

Welcome to . . .
Joyroad 101

*We're glad you've chosen to go through this introductory class with us.
The class comprises a basic introduction to our church family.*

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Lesson 1

OUR SALVATION

“Getting Started Right”

John 3:1-18

In running a race, raising a family, or learning to walk, it is all-important that you get off on the right track. The Christian life is no exception. Let's learn today seven vital facts about getting started right in a relationship with God.

If you stood before God in the next five minutes and God said to you, “Can you give me one reason I should allow you to come into my Kingdom?” what would you say to Him?

Your answer to that question reveals the basis of your trust for eternal life. Many people answer, “Because I've lived a good life” or “I've been in church all of my life” or “I've done the best I could” or other such man-centered responses. But in order to get started right and give the proper response to God, we need to understand seven vital facts about having a relationship with God. (You'll want to look up most of these verses and share them with your study group).

7 FACTS OF LIFE

1 The Fact of God's **Plan** For You.

John 3:16 - “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

John 10:10 - “The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”

- God loves you and wants you to experience peace and life—abundant and eternal. God's plan is for you to enjoy abundant fellowship with Him. *John 3:16; John 10:10; Romans 6:23b*
- God also requires that you love and obey Him. *Matthew 22:37; I Peter 1:16*

Since God planned for us to have peace and the abundant life right now, why are most people not having this experience? What keeps us from obeying God, as we should?

2 The Fact of Human Sin.

- Sin is a fact in every human life. It means that we fall short of God's perfect requirements, and we choose to go our own self-centered way. *Romans 3:10, 23; Isaiah 53:6 Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 5:12*
- Do you always live up to what you know is right, and have you always done that? Are all your thoughts of a nature that it wouldn't bother you if everyone knew them?
- In humility, we must be willing to admit that we have sinned against God, others and ourselves.



3 The Fact of Sin's Penalty.

- Sin results in spiritual death and in separation from God.

Romans 6:23a "...for the wages of sin is death."

Ephesians 2:1 "...and you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have separated you from your God, your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

- We are dead in

_____ Spirit _____ - Present and immediate – spiritual life

_____ Soul _____ - Progressive and continuing
psychological life (Mind, will, and emotions darkened)

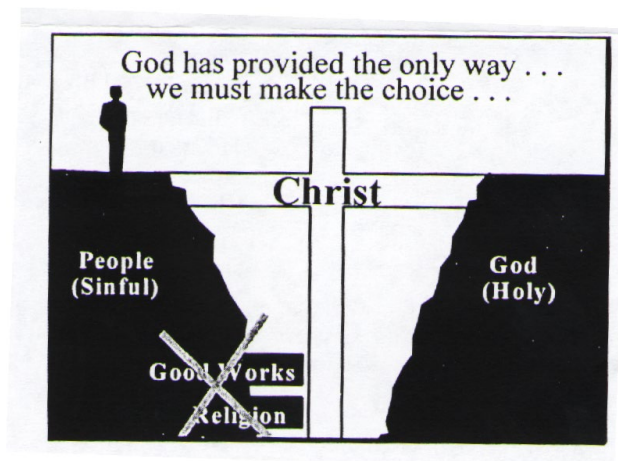
_____ Body _____ - Ultimately – physical life

4 The Fact That Sin's Penalty Must Be Paid.

- We have devised all types of methods to try to bridge the gap between God and man (good works, religion, morality), but for God to be holy and just, sin's penalty must be paid. These attempts cannot pay for or forgive sin. . (Hebrews 9:27; Exodus 34:7; Isaiah 59:2) Sin's penalty must be paid by death (Hebrews 9:22)
- Either we must pay for our sins, or . . .

