

Bridgeway Church Covenant

The following commitment to covenant membership is not undertaken that we might gain God's favor, but because we already have it. We do not promise to fulfill these responsibilities in order that we might be forgiven or gain entrance into God's kingdom, but because through the finality and all-sufficiency of what Jesus Christ has accomplished on our behalf, we have already been forgiven and are already heirs of God's kingdom.

Many Christians live in an "if / then" relationship with God. *If* I do what is right, *then* God will love me. *If* I give extra money to missions, *then* God will provide me with a raise at work. *If* I avoid sinful habits, *then* I will be spared suffering and humiliation, etc. It's a *conditional* relationship that is based on the principle of *merit*. The gospel calls us to live in a "because / therefore" relationship with the Lord. *Because* we have been justified by faith in Christ, therefore we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). *Because* Christ died for us, therefore we are forgiven. *Because* Christ has fulfilled the law in our place, therefore we are set free from its demands and penalty, etc. This is an *unconditional* relationship that is based on the principle of *grace*. The difference between these two perspectives is the difference between *religion* ("if / then") and the *gospel* ("because / therefore"). The "religious" life is not the "gospel-centered" life.

No one should embrace the following covenant without a clear understanding of this truth. We are happy to commit ourselves in covenant one with another because God has already committed himself in covenant to us in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, the principles of this covenant are not a legalistic code by which we judge our worth or hope to gain God's approval. Rather these principles are an expression of our joyful recognition that our worth and approval in the sight of God are already rooted in Christ and established by his redemptive work on our behalf.

Therefore, as we seek to walk in obedience to the biblical obligations of this covenant, we understand and freely confess that it is only by the grace of God working in us that will empower us to fulfill our responsibility and delight as Christians. Apart from God's grace, all we can expect from ourselves is a life of failed attempts at righteousness, but in light of the gospel, and with the empowering grace of God by the Holy Spirit, we seek to walk in grace-motivated obedience while God works in us "both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

On those occasions when we fail to live up to the commitments we are about to make (and we *will* fail), we pray that God would grant us quick and unmistakable conviction of our sin and a repentant heart that turns from self-centered and idolatrous living to a robust confidence and joy in the truth of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, having been graciously enabled by the Holy Spirit to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves wholly to him, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with each other. By the grace of God at work within us, we promise:

- To submit to the Scriptures as the final authority on all issues of life and belief (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)
- To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 5:1-21; 1 Thess. 5:12-22)
- To faithfully participate in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-34)

- To submit to the Elders, Pastors, and other appointed leaders of the church, out of reverence to and in recognition of the loving authority of Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, and to diligently strive for unity and peace within the body (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5).
- To regularly contribute to the life of Bridgeway Church by attending weekly services, engaging in biblical community and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; Titus 3:14)
- To work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-6)
- To walk together in brotherly love, exercising affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, faithfully admonishing and entreating one another as occasion may require (Rom. 12:9-16; Heb. 10:24)
- To pay careful attention to the many “one-anothering” commands in the NT and by the grace of God apply ourselves to the fulfillment of each to the building up of the body of Christ (John 13:34; Rom. 12:10, 16; 14:13, 19; 15:7, 14; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:32; 5:21; Col. 3:9; 1 Thess. 4:18; James 5:16;
- To rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows (1 Cor. 12:26; Gal. 6:2; Col. 3:13)
- To seek, by God’s gracious help, to live righteously in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (Titus 2:11-14)
- To practice complete sexual purity until married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 6:15-20, 10:8; Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).
- To contribute cheerfully and generously to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations (2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 2:10; 3 John 5-8)
- We also promise that when we move from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.