



What the Bible Says

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Our Statement of Faith

The MCC General Conference, meeting in Vancouver, Canada, in July 2016, voted the following statement of faith.

Preamble

Metropolitan Community Church is one chapter in the story of the Church, the Body of Christ. We are people on a journey, learning to live into our spirituality, while affirming our bodies, our genders and our sexualities.

We don't all believe exactly the same things. And yet in the midst of our diversity, we build community, grounded in God's radically inclusive love for all people.

We are part of an ongoing conversation on matters of belief and faith, shaped by scripture and the historic creeds, building on those who have come before us. Our chapter begins when God says to us: "Come, taste, and see."

Our Faith

"Come, taste, and see." Jesus Christ, You invite all people to Your open table.

You make us Your people, a beloved community. You restore the joy of our relationship with God, even in the midst of loneliness, despair, and degradation. We are each unique and we all belong, a priesthood of all believers.

Baptised and filled with Your Holy Spirit, You empower us to be Your healing presence in a hurting world.

We expect to see Your reign on earth as it is in heaven as we work toward a world where everyone has enough, wars cease, and all creation lives in harmony.

We affirm Your charge to all of humanity to care for the land, sea, and air. Therefore, we will actively resist systems and structures that are destroying Your creation.

With all of creation we worship You—every tribe, every language, every people, every nation. We know You by many names, Triune God, beyond comprehension, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, who invites us to the feast. Amen.

Explanation

The Bible texts that follow seek to amplify, explain and apply the above statement of faith. The Bible texts were selected and arranged by David Coltheart, pastor of MCC Brisbane.

1. The Bible

God Speaks to Us

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7

God Speaks from the Holy Scriptures

From infancy, you [Timothy] have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:15-17

The Prophetic Message

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:19-21

Jesus is the Ultimate Messenger

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 1:1-3

Purpose of the Bible

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you... Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:11, 105

Scriptures Teach about Jesus

The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. Acts 8:34-35

God's Word is Truth

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17

Bible Prophecies Point to Jesus

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Christ is the Centre of the Bible

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me. John 5:39

Teach and Encourage

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. Romans 15:4

Leads us to Faith in Jesus

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Romans 10:17

Test of Faith and Teaching

Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Isaiah 8:20

Live by God's Word

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4

God's Word Endures Forever

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever." Isaiah 40:8

Put God's Word into Practice

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22

2. God

Three Persons

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28:18-20

God is Plural

In the beginning, God [*Elohim*, a plural word] created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters... Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness. Genesis 1:1,26

God is One

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one [*echad*, meaning both unity and unique]. Deuteronomy 6:4

God the Creator

But Jehovah is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. Jeremiah 10:10-12

The All-Powerful God

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.” Revelation 19:6

God is Present Everywhere

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. Psalm 139:7-10

God Knows Everything

I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. Isaiah 46:9,10

God is Eternal

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27

God is Love

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:8-10

Jesus is God Made Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him, [the Word] all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-4, 14

Jesus and God United as One

I and the Father are one... I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. John 10:30 John 17:20-23

Jesus Reveals God

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. John 14:6-9

Jesus Promised to Send the Holy Spirit

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth... But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:15-17, 26

3. Jesus Christ

Existed from Eternity

But you, Bethlehem, though you are small among the towns of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. Micah 5:2

Jesus is Creator

The Son is the image of the invisible God, supreme over all creation. For in him [the Son] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. Colossians 1:15-18

Miracle Birth

But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:30-35

Born in Bethlehem

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. Luke 2:4-7

Jesus is Fully God

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. Colossians 2:9,10

Jesus Claimed to be God

“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. John 8:58, 59

Jesus Accepted Worship

Then Jesus to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” John 20:27-28

Jesus is Fully Man

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11

Jesus Died and was Raised to Life

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures
1 Corinthians 15:3,4

We are God’s Children

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, Galatians 3:25

Jesus is Coming Again

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
John 14:1-3

4. The Holy Spirit

Jesus Promised the Holy Spirit

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.” John 15:26

Work of the Holy Spirit

“But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. John 16:7-13

Teach Us about Jesus

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26

The Holy Spirit is God

“Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.” Acts 5:1-4

The Holy Spirit is Eternal

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! Hebrews 9:14

The Holy Spirit is a Person

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God. Romans 8:27

Believers are Baptised by the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist said, “I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Matthew 3:11

The Holy Spirit Guarantees our Salvation

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

The Holy Spirit is Shown In Our Lives

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

The Holy Spirit Lives in Us

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Psalm 51:10,11

The Holy Spirit Empowers Us for Ministry and Service

Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Unity through the Spirit

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27

5. The Experience of Salvation

Everyone is Born a Sinner

There is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

Sin is Separation from God

Therefore, sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned... For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:12, 19

Sin is Disobedience

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he [Jesus] appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. 1 John 3:4-6

Jesus Provides Life

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

Salvation Provided through Love

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Jesus Came to Save us from Sin

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

Jesus Died for our Sins

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:6-8

God Forgives our Sins

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8,9

Credited with God's Righteousness

God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Jesus Life Accepted as My Life

For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Romans 5:10

Believe in Jesus

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

Eternal Life in Christ

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. John 5:24

Christ's Resurrection Life

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 1 Corinthians 15: 20-23

Freedom in Christ

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

Robed in Christ's Righteousness

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Isaiah 61:10

Created Anew in Christ

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17

6. Salvation by Grace through Faith

Saved by Grace

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10

What is Faith?

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrew 11:1 **Declared**

Righteous through Faith

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” Romans 1:16-17

God Gives Faith

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. Romans 12:3

Faith is Based in the Person of Jesus Christ

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Hebrews 12:1-2

The Source of Faith

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Rom 10:17

Children of God Through Faith

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26-28

The Evidence of Faith

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds... You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. James 2:17-24

Obedience through Faith

Through him [Jesus] we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake. Romans 1:5

Faith Put to the Test

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-3

Faith is Our Strength

Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes... Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:14-18

Christ Lives in Us By Faith

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Ephesians 3:16,17

Live by Faith in Christ

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

7. Baptism

Jesus Example

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.” Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment, heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:13-17

Baptism is a Symbol of the New Birth

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. John 3:3-6

Jesus Command

He [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15,16

Meaning of Baptism

Don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. Romans 6:3-5

Wash Away Sins

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’ Acts 22:16

Clothed with Christ

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,²⁷ for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Galatians 3:26,27

Baptism Makes Us Followers of Jesus

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28:18-20

Repentance from Sin

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call...” Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:38-41

Believe

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptised. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them. He was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household. Acts 16:29-34

Philip Baptises the Ethiopian Eunuch

Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptised?” Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8:35-39

8. The Christian Life

Our Need of Righteousness

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind; our sins sweep us away. Isaiah 64:6

Victory from Sin only Through Christ

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 7:24,25

Christ Lives in Us to Bring Victory

Christ in you, [is] the hope of glory...So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 1:27, 2:6,7

Belief in Jesus Makes Us God's Children

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13

Love is the Principle of God's Laws

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law. Romans 13:8-10

Obedience

For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? Romans 6:14-16

Overcoming Temptation

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Resist Evil

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. 1 Peter 5:8,9

Christian Living

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you. Ephesians 4:29-32

God Has Promised to Help

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Jude 1:24

Christ our High Priest

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

God's Will for Us

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

9. Growing as a Christian

The Bible is Our Guide

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:11,105

Study the Bible to Discover God's Will

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17:11

Jesus Taught us to Pray

Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.' So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." Luke 11:2-10

God Answers Prayer

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Mark 11:24,25

Love is the Characteristic of Christians

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34,35

Social Justice

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Isaiah 58:6-8

Blessings in Giving

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35

Tithes and Offerings

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. Malachi 3:10

Offerings to God

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:7,8

Remembering Christ's Death and Resurrection

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Living in Union with Christ

Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. John 15:5-12

Follow Jesus

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23

10. The Church

The Church is God's House

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22

Church Leaders

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service. This is so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11,12

Christ is the Head of the Church

And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. Colossians 1:18

Peter's Confession of Faith

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Matthew 16:16-18

Priesthood of all Believers

You [Christians] also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:5,9,10

The Seven Helpers

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. Acts 6:1-6

Appointment of Elders

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. Acts 14:23

Mission of the Church

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-16

Teaching and Preaching

Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. Acts 15:22-35

Fellowship and Service

The [believers] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Acts 2:42-45