5 The Fact that Christ Paid The Penalty For Our SINS.

- Christ Jesus died on the cross as our Savior.
1 Timothy 1:15
- Christ Jesus died on the cross as our Sacrifice.
Hebrews 9:22
- Christ Jesus died on the cross as our substitute.
1 Peter 2:24
- God Punished our sins in Christ and offers us forgiveness in Christ. He died in our place. (so we wouldn't have to bear the penalty for sin.)
Romans 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."



6 The Fact That Salvation Is A Free Gift.

- You cannot earn eternal life and you do not deserve it. We deserve to be punished for our sin. But Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins and offers us salvation as the free gift of His grace (something we don't deserve). We must fully trust by faith in what He did for us on the cross and in His victorious resurrection, which proves that He is God, and can forgive our sins.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Titus 3:5-7; Is.64:6

7 The Fact That You Must Receive Jesus Christ by Repentance and Faith.

John1:12 – But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

- Repentance means that we turn from self-dependence and sin to trust in Christ. Faith means that we put all our dependence, trust, and commitment in the person of Jesus Christ for forgiveness and eternal life. Believing in Christ is not just head knowledge, or emotional action. It is an act of the will to choose and commit to Christ. When you receive Christ, you receive eternal life.
- When you receive eternal life, God reverses what happened in Adam.

In Christ, you come alive in:

- **Spirit** – Immediate and Present – Justification (Forgiveness) – Spiritual Life
- **Soul** – Progressive and Continuing – Sanctification (Growth) – Psychological Life (mind, will, emotions)
- **Body** – Ultimate – Glorification – Physical Life (bodily resurrection)

That's why we call salvation Abundant life.

Why should God let you into Heaven? "Because Jesus Christ died for my sins and I have believed in Him" is the only acceptable answer.

Salvation means freedom and forgiveness from sin are granted, eternal life is received, love is poured out in the heart, the presence of Christ is given to you, and you never again have to feel like you have to earn God's love or favor. He will love you forever and regardless. And you can get about the business of living obediently in Him. Won't you believe in Christ and be saved today?

Here is a suggested prayer if there is any question in your heart about getting started right:

“Father God, I know that you love me and want me to worship You. I know that I have sinned against You and deserve Your justice. But Jesus died in my place on a cross bearing my sin. I want to turn from sin and accept that gift. I want Christ to come into my life right now and take control as my personal Savior and Lord. From now on I want to live my life for Him. Amen.”

Name

Date

Start reading the gospel of John in a Bible translation you can understand. Tell someone about the decision you have made today.

Lesson 2

OUR SYMBOLS

“Show-So Religion”

Jesus Christ has left us two symbols, or ordinances, that represent the new life we have received in Him. Salvation is personal and has already taken place in the heart. Nothing can ever take away that gift of eternal life. But salvation is not private. These two symbols, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, are the public and corporate demonstration of what Christ has done for us and what we have believed about Him. Both of these ordinances are commanded for believers. They do not confer grace. They celebrate grace. They do not save. They are for the saved.

BAPTISM

1 The **Priority** Of Baptism – Why should I be baptized?

- a. To follow the example set by **Jesus**.
Mark 1:9 “And it came about in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” (Why was Jesus baptized? Not to wash away sin [He had none!], but to symbolize the new covenant in His death and resurrection.)
- b. Because Christ **Commanded** it.
Matthew 28:19- Let’s not minimize what Jesus maximized! Baptism is not essential for salvation but is essential for obedience. It is an important step of obedience.
- c. It demonstrates that I really am a **Believer**.
Acts 2:41, Acts 18:8; 1 John 2: Baptism is the New Testament public profession of faith. It was the way a New Testament believer identified himself as a follower of Christ.

2 The **Picture** Of Baptism – What is the meaning of baptism?

- a. It illustrates Christ’s **Death** and resurrection.
1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4 “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

- b. It illustrates my **New Life** as a Christian.
2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4 I am now identified spiritually with His death and resurrection. I am now dead to sin but alive to God in Christ.
Romans 6:11
- c. It is a **Sign** of my commitment to Christ.
Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jesus commanded us to **Make** disciples (go therefore), **Mark** disciples (baptizing them), and **Mature** disciples (teaching them).

