beings; his deity means that his death can serve to atone for the sins of all humankind."

- Millard J Erickson

Jesus incarnation: being made flesh (John 1:14)

For the second member of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to enter into human flesh, as the Son of God did, is of great significance to us as Christians. The Son took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, who was born of a virgin and from the line of David as prophesied about in the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14).

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (“God with us”).

- Matthew 1:23

He was tempted as we are, suffered the same hurts and frailty that we experience and is sympathetic to our cry. Yet in all this he remained perfectly sinless. (Hebrews 2:17-18) Jesus took on flesh as the perfect representative for the human race.

We believe that Jesus was, and is, fully human and fully God. In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form (Philippians 2:6). This idea of the God of Heaven coming to live among his people is not foreign to the Jews. In the Old Testament God regularly lived among his people. For example, we see this in the Garden of Eden and at the use of the tabernacle. Because He loves us so much, God the Father has always been extending himself to His people.

Jesus took on flesh as the perfect representative for the human race. He was sent to redeem humans, who were born under the law (Galatians 4:4-5) and, as such, under the penalty of death. Jesus' death is sufficient to atone for all of humanity. Because Jesus was God (i.e. sinless) he did not have to die to atone for his own sin, but he did so in payment for the sin of mankind.

“First, I would consider Christ’s taking upon Him our nature to put Himself in a capacity to purchase redemption for us. This was absolutely necessary, for though Christ, as God, was infinitely sufficient for the work, yet to His being in an immediate capacity for it, it was needful that he should not only be God, but man. If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, He could not have purchased our salvation; not from any imperfection of the divine nature, but by reason of its absolute and infinite perfection; for Christ, merely as God, was not capable either of obedience or suffering.”

- Jonathan Edwards

The Cross

“God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.”

- Romans 5:8

Question: Why did Christ die?

Jesus' death was not an accident or primarily due to some religious-political conspiracy. God the Father crucified His Son (Romans 8:32) according to His plan (Acts 4:27-28). We believe that Jesus laid down His life of His own accord (John 10:17-18) in obedience to the Father.

Question: What is the reason for Christ's death?

There are many beautiful aspects of the purpose of Christ's death. One was a fulfilment of Old Testament promises from God to deliver His people from slavery to sin. Other purposes for Jesus' death include:

- To absorb the wrath of God (Rom 3:25)
- Because He loved us (Ephesians 5:25)
- To ransom us (Mark 10:45)
- For the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:28)
- To give eternal life to those who believe in Him (John 3:16)
- To bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18)
- So that He would be crowned with glory and honour (Revelation 5:12)
- To be our eternal High Priest (Hebrews 9:24-26)

The Resurrection

After three days in the tomb, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, achieving victory over death. We believe that Jesus was raised physically, in history, as is documented in the Bible. This is an essential belief of Christians, without which our faith is futile (1 Corinthians 15:17).

We believe that His resurrection transformed His body into an eternal, living, powerful body, and Jesus now reigns in Heaven with a physical, human (albeit

transformed) body. The resurrection is proof that God approved of Jesus' sacrifice and will appoint Him judge of the world (Acts 17:31).

Redemption

Question: How can I be saved?

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."

- Acts 16:31

We believe that the only way to be saved is through Jesus Christ. We believe that His death and the victory of his resurrection, after three days, are the only grounds for salvation. Belief in Jesus means a wholehearted trust in and submission to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

There is nothing that one can do to be 'good enough' to be saved. We reject the idea that someone 'has to get their life sorted, first' before they can be saved. Salvation is not by our "own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). Believe, and receive it.

His love

Question: Who can be saved? Who did Jesus die for?

The offer of salvation is open to all people (John 3:16, 6:47), but Jesus gave His life as a ransom only for the "many" (Mark 10:45). Jesus gave His life for His sheep and not for those who are "not part of [His] flock" (John 10:15, 26). We hold that the death of Christ on the cross reconciles all things to God, (Colossians 1:18-20) but secures justification only for His elect (Rom 8:28-33).

Jesus' continuing work.

Question: What is Jesus doing now?

