

# THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

**INERRANCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.** The sixty-six (66) books of the Bible are the living written Word of God, divinely inspired by God, a revelation from God to man, inerrant in their original manuscripts, and the only infallible, authoritative, and final rule of faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

**GOD IS THREE-IN-ONE.** There is one true God eternally existent in three distinct persons— God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is also known as The Trinity. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Father. The Father is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Son. God is exactly one God and triune, in perfect unity and indivisible (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 3:16– 17; John 10:30; John 14:16,17).

**THE DIETY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.** The Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only eternal Son of God. Jesus was fully human and fully God. The Scriptures declare:

1. His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31,35).
2. His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
3. His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
4. His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
5. His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4).
6. His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9,11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).
7. His impartation of the Holy Spirit

**THE FALL OF MAN.** Man was created good and upright, made in the likeness and image of God. However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-21; Romans 3:23; Romans 3: 9-10; Isaiah 59:2; Colossians 1:21).

**THE SALVATION OF MAN.** Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is man's only hope for redemption. He gave His life and shed His blood to redeem and restore man back to God.

1. Conditions of Salvation. Salvation is a gift of God available to all people, but it is only received through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is appropriated by personal repentance, belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and His bodily resurrection (justification), confessing Him as one's personal Lord and Savior (atonement), and receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (regeneration). In so doing, man becomes an heir of God having the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3-7; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Galatians 3:13-14; Romans 10:9-10; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 John 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:17).

2. The Evidence of Salvation. The inward evidence of salvation to the believer is the direct witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence of salvation to all men is a life of true righteousness and holiness and should produce an active and ongoing lifestyle of loving obedience and service to Jesus Christ while being conformed to His image (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12; Philippians 2:12; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:12-13).

**SANCTIFICATION.** Sanctification is a definite, yet progressive work of grace, commencing at the time of regeneration and continuing until the consummation of salvation. Sanctification is the process of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God by walking in holiness. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit empowers all believers to live a holy life and should be earnestly pursued by walking in obedience to God's Word and by continually offering every aspect of one's life and being to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 12:14; I Thessalonians 5:22-24; Philippians 3:12-14; I Corinthians 1:30; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:12; Romans 6:1-11,13; Titus 2:11-14).

**HEAVEN AND ETERNAL LIFE.** Those who accept Jesus' sacrifice as the payment for their sins and who believe in His resurrection will receive eternal life and blessing in Heaven in the presence of God. Heaven is a literal place. The Bible also mentions rewards that await the believer who serves the Lord faithfully in this world (Romans 10:9-12; John 1:12; John 3:18; Acts 7:48-49; Matthew 5:34-35; Mark 16:19; John 14:1-4; 1 John 2:24-25; Matthew 24:12-13; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12; Revelation 2:7; John 17:3).

**HELL AND ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.** The one who physically dies in his sins without Christ will be eternally consigned to the lake of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is known as the second death. The lake of fire is a literal place (Revelation 20:15; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 21:8; Matthew 13:41-42).

**ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED.** Those who embrace Christ as their Savior, enter into a relationship with God that ensures the everlasting security of their salvation. Believers undergo a spiritual rebirth (regeneration) upon their faith. Once this happens, they are justified, and their salvation is certain. To lose their salvation would necessitate a reversal of the regeneration process. The Scriptures provide no indication that this new birth can be revoked. If someone believes in Christ today, possesses eternal life, and seemingly loses it tomorrow, it suggests that it was never genuinely 'eternal' to begin with (John 10:28-29; Romans 8:30-34, 38-39; Ephesians 4:3; John 3:3, 15; Titus 3:5).

**BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.** The Baptism in the Holy Spirit, distinct and subsequent to conversion, is a gift from God as promised by the Lord Jesus Christ to all believers who ask. In Scripture, this experience was commonly accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit Himself gave utterance, but it may also manifest with evidence of other spiritual gifts outlined in Scripture. The

Baptism of the Holy Spirit (infilling) releases the fullness of the Holy Spirit and endows believers with power for life, service and witness. With it comes the bestowment of spiritual gifts for the work of the ministry. Every believer should seek to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. With dependence upon the Holy Spirit, believers can be Spirit-led (Matthew 3:11; John 14:16-17; Acts 1:4,8; Acts 2:38-39; Acts 19:1-7; Acts 2:4; Luke 24:49; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Acts 8:12-17; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 11:14-18; Acts 15:7-9; John 7:37-39; Acts 4:31; John 1:32-33).

**GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** The gifts of the Holy Spirit, as outlined in Scripture, are fully active and for today. All believers should earnestly desire spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are given to believers for the work of the ministry and the edification of the church. The ministry of spiritual gifts should be encouraged, frequently practiced, stewarded well, and always exercised in a fitting and orderly way (1 Corinthians 12:1-31, 1 Corinthians 14:1-40).