3 The **Pattern** Of Baptism – What is baptism? Why be baptized by immersion?

Baptism is the immersion in water of a person who has believed in Christ as a step of obedience (following and not connected to salvation) to symbolize that person's belief in and identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- a. **Jesus** was baptized by immersion.
Matthew 3:16
- b. Every baptism in the **New Testament** was by immersion.
Acts 8:38-39 There is no example of nor any command for a sprinkling baptism or an infant baptism in the New Testament.
- c. The word "baptize" means to "**Immerse**, plunge, or dip" in water.
Greek – Baptidzo. *Acts 2:41*
- d. Immersion baptism best symbolizes **Death** and resurrection.
Romans 6:4

The founders of denominations (even non-Baptists) agree:

Martin Luther (Lutherans) "I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the Word imports and the mystery signifies."

John Calvin (Presbyterians, Reformed Church) "The word baptize signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the early church."

John Wesley (Methodists) "Buried with Him alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church."

4 The Participants of Baptism – Who should be baptized?

- a. Every person who has **Believed** in Christ. (Acts 2:41 “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”; 8:12-13)
True baptism takes place as soon as possible after genuine conversion. The question is: At what point did you come to genuine faith in Christ? This is the “believer’s baptism.”
- b. At Northwoods, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. Some churches practice a “baptism of confirmation” or “covenant baptism” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between parents and God on behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal profession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. Still other churches believe that baptism for an infant washes away original sin. (Roman Catholicism).

QUESTIONS:

- ***When should I be baptized? (Acts 2:41; Acts 8:35-38)***
As soon as possible after salvation.
- ***Is baptism necessary for salvation? (Ephesians 2:8-9)***
No, we are saved by faith in Christ alone. Baptism is a step of obedience after salvation that demonstrates publicly a person’s commitment to Christ.
 - ***Can my family be baptized together or at the same time?***
Of course, if all of your family has come to faith in Christ.
 - ***What should I wear when I am baptized?***
Modest clothing that can stand water.
 - ***Will I have to say anything?***
No, your baptism speaks for itself. You may give a verbal testimony.
 - ***Any special needs?***
Physical limitations, etc.

Baptism says, “I am not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I will publicly profess my faith in Him.” Have you been baptized by immersion after salvation as a sign, symbol, and public profession of that salvation? Express your desire today. Speak to a pastor.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

The Lord’s Supper is so called because it was instructed by the Lord Himself in the upper room with His disciples on the night before He was crucified. (*Matt: 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20*) Jesus wanted to leave His followers a visible, physical symbol of what He was about to do for them. Paul gave us specific teaching on the Lord’s Supper and directs us to remember Jesus through the taking of the Supper.

1 What is The Lord’s Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in 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.”

- a. It is a **Simple** act, not an elaborate ceremony. (*vs. 23*)
- b. It is a reminder or memorial supper. (*vs. 24*)
- c. It is a **Symbol**. (*vs. 25*)
- d. It is a **Statement** of faith. (*vs. 26*)

The Lord’s Supper does not save. It is a celebration and a statement of the grace we have already received in Christ.

2 Who should take the Lord’s Supper?

- a. Only those who are already **Believers**. (*Mark 14:22-26; 1 Cor. 11:20*)
- b. Jesus practiced the supper with His **followers**, and Paul exhorted believers to remember Him in the Supper. How can we remember Him if we’ve never acknowledged Him and believed in Him?

3 How do I prepare myself for the Lord's Supper?

- a. Self-examination
1 Corinthians 11:27-28 “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”
- b. Confessing my **Sins**
1 John 1:9
- c. Recommitment of **Life**
Romans 12:1
- d. Resolving to mend **Broken** relationships.
Matthew 5:23-24
- e. Reflect on the Elements
1 Corinthians 11:24-25
The bread (representing His broken body) and the cup (representing His shed blood).