Christ has ascended, sits at the right hand of the Father and rules as master of the universe (Hebrews 1:3). He is available to us as High Priest (Hebrews 4:14) and is

with us always (Matthew 28:20). We believe that Jesus continues to be our intercessor (Romans 8:34. Hebrews 7:25), and He does this, primarily, through

“intervention in our interest rather than supplication our behalf (as if His position were one of sympathy without status or authority)”

- J.I. Packer

From His throne Jesus Christ pours out His Holy Spirit on the church to help and equip us to serve (Ephesians 4:8-12). Finally, Jesus is preparing a place for His bride, the church, to spend eternity with him (John 14:3).

4. THE PERSON, ROLE, BAPTISM AND WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

One of the main points, if not the main point, of the entire Bible is God's passionate pursuit of mankind in order to re-establish a healthy, intimate relationship with Him. From Genesis 3 onwards, God communicates how serious He is about having the relationship with His creation restored. There is a lot of talk about having a relationship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus the Messiah; however, there is so much misunderstanding about the Holy Spirit that it's hard to get a clear picture of who He is.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is one Person of the Triune God whom we worship. Contrary to some beliefs, the Holy Spirit is not simply some force or mystical impersonal object into which we can "tap" in to. These false ideas of the Holy Spirit are not aligned with what God has revealed to us through the Bible (John 15:26, Romans 8:26, Acts 5:3).

The role of the Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit:

- Was present at creation. (Genesis 1:2)
- Was present as a member of the trinity when God made man in their image. (Genesis 1:26)
- Was filling people for specific roles and tasks. (Exodus 35:31, Numbers 11:17, 1 Samuel 10:6)

In the New Testament, the New Covenant, which was prophesied about in the Old Testament and initiated by Jesus during the last Passover before He was crucified (Luke 22:20), speaks of a change in relationship with the Holy Spirit, not a change in the nature of the Holy Spirit

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit."

- Joel 2:28-29

See also: Jeremiah 31:31-33, Ezekiel 11:19.

Taking a look through John 14-16

- He will be a helper, or comforter. He currently abides with but will be in you. (John 14:16-17)
- The Helper comes from the Father; sent by Jesus; will testify about Jesus. (John 15:26)
- If Jesus does not go away (death/resurrection) the Helper will not come. It is the very death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the throne of God, which enables Him to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit back to His disciples. (John 16:7)
- The Spirit of truth² will guide people into truth; He will speak only what He hears and not on His own initiative; He will disclose to disciples what is to come; He will glorify Jesus and will disclose all things from the Father and Jesus to His disciples. (John 16:13-15)

Summary

Old Testament relationship: The Holy Spirit was On or Upon people.

New Testament relationship: The Holy Spirit is now In (on or upon as well) those who give their life to Christ.

The Holy Spirit as the seal, or promise, of Jesus

The Holy Spirit is our guarantee, or engagement ring, of the future day of redemption and marriage.

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

- Ephesians 1:13-14

See also: Ephesians 4:30, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Revelation 19:7-10

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Definition: Baptizo, most commonly means “to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge.”

² Spirit of Truth: We cannot separate God's truth and God's spirit!

In the moment a person surrenders their life to and puts their trust in Jesus they receive the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a salvation issue or whether or not we are “in-dwelt” by the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, as Luke uses the term in Acts, is an empowering of believers.

- The disciples were to wait for “power” when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. (Acts 1:8)
- The disciples were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues (other known languages). (Acts 2:4)
- The disciples filled with the Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31)
- Separate laying on of hands to baptise believers in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)
- Cornelius and his family were baptised in the Spirit while Peter was preaching to them. They spoke in tongues. (Acts 10:44-48)
- Paul baptised believers who did not know there was a Holy Spirit. They spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:1-7)

There are some similarities in the various experiences of people being baptised in the Spirit, but it was not always exactly the same. The Bible tells us that the believers were continually filled with the Spirit. There was a constant need to be refilled and renewed with fresh power and boldness to preach the word of God to the world around them!

Pursuing the Baptism of the Holy Spirit today

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”

- Luke 11:13

We receive the Holy Spirit by asking the Father, through Jesus!

“...be continually being filled with the Spirit.”

- Ephesians 5:18

Here is an example of a simple prayer to pray:

“Father, my power is not enough. I cannot do what you have called me to do on my own. I need You. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and give me the power I need. In Jesus’ name. Amen (so be it).”

