



*"They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read." - Nehemiah 8:8*

## Covenantal Documents

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### Purpose

The Bible Seminary exists to glorify God by training Christian believers in a context of biblical community in all 66 books of the Bible so that they can serve the local church and fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit.

### Core Values

**Lordship** – Because He is Lord (Philippians 2:11), we will continually ask Jesus Christ to sit on the throne of the seminary and on the throne of the lives of its faculty, administrators, and students for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

**Bible** – Because the Bible is the fully true Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16), we will offer and require the study of all 66 books of the Bible before graduation with a degree. We will seek to creatively integrate classical theological disciplines and ministry training by studying books of the Bible (i.e. Church History will begin with the Book of Acts and keep going; Pastoral Leadership will come through the study of the Pastoral Epistles; Systematic Theology will flow out of the study of the Pauline Epistles)

**Prayer** – Because apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), we will continually seek to plug into the Vine Jesus Christ through yielding to Him in prayer. We will offer a unique emphasis on prayer including classes on prayer, a school of prayer, prayer faculty, and multiple prayer opportunities in the life of the seminary.

**Unreached Peoples** – Because the return of Christ awaits the evangelization of all people groups (Matthew 24:14), we will keep our eyes on the unreached peoples of the world and train our students to have a heart for the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) by seeking to reach millions of souls for Jesus Christ.

**Local Church** – Because the local church is God's plan (Matthew 16:18), we will be based in the local church and have a symbiotic relationship of service and training with local churches and parachurch ministries.

**Community** – Because we were created for community (Genesis 1:26; Romans 12:5). We will seek to build a campus-based fellowship where the "one anothers" of Scripture are lived out, where authenticity and accountability are practiced, and where integrity is modeled and taught.

**Compassion** – Because God has a huge heart for the poor and overlooked (Matthew 25:31-46), we will strive to motivate, equip, and train students to minister to "the least of these" as a lifestyle.

## Institutional Objectives

The Bible Seminary strives to provide a learning environment, faculty, staff, and support services that enable students and graduates to:

- Believe in Jesus Christ as **LORD** and trust Him on the throne of their lives for the glory of God.
- Believe the **BIBLE** is the fully true Word of God, and have integrated the study of all 66 books of the Bible with studies in classical theological disciplines and ministry training prior to graduating with a degree.
- Practice a life of **PRAYER**, continually seeking to plug into the Vine of Jesus Christ.
- Have a heart for the **UNREACHED PEOPLES** of the world and the fulfillment of the Great Commission through seeking to reach millions of souls for Christ.
- Have training and experience in the **LOCAL CHURCH** and have established key relationships with various local churches and parachurch ministries.
- Have experience in ministry and study amidst a **COMMUNITY** committed to authenticity and accountability, and where integrity is modeled and taught.
- Have **COMPASSION** for the poor and overlooked, and have received motivation, equipping, and training to minister to "the least of these" as a lifestyle.

## Doctrinal Statement

- **We believe in the inspiration and authority of Scripture** – The Bible is the only inspired Word of God, fully true, and our sole authority for all that we believe and do (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18). We hold to the inerrancy of Scripture, as outlined in the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.”
- **We believe in one God** – There is only one true God who exists eternally in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 14:9; Acts 5:3-4,9; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3, 1 John 5:7).
- **We believe in the deity and humanity of Christ** – Jesus Christ is Lord, being fully God and yet fully Man, born of a virgin, as affirmed in the Nicene, and Apostles’ Creeds (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1-2,14; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:13-20; Hebrews 1:8).
- **We believe in substitutionary atonement** – Jesus Christ died on the cross as our substitute – taking upon Himself the penalty of the sins of fallen humans (John 1:29; Romans 3:25-26; 5:8, 12-19; Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18).
- **We believe in the resurrection of Christ** – Jesus rose from the dead in a bodily resurrection defeating sin and death (Romans 6:4-9; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6).
- **We believe in salvation by grace through faith alone** – A person is saved from eternal separation from God as a free gift when that person places their faith in Jesus Christ who is the only way to the Father (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Revelation 21:27).
- **We believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ** – Jesus Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead (Matthew 24-25; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19-21).
- **We believe in heaven and hell** – Believers in Jesus Christ will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in eternal fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 21:1-7; 22:1-5). Unbelievers will be resurrected to conscious separation from God and eternal punishment (Matthew 25:41,46; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10-15; 21:8).

### WHERE WE STAND ON SOME CONTROVERSIAL SOCIAL ISSUES

We acknowledge that the following social issues have brought much pain and division in some churches, and we do not approach these issues lightly or glibly. But we also acknowledge that, at the heart, these are authority of Scripture issues. We believe the Bible is clear about the following:

- **Abortion** – We believe human life inside a mother’s womb begins at conception and is a real human being created in the image of God (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:4-5; Luke 1:39-45) and, therefore, that abortion is murder and wrong/sin (Exodus 20:13). We believe God offers full forgiveness to an abortive mother/father who has turned to Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:13-15; Ephesians 1:7).