4 When and how often should we observe the Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper. It should be a regular part of the church's practice. He instituted it on a Thursday night. Since it is a “supper”, it may seem more appropriate to observe it at an evening service.

Lesson 3

Our Statements

The first two lessons in this series dealt with our salvation and our walk with Christ. These last four lessons will deal more specifically with who we are as Northwoods Church. We believe that God has called us together as a church with a very special purpose – to share His love with a lost and hurting world. We need to understand why we exist (our mission statement), what we believe as a church (our faith statement), and what we express in the practice of a Baptist Church (our Christian expression statement).

1 Our Purpose Statement (Why We Exist)

The Purpose of Northwoods Church...

“We believe a great commitment to the Great **COMMANDMENT** and the Great **COMMISSION** will grow a great church!”

The Great Commandment – *Matthew 22:36-40* - "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" [37] And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' [38] "This is the great and foremost commandment. [39] "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' [40] "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Q - *To whom was Jesus speaking and how does this passage relate to us?*

The Great Commission – *Matthew 28:19-20* -"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Q - *To whom was Jesus speaking and how does this passage relate to us?*

- To Love God with all your heart is **EXALTATION (worship)**.
- To Love your neighbor as yourself is **EDIFICATION (love)**.
- To Go ... make disciples is **EVANGELISM (outreach)**.
- To Teach them ... all things is **EDUCATION (discipleship)**.

These are the four priorities we want to be involved in at NWC.

But we have only one exciting purpose that encompasses the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

The Northwoods Church Mission Statement

“Inviting people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.”

This statement helps clarify our aim as the body of Christ. We filter every idea, program, and practice through this mission statement. We do not exist for the sake of religious tradition, denomination heritage, personal or corporate convenience, or theological reaction (to ride some theological hobby-horse), although we may take these things into account when expressing our concept of what it means to be the church. We exist to carry out The Great Commandment and The Great Commission in this culture, to this generation. For this reason, we believe the church should always be culturally relevant since it exists not only to build up the body, but also to reach out to the lost world (I Cor. 9:22). (So, we don't just ask question about the people we have.) To filter everything through our mission statement means that we ask questions about the people that we don't yet have and modify our programming to reach them, without changing the truth of God. In short, we exist to:

- (1) **Glorify God**
- (2) **Reach the World**
- (3) **Disciple and Edify the Body**

“Why Our Church Must Never Stop Growing” (Make MORE and BETTER Disciples)

- **Because people need the LORD.** *2 Peter 3:9 – The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance; 2 Cor. 5:14; Luke 15:3-10; Matt. 9:12-13*
- Q - *What is on God's heart? What should be on our heart?*
- **Because God COMMANDS us to grow.** *Luke 14:23 – “And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled; Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20*
- Q – *Why would Jesus give us The Great Commission and not expect us to carry it out?*
- **Because God WANTS it to grow.** *Colossians 2:19; Matt. 16:18 – “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.*
- Q - *Doesn't Jesus want to seek and save as many as possible, whom the Father has given Him? How does He do that?*

- How can a church sustain numerical growth in reaching more people and yet still grow deeper in fellowship, pastoral care, and discipleship? How can we reach more disciples and still grow better disciples? We believe that the answer is that our church must grow LARGER and SMALLER at the same time. This development can take place through large group celebration (worship services), small group cells (small group discipleship), and every member evangelism (learning to SHARE HIS JOY).

2 Our Faith Statement of Northwoods Church *(What We Believe)*

In essential beliefs, we have unity.

In non-essential beliefs, we have freedom.