A false understanding of what the baptism should look like:

“It needs to be a big, hyped up event where people start to fall down, laugh out loud, speak in tongues, prophesy, or something else.”

This is not the case. Any of those manifestations could happen and are generally evidence of the Holy Spirit doing a deeper work in a believer’s life; however, these are not essential evidence for a believer being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The evidence for the Holy Spirit in someone’s life is unconditional love (the ability to love people as Jesus loves them and to receive that love from Jesus). Additional evidence may be an increase in boldness, speaking in tongues, prophesying, praying for healing and see it take place, or a variety of any of the other spiritual gifts God chooses to give His children. Speaking in tongues is not the only, or greatest, evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Holy Spirit

The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individual believers and in the church manifests in two main ways. He gives us gifts for the purpose of completing the good works Jesus has set aside for us to do, including building up the church, and He conforms us as individuals into people who look more like Jesus. The qualities that the Holy Spirit works in us are referred to as the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts and the fruit go hand in hand and are inseparable.

The Gifts of the Spirit

God gives gifts to his children through the Holy Spirit.

- We are not to remain ignorant of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1)
- God is the one who decides what gifts to give and to whom (1 Corinthians 12:11; Hebrew 2:4)
- It is purely an act of grace as we have done absolutely nothing to deserve these gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7,11)

- Every believer is to have at least one manifestation of the Spirit operating in their life (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- We are to ask God for, and strongly desire to have spiritual gifts (Luke 11:13; 1 Corinthians 14:1)
- We are not to neglect the gifts of God, but rather we are to stir them up in our life (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6)
- The motive for using the gifts is to be love (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)

The gifts are for the whole body of Christ (the common good) to function supernaturally on earth in order to speak, see and act as God's voice. This is the continuation of His ministry on earth and will allow us to truly bear fruit and have that fruit remain.

Although the Holy Spirit can expose sin and hypocrisy through the gifts, if He wills, the Holy Spirit does not give out His gifts to embarrass anybody. The gifts are always used to encourage, help, heal, build up and comfort God's people.

There are different portions of the gifts that God gives us. Two people may have a gift of prophecy, but one has more of it than another. It is not a value issue, but a responsibility issue. God decides who gets what, our job is to not complain, but thank God for what He has given us, whether a lot or a little, and be faithful to be a good steward of what He has given us.

Purpose of Gifts

- The Holy Spirit enables us to experientially know the love of God (Ephesians 3:16-19).
- The Holy Spirit enables us to be witnesses for Jesus (Acts 1:8). To be a witness means to testify that something is true. The disciples went out testifying that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world and they could only effectively do this with power from the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit gives us the boldness to proclaim the word of God and gifts to help us proclaim the word of God more effectively throughout the earth (Hebrews 2:4).
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit also enable us to build up the body of Christ into the mature, future Bride of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Important to keep in mind:

- The gifts are not meant merely for our own personal entertainment and enjoyment.
- The gifts that are given have no reference to an individual's character, integrity or maturity.

Everyone is uniquely crafted by God for a specific purpose. He has given everyone a variety of skills and talents as part of this unique crafting. When somebody surrenders their life to Jesus and fully trusts in Him, they are also spiritually gifted.

Spiritual gifts give the believer a special, divine ability to encourage and build up the church. Though some of these spiritual gifts seem to overlap with normal skills and talents (hospitality, administration, teaching, serving, etc.), the spiritual gift is different in that there is a special amount of grace and divine help in using those gifts and especially effective in building up the body of Christ. Just because a certain gift may seem more "normal" does not mean it is not a spiritual gift. All these gifts require the added grace of God to be effective in fulfilling their purpose.

The Fruit of the Spirit

God calls us to be holy, as He is holy (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:15-16). The Holy Spirit works upon believers in such a way as to conform them into the image of Christ. A list of qualities that are identified with people who are walking in the Spirit can be found in Galatians 5:22. This list is not exhaustive: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control, Humility.

5. BAPTISM

Why baptism?

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

- Matthew 28:19

What is baptism?

Baptism is a public physical act that signifies a spiritual inward reality. Baptism represents a believer's obedience in identifying with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by being submerged in water.

