

# **VISION & VALUES**

# Introduction

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***Thank you*** for taking the time to have a deeper look at what we believe at Grace. What follows is not so much a formal statement of beliefs and more a window into how we think about what matters most. Our hope is that as you read through this document, you will discover what motivates us as a church community. In our minds, there are *five V words* that bring clarity to the purpose and direction of every Church community.

**YOUR VISION:** *The big picture view of God & His Kingdom*

**YOUR VALUES:** *The community values that define how you live*

**YOUR VEHICLES:** *The strategy for remaining faithful*

**YOUR VOCABULARY:** *The common language of discipleship*

**YOUR VALUATIONS:** *The way you define success*

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# The Five V's

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Our **Vision** is what we believe the big picture should look like for every Christian. This is meant to be the place where most of us regardless of our differences in theology or application can agree that the main things, are the main things. For Grace, our Vision as you'll find out is expressed in maintaining the tension between three main priorities, The Kingdom of God, The Family of God and The Mission of God.

Our **Values** are a more clearly defined idea built around the five essential things that we believe are vital to living lives connected to our *Vision*. For instance, because we believe in the priority of seeking the Kingdom of God first above everything else in our lives (a *Vision* or big picture thought), a central focus our community is that everyone be discipled. That's why Discipleship or "A Transforming Life" is one of our five *Values*.

Our **Vehicles** then flow from our Vision and Values and ultimately become the most visible example of what matters in a community. They are the practical and strategic "how's" that we are going to live out our *Vision & Values* in the culture we are a part of. For Grace, we can quickly point to small groups or

Sunday worship as a tangible "how's" that we are using to live out our Vision and our Values.

However, because Vehicles are a means to an end, a way or strategy for being true to the purpose set out in our Vision, it means they can change and they do. For example, a church's worship style can change to better serve the demographic of the group that's attending or the way that small groups are meeting in the midst of a pandemic can be completely reimaged in light of restrictions. These are Vehicles we employ to get us to our destination. *Vision* and *Values* are the "why and what we believe", but *Vehicles* are the "how" that are dependent on shifting things like our culture or demographic. Discipleship and Transformation are convictions related to our *Values*, but how small groups meet or how we order a service are convictions related to our *Vehicles*. This is the best way to accomplish our goals of following Jesus. For example, as we've navigated through 2020, with its restrictions and prohibitions, we've had months of services completely online and hours of groups completely virtually. Those vehicles were a means to an end, not the end itself. Our goal is to make sure we are reassessing our Vehicles on a regular basis in order to make sure they are still working for us as we seek to remain faithful to God. (Cont. next page



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# The Five V's

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Often, we get find ourselves bent out of shape because our favourite kind of *Vehicle* is changing or needs to change. At Grace, our goal is to be people who think clearly and live passionately for our *Vision & Values* and at the same time hold very loosely to our *Vehicles* because we know that they are bound to change. It is our hope that by the end of this booklet you will clearly understand how we are striving to live out our *Vision & Values* at Grace together.

Our **Vocabulary**, is the common language we use to define the process of being a disciple. Whether these terms are used intentionally or not in a community, we know every church has them or develops them. Sometimes the way we speak about following Jesus can become too complicated, sometimes it get overly religious and sometimes it's so familiar that it loses it's effectiveness. Regardless, those common terms we all use to talk about following Jesus (repentance, faith, transformation, grace etc) have a huge formational force that will either help our community or hinder it. At Grace, we want to intentionally define those key terms, use them in fresh and innovative ways to create a common language for discipleship amongst us that leads to real change. This booklet is part of that work. We believe in the importance of speaking the same language in a

family of faith because it leads to greater ease and deeper insight.

Our **Valuations**, are the ways in which we define success. This matters because it creates clarity when we set out to partner together in our work and ministry. We so desperately need a unified vision of what matters in this life. At Grace, our values help inform our valuations. For example, for us, the goal of everyone being disciplined matters more than simple attendance because attendance isn't our goal, deep transformation on the inside is. This changes how we measure success internally, how we think about leadership and ministry, and even how we define what our problems are.