**DIVINE HEALING.** God heals today. We pray in faith for healing and trust God with the timing and results (Mark 16:17-18; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24; Matt. 8:16-17; Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 10:1; Matthew 10:8; 2 Kings 5:14; Luke 10:9).

**FREEDOM AND DELIVERANCE.** God frees and delivers His children from strongholds, besetting sins and demon oppression today. Believers can pray in faith for freedom and deliverance with the authority given to them in Jesus' Name and trust God with the timing and results (Daniel 4:34; Acts 16:18; Matthew 10:1; Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:17; Mark 16:17).

**LAYING ON OF HANDS.** Laying on of hands is a biblical practice with multiple applications. Scriptural examples include imparting blessing, healing, conferring office, being filled with and baptized in the Holy Spirit, prophesying, receiving spiritual gifts, ordination, and consecration (Acts 13:2-4; Mark 5:22-23, 41; Mark 5:28-31; Acts 28:8; Acts 19:11-12; Mark 10:13-16; Acts 6:2-6; Acts 8:16-18; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

**ORDINANCES.** The Scriptures enjoin the Church to practice two perpetual ordinances.

1. **WATER BAPTISM.** Baptism in water is by immersion and is a direct commandment of the Lord. It is for believers only. The ordinance is a public declaration and outward sign of a believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Believers are baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:36-39).

2. **THE LORD'S SUPPER (COMMUNION).** Participating in The Lord's Supper is a direct commandment of the Lord and commemorates His death until He returns. It is for believers only and should be observed regularly. The bread symbolizes the Lord's broken body. The cup symbolizes the New Covenant in His blood. When believers partake of The Lord's Supper, they are signifying their

participation in Him and with one another. Believers should examine themselves to ensure that they do not receive The Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner so as not to sin against the body and blood of the Lord and bring judgment upon themselves (1 Corinthians 11:23-31; Luke 22:19-20; John 6:48, 51, 53-57; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

ESCHATOLOGY. The end times will include the future bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ (also known as the Second Coming), the resurrection of the saints, the millennium, the final judgment, and the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 20:6; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27-31; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 19:11-16; Revelation 20:1-6; Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21:7-8; 2 Peter 3:13; Romans 6:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; John 14:2-3; John 3:16; John 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).

MARRIAGE. Marriage is a sacred bond (covenant) between one man and one woman as instituted and defined by God in Scripture. Marriage provides for intimate companionship, sexual expression, procreation, and reflects Christ's relationship with the Church. God's design is that marriage should be permanent, sacred, and exclusive. (Ephesians 5:22-33; Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Matthew 5:28; Matthew 19:4-9; Mark 10:6-12; Genesis 1:26-28; Proverbs 5:15-19).

DIVORCE. Once a couple enters into a covenant of marriage, it is God's intention that they remain in that marriage for life. Therefore, it is the position of RIVERS CHURCH to make every reasonable effort to counsel repentance, forgiveness, restoration, and reconciliation through Christ. For those who have already experienced divorce, reconciliation with their spouse shall be counseled, if applicable. If reconciliation is not possible, repentance of divorce, if applicable, shall be encouraged. Those who have experienced and appropriately and sincerely repented of divorce are free to remarry and may serve in any function of the church as outlined in these bylaws (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9; Matthew 5:31-32; 1 Corinthians 7:15; Malachi 2:16).

HUMAN SEXUALITY. Sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of a biblically defined marital relationship, as described herein. Sexual immorality, as defined in Scripture, whether inside or outside of marriage, is clearly and expressly prohibited. Consequently, the church regards any and all forms of sexual immorality, or even lustful intent or desire toward such things, as sinful. Though sexual immorality in all its forms is sinful, redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin is possible. Therefore, it is the position of RIVERS CHURCH to make every effort to counsel repentance, deliverance, healing, and wholeness through Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:27; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Matthew 15:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:14-16).

GENDER. Since in the beginning, God created male and female (two distinct genders), the church holds sexual identity to be biologically determined at birth, and thus associated gender norms are to be observed as appropriate to applicable biblical

standards. Likewise, the church regards the intent or desire to surgically alter one's gender, as defined herein, and/or identify as any other alternative gender, as in violation of God's creation and is sinful. Each of us faces a different set of battles. Yet Christ sets us on the path to victory. Jesus claims to be sufficient for any and all of our battles, and He desires to sanctify us through His Word of truth. God does not make mistakes. The one who feels he or she was born in the wrong body needs, first and foremost, to experience the transformative power of Christ (Genesis 1:27; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Peter 1:4).

**SANCTITY OF LIFE.** