

Do y'all believe we were created to worship?

Ecclesiastes 3:11—God has set eternity in the hearts of people

We instinctually know there is something more to this life.

Romans 1:18-20 says that God has made Himself obvious in creation, so people have no excuse to not glorify Him

Meaning, we should worship God for no other reason than just because of what we see in creation.

Psalm 29:2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

All throughout Scripture, it's understood that we will worship.

God has created us to worship!

The words of the hymn "Come Thou Fount"

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love

So, we are created to worship, but because of sin, we're prone to wander away from the One we were created to worship. Which means, we will worship other things and/or people in place of God.

God knew the Israelites were prone to wander. They would leave Him. And yet in His grace, God did not reject them, but continued to provide a way for them to worship Him and be in relationship with Him.

So, let's talk about the worship of the Israelites and how they wandered.



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N42 October 16, 2022

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Worship

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

"Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care."

Psalms 95:1-7



What is the appeal of idolatry?

WAY OUT

"Getting Egypt Out of Israel"

Exodus 32:1-35

Most Christians pride themselves with never being tempted to worship idols. Our monotheism is culturally entrenched. There are few places that invite us to practice idolatry. We may have advanced sociologically beyond shrines that offer alternatives to the worship of one solitary God. Worship of multiple deities seems foreign or strange to most people native to the West. If not strange, polytheism seems illogical and impractical.

Christians are quick to quote Psalms or Prophets ridiculing the incredulity of idolatry. Isaiah 44 mocks the lifelessness of carved images. "They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand" (Isa. 44:18). Jeremiah bemoans the impotence of idols by claiming, "But where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you, in your time of trouble" (Jer. 2:28). The Psalmist taunts, "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear, nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them" (Ps. 135:15-18). The "golden calf" is lampooned in Ps. 106:19-20, "They made a calf in Horeb and worshiped a metal image. They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass."

Just when we think we may have advanced beyond the allure of graven images, this temptation to false worship can manifest in many ways that may surprise us. Recently some elementary school children being taught the Ten Commandments were asked, "What is an idol?" An eager student confidently answered, "An idol is someone who is talented and can sing like a superstar!" This child's definition belied the idols of our day. We may not worship idols of stone or wood. Instead we are inclined to worship American Idols of talent, fortune and influence. An

athlete, musician, movie star, politician or social media influencer often serves as our "golden calf." While we may not bow down to statues, we are inclined to spend inordinate amounts of time fawning over the famous.

Why is idolatry so dangerous? Distilled to its essentials, idolatry is control. If I have an assortment of gods, then I get to determine that assortment based upon what they do for me. If a god is working for me, it stays. If not, then I can add another. If I choose the gods, then I make the gods. If I make the gods, then I make myself a god. If I make myself a god, then I have violated the Ten Commandments.

Idolatry is not only for polytheists. Christians monotheists would never "have any other gods" before the Creator. Yet, many will create images or seek experiences that help them see, feel or sense more tangibly our invisible God. Can we worship God if he does not manifest himself? Can we remain faithful to a God who seems distant or aloof? If God does not meet us on our terms, will we continue to follow him? This is the monotheist's dilemma: if there is only one God, what do I do when he does not meet my demands?

First, do not seek substitutes or counterfeits of God. Rather, wait on him. If God does not move or make things clear, wait on him until he does so. If God says "No," thank him and let go of your demand. God's people get into the most trouble when they try to answer their own prayers prematurely with self-made solutions. Abraham and Sarah had their Hagar. King Saul had his sacrifice. Jonah had his Tarshish. The people of Israel had their "golden calf." All of these followed the one true God, but implemented something of their own ingenuity to solve the perceived incongruity of their will and God's will.

True worship is letting the one true God control our lives. Submitting to God with gratitude and no substitutes is the antidote for the persistent and implacable temptation of idolatry.

Read Exodus 32:1-35

1 Then the Lord said to Moses, 1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

2 Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord." 6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

7 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 8 They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

9 "I have seen these people," the Lord said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. 10 Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

11 But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. "Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.

13 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'" 14 Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

15 Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. 16 The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, "There is the sound of war in the camp."

18 Moses replied:

"It is not the sound of victory,
it is not the sound of defeat;
it is the sound of singing that I hear."

19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. 20 And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

21 He said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?"

22 "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' 24 So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

25 Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughing-stock to their enemies. 26 So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him.

27 Then he said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.'" 28 The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. 29 Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day."

30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

31 So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

33 The Lord replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. 34 Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."