- **Celibacy, Marriage, and Sexuality** – We believe God created humans in His image, intentionally and immutably male and female, each bringing unique and complementary qualities to sexuality and relationships (Genesis 1:27, 2:21-24, 3:16-20, 4:1; Matthew 19:4-5; Ephesians 5:22-33). Celibacy, marriage, and sexuality in general are gifts from God to be expressed: (1) within specific boundaries He designed for our safety and pleasure, and, (2) within the confines of His purposes, which include gratefully honoring the Lord with our bodies and minds (Proverbs 6:20-7:27; Matthew 6:27-30; Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 7:19-20; Ephesians 4:17-5:20; Philippians 1:20-2:16).

Sexual acts within marriage are God’s solely ordained method for moral human procreation (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18-24; Matthew 19:4-9; Mark 10:5-9; Ephesians 5:31). Sexual acts condemned in the Bible include but are not limited to adultery, bestiality, fornication, incest, lust, prostitution, same-sex sexual acts, sodomy, and voyeurism (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7-23, 20:10-21, 21:9; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27-28, 15:19; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-13; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17-19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, we believe variant sexual behaviors such as bi-sexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, pedophilia, transgenderism, and transsexualism are sinful and defy God’s natural order, plans, and purposes (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Genesis 19; Jude 7; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Timothy 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We do not believe in ordaining self-avowed practitioners of any of these or any other sexual sins, and do not believe in ceremonies that celebrate same-sex unions (Romans 1:18-32).

- **Ministry Leadership** – We believe persons engaged in willful, ongoing sinful practice(s) should not serve in ministry leadership (Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 5:1-13 and 6:9-20; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9), and those already serving in leadership that engage in ongoing sinful behavior(s) should be disciplined and removed from leadership, at least for a season (Deuteronomy 17:1-7; I Samuel 15; 2 Samuel 11-12 and 24; Daniel 4; I Corinthians 5-6; Revelation 2-3). We believe true repentance and conversion are first steps toward salvation, and essential for engaging in the process of sanctification (I Corinthians 6:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:1-8). Therefore, anyone considering ministry leadership via a path that includes seeking a degree from and/or working for The Bible Seminary should evidence public and private freedom from sinful behavior(s) over time (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20; James 2:14-26), since ministry leadership is incorporated into official positions and roles at The Bible Seminary including administration, board, faculty, staff, and students.

## Ethos Statement

It is a high honor and privilege to represent God to people by being in the ministry and training for ministry. When people see someone “in the ministry,” they see that person as representing Christ’s church. It is for this reason that the Bible outlines in 1 Timothy 3 some of the expectations and qualifications of a leader in the church. It is very important for each member of the seminary community (no matter what their position) to seek to live up to these standards (with God’s help and empowerment). Thus, we ask each member of the seminary community to covenant to lead a life that is “above reproach” as defined by the following Ethos Statement. The heart of this document is healthy community full of grace and truth (John 1:17).

As a member of the seminary community, I agree, with God’s help and empowerment, to live by the following ideals to the best of my ability:

1. I will seek to walk with God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Genesis 5:22; John 17:3; Mark 12:29-31; Ephesians 2:8-9).
2. I will seek to have no other gods than Jesus Christ (Exodus 20:3-6; 1 Peter 3:15). I will seek to keep myself from idolatry (1 John 5:21) by not making idols out of money, sex, power, people, material things, school, or ministry success.
3. I will work as “unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:23-24). I will give God my best in my family, in my job performance and in my training for ministry.
4. I will refrain from sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). If I am married, I will be faithful to my spouse (Exodus 20:14). If I am single, I will remain celibate in my singleness. I will not engage in homosexual practice (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
5. I will refrain from drunkenness or the use of illegal drugs (Ephesians 5:18). I will not allow a substance to control me, rather I will seek to be controlled by God. If I choose to “drink socially,” I will do so in a way that does not cause other people to stumble (1 Corinthians 8).
6. I will practice Biblical conflict resolution. If someone hurts or offends me, I will go to that person and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15,25) and forgive them (Ephesians 4:32). If this does not resolve the issue, I will then involve a second person as prescribed in Matthew 18:15-17. I will not slander another person by talking negatively about him/her without him/her present (Ephesians 4:31). I will seek to build others up with my words (Ephesians 4:29). If I cannot bring resolution through these steps, I will seek counsel.
7. I will be respectful of those in authority over me and submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:17) unless they were to call me to do something contrary to Scripture (Acts 5:27-29). I will seek humbleness in my life (1 Peter 5:5-6).