Baptism comes from the Greek word baptizo and means: to dip, plunge, overwhelm, soak, or immerse. This is the word always used in connection with a believer's baptism. The Greek word for sprinkle, rantizo, is never used in connection with a believer's baptism.

“As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptised?’”

- Acts 8:36

Do I have to be baptised?

Many people wonder or ask if baptism is a requirement to secure salvation. The answer is no, salvation is always a gift of God's grace received by faith in Jesus Christ, not by any work or effort of our own (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, baptism is an issue of submission and obedience. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was baptised (Matthew 3:13-15) and commanded every believer to be baptised in water (Matthew 28:19-20).

Baptism was clearly the initial first step of obedience that every New Testament believer took (Acts 2:38, 8:12-13, 35-37, 9:17-18, 10:47-48, 16:13-15, 30-33, 18:8, Matthew 28:19-20).

Am I ready to be baptised?

There are four prerequisites to baptism presented in the Bible:

- Everyone baptised heard the Gospel (Acts 18:8)

- Everyone baptised believed the Gospel (Acts 16:29-34, Mark 16:16)
- Everyone baptised repented of their sins (Acts 2:38)
- Everyone baptised made a verbal confession of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:37)

The four prerequisites for baptism reveal that only those who are able to hear, believe, repent and confess the Lord Jesus Christ are proper candidates for baptism.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that now one may boast.”

- Ephesians 2:8,9

What if I was baptised as a baby?

Some traditions believe baptising babies takes away original sin and makes the child acceptable to God (Roman Catholicism), while others connect the Old Testament practice of circumcision and the New Testament practice of baptism as a means to be included in the covenant community (The Reformed tradition). Others believe being re-baptised as an adult would be sinful. None of these represent the New Testament teaching on baptism nor is there any instruction on baptising infants.

We believe that infant baptism is a different type of baptism with a different meaning to believer baptism, like an engagement ring has a different meaning to a wedding ring.

We believe that infant baptism is different and not a substitute to believer baptism. It serves a different function and meaning and does not fulfil the four prerequisites of believer baptism taught in the Bible (see “Am I ready to be baptised?”). If a person was baptised as an infant, believer baptism should be pursued because infant baptism is a parental decision, and believer baptism is a personal decision made when someone has committed their life to following Jesus Christ.

If you have been baptised as a believing adult at a previous church, as long as it met the requirements of the four prerequisites found in the Bible, it counts as baptism.

Is Biblical baptism required for Membership in Philadelphia Prayer Centre?

No. However, we are a community of believers that seek to Love the LORD God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, and with all of our strength, a community that is “all In” with our faith and our obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that believer baptism should be a simple step of obedience for anyone striving to be “all In” in following Jesus Christ.

6. BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

There is a God-declared goodness in the joining of a man and women in marriage (Genesis 2:18). Marriage is God's invention and He defines what marriage is and is not, therefore marriage is not subject to cultural whims, political correctness or majority votes. God established marriage to be the most significant and unbreakable relationship possible between human beings.

Today marriage has been redefined based on what people want marriage to be. However, Biblical marriage is defined and demonstrated throughout the Bible having 4 aspects and a blessing.

Biblical Marriage is (Genesis 2:18-24):

1. Between a man and a woman

There is no other Biblical definition of marriage.

2. Leaving of one's family of origin

In marriage, a new family unit is created and requires the leaving of one's original family unit. Now all decisions, primary allegiances, and focus must completely change from parents to new family unit.

3. Unconditional covenant made with one's spouse

The ESV term "hold fast" is used to describe Covenant Faithfulness. In Deuteronomy 10:20 Israel's part in their covenant with God was to "hold fast" to God. To be faithful to God.

What is an unconditional covenant? It is the strongest union possible. In a treaty, you keep your oaths as long as the other keeps theirs. In a conditional covenant, you make "if/then" oaths. "If you do this, then I will do that." Marriage is not a conditional covenant, it is an unconditional covenant. An unconditional covenant means you keep your oaths even if they break theirs, even if it is founded on lies and deceit (Joshua 9), no matter the cost .

Marriage is unconditional. Not, "if you love me, or if you make me feel good about myself, then I will stay with you." No. It is a covenant that you will love them and be faithful to them even if they do not continue to love and remain faithful to you.