We hope that helps you grasp how we think about, thinking about the things that matters most. What follows is a brief introduction into how we think about moving from a big picture vision all the way down to forming values.

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VISION & VALUES: PART ONE

# VISION: The Big Picture

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# VISION: The Big Picture

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## **SEEING & UNDERSTANDING JESUS**

The most incredible thing about becoming a Christian is truly seeing and understanding who Jesus is. In a moment, your eyes are opened and you realize that Jesus isn't just a man, he isn't just a good example of moral character or kindness, and neither can he be just one of many ways to God. Instead, you see for the first time that if Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, then he is also the risen Lord of all of Creation, the Savior of a world that is broken and lost without him.

## **SEEING & UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES**

The side effect of seeing Jesus as he is though, is that we can no longer look at ourselves and this world the same way. In His light and truth, we look at ourselves and begin to see how fractured we have all become through sin and how impacted we have been through the influence of evil at work in the world we live in. We realize how we have been living lives that are unnecessarily severed from his friendship; as broken image-bearers who have lost their true purpose. We begin to grasp that while we are His good and beautiful creation we have also been misshaped and deceived by our own sinful desires. And so we must confront that while we are deeply loved by Jesus,

our hearts have also been hardened in so many ways to the truth and freedom offered to us through Him. What can we do?

## **GOOD NEWS**

Jesus' message for this world is that he has really good news (a gospel message) to declare about that very question. His good news is that while we were all unable to save ourselves or make our world right again, he came to fulfill God's covenant promises to redeem the world and our lives from both the work and influence of sin and Satan. His life and ministry demonstrated that reality wherever he went; people were forgiven, healed, and delivered. But not only did he model what real life looked like when it was connected to God, but he demonstrated God's love for us through his atoning sacrifice on the cross. In his death he reconciled us with God, making peace by his shed blood. And in his resurrection, he gave us the promise of life beyond the grave.



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# VISION: The Big Picture

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## THE KINGDOM

In fact, the central message that he preached wherever he went (Mark 1:13-14), explained his purpose, that now through his life, the Kingdom or the reign of God has begun to break into this broken world and renew it. What does the Kingdom look like when it breaks into our world? The relational reconnecting of people's life to the source of God's life, so that the all the blessing and grace of God begins to be flood into every part of their life. And as it does it brings healing to their body, soul and spirit, forgiveness for all of their sin, freedom for them that a corresponding freedom all of creation from oppression and enslavement to death and a new purpose and hope for their future. What a promise! But how do we receive it?

## THE EXCHANGE OF GRACE

Well, Jesus' announcement was that if you wanted to experience that kind of life that's reconnected to the source and overflowing with the blessing of God, you had to exchange your old life for his new life. That required you to surrender everything, your identity, your performance, your failures, your dreams and your regrets, to God in exchange for welcoming Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. That is grace. That

exchange meant that you recognized and honored Jesus as the rightful and worthy King that he is and gave him first place in your heart. More than that though Jesus' message tells that that isn't something that simply happens once in our life, but something that happens over and over again. For Jesus it means that you continually learn to believe and trust not only in his great love towards you and his great power to save you but that you keep seeing and believing that he will continually empower you and lead you for the rest of time. How do you do enter into that?

## REPENT & BELIVE

His simple invitation was that you needed to repent and believe the good news. But that begs the question, what is repentance and believing really all about? Isn't it just being sorry or regretting your mistakes? That is part of it, but it's not even the most important part. Repentance is that initial and ongoing work of transformation that happens in our minds as we begin to deeply believe everything Jesus has said and done. It comes when we hear the good news about Jesus and then build our life upon that truth. For instance, the good news for someone might be that Jesus forgives them if they confess their sins to him. That good news leads can lead to repentance.

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# VISION: The Big Picture

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And repentance would be hearing, reflecting and deeply internalizing that truth about in light of the shame that person felt, the bad news they had been believing, the truth about who they were, the promise of God for their need and the joyful revelation of Jesus' grace. Now paired together with repentance is the act of believing. And believing is that act of faith that puts that new thought into practice. It's not enough to simply be open or aware of the fact that you are forgiven, it's requires faith to actually know you are forgiven and faith to continually experience the freedom and joy of that assurance. So we exchange our old life once and for all and then live in that truth in deeper and deeper ways through ongoing repentance and belief in Jesus.

## **THIS NEW LIFE**

On one level, that is what the new life looks like: Our lives being continually transformed by Jesus as we seek to follow his way. However, at another level, as we live that life out, we also know that we are not able or called to do this alone. God has something much bigger in mind. Not just the renewal of one life, but the renewal of every family, every community, and every city. And not just every person but all of creation itself will be redeemed. In fact, Jesus' invites us to see our lives as a

meaningful part of a much bigger new story! One that stretches from the beginning of time and in God's will is being worked out to the end of it. A story God himself continues to write through our lives. To be apart of that, we all must be careful to submit our stories to the author of all life.

## **GOD'S GREAT STORY**

Therefore, we are to understand our stories within God's good plan for creation. Now that we're redeemed from sin's curse, our greatest failure would be to somehow misunderstand what God has been intending to do through us from the beginning. Fortunately, Matthew 6:33 lays out the clearest goal for us as God's new Kingdom people: "To be those who seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be added to you". He asks us to seek first Jesus as the King, and desire that he would have dominion in every place that we live, work and enjoy. A pretty clear promise, isn't it? Live our individual lives as partners together with God's wider vision for creation first and then everything you need as you follow him, will be added to you.