The purpose of this Ethos Statement is order (1 Corinthians 14:40) and to uphold integrity, respect, honor and character (2 Timothy 2:20-22). There is plenty of grace in this community for mistakes (James 5:16), whereas there is not room in this community for blatant and unrepentant rebellion (1 Corinthians 5). I agree to do my best to live by this Ethos Statement with God’s help and power through Jesus Christ and for His glory.

## Academic Freedom Statement

The Bible Seminary (TBS) is in mission to provide academic instruction and vocational training for Christian ministers to perform as pastors, counselors, missionaries, church planters, and leaders. Supporting this mission are the seven adopted Core Values of TBS and basic Christian convictions in the TBS covenantal documents and the Faculty Handbook.

Diversity of education and religious viewpoint is available to society through the plurality of global academic institutions. At TBS, we invite the richness of interpretation and study of the Bible as we seek its deepest meaning and truth. TBS is to be distinguished as an academic institution that shares a basic set of Core Values among its students, faculty, administrators, and Board of Trustees. Instruction, research, and academic investigation are to uphold and respect the positions provided in the Core Values, the Ethos and Doctrinal Statements, and the Faculty Handbook. For example, the following statement from the TBS Faculty Handbook summarizes one of our institutional doctrinal positions that we expect all TBS faculty to uphold:

### Creationism versus Evolution

God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1); God set the land to produce seed-bearing plants and trees (Genesis 1:11-12); God created all living things in the sea and on land, and the birds of the sky (Genesis 1:20-25); and God created man, male and female (Genesis 1:26-27). Scientific observations make obvious that God's creation is uniquely enabled by God to adapt to its environment, making subtle changes over time to survive and thrive in the world – a process often described as “micro-evolution”. Humans have also adapted and diversified, as indicated by the many races, peoples, and societies that have developed through the ages. However, this ability to adapt is not a substitution for the absolute truth that God created humans in His image (Genesis 1:27), breathed life into man (Genesis 2:7), and, after the discovery of sin by the first humans, Adam and Eve, God dispatched mankind to the less than perfect circumstances in which we live life today (Genesis 3:14-24). Therefore, while we acknowledge the phenomena of micro-evolution, we reject the macro-evolutionary theory of how plants, animals, and humans came to exist. Rather, we embrace the biblical view of creation that God created the heavens and the earth and all that is within it, including humans. We are open to either a young earth view of creation (where “yowm” = 24-hour period) or an old earth view of creation (where “yowm” = an age).

In general, Academic freedom means individuals have rights to engage in intellectual debate, research, speech, through written or electronic correspondence, on and off campus, without fear of censorship, retaliation, or sanction. This freedom encompasses rights to maintain academic standards and gives faculty members reasonable latitude in deciding how to teach assigned courses; encourages intellectual integrity; sustains pedagogical approaches consistent with disciplines taught; and informs evaluations of student work, all exercised within the shared boundaries defined by the TBS Covenantal Documents.

Academic freedom does not involve expressions that substantially impair the rights of others or the imposition of political, religious, or philosophical beliefs on individuals of the TBS community. Academic Freedom does not provide protection of faculty who demonstrate professional ignorance, incompetence, or dishonesty with regard to their assigned discipline or fields of expertise, or who engage in arbitrary or capricious evaluation of students.

All members of the TBS community have a right to due process. Anyone alleging or responding to a potential breach of academic freedom should follow the TBS Grievance Policy.

## Nondiscriminatory Policy

The Bible Seminary admits students of any race, sex, color, disability, age, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the Seminary. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, disability, age, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its hiring policies, educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

## Philosophy of Education

We believe the Bible is one book, written by many authors over time, inspired by one Spirit for all time – and is the best training manual for ministry.

We believe that doing ministry, debriefing ministry, and studying ministry – in association with called, life-giving, seasoned and Spirit-filled professionals – is an effective educational model.

We believe a balanced, Bible-based, Christ-centered, mission-focused educational approach includes a comprehensive curriculum that integrates studying through all 66 biblical books along with studying standard historical, theological, and practical disciplines critical to developing professional skills for 21st century ministry

We believe that challenging and nurturing students, getting them into the Word of God, and helping them think biblically and listen to the Holy Spirit, involves a unique combination of professional ministry training, cutting-edge tools, and extraordinary experiences.

We believe that face-to-face interaction over time, among groups of individuals with a common set of core values and doctrines and ethical standards, and with diverse backgrounds and experiences, can offer an exciting, family-friendly, practical, rich, and unparalleled learning environment.

We believe that a journey of theological education should:

- Glorify the Lord
- Be rooted in His Word
- Nurture an intimate, faithful, trusting relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Cultivate a contextual and more profound understanding of God and creation, scripture and the world, heaven and earth, culture and history, time and eternity, and things seen and unseen
- Equip students with relevant experiences, knowledge, relationships, training, and tools for a lifetime of ministry leadership
- Lead to a passionate commitment to love and serve the Lord and others with all that students are and have, in perpetuity.