4. Become One

Jesus clarifies Genesis 2:24 in Matthew 19:4-6. "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."

This oneness is a oneness for life, only to be separated in death.

7. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Many times, Jesus gets asked about divorce, about the severing of this most perfect union. A sin-filled people want to know if they can get out of this perfect union. God does not want people to get divorced (Malachi 2:14). Divorce is always in violation of God's original plan for marriage (Matthew 19:3-9) and only to be a last recourse, permitted only in very limited scenarios because of the hardness of our hearts.

Question: When is divorce permitted?

1. If your unbelieving spouse leaves you (1 Corinthians 7:15)

A Christian is not to leave their unbelieving spouse, but if their spouse leaves them they can let them go.

2. If your spouse commits sexual immorality (Matthew 19:7-9)

If your spouse has sexual intercourse with anyone other than their spouse you are permitted to divorce. There are other sexual sins outwith intercourse including pornography, lust, and emotional affairs. While these are immoral and a sin against God and the spouse, these do not release the offended spouse from their unconditional marriage covenant.

Note: Jesus is not saying if your spouse cheats on you, you should leave them. Divorce may be permitted in situations of adultery, but in no way could you say it is required.

Question: Does the Bible permit divorce for any other reason, such as violence, drunkenness, drug addiction, imprisonment, insanity, emotional or verbal abuse?

No - but measures should be taken to protect life and family members from ungodly and unlawful harm.

Question: When is the unconditional Covenant with your first spouse over and remarriage permitted?

The answer is not when you are divorced. Divorce is not complete severance of your unconditional covenant (Luke 16:18).

The Bible says much more about remarriage than it does about divorce. In most every scenario remarriage is a sin and causes people to commit adultery because their first unconditional covenant has not been completely severed.

Question, when is remarriage is permitted?

The Bible gives two scenarios:

1. When your previous spouse is remarried (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

There is a total and irreconcilable termination of your original marriage covenant when a spouse remarries another. No matter the reason (even death) of the ending of their second marriage, it would be an abomination to remarry your previous spouse after they have remarried.

2. When your previous spouse dies (1 Corinthians 7:39)

It is a covenant only to death. You won't be married in heaven (Matthew 22:30). The marriage covenant is completely over when one dies.

Scriptures to help you understand the issues of divorce and remarriage:

Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:1-40

8. BIBLICAL OFFERINGS

Offerings are about stewarding God's money entrusted to you, to be used in obedience to His clear biblical directives by bringing them to the local church so that it can thrive and honour God. God's people have always struggled with offerings and stewardship. Since Genesis chapter 4 we have seen people struggle with bringing the kinds of offerings which honour and please God. The worship of God is centred around the offerings of his people. There are 700 direct references to money in the Bible and a total of 2350 references that address our relationship to material possessions. Jesus keeps referring to money as a heart test revealing our faithfulness (Luke 16:11), our preoccupation (Matthew 6:21) and loyalty (Matthew 6:24) to God above ourselves.

The type offerings we are called to give:

- Regular (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
- Proportional (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
- Sacrificial (Mark 12:41-44)
- Willing (Deuteronomy 15:11)
- Generous (2 Corinthians 9:6)
- Cheerful (2 Corinthians 9:7)

God has established offerings to finance these priorities:

1. The building, repairing, remodelling, maintenance and worship in the house of God

The building of both the tabernacle and both the temples of God were financed remodelled, repaired, and maintained by the offerings brought to God by the leaders and the people.

The early church continued bringing their offerings to the temple as required and thus continued financing the place in which they daily gathered (Exodus 35, 2 Kings 12, Acts 2:46).

A portion of our offerings go towards these same things as well including heating, insurance, building costs, lighting, equipment, sermon notes, visitor information, prayer cards, food, and the like.

2. To financially support those who lead, especially those who teach

1 Corinthians 9:14 “The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.”

See also: 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; 1 Timothy 5:17; Luke 10:7

3. For the global church needs

We see Paul supported on his mission trips from offerings given by believers in other cities (2 Corinthians 11:8). We also see him gathering offerings throughout Asia to bring to the struggling and impoverished church in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

We dedicate 10% of all offerings to support missions from our church and to support the impoverished and persecuted church around the world through Release International.