35 And the Lord struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle the main character in Ex. 32:1-6.
- Place brackets on "brought" throughout Ex. 32.
- Box the word "they" in Ex. 32:4 and draw an arrow back to whom the word refers.
- Underline the word "gods" throughout Ex. 32.
- Double underline "LORD" throughout Ex. 32.
- Double underline the description of the "great sin" the people committed as stated in Ex. 32:31.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What contributed to the Israelites' alarming request in Exodus 32:1 (see Ex. 24:18)?
1. At the very same time that the Israelites were demanding Aaron make them gods, what was Yahweh doing on the mountain (Ex. 25-31)? Explain the irony of this.
3. Evaluate Aaron's response to the Israelites' request as described in Ex. 32:2-5 and his response to Moses in Ex. 32:22-24. Why do you think he acted the way he did?
4. Which of the Ten Commandments did Aaron and the people of Israel violate? How do you think they would justify their actions?
5. How is the activity of Ex. 32:1-6 different from the LORD's plan for worship (Ex. 25-31)?
6. What was the LORD's assessment of Israel's activity and what did he propose to do in response (see Ex. 32:7-10)?
7. Contrast the roles that Moses played in Ex. 32:11-14, Ex. 32:15-29, and Ex. 32:30-35.
8. How is it possible for the LORD to "not bring on his people the disaster he threatened" (Ex. 32:14)?
9. What does the "golden calf" incident of Ex. 32 teach us about humanity?
10. What are some "golden calf" creations that Christians build today? Why do we build them? How can we resist this temptation?

Commentary On The Text

The Book of Exodus records the momentous journey of the people of Israel. They started out as slaves and were redeemed by God through many miraculous events (Ex. 1-13). They were led by Moses to the mountain of God (Ex. 13-18). These chosen people were then invited into a covenant ratified by their public acceptance of God's laws (Ex. 19-24). Finally, they were entrusted with the glory and honor of worshiping the one true God, serving as a "kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6) as well as a light for all the nations (Isa. 49:6). This priesthood and its service of worship are detailed in the final chapters of Exodus (Ex. 25-40). The journey from mud pits to the grandeur of priesthood is no small affair. The transformation of the people of Israel is perhaps the greatest miracle found in the book of Exodus.

This Exodus was not without its challenges. The people of Israel initially rejected Moses (Ex. 2:14). They questioned his judgment (Ex. 5:21) and claimed he was incompetent (Ex. 14:11-12). They grumbled (Ex. 15:24), complained (Ex. 16:3), quarreled (Ex. 17:2), and even tested the LORD by questioning his presence with them (Ex. 17:7). They climactically derailed in grand fashion by demanding Aaron "make them gods" in Moses' absence (Ex. 32:1), violating the covenant they had just inaugurated. They were truly a "stiff-necked" people (Ex. 32:9), guilty of offending their human leader (Ex. 32:19) and their ultimate divine Deliverer (Ex. 32:10).

"Exodus 32 describes Israel's archetypal apostasy at God's own mountain, scant weeks after ratifying the Covenant. Having brought them to Yahweh's abode in the wilderness, Moses disappears, perhaps as part of the 'test' mentioned in 20:20. True to form, the Israelites panic; Exod. Rab. 42:3 aptly compares the scenario to vassals rebelling in their suzerain's absence. As they have had difficulty maintaining faith in a hidden God, so they completely lose trust in their absent leader. Having triply affirmed, 'All the words that Yahweh spoke we will do ... and heed' (19:8; 24:3, 7), the people immediately violate the Decalog by making for themselves a metal god in a calf's likeness. An invisible Deity, sans human representative or graphic representation, is simply too abstract for them" (William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19-40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Vol. 2A, Anchor Yale Bible, 566).

At the very time that Israel was impulsively making its major mistake regarding false worship (Ex. 32:1), Moses was on the mountain receiving the detailed plans of God for a worshipping nation (Ex. 25-31). The contrast between what Moses was receiving and what the people were demanding could not be sharper. "At every key point the people's building project contrasts with the tabernacle that God has just announced. This gives to the account a heavy ironic cast. (1) The people seek to create what God has already provided; (2) they, rather

than God, take the initiative; (3) offerings are demanded rather than willingly presented; (4) the elaborate preparations are missing altogether; (5) the painstaking length of time needed for building becomes an overnight rush job; (6) the careful provision for guarding the presence of the Holy One turns into an open-air object of immediate accessibility; (7) the invisible, intangible God becomes a visible, tangible image; and (8) the personal, active God becomes an impersonal object that cannot see or speak or act. The ironic effect is that the people forfeit the very divine presence they had hoped to bind more closely to themselves" (Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 280).