In all things, we have **Love**.

a. **About God**

God is the CREATOR and RULER of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. *Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 29:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Cor. 13:14*

b. **About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the **Son of God**. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of lords. *Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-14; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13*

c. **About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with **Power** for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and **Guidance** in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily. *2 Cor. 3:17; John 16:7-13; 124:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:12, 3:16; Eph. 1:13; Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18*

d. **About the Bible**

The Bible is God's **Word** to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is **Truth** without any mixture of error. *2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 1:13; Ps. 12:6; Ps. 119:105, 160, 12:6; Prov. 30:5.*

e. **About Human Beings**

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the **Supreme** object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "SIN." Our nature is sinful and because of that, our acts are sinful. We don't measure up to the glory, purposes, or plan of God. These attitudes and actions SEPARATE people from God and cause many problems in life. *Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2; Lev. 17:9; Psalm 51:5; Psalm 14:1-3; I John 1:10; Romans 3:10-11*

f. **About Salvation**

Salvation is God's **Free Gift** to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. **Eternal Life** begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. *Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; John 14:6; Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:26; Rom. 5:1*

g. **About Eternal Security**

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is **Secure** in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security. *John 10:28-29; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb 7:25; 10:10; I Peter 1:3-5*

h. **About Christian Growth**

We believe that believers are called to live holy lives that are worthy of our **Calling** to and by the Lord Jesus Christ (*1 Peter 1:16; Eph. 4:1*). Our lives are to be different. We are to impact the world but are not to be carried away by the world's lusts, passions, or pride. Christian growth is the work of grace that God is doing in you, the believer. Growth is not something we work up or push out. We are new creations in Him (*2 Cor. 5:17*), dead to sin and alive to Christ (*Rom. 6:11*), and unconditionally loved and made secure by Him (*John 10:28*). Nothing we can ever do can earn more love or favor with Him. We serve Him out of a relationship of love, not law. Walking with Christ is a process of presenting our lives and challenges daily to Him and submitting to His Lordship (*Rom. 12:1-2*).

As we **Abide** in Christ (*John 15:5*) and **Walk** in His Spirit yielding control to Him daily (*Gal. 5:25*), He will produce fruit from our lives that will last. God uses the Scripture (correctly

interpreted and applied), prayer, circumstances, and His Body to bring about fruit and growth in our lives, as we rely upon His Holy Spirit.

i. **About Eternity**

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is **Hell**. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. *John 3:16; 12:25; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:15; Matt 8:12, 25:41-46; Heb. 5:9*

j. **About the Church**

We believe that a New Testament church is a **Body** of baptized believers who are joined together for spiritual strengthening, for evangelism, and for Christian fellowship. The church is an autonomous body, with the government of the church vested in the local body, and subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body.

We believe the **Ordinances** of the church are two: baptism (by immersion, administered to believers only as a symbol of their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and as a symbol of the believer's death to sin, burial of the old life, and resurrection to walk in newness of life); and the Lord's Supper (to be taken by a believer in order to show forth the Lord's death till He comes).

We believe the Scriptural **Officers** of the church are pastor (elder[s]) and deacons. Pastors serve through the ministry of spiritual oversight and leadership. Deacons serve through meeting physical needs. Every member, given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit, should develop and deploy those gifts in and through the ministry of the church. *Matt. 16:13-20; I Peter 2:5-10; Acts 2:41-47; I Cor. 12:12-28; Heb. 10:25; I Tim. 3:1-13; Heb. 13:17; I Peter 5:1-3*

3 Our Christian Expression Statement *(What we practice as a church)*

BIBLE – Baptist are people of the Book. We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is revealed propositional truth, truth for all times, for all people, in all settings. *(Psalm 119:105-106; 2 Timothy 3:16; John 17:17)*

Q - *Why is the Bible so Important for Christian discipleship?*

AUTONOMY – We believe that the church is autonomous institution with the government vested in the local body. We are part of the Southern Baptist Convention, a denomination organized in 1845 for the purpose of doing missions, evangelism, education, and benevolent work in the U.S. and abroad. As such, we are part of a network of churches as the associational level (other SBC churches in our immediate area), the state level (SBC churches in the state of Florida), and the National level (U.S. and abroad).

However, the denomination nor any other SBC church has control over the decisions, discipline, or practices of Northwoods or any other local church.

PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER – We believe that every believer has the sol competency to go before God through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not through any other human intermediary. As believers we are also responsible to search the scriptures on our own in responsible and accountable study and exercise our spiritual gifts as priests before God on behalf of the body.

TITHING – We believe in storehouse tithing (10% giving) for every member of the local church to support God’s work in and through the body. The tithing is a reasonable, proportionate guide for all and should be given by grace and in gratitude for all that God has done. New Testament giving further expresses that our giving should be regular, proportionate, voluntary, and grace directed.

IMMERSION BAPTISM – We believe in the baptism of believers in water as the symbol of the death and resurrection of Christ and the sign that a person has become a believer.

SPIRIT-LED LIVING – We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer at the time of conversion. He is the seal and gift of our salvation who can never be taken away, He is the power of God in every believer for obedience. He guides, teaches, convicts, comforts, encourages, empowers, and gives gifts. Believers are instructed to be filled with the Spirit, daily yielding control to Him, living obediently to the Word and walking in the Spirit. Our worship is to be Spirit led and directed.

TELLING OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST – We want to be people of evangelism – sharing the good news that Jesus Christ died to save and forgive. We believe that it is the responsibility of every Christian and every church to give away what we have been given – the life-changing message that Jesus Christ is Lord. *Matt. 4:19*

Beyond these basic Baptist expressions,
we want Northwoods to be
“A Fellowship of Joy!”

Joy is “**the deep settled confidence that God is in control of the details of our lives.**” Jesus is Joy, and He brings joy into every person’s life who believes in Him. Joy is not the absence of pain. It is the presence of God. We want the world to experience His joy through our influence.

Lesson 4

Our Strategy

Below, you'll find our strategy for taking the church to our culture.

Our Mission

“Inviting people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Our Philosophy of Ministry

1. Celebrative worship services with a strong commitment to Scripture, music and life application in our teaching and preaching.
2. Caring small groups that teach, disciple, minister, and love.
3. Outreach using every means possible.
4. Open-ended approach to starting new ministries, discipling people and meeting needs in our community.
5. A Joyful atmosphere of warm and friendly people.

Our Steps to Growth

A plan for every member of Northwoods Church
to SHARE HIS JOY with a friend
and neighbor and help the body of Christ grow.

- #1 Build relationships in the **COMMUNITY**.
- #2 Share Your Faith **CONSISTENTLY**.
- #3 Invite your friend to a **CELEBRATION WORSHIP SERVICE**.
- #4 Involve your friend in a **SMALL GROUP**.
- #5 Your friend is being trained in **DISCIPLESHIP**.
- #6 Your friend is involved in **MINISTRY**.
- #7 Your friend is ready to train and disciple **OTHERS**.

And the beat goes on! This is the process of multiplication!

Lesson 5

OUR STRUCTURE

In this lesson we want to study several distinctives that make Northwoods a special place where God is honored, people are loved, and ministry takes place. You could call these ten characteristics the “core values” of Northwoods. They are very important to us as a family of God, and every member needs to understand them.

Nnurturing Relationships

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The church is a body, a family, a community, and a movement. As such, we place a high value on growing in relationships. That's why we place a strong emphasis on small groups and learning accountability, forgiveness, love and serving one another. We don't just want our church to grow larger (The Great Commission). We also want it to grow deeper and closer (The Great Commandment). Northwoods is really a larger church of many smaller churches. We meet in large group for worship. But we meet in small groups for ministry, discipleship, and relationship building. So come to worship. But get in a small group. The key: Find your niche! Say it again – Find your niche. If you don't, you won't “feel” that Northwoods is a close “family.”