4. For the focused ministry and mission of the local church

The early church was known for its ministry to the poor, especially to the widows. This was a powerful ministry and mission they had to the people in Jerusalem resulting in large numbers of priests being saved. (Acts 6:1-7)

When God’s people do not bring their offerings to the local church, the church’s effectiveness, potential, health, and mission are proportionally reduced.

In the New Testament, the offerings were ‘laid at the apostles feet’ and the church strategically distributed them. We also see believers being generous personally to the poor, a highly encouraged thing but not the same as or in place of an offering to the church.

Lies Regarding Offerings

1. God is pleased with just any amount

Malachi 1:6-14 describes a God insulted by offerings. God is not pleased with just anything, he is only pleased with our first and our best. He is a great king and yet we treat him as a beggar, often giving him whatever we might have in our pockets, instead of worthy offerings for a worthy God.

Malachi 3:8-10 is strikingly clear that when we do not bring our whole offerings and only partial offerings, we are robbing God and he curses those who rob him in this

way. Nowhere in the Bible do we see giving less than 10% modelled or encouraged.

2. The quality of the leadership or the poor use of the offerings gives an excuse to withhold offerings

Jesus praises a very poor widow who gave her last 2 pennies, all she had to live on. Where did she bring her offering? To the temple. Who lead the temple, and who did the temple pay? Those who were going to kill Jesus the very person they claimed to worship. We must bring our offerings and it is for God to deal with those who misuse them (Luke 21:1-4).

3. New Testament believers do not need to give to God as much as Old Testament believers

Jewish Believers in the early church were giving all the Old Testament tithes plus generous offerings to the church. The temple tithe was about required giving, the New Testament offerings were about incredible generosity funding the church, its leadership, and its mission.

God opposes those who are stingy and deceitful with their offerings (Acts 5:1-11, Malachi 1, Haggai 1).

4. I can get my life sorted and then start giving.

Haggai 1:3-11 tells us to 'Give careful thought to our ways.' How people were attempting to establish and build their own homes first while God's house was neglected and as a result God was withholding things from them. We must bring our offerings to God first, take care of his house, and then can be busy with our own houses.

Why should I give?

- To obey the Lord's clear command (Malachi 3:10, Luke 6:38, Matthew 6:2)
- To prove my love for Christ (2 Corinthians 8:8, 1 John 3:17-18)
- It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)
- To confirm my heart's desire (Matthew 6:21)
- To please the Lord (Hebrews 13:16)
- To combat materialism (Mark 10:21)
- To produce eternal rewards (Matthew 6:19)
- To finance all the things God's church is to finance (see above)

9. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The purpose

The purpose of church discipline is the spiritual restoration of fallen members and the consequent strengthening of the church and glorifying of the Jesus Christ.

When a sinning believer is rebuked and they turn from their sin and are forgiven, they are won back to fellowship with the body and with its head, Jesus Christ.