Moses took on three roles in response to the people's idolatry. First, Moses acted in mediation for the people seeking mercy from God (Ex. 32:11-14). God was angry at the impetuous idolatry of his people and desired to "destroy them" and replace them (Ex. 32:10). Moses appealed to God's goodness, reputation, and faithfulness as reasons for avoiding the "disaster he had threatened." Second, Moses acted as a magistrate, executing judgment for God upon the people for their idolatry. He broke the tablets (Ex. 32:19) in recognition of the covenant broken by a rebellious people. He destroyed the idol and made the Israelites taste their own shame. He confronted a compromising Aaron and then brought capital punishment upon those who chose to not follow the one true God. Moses' judgment upon the people implicated all but was ultimately focused upon repeat and obstinate offenders. Finally, Moses acted as a mending agent, focused upon restoring the relationship of the people of Israel with the LORD through forgiveness and atonement (Ex. 32:30-35). Moses sought to restore the people of Israel to a right standing with Yahweh. He offered to sacrifice even himself to "make atonement" for the sins of the people. God did not accept Moses' offer of substitutionary atonement. Instead God challenged Moses to lead the people of Israel to the promised land. God would bring appropriate justice to the people in his own time and in his own way (Ex. 32:34-35). God would in the future institute substitutionary atonement, not through Moses, but through one greater than Moses, his Messiah. "Moses cannot make atonement for anybody. The priest, acting for God in God's name, can. Thus in Lev. 4 and 5, for example, the priest takes the blood of the sin and guilt offering and makes 'atonement' for the offerer with the result that the offerer is 'forgiven' (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31; 5:16, 18). There are so many similarities between Moses and Jesus, from birth to ministry, but at one crucial point the similarity breaks down. As Waltke says, 'But Moses unlike Christ cannot make atonement'" (Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, 554).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *gathered around* “when used with (‘al), gives the verb the nuance of ‘against’ (cf. Num 16:3; 17:7; 20:2; Ezek 38:7). Therefore, the Hebrew, may be translated ‘gathered together against Aaron,’ thus indicating an adversarial relationship between Aaron and the people” (Randall C. Bailey, *Exodus*, The College Press NIV Commentary, 341).

v. 1 *gods* “Denoting either one deity or many. This issue reappears in 32:4, 8, and 23. In all four instances, ‘*elohim*’ comes in a quotation attributed to the Israelites. Although it has a plural ending, in the Old Testament ‘*elohim*’ normally denotes God in the singular. When ‘*elohim*’ refers to one God, associated verbs and pronouns are usually in the singular. While this appears to be grammatically incorrect, it is theologically accurate. Sometimes, however, ‘*elohim*’ refers to ‘gods.’ When this is so, the verbs or pronouns linked to ‘*elohim*’ are in the plural. Although this is grammatically correct, it is theologically inaccurate, for there is only one God. Taking this distinction into account, the Israelites’ words imply that they speak of ‘gods,’ for the verbs associated with ‘*elohim*’ in 32:1, 4, 8, and 23 are in the plural. Yet it seems apparent from the context that they are not expecting Aaron to manufacture various ‘gods’ for them. The people are clearly satisfied when Aaron produces one idol for them to worship” (T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Teach the Text Commentary Series, 171).

v. 5 *festival to the Lord* “Aaron’s response begins to reveal the ambiguity of the original situation for the first time. When he saw their reaction, he proclaimed: ‘Tomorrow will be a feast to Yahweh.’ Obviously Aaron had a different intention from the people when he made the calf. The fact that he could incorporate the calf in a Yahweh festival indicates that he did not understand it as blatant apostasy from Yahweh. Nor does v. 5 imply that Aaron had identified the calf with Yahweh as some older commentators suggest. The portrayal of Aaron in this verse surely does not belong to some allegedly late attempt to mitigate his responsibility. Rather, the author allows Aaron to remain in an awkward and compromising position which is not resolved, but only intensified by his own apology in vv. 21ff” (Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, 566).

v. 6 *revelry* “The celebration of worship in front of the calf is similar to the sin in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve also sought to establish themselves as authors of their own futures by eating from the tree. The Heb. Word ‘revelry’ (tsakhaq) usually means ‘mocking’ or ‘teasing.’ The sexual connotations sometimes attributed here stem from a comparison with a positive use of the word referring to sexual relations between Isaac and Rebecca in Gen. 26:8. It is more likely that the mocking was rooted in the knowledge that the calf-bull was in their control and they were free to do anything they liked. The unrestrained sexuality is a more likely reference in v. 25, ‘running wild’ (para‘) that also means ‘uncovered’” (James K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 290).

