

RESTORATIONCHURCH

STATEMENTS OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE...

- In the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Bible as the final authority for all matters of faith and conduct; in one God, eternally existing and revealing Himself to us in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinguishable, but indivisible;
- In the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, that He is true God and true man, His sinless life, and His atoning death on the cross which He obtained for us and eternal redemption;
- In the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His appearance to many after His death, in His ascension into heaven, in His present life as our high priest and advocate, in His future second coming, and in His millennial rule;
- In the total sinfulness of mankind for which we deserve everlasting punishment, and thus in the necessity for regeneration and salvation of sinners by grace, that all must acknowledge and repent of their sin and have faith in the perfect and complete work of Christ on the cross as the only means of salvation;
- In the work of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation to give a new heart to know and obey the Lord;
- In the baptism in the Holy Spirit after salvation as an endowment of power and supernatural gifts for the equipping of His Church;
- In the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as manifested in Scripture and in the ability of God to minister divine healing in its varied aspects as practiced in the Early Church;
- That God has called His people to love Him with their whole heart and live as servants of the Holy Lord;
- That there is one church made up of believers who serve God through the local church around the world. These local churches should be under the sovereign headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, exercising autonomous government under him, administering all their local affairs and ministries for the spreading of the Gospel;
- That we are called to be a people belonging to one another as the Body of Christ, that our citizenship is in heaven, and that one day we shall be joined to our Savior and made to be like Him as our final reward as sons and daughters of God, to live with Him for all eternity;
- That the Lord Jesus Christ will return visibly and bodily at the end of the age, and His glorious return will be accompanied by the resurrection of the redeemed to eternal life, the resurrection of the unregenerate to eternal punishment, and the renewal of the heavens and the earth;
- In the practice of water baptism; sharing of Communion or the Lord's Supper as a covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus and with one another in the Body of Christ; laying on of hands; and fasting.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.RESTCHURCH.COM

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STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

This much is clear: Our journeys to Jesus and His salvation have a similar beginning. We are all born into sin and we cannot and should not try to “get ourselves together” before we come to Christ. This includes the area of our sexuality, which is becoming more confusing than ever before. You don't have to find Jesus, He is looking for you as One looks for a lost son or daughter. Let Him find you! Fall into His arms. His love is fierce and trustworthy. Let Him redeem, restore, and define you. We bring our self, our sin, our pain, confidence, preferences, and ideals to Him, and He begins the process of transformation. Our journeys are the same: while we didn't want God, He reached for us and saved us. He is our King and Creator, whose desire is that we experience the beauty, joy, and fullness of all that life in Him has to offer.

For those who identify as LGBTQ, we want you to experience the love of God and our love expressed in honor, compassion, respect, and safety. We deeply regret that throughout history, the Church at large, including our local church, has often participated in, been silent about, or purposefully ignored significant injustices against those who identify as LGBTQ. In any area where we, or our predecessors, have participated in such behavior, turned a blind eye, or failed to speak up on behalf of your safety, dignity, and justice, we ask for forgiveness. We seek to be a better example of God's love.

You are loved by the Lord. The pain, trauma, and injustices you've experienced matter to Him and to us. In both private and public conversations, we want to express the lovingkindness that God has for all people. Though we may disagree on what is best for individuals and society, those who identify as LGBTQ can and should rightly expect that you are important and valuable to us.

The Bible is an identity book. It tells us who God is, who we are, and what our purpose is. We believe that the God of the Bible is a good and loving Father who wants the very best for us - and He is that best! Two very important truths that we hold onto are the ideas of God loving us and us loving others. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.” (John 3:16-17) 1 John 4:7-8 says “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” We are to love, and not judge, one another.”

A Christian is one who has come into a living, active relationship with Jesus Christ. We have been saved by God's grace, which is His unearned love for us, and the power to transform us. We die to our old self and become alive in Christ (Rom 6:4) as a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). We have a new identity and are on a journey of becoming more and more like Him (2 Cor 3:18). Every person needs Jesus and needs to be transformed. Knowing and being known by God in Christ is the meaning of life.

God has been teaching us who He is, who we are, and what our role is, since the very beginning. The Old Testament contains the essential moral obligations God gave humanity, through the Jewish people, as a foundation to love God and love people. Jesus interpreted and clarified the teachings of the Old Testament, and His instruction went beyond our actions to the very posture of our hearts. We seek to ground our standards and view of humanity and sexuality in the nature of God, the teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the clarity of Scripture.

