

What It Means to Belong at Calvary

Part 2 (Self Study)

What We Believe (Core Beliefs) / What We Value (Core Values)
What We Value (Core Values) / Evidences of a Christ Follower
Share My Story / What's Next?

NAME

DATE

Calvary's

10 Core Beliefs

The following represent a simplified form of the basis for our teaching and Christian life at Calvary.

The bold sentences point out beliefs which may differ with other churches and denominations. In short, these describe our "world-view".

You may wish to check out many of the Bible verses listed, but make sure you read the ones which call for an answer.

01 The Bible. We believe the Bible is God's complete and accurate Word to us and has the right to command our lives. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:21; Matthew 5:18)

○ This means...

the Bible is ALL TRUE!

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. How much of the Bible is worthwhile to us?

A: _____.

How should the Bible impact my life today?

A: _____.

02 God. We believe there is one infinite, eternal, true God who created all things and exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 5:3,4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6)

03 Jesus Christ. We believe Jesus Christ is both God and man, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He died on the cross as a perfect blood sacrifice for our sins. He arose bodily from the grave, ascended into heaven, and is now our high priest and advocate. (2 Corinthians 5:21; John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1)

04 Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit as a divine Person points people to Jesus Christ. He convicts of sin and changes the life of the believing sinner. He comforts, takes up residence in, guides, instructs and powers the believer for godly living, worship and service. (John 14:16, 17; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9)

05 Man. We believe man was originally created in the image of God but fell into sin and lost all spiritual life. This spiritual death is passed on to all mankind, except the man Jesus Christ. Only through a new birth by the Holy Spirit can salvation and life be gained. Subsequently, every believer can approach God personally with no mediator other than Jesus Christ Himself. (Genesis 1:26; 2:17; Romans 3:23, 5:12-19; 8:6, 7; Ephesians 2:1-3)

○ This means every believer in Jesus Christ can approach God PERSONALLY. No PRIEST OR PASTOR can claim to be the link between another man and God.

Here at Calvary there is no “hierarchy” or “chain of communication” that puts the “clergy” (the pastors) on a different level than the “laity” (the ordinary folks). In fact, we don’t especially like the title “Reverend” as that seems to suggest such levels of connection to God.

Read 1 Peter 2:9 (it’s one of those small books near the end of the Bible). What identity do you have if you are a follower of Jesus?

A: _____.

Did you know you are a priest? What do you think it means to be “a royal priesthood”? What is it that priests do?

A: _____.

Look up 1 Timothy 2:5-6. According to these verses who is the only person who stands between you and God the Father?

A: _____.

06 Salvation. We believe no one can be at peace with God except through the blood of Jesus Christ who died as our substitute. That salvation is received as a gift through faith alone. The moment we put our confidence in Jesus Christ as Forgiver and Leader we pass from death into everlasting life and become children of God forever. (*John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Romans 5:6-9*)

○ This means there is only ONE WAY to heaven. This also means a Christian will always be in the family of God. (Some call this “ETERNAL SECURITY.” Others might use the phrase “ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED”.)

Read John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. How many ways are there to God?

A: _____.

What is it?

A: _____.

Read John 10:27-29. When we become God's sheep (Christians), how long does God keep us in his hands?

A: _____.

Read Romans 8:35-39. What kinds of things can actually get us separated from the love that God has for his children?

A: _____.

07 Church. We believe the universal Church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ. The local church is a group of believers who regularly meet for worship and ministry. The Ruler over the local church is Jesus Christ Himself. The local church is commanded to practice two special symbols, believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper, neither of which brings salvation, but both of which are evidences of obedience and community with the Lord. The Church and the secular government should be separate. (*Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:23-47; Ephesians 1:22; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30; Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:29*)

○ This means "higher" body exercises authority or "is the boss" (other than Jesus) over CALVARY CHURCH or any local church.

○ This means the CHURCH and the GOVERNMENT have their own areas of responsibility.

