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New Disciple's Orientation Class

I. Christian Discipleship

A disciple is a follower or student of a particular teacher. A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who accepts His as their teacher, obey His teachings, lives in alignment with in His teachings, and who strives to emulate His examples of love, compassion, humility, and service to others. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a lifelong journey of learning, growing in faith, and becoming more like Him in character and action.

34 *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* **John 13:34-35**

Jesus' Charge To His Disciples

16 *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."*
Matthew 28:16-20 NKJV

Jesus charged His disciples to "go and make disciples." Those who are distinguished by their love for one another are charged to go and make disciples of all nations. The passage called the "Great Commission" was among Jesus' last instructions to His disciples. As His disciples grow spiritually we make disciples as we deepen our relationship with God, demonstrate our love for others, and share what God has done for us.

Think about it:

What is the first responsibility of a disciple of Jesus Christ?

How does the command to make disciples reflect Jesus' vision for spreading the Gospel?

What are some practical ways that modern-day Christians can actively engage in discipleship within their community?

II. Understanding Salvation God's Gift

Salvation is a condition of being delivered from sin and its consequences through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is a place (*positional sanctification*) where believers experience freedom from the penalty of sin, liberation from the power of sin, and deliverance from the presence of sin.

Scriptures:

Romans 10:9-10 (NIV): *9 "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."*

This passage emphasizes being free from the penalty of sin.

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV): *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

This verse illustrates the ongoing process (*progressive sanctification*) of being liberated from the power of sin through the message of the cross.

Revelation 21:4 (NIV): *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* This passage points towards the ultimate fulfillment of salvation (*glorification*) where believers are delivered from the presence of sin.

Salvation is a gift from God which is available to all humanity. Salvation cannot be earned through good works or human effort; it is available only because of God's love, mercy and grace. Grace, the unmerited favor and kindness of God, is extended to all despite our unworthiness.

Scripture:

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:4-10 NKJV

We are saved by grace through our faith in Jesus Christ. We believe (*by faith*) that He died for our sins and was raised from the dead by the power of God. Faith is the key that unlocks the door to receiving the gift of salvation. By trusting in God’s plan, we enter into a personal relationship with God and experience forgiveness of sins and eternal (new) life.

God’s Promise

The Bible offers a clear declaration of God’s love and promise of salvation to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

Scripture:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:16-18 NKJV

These verses provide a powerful reminder of the sacrificial love that God has for all people. It assures us that through faith in Jesus Christ, we can experience the gift of new life. This not only highlights God's immense love but also His desire for a personal relationship with each individual offering redemption and hope for all who believe in Him.

God’s Power

God's power to regenerate is a miraculous work that brings about spiritual rebirth (new life) in individuals.

Scripture:

1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:1-7 NKJV

Through God's power spiritual life is given. It is the power that raised Jesus from death, and it is the power that gives us new life in Christ. The process of regeneration is not based on human effort (*discipline*) or merit (*intelligence*) but is solely a result of God's grace and sovereignty. It is a profound demonstration of God's power to give a new spiritual presence to those who believe in Him.

God's Person

We believe in what is called the “hypostatic union”, which refers to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. We believe that in the person of Jesus, there were two distinct natures, divine and human, united without mixture, confusion, separation, or division. We affirm that Jesus is the Son of God and also the Son of Man, embodying both the divine and human nature in perfect unity.

Scripture:

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

Colossians 2:8-10 NKJV

We hold firmly to the belief that in Jesus Christ God was fully manifested bodily. Jesus embodied the perfect union of divinity and humanity.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

In Jesus Christ, we received the revelation of God's love, grace, compassion, power and purpose, offering salvation, redemption, and restoration.

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14: 6 NKJV

III. Introduction to the Baptist Church A Brief History of the Baptist Church

Denominations are man made separations based on polity and practices. We happened to be Baptist so let's know something about what that means.

The Baptist Church traces its roots back to the 17th century when it emerged as a part of the larger Protestant Reformation movement. Baptists emphasize the belief in individual freedom of conscience, the authority of the Bible, and the practice of believer's baptism by immersion. Baptists uphold the principle of the separation of church and state, stressing the autonomy of each local congregation. Baptists prioritize evangelism, missions, and personal conversion experiences, viewing them as central to the Christian faith.

The Black Baptist Church follows the same doctrinal traditions. The birth of the Black Church in America dates back to the early 18th century when enslaved Africans and free Blacks sought spiritual solace and community during their struggles. The First African Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia, founded in 1773, is often recognized as one of the earliest Black Baptist congregations. During the antebellum period, Black churches provided not only a space for worship but also served as centers for education, social justice, and resistance against slavery.

Baptist Conventions, which are made up of local churches from across the country and around the world have expanded over time. The Baptist World Convention includes independent Baptist churches from around the world. Every two years Baptist World Convention convenes a gathering of Baptist Church from every nation.

National conventions include; Southern Baptist, American Baptist, National Baptist Convention USA Incorporated, the Progressive Baptist Convention, Reformed Baptist, Primitive Baptist, as well as other Independent Baptist churches, each with its unique traditions and practices united by the core Baptist beliefs.