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God, who according to Scripture, is not a sexual being, revealed that He intentionally created humanity “in His image, in the image of God He created him: male and female He created them.” (Gen 1:27). The different, yet necessary and complementary natures of masculinity and femininity were necessary to reveal something about the nature of God.

Though men’s and women’s bodies are highly similar in various biological systems (nervous, circulatory, digestive, etc.), men and women are different. Every cell in the body contains either a male or female chromosome set. Every system of the male and female body functions perfectly and effectively independent of the other--except our reproductive systems. Gender is derived from the root “gen”, as are words like “generate” and “genitals.” Male and female are designed in such a way that future generations depend on how our bodies complement each other. Therefore, we do not look to our desires, attractions, experiences, or inner-self to find identity as male or female. The starting point for individual identity is each person’s biology.

Every definition that is added to human identity are variants, responses, or reactions to the two sexes. To articulate reality in other ways does not change this fundamental truth. Subjective viewpoints on gender fracture our ability to connect and communicate with one another, and distort how we socialize our children. We believe that God knew exactly what He was doing when He designed and created our sexuality and called it good.

We seek to live in full agreement with His original design while advocating for respectful and excellent medical and emotional healthcare as appropriate for the very small fraction of people born with disorders of sexual development, including intersex anomalies.

God loves the human body. Not only did He design us as male or female, He also sent His Son to be flesh and blood as a human with a physical body. God cherishes physical bodies enough that He would reveal Himself through one. The believer’s body is a temple for the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), who brings healing, instruction, and communion with God. “The body is . . . for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Cor 6:13). Through the incarnation (when God in Christ became flesh and blood) and through the Resurrection, Jesus has redeemed our body, soul, and spirit as an integrated whole that enables us to know God, others, and ourselves, and ultimately to reveal and glorify Him.

Sex and sin are not synonymous. God made us sexual being before sin was a factor and called it “very good” (Gen 1:31). He has given us boundaries about how to express ourselves sexually. The Bible consistently addresses the complexity of our sexuality as a result of our sin. God knows that the development of our sexuality is dependent on our family, community, and culture. Human sexuality has few natural limitations: one may act sexually with anyone or anything and in any setting if we are not socialized about what is healthy and expected. Therefore, God has taught us His values.

As a model for all humanity, God taught Israel the proper and healthy expression of sex. Just as with any other pleasure in life, like rest, work, eating, etc., sex can be wonderful or destructive. He had to teach Israel that sex with one’s parents or with children wasn’t acceptable, nor was sex with someone else’s spouse, sex with the same gender, sex for sale, sex in ritual worship, sex outside of marriage, sex with animals, sex in a group, and forcing sex on another. All were unacceptable to God no matter how tempting or desirable. Some of these may seem like common sense, but they are all values we have learned. Humans didn’t invent these guidelines in an evolutionary process or by imagining their ideal experience; rather they came from divine revelation. God taught us how to treat one another and how to steward the gift of sex to create healthy people and societies.

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The refusal to acknowledge and honor God leads to disconnection from reality and truth. The lie that He doesn't exist, can't be known, has no rightful demands on us, and/or that we are not accountable to God creates a web of untruth in society as we invent new meanings for life and vie for power and pleasure. Our thoughts, emotions, and wills become distorted and unreliable guides in such a way that we worship created things rather than worshiping the Creator (Rom 1:25)

God deeply values freedom because it is part of being made in His image and is necessary to truly love and become Christ-like. Worshiping things other than God eventually leads to lust - which is the enshrinement of desire as the focus of life - and it is idolatry. Eventually, lust enslaves people as they define themselves predominantly by their desires rather than God's heart and purpose. He will allow individuals and societies to stubbornly experience sin's damaging effects - even to the point where it distorts their humanity (Rom 1:24).

The multitude of possible gender identities and the normalization of same-sex sexual behavior points to a society that has abandoned the desire to accurately define and socialize humanity as a reflection of the image of God. When this point is reached, society has suppressed and distorted something built into the fabric of creation, and this is not healthy (Rom 1:21-23).