v. 7 *corrupt* “means ‘go to ruin,’ ‘spoil, pervert, corrupt,’ and takes on strong connotations according to its context. How they have become corrupted is defined more clearly in the next verse. This condition of corruption is the first of Yahweh’s moral, ethical, and religious evaluations of Israel in this verse (cf. v. 9). The author-editor uses the same verb to describe the corruption of the earth as the reason for Yahweh’s destruction of it by a flood (Gen 6:11). This ‘first great sin’ of breaking Yahweh’s Ten Words is clearly parallel to the account of the ruin and corruption of the first people of God, the human race, in Gen 2-3” (Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary, 304).

v. 9 *stiff-necked* “‘Stiff-necked’ is a farming metaphor for an animal unwilling to bow its neck to receive the yoke and so be usefully employed on the land. The people were stubborn and unprepared to accept the LORD’s direction (33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut. 9:6, 13; 31:27; Acts 7:51). They were intent on going their own way” (John L. Mackay, *Exodus*, Mentor Commentaries, 532).

v. 10 *leave me alone* “For God to announce to a prophet (Moses being the paradigm for all future prophets) his intention to do something as a way of inviting intercession has many parallels, the most famous perhaps being those of Amos 7:1-6, where God showed Amos things he was planning to do by way of judgment upon Israel and then, in response to Amos’ intercession, relented. In that context he was clearly inviting Amos to intercede so that he (God) might relent. A similarly prominent example is found in Jonah’s required announcement that Nineveh would be destroyed in “forty days” (Jonah 3:4), a message Jonah reluctantly gave because he knew that it represented an invitation to repent and not an irreversible condemnation” (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, Vol. 2, The New American Commentary, 670).

v. 14 *relented* “The basic meaning of the verb is ‘have compassion’ or ‘feel sorrow.’ When people feel sorrow, or are ‘sorry,’ the context of sin often warrants the translation ‘repent.’ *Nakham* means ‘repentance’ in the sense of feeling sorrow. When God feels sorrow, however, the word cannot mean ‘repent’ since God does not sin. Rather, it indicates God’s sorrow for the consequences people must face as a natural result of their sin and the Lord’s justice in the world order” (Bruckner, 285).

v. 32 *blot me out* “Here we see the true heart of Moses: his desire to save the people was so great that he offered his own life, telling God that he was not willing to live longer if God would not forgive Israel. And Moses was successful. God told Moses that he would continue to lead Israel by his ‘angel.’ God still punished Israel with a plague because the nation was still full of stubborn and apostate people, as subsequent events would show. Similarly, when YHWH said, ‘I will erase from my book whoever sinned against me,’ the point was not that he was unwilling to forgive, but that he knew those in Israel who were his own and those who were not, and he would deal with them individually” (Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, 632).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Resist the urge to replace God with things more tangible.
Instead, seek his favor, his faithfulness, and his forgiveness.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Old habits die hard. Confession – I love chocolate and Cheez-Its. Actually, all junk food. I’ve been on a mission to feed my temple better and model good eating habits for my kids. Unfortunately, the junk foods that I love don’t fit into this plan. They say it takes about 21 days to start a new habit, and I’ll be honest, every 22nd day I feel the pull to celebrate with a little treat. Inevitably, that little treat will completely derail my good eating habits. God took the Israelites out of Egypt, but they just couldn’t seem to break old habits. Even though they committed to follow the Lord and do what He said (Ex 24:3), their impatience and need for immediate gratification led them to turn away from the Lord and worship a little golden calf made from earrings. There was so much better waiting for them just up the mountain! It sounds so foolish, but it’s hard to walk away from what you’ve always known. People get stuck in the rut of bad habits and hang-ups. Our kids will struggle with this, too. So, what kind of leader will you be? Will you be like Moses, seeking God and His will, or Aaron, enabling and encouraging bad habits then lying about it? We’re all tempted to cave under the pressure of a two-year-old tantrum or preteen eyeroll, but God has something better in store for our kids. We teach them to obey us as training ground for obeying the Lord. Let’s model obedience for our kids by resting in God’s presence and turning away from things of this world. We’re praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?	What Do You Think?	What Do You Do?
<p>Read Exodus 32:1-35</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What seemed to be the Israelites problem and how did Aaron “fix” it? 2. Describe God’s reaction. Describe Moses’ reaction. 3. How was Moses the mediator for the Israelites? 	<p>Does it seem harsh for the Levites to kill the people? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Think about things or activities that distract you from God. Fast from these things this week and replace them with time with God in prayer, reading the Bible or just thinking about Him.</p>

CORE COMPETENCY: Worship

I celebrate God for who He is and what He has done for me.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 18:29

“With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.”

KidPIX COUPON

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

CHILD’S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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