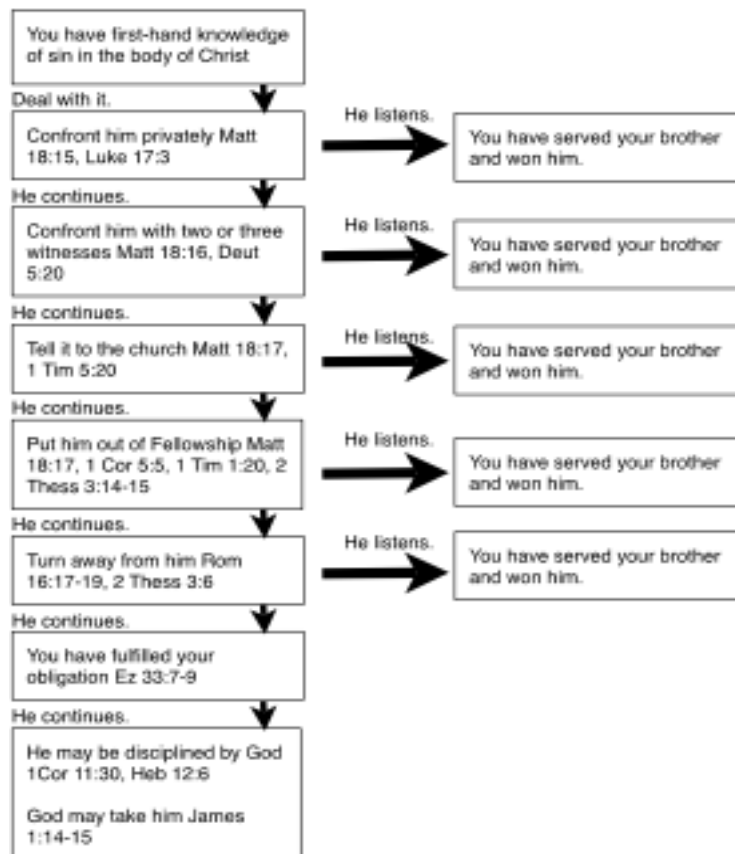
The objective

The objective of church discipline, then, is not to throw people out of the church or to feed the self-righteous pride of those who administer the discipline. It is not to embarrass people or to exercise authority and power in some unbiblical manner.

The objective is to restore a sinning believer to holiness and bring them back into a pure relationship within the assembly.

The body of Christ in the business of recovery (Galatians 6:1), and such is the purpose of church discipline.

PROCEDURE FOR SCRIPTURAL DISCIPLINE CHURCH DISCIPLINE DEALING WITH SINNING CHRISTIANS



Church discipline must above all be carried out in humble love, and never in a spirit of self-righteous superiority. The step of “putting him out of the fellowship” does not exclude all contact. When there is an opportunity to admonish them and try to call them back, the opportunity should be taken and even pursued.

10. COMMUNION

The meaning of communion

Communion is about remembering and proclaiming Jesus' death on the cross and the ramifications of his sacrifice.

“On the night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, “This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way, after supper He also took the cup and said, “This cup is the new covenant established by My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”

- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

While taking communion, we remember that Jesus fulfills the Passover as the ultimate Passover Lamb, and that his death makes a new covenant between God and humanity. This new covenant, superior to the old covenant, is based on the death of Jesus in our place and not our ability to perfectly keep the law of God.

The frequency of the Lords Supper

Scripture indicates that after the death and resurrection of Christ the early church began administering communion daily (Acts 2:46-47). Traditionally Passover was once a year. However, this “New Passover Supper” was clearly increased to at least weekly (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 11:20). We follow this New Testament example by remembering Jesus in communion at every church service.

Who can partake in The Lords Supper?

“Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup...”

- 1 Corinthians 11:28

Only those who have closely examined themselves in relationship to Jesus may participate. We do not regard it to be the church's responsibility to restrict whom may share in this communion. Instead, it is our responsibility to regularly provide it as an act of worship and to give clear instruction as to who it is (not) for. God will discipline those who make a mockery of it (1 Corinthians 11:27, 29-33).

Note: We generally do not advise parents who have children who have not publicly professed their personal response to God's call (i.e. Baptism) to partake in this sacrament.

The Lord's Supper proclaims Christ's death until he returns

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's Death until He comes."

- 1 Corinthians 11:26

When celebrated by the true Church, the breaking of bread and drinking from the cup of Christ announces over and over again the awesome sacrifice of His death for the redemption of man. And looks to His future coming again. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Note: For more information on the saving work of Christ, please look at the Jesus and Salvation section. Communion is not a means of salvation.

Who may administer communion?

Scripture indicates that communion has consistently, since Jesus first started it, been entrusted to the church. At Philadelphia Prayer Centre, we feel that it is our duty as the church to appoint men and women of good character and dedicated to the purposes of the Church at this post. Anyone misaligned with Jesus will not be permitted to administer the Lord's Supper to not take away or detract the congregation from the importance of our spiritual condition in this matter.

How we receive it

Generally, we partake in communion during each Sunday service. The time is always initiated by a lead staff person who briefly outlines:

- Who should receive communion
- Instruction on how we do it (dip the bread into the wine and take)
- What the bread and wine represent to those who are fully trusting in Jesus Christ.

Because we see this as an act of obedience, remembrance and worship, we allow each person to proceed toward the communion tables throughout the duration of the closing worship set after instruction is given.