Opportunities

1 Cor. 9:22 "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."

Since the church can be a large group in worship or a small group in care ministry, we want the church to be “a thousand points of light” in reaching and ministering to people. That's why we practice multiple opportunities for worship, Bible study, and other ministries. We like to provide CHOICES. This approach helps us to accommodate more people and therefore, reach and minister to more people. Use more hooks and you're more likely to catch more fish. You cannot dilute Biblical fellowship with numbers. We meet in large group for worship, and we meet in small groups for edification and fellowship. Don't expect worship to do what small group is intended to do.

Reaching People

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

We don't want to just teach classes and run a church program. We want to make disciples who will make disciples who will make disciples and so on until Jesus comes. This truth is the teaching of the Great Commission. That is the purpose of this course and others like it. This core value also communicates the reason why we want to start new classes, new ministries, and even new churches as often as possible. We want to reproduce our ministry!

Further, we believe that the church in style and in evangelism should always minister with cultural relevance. This is the generation that God has called us to impact and this is the culture that we are called to influence. We cannot do that if the culture can't understand our message because it is presented in an archaic style. We won't change the truth, but we will change the package (*1 Cor. 9:22 – "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."*)

Q - Describe the discipleship opportunities you have had. Do they go beyond being in a Sunday School class?

Truth

2 Tim. 3:16-17 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

We believe strongly that the Scripture is applicable to everyday life and should be studied and taught with energy, creativity, and joy. The Bible is our training manual for everyday life.

Hope

Romans 15:13 "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

What the world needs is a little bit of hope and joy – His hope and joy! We want Northwoods to be a positive, grace-centered place. That doesn't mean we'll shy away from the truth at any point. But it means that we will share the truth, not beat people up with it. We won't make policies out of man-made religion.

Q - In what ways has the church of your past "majored on the minors" or been less than a "hope-filled" place?

Worship

Hebrews 13:15 "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." Learning to live in an attitude of worship and praise is what God desires from His people. It's part of learning what His joy is all about, especially in the bad times. Uplifting, creative, and stimulating worship services are also very valuable to us. These services may

include good music, applicable Bible messages, a spirit of celebration, drama, and other audio and visual aids. The Bible is our source book for information about worship, not man's ideas.

Q - *What does it mean to have an attitude of praise? What is the most important part of a corporate worship service?*

Our worship services may contain traditional elements, but we will also strive for cultural relevance in our style. This conviction comes out of our mission to minister not only to those that we have but also to those that we're trying to reach, not to mention the fact that God has us alive in this culture for this generation at this time in history.

Organization

Eph. 4:3, 11-13 "...being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

Northwoods has a streamlined organizational structure that minimizes bureaucracy, gives less opportunity for division and disharmony, and maximizes ministry. The church is a fellowship, a family, a body, and a sheepfold. Therefore, we should concentrate on what builds up, not what breaks down and divides. We are to focus on harmony not division (*Eph. 4:3; Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 11:17-18*). We should promote unity and downplay division. Any attitude that causes disunity is sin. Voting by its very nature tends to divide. We are to focus on ministry, not maintenance. A simple structure maximizes ministry and minimizes maintenance.

Our church is elder (pastor) led, deacon administered, and people served. That is, the Bible teaches that pastors are to shepherd the flock of God, deacons are to administrate the serving ministries of the church, and that every member is to minister and serve through their particular spiritual gifts. (*cf. Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:28; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-5*). At Northwoods we don't vote on every issue that must be decided every month. We don't have a monthly business meeting. We have a business meeting once a quarter or when a special need arises, but our bylaws require that the church approve by vote any full-time ministerial staff, the budget, and any expenditures outside the budget above \$100. Beyond that, our pastors lead, our deacons serve as accountability to our pastors and administrate service to the body, and our people minister through their gifts. We believe this is the Biblical model for church organization and for effective ministry.

Pure church democracy is wrong. Pure pastoral or deacon dictatorship is wrong. Servant leadership under the structure of authority is the Biblical model.