Baptist Doctrine In Common:

Soul Freedom: Baptists believe in the autonomy of the individual soul before God, stressing the freedom of personal religious convictions without interference from any ecclesiastical or governmental authority. (***Galatians 5:1***).

Believer's Baptism: Baptists practice believer's baptism, which means they baptize individuals who are old enough to make a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ, rejecting infant baptism. (***Romans 6:4***).

Priesthood of All Believers: Baptists emphasize the idea that all believers have direct access to God and are called to be "a royal priesthood," allowing for a decentralized church structure and individual interpretation of the Bible. (***Hebrews 4:16, 1 Peter 2:9***)

Congregational Governance: Baptists adhere to the belief in local church autonomy, where each congregation is self-governing and makes decisions independently without hierarchical authority from a denomination or higher church entity.

Perseverance of The Saints: The perseverance of the saints, also called eternal security, refers to the belief that those who are truly saved by God will persevere in their faith and never fall away. (***John 10:28-29***).

Two Ordinances: Baptism and The Lord's Supper

Baptism

Baptism holds great significance in the Baptist Church for a new disciple. It is a vital step of obedience and faith symbolizing the disciple's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Baptist tradition water baptism is not mandatory for salvation.

Through baptism, we publicly declare our faith and commitment to following Christ. Baptism is seen as a powerful act of symbolic spiritual cleansing and rebirth, signifying the forgiveness of sins and the beginning of a new life in Christ. It is also a means of joining the community of believers, symbolizing unity with other Christians in the body of Christ. Ultimately, baptism serves as a profound expression of one's personal relationship with God and a public testimony to God's grace and salvation in the believer's life.

The Lord's Supper

This ordinance is a celebration of the new covenant established through the sacrifice (blood) of Jesus. Baptists believe in partaking of the bread and wine (or grape juice) in remembrance of Jesus' body broken and His life given for the redemption of sins.

The bread represents Jesus' physical body which was broken (*severely abused*) the punishment for sin on behalf of believers. His death on the cross was *substitutionary*, meaning He died in the place of every human being, releasing us from the death penalty. Similarly, the cup (*filled with wine or grape juice*) symbolizes Jesus' life, which He poured out (*the price*) to establish the new covenant between God and humanity.

Partaking of these elements as often as we do celebrates and reflects on the profound love of God, the atoning work of Jesus, and the unity of believers in the body of Christ.

IV. Developing Spiritual Disciplines Building a Relationship with God

Developing spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, worship, fasting, giving, and service help us to align our hearts and minds with God's will, leading to spiritual growth and maturity.

By engaging regularly, we cultivate a deeper intimacy with God, strengthen our faith, and developing an awareness of His presence in our daily lives. Spiritual disciplines also enables believers to live out our faith in a way that honors God and impacts the world around us.

Establish a Routine: Setting aside dedicated time each day for spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible study help build habits that strengthen your relationship with God.

Accountability: Partnering with a fellow believer or joining a small group or ministry can provide accountability and encouragement in practicing spiritual disciplines consistently.

Giving: As a discipline is necessary for spiritual growth and faith development. How one gives is a good indicator of their trust in God and commitment to ministry.

Reflect and Adjust: Regularly reflect on your spiritual progress to assess what is working well and what needs improvement. Be open to adjusting your practices to better align with your spiritual goals.

V. Understanding the Core Values of the Union Baptist Church

Spiritual filled worship.

This core value emphasizes authenticity, spontaneity, and openness to the moving of the Spirit during times of worship. We seek to engage with God wholeheartedly, allowing the Spirit to guide, inspire, and transform the worship experience. The goal of spirit-filled worship is to encounter God in a meaningful and life-changing way, nurturing a deeper relationship with Him and glorifying Him through heartfelt, spirit-led worship.

Making and developing disciples.

Based on the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 to go and make disciples of all nations, we uphold this core value in our church by

emphasizing the importance of teaching, mentoring, and equipping believers to grow in their faith and share the Gospel with others.

Enhancing the quality of life for our community.

This core value is rooted in our mission to actively engage with and uplift the individuals and families in our community, demonstrating Christ's love through tangible acts of kindness, service, and support.

Developing leaders.

This core value highlights our commitment to identifying, equipping, and developing leaders within our church community, nurturing their gifts and talents to serve effectively and make a lasting impact for God's kingdom.

Conclusion:

As a member of Union Baptist Church, it is expected that you join us as we adhere to certain principles and responsibilities. You are expected to:

Grow Spiritually: Embrace opportunities for spiritual growth through prayer, studying the Scriptures, participating in small groups or discipleship programs, and seeking personal transformation in alignment with Jesus' teachings.

Worship Regularly: Attend and actively engage in church services, including Sunday worship, prayer meetings, and other gatherings to foster fellowship with the congregation and deepen your connection with God.

Serve Diligently: Volunteer your time, talents, and resources to serve the church community and participate in ministries that contribute to the well-being of others, such as outreach programs, pastoral care, or community service initiatives.

Give Consistently: Support the church financially by giving tithes and offerings as a means of sustaining the church's operations, supporting

mission work, and furthering the ministry's impact in the local community and beyond.

By committing to these expectations, you actively contribute to the spiritual growth, communal worship, service outreach, and financial stability of Union Baptist Church, maintaining a vibrant and supportive faith community for all members.

Q&A Session