# VISION: The Vision Triangle

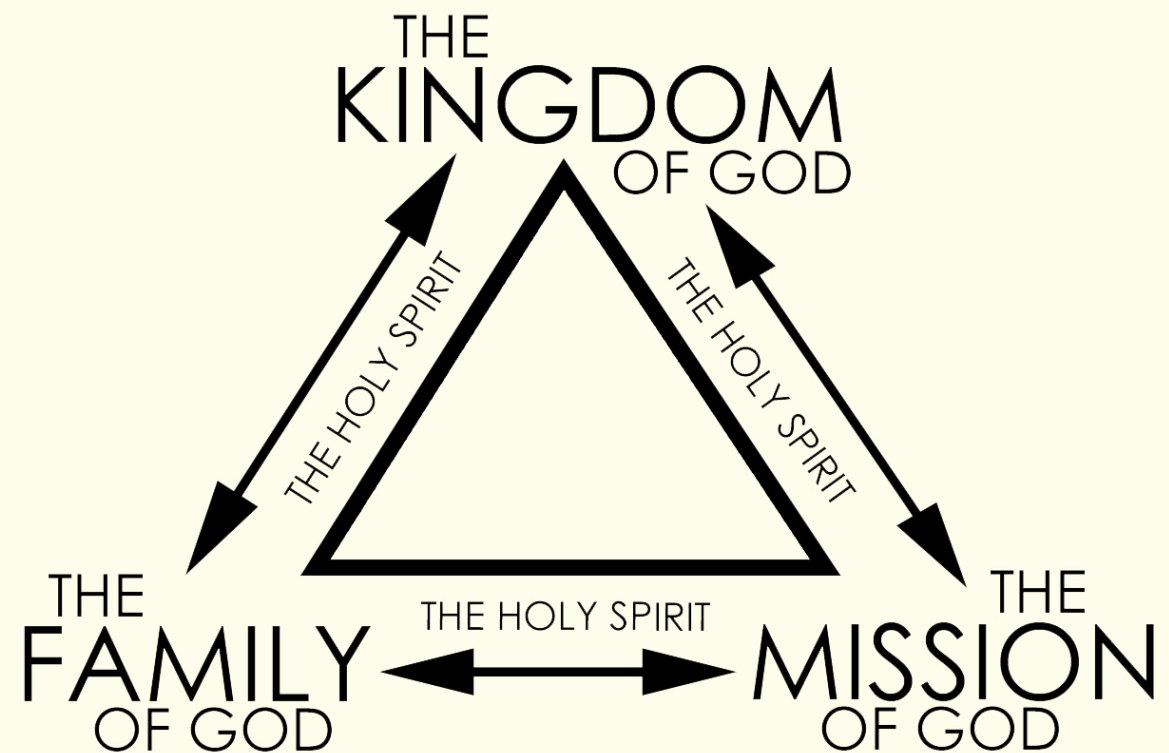
## KINGDOM, FAMILY & MISSION

With this in mind, we believe that the building blocks of our spiritual lives can be expressed through each of us working to maintain three clear priorities in our lives. The priority of the **Kingdom of God**, the priority of the **Family of God** and the priority of the **Mission of God**. They could be expressed by saying that I will honor God as the King over all, I will live as a member in this new family that God has given me, and I will work as a partner with the great mission of God in this world.

In our lives, all three areas function as interdependent pieces that are joined together through the work of the Spirit. By the Spirit you have become a child of the King, a brother or sister in God's family and you work as an ambassador of his Kingdom. These three identities are held in tension together and they help explain and define one another. To help us picture this we use a triangle (see diagram).

Therefore, if you are working from the top down on the diagram, we believe that the Kingdom of God is most evident when God's Family and God's Mission are joined together. Hence our mission statement at Grace is to be "A Family on a Mission" because: we are people seeking the Kingdom of

God! The more that Family and Mission are intertwined in our lives, the truer the representation of God's Kingdom you have. Accordingly, the less these two work together, the less ideal the representation of God's Kingdom work will be.

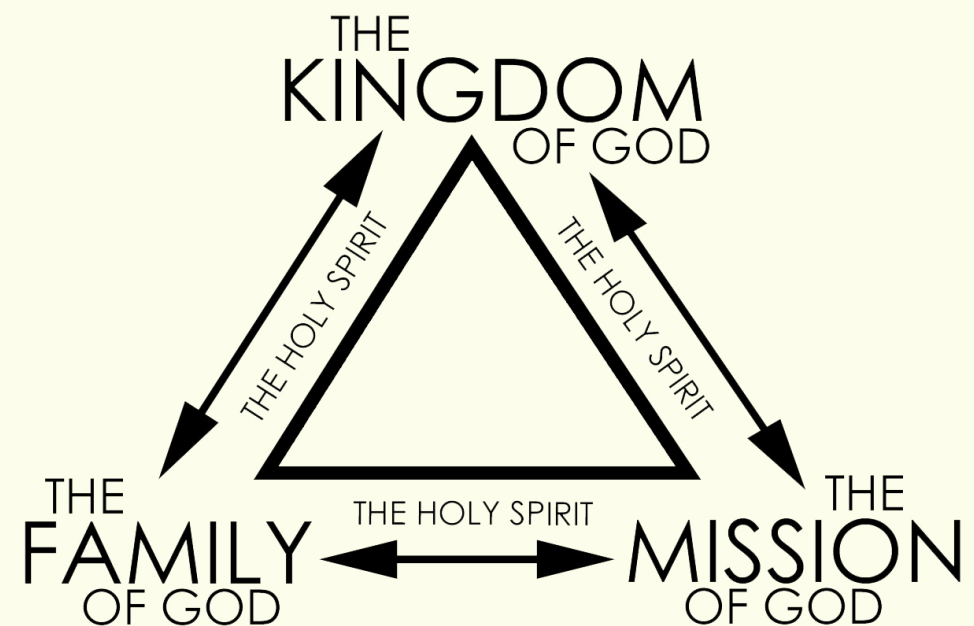


# VISION: The Vision Triangle

At the top of the triangle, the first priority is **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. This means that as Christians we choose to view our lives and the world around us through the narrative of God's story. More specifically, we view our lives through the story that Jesus came, died and rose to save creation from its bondage to sin and in its place institute a new order of government: The Kingdom of God. This means that though we live in this world, we are not citizens of it, we are people of the Kingdom, called to participate in, witness to and work towards the Kingdom being established. As Jesus taught us to pray, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". The implications are life-altering. It means that we will surely lose this world but we will gain Jesus!