Check out Matthew 16:16-18. If there was a problem in the church, who made the final decision about getting it solved?

A: _____.

Read Matthew 22:21 and Acts 5:29. When should we obey the government?

A: _____.

What if the rules of the government and God conflict?

A: _____.

08 Outreach. We believe our purpose is to preach the gospel of salvation by faith and thereby reach the vast number of people who really are lost. No degree of human reformation or morality will bring salvation. (*Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 19:10; Acts 1:8*)

○ **Christ are truly LOST and we must do everything we can as a church to reach them before it's too late.**

09 Future. We believe there is a real heaven and a real hell. The souls of believers at death go immediately to be with Jesus Christ, their bodies waiting for the resurrection at His coming, commonly known as the rapture of the Church. The souls of unbelievers at death are separated from God, awaiting the raising of their bodies when at the final judgment they will be sent into everlasting punishment. Jesus Christ will come in person to introduce His kingdom on earth for the millennium. Then will come the new heaven and the new earth forever. (*Luke 16:19-26; 2 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:1-15*)

○ **This means that Jesus Christ is coming back for HIS CHILDREN!**

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. What is the next big event in history that we as Christ-followers should be looking for (see v. 16)?

A: _____.

When we as Christians face death, why should we not grieve?

A: _____.

10 Christian Life. We believe the child of God is not to have the attitudes and behaviors that characterize this world. As disciples we are to grow in our obedience to Jesus Christ. We are to show compassion to those in need and recognize that what we own belongs to God. (*1 Peter 1:16; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 5:15-17; James 2:14-17; Psalm 82:3-4; 1 Timothy 6:17-19*)

○ **This means our standard of holiness is GOD, His WORD, and not MAN-MADE RULES.**

What are some of the rules of behavior you have for a person who calls himself a Christian?

A: _____.

What on your list are directly from God's Word (absolutes), and which are more likely man-made rules (preferences)?

A: _____.

Calvary's

7 Core Values

These values reflect the culture we wish to have at Calvary.

These comprise the grid through which all decisions about our ministries must pass.

Though some may not be Biblical absolutes, they clarify the attitudes and approaches we take in accomplishing our purpose.

01 Outreach. Investing in relationships with unbelievers, loving them without an agenda, and introducing them to Christ (*Luke 5:27-32; Acts 1:6-8*).

Check out Luke 5:27-32; 19:10. Whom was Jesus interested in?

A: _____.

Read Acts 1:6-8. And whom should we be interested in?

A: _____.

Who do you think “lost people” are?

A: _____.

Do you know any? Do they really matter to you?

A: _____.

Also check out Luke 15 and Matthew 18:4.

02 Worship. Giving God glory in my heart and life through worship as an individual and as a part of a church (*Psalms 100; Isaiah 6:1-8*).

Read and consider the response of the Psalmist in Psalm 100.

What was Isaiah’s reaction to the presence of God in Isaiah 6: 1-8?

A: _____

03 Community. Sharing our lives together as believers, to encourage, sharpen and bear each other’s burdens (*Acts 4:32-35, 42-47; Ephesians 4:1-32*).

Read the fascinating story in Luke 5:17-26. Who brought this guy to Jesus?

A: _____.

Whose faith was the basis for the spiritual and physical healing? (v. 20).

A: _____.

04 Instruction. Making God’s Word a priority in my life where I learn, understand, and apply it to each area of my life (*Psalms 119:9-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*).

How important was God’s Word to the Psalmist in Psalm 119:9-16?

A: _____.

What did Paul say about the role of scripture in our lives? Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

A: _____.

05 Prayer. Showing my dependence on God by spending time in prayer with praise, thanksgiving, confession, and requests (*Matthew 6:5-15; Philippians 4:4-7*).

What did Jesus teach about prayer in Matthew 6:5-15?

A: _____

_____.

How are prayer and anxiety related? Check out Philippians 4:4-7.

A: _____

_____.

Is prayer always asking for things? What else is it?