Jesus teaches His followers a sexual ethic that is fundamentally different from secular society. He teaches that we are more than our desires, questionings, or attractions. In Matthew 19:4-6, He reaffirms the Genesis 1 view of sex, gender, and marriage.

And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no person is to separate.

Twice Jesus added "two" to His quote of Genesis 2:24, emphasizing the truth that marriage was always intended to be a lifetime covenant between one man and one woman, and the only context in which sexual behavior is blessed. The only other path that Jesus advocated was to remain single and celibate (Matt 19:10-12). Jesus believed this to be a calling, knowing that most would marry. The Apostle Paul also addresses this in 1 Corinthians 7.

Jesus then takes it a step further with His followers. He teaches them and expects them to not cultivate lust (Matt 5:28), that is, to treat themselves and others as less than human or as mere objects of sexual gratification. We monetize and normalize lust; He forbade it. Desire is normal and healthy; lust is self-medicating and destructive. Lust's manifestations - human trafficking, porn, the "hook-up" culture, and more - destroy respect, intimacy, and bonding. Lust sees other people as something to be collected, possessed, consumed, and then discarded. Jesus is creating a "peculiar people" (1 Pet 2:9) who resist sexualizing each other. A people who protect each other; where sex is a part of life, not the meaning or center of it.

We acknowledge that we at Restoration Church, and the greater global Church, have often failed to live up to this standard by following the heart and teaching of Jesus in creating safe and noble communities. The Church has often behaved hypocritically, or acted as though none of us fail or struggle in these areas, and we seek forgiveness and grace to grow and embrace the standard Christ has called us to.

Jesus consistently saw the beauty and worth in people, regardless of how society, religious elites, and influencers perceived them. His words instilled an awareness of personal dignity and self-worth that caused people to marvel over who God is and who they were to Him. He modeled perfect love and unflinching truth. He had people in process around Him, and wasn't intimidated by their histories or ongoing struggles. He never required people to have it all together in order to follow Him, and He knew that His followers would take time to grow and become more like Him along the way. His grace is transformative; sometimes working all at

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once, and other times step-by-step.

Some people experience same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria, including some in our church community, not because they were “born that way”, but because they were born human into a fallen world, and because society has disrupted and confused how we teach children who they are. But human beings are more than their socialization and desires. As we are learning and living Jesus’ sexual ethic, we may stumble, but we do not reach for shame, punishment, or self-condemnation. Instead, we reach for grace because He is faithful and experienced temptation just as we do (Heb 4:15). In all areas of life, we are on a journey towards freedom, hope, and peace.

We trade in our old labels and identities, and joyfully receive a new identity as His sons or daughters (John 1:12).

We believe that God designed us with a free will and deeply values our ability to respond to His invitation. Jesus never forced people to follow Him or punished them into change, but invited them to enter into a new way of life. As His followers, we are called to treat all people in the same way, with the utmost respect, dignity, compassion, and love, even while adamantly disagreeing with them. We therefore reject any and all forms of physical violence, force, manipulation, shame, or humiliation used in any kind of therapy as ineffective and abusive. These are remnants of what the Bible condemns as “self-made religion . . . and severity to the body,” yet they “are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh,” (Col 2:23).

Instead, we listen. We ask questions. We share our stories. We love each other. We embrace freedom and voluntary growth. We create an environment of authenticity and grace where all people can pursue and receive the freedom that Jesus died to give us. We strongly advocate for safe and fair access to resources that will assist people in their personal journeys as they navigate their self-understanding. This includes religious and secular counseling, Biblical teaching, loving parents and guardians who are empowered to have meaningful conversation and influence, wise teachers, role models and mentors, respectful intellectual conversation, and healthy communities where all individuals can find safe places to discuss these sacred issues of faith, identity, human sexuality, and culture. Everyone is on their own journey to healing and wholeness, and we do not discount anyone’s journey.

As we at Restoration Church seek to be a family focused on restored, healed, and empowered lives. We recognize that it is His power at work in us that is enabling us to experience something of His Kingdom on earth. We serve a God for whom nothing is impossible and whose power draws us into His wonderful righteousness. God loves and accepts all people as they are when they come to Him. He invites them to experience the wonder of His Kingdom and the extravagance of His transformative love. We mustn’t hold onto our fallen and unredeemed identity when God is offering more than we could ever ask for or imagine - even redemption of our sexuality according to His Word.