Others

Romans 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.” Jesus and others should be the emphasis! We don’t want to be selfish in our relationships or selfish in our approach to people. We want the atmosphere to be warm, inviting, and servant-focused. We want to be thinking of others.

Because we love and care about one another, we believe in and practice church discipline. Church discipline at its core involves correcting sin and encouraging one another to righteousness. This can be done through an informal means of teaching or through a word of admonition. The goal is restoring a person to their walk with God and reconciliation to the body of believers. It on occasion has to be done in a formal means through the application of Matthew 18:15-17. Though the goal is always to restore an erring church member, it is possible that a non-repentant member could be dismissed from the fellowship of the church.

Defined Target and Purposes

Mark 2:17 “And hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners”. We want to know Tallahassee and understand the people we are trying to reach. We want to know our purpose statement and have measurable goals at which to shoot. If you shoot at nothing, you will hit it every time!

Q - *How well do you know your neighbors? How well do you know the people on your block? Do you know what makes them tick well enough to take Christ to their need? Would you be able to communicate with them well enough not to create barriers to communication?*

Spiritual Service

Col. 3:23 “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

We believe strongly in every member serving the Lord through spiritual gifts. We also believe very strongly that we must undergird everything in prayer because if the Lord is not blessing this, it will not last!

* Spend a moment now praying for Northwoods, that we will be the body of Christ that God the Father wants us to be. Pray that every thought, idea, goal, and ministry will bring glory to Him. (*Rom. 11:36*).

Lesson 6

OUR SHARED COMMITMENT

Let's take this last lesson and go over what we believe to be a working New Testament Church Covenant that expresses what we commit to Christ and to one another as members of His body.

“For God's Glory in Christ Jesus, we will GROW on PURPOSE and GO on MISSION.”

Having repented of our sins and having trusted in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and being baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we make the following covenant with God and one another.

By God's grace and the help of the Holy Spirit:

We will support the TESTIMONY of our church. (I am a member!).

- **By loving God supremely – Matthew 22:34-40**
- **By living a Spirit-filled Christ-like life – Galatians 5:22-25**
- **By faithfully worshipping together on the Lord's Day – Hebrews 10:25**
- **By regularly sharing the gospel with unbelievers – Matthew 28:19-20**
- **By demonstrating Christ's love to all people – Galatians 6:10**
- **By supporting the global missions' efforts – Acts 1:8**

We will guard the unity of our church. (I am a messenger!)

- **By honoring its doctrines – 1 Timothy 6:2-4; 2 Peter 3:2**
- **By showing love for one another – John 13: 34-35**
- **By ministering to one another – Philippians 2:3-5**
- **By praying with and for one another – Ephesians 6:18**

- By speaking in a way that builds up others – Colossians 3:16
- By following the leaders chosen by the church – Hebrews 13:17

We will support the ministries of our church. (I am a minister!)

- By giving generously of our finances – 2 Corinthians 9:7
- By being equipped to serve – Ephesians 4: 11-13
- By developing a servant’s heart – John 13:12-17
- By exercising our spiritual gifts in ministry – 1 Peter 4:10

As members, we will, if we move from the Fellowship, as soon as possible, unite with another Fellowship where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.

This completes “Joyroad 101”. We are glad that you completed this course and hope that you’ll use it to find an area of ministry involvement at Northwoods Church. Why not use these notes and lead a small group of people through them who haven’t been through it yet? May your joy abound in knowing and serving Christ forever.

2 Cor. 4:5 - For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

Next Steps

Where Do I Go From Here?

1. Make a commitment to membership if you have not already.
2. Begin participating in a Life Group.
3. Set an appointment with one of our Pastors and fill out a spiritual gifts evaluation and discuss the possibilities for ministry and reaching out to the unchurched.
4. Take the next step in the Northwoods Life Development process by attending our 201 class entitled *“Following Christ Today.”*