A: _____

_____.

06 Service. Displaying a willingness to use my gifts to serve the body of Christ with humility and passion (*Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31*).

Read Ephesians 4:11-13. Is it the job of the staff to pull off “church stuff”?

A: _____.

Whose job is it?

A: _____.

Also read Romans 12:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31.
Where do you think you fit?

A: _____

_____.

07 Stewardship. Understanding everything I have is from God and using my time, talent, and treasure for His mission (*Matthew 6:19-34; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15*).

Who actually owns it all?

A: _____.

What should we do with our stuff? Matthew 6:19-34

A: _____.

What attitude should we have about what we have? 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

A: _____

_____.

Evidences of a Christ Follower

The real evidences that we follow Jesus are these character issues. They are also known as the fruit of the Spirit (as found in Galatians 5:22-23) plus humility and hope.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”
(Galatians 5:22-24)

Fill the circle where you think you are:

Love. I unconditionally love others.

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His only son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.” (1 John 4:10-12)

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

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (John 15:11)

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

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Patience. I am patient with others.

“A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.” (Proverbs 14:29)

Kindness/Goodness. I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

“Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.” (1 Thessalonians 5:15)



Faithfulness. I am faithful to fulfill God’s will for my life.

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.” (Proverbs 3:3-4)



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

“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” (Philippians 4:5)



Self-Control. I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

“So, then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and selfcontrolled.” (1 Thessalonians 5:6)



Humility. I choose to esteem others above myself.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)



Hope. I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.” (Hebrews 6:17-20)



Prepare My Story

We want you to write down a brief account of what God has done in your life and send it to us.

Here are some tips for writing your story:

Tip 01: Be Clear and simple.

Your story should clearly explain exactly what you did to cross over the line of faith and accept Jesus as your Forgiver and Leader.

Tip 02: Pick a theme.

Describe a central issue in your life, an “open nerve” that shows the contrast in your spiritual outlook before and after knowing Christ. What was missing in your life? (You could say: “I was very lonely... My life was spiraling out of control... My life was empty... I met a friend who had something special I didn’t have who shared with me about Jesus...”)

Tip 03: Pick a verse.

Quote a key verse that really opened your eyes and touched your heart (if there was one.) God’s word is powerful and He will use it to touch others.

Tip 04: Be brief and to the point.

You should be able to tell your story in 3-4 minutes or less (if possible, no more than 500 words, or one page, type written, single-spaced).

Divide your faith story (or testimony) into three sections:

01: Before Christ (BC)

02: Conversion

03: After Christ (AD)

As you thoughtfully prepare your story, there are two questions related to each section:

01: Before Christ (BC)

1. Where were you spiritually before receiving Christ and how did that affect you (your feelings, attitudes, actions, and relationships?) Make sure to keep this part brief with no gory details. (If you became a Christian as a child, you could start directly with question #2.)
2. What caused you to begin considering God/Christ as a solution to your needs?

02: Conversion

1. What realization did you come to that finally motivated you to receive Christ (was there a Bible verse or conviction that brought you to your needs? Did someone share with you? What did they say that really touched you?)
2. Specifically, how did you receive Christ as your Forgiver and Leader (what did you do, what did you pray?)

03: After Christ (AD)

1. How did your life begin to change after you trusted Christ? (If you became a Christian as a child, answer questions #1 and 32 in this section by contrasting your life to what it might have been like without Christ.)
2. What other benefits have you experienced since becoming a Christian?

Final Steps

01. Complete the “What we believe” study.

02. Complete the “What we value” study.

03. Fill out the “Evidences of a Christ Follower” personal assessment.

04. Write your story (see the page with suggested “tips”).

05. When you are ready, send an email to Gina Green at gina@calvaryonline.org or call us at 563.263.3367. We will arrange a chance for you to review your story with a leadership board member or staff member and act on your membership.



Calvary Church is located at 501 W. Bypass 61, Muscatine, Iowa. Phone: 563-263-3367
2014