At the bottom left, the second priority is **THE FAMILY OF GOD**. This means that as Christians we choose to view ourselves through our new identity as God's children and God's family. We no longer regard ourselves or our new family according to our past failures or reputation. In fact, "if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17)! No longer do we live for ourselves, but for the family and community around us.

At the bottom right, the third priority is **THE MISSION OF GOD**. This means that as Christians we choose to view our entire life's purpose through the lens of God's mission to the world through Jesus. We believe that we are each called to participate in demonstrating and practicing the way Jesus in our neighbourhoods. We have found that while it requires courage, we are uniquely positioned to truly love without thought of cost, serve without need for recognition, accept those who are not accepted and speak confidently to those who have not heard. We live to generously and joyfully express the goodness of Jesus to the whole world.



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VISION & VALUES: PART TWO

# VALUES: What Defines Us

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# VALUES: What Defines Us

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## WHAT WE VALUE:

In light of that big picture, what values emerge from having those three priorities of Kingdom, Family and Mission? We have chosen to elevate five intentional values: A Transforming Life, Loving Family, Radical Faith, Joyful Service & Relational Mission. These are the targets we are aiming at as a community. They are inclusive values, in that they are for everyone, not just the leaders. Each of these can be read as, "We value \_\_\_\_". And our goal is that everyone would be disciplined, find belonging, pursue God's promises, live for each other and encounter Jesus.

### 1. A TRANSFORMING LIFE: *Everyone Being Discipled*

We believe everyone is called into a life of discipleship following Jesus. Following Jesus is all about learning to hear the voice of God and obeying. So we create places of intentional relationship like Missional Communities and Discipleship Huddles so you'll be invited and challenged into new patterns of believing that lead to inner transformation. On Sundays we practice our discipleship as a family, coming ready to worship together and use the gifts we have cultivated to encourage and build each other up.

### 2. LOVING FAMILY: *Everyone Finding Belonging*

We believe everyone is called to find their true identity in Jesus. At Grace, we live for people to experience genuine family, where everyone finds true belonging and tangible love. Because God's our Father, and we're his beloved children, we practice relationships that are built on vulnerability, courage, and telling the truth. We gather every week as a family to live out celebrating, connecting and giving together.

### 3. RADICAL FAITH: *Everyone Pursuing His Promises*

We believe everyone is called to daily walk of faith in Jesus. We exist to empower and encourage every person to walk by faith in Jesus. By faith, you were made to daily receive God's abundant provision and power. We practice this radical trust, as we assert God's word above our fears, above the way situations may appear and above every power that opposes the kingdom of God. We want to walk by faith not just sight.

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# VALUES: What Defines Us

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## **4. JOYFUL SERVICE: Everyone Living For Each Other**

We believe everyone is called to humbly serve like Jesus. At Grace, we believe our highest calling is to go to the lowest place. Living our life for the sake of others is at the centre of the cross-formed life and is our greatest source of joy. We practice this by living in a community marked by generous giving, thoughtful care and shared responsibility. We also work to pioneer and partner with creative initiatives that serve our region.

## **5. RELATIONAL MISSION: Everyone Encountering Jesus**

We believe everyone is called to demonstrate the good news of Jesus. Our conviction is simple: Jesus wants to uniquely live his life through you. A life of discipleship, faith, family, and service that overflows with the good news that Jesus is alive and He saves. We practice that new way of living by recognizing that God has purposefully planted us in specific neighbourhoods and workplaces. We live for others to encounter the love of Jesus.

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**THANK YOU**, for taking the time to learn more about Grace! We hope that this has been a helpful tool for you to learn more about what motivates us as a church family. ***We would love to connect with you and answer any questions you have about Grace or about God.***

God Bless you and keep you!

**- Grace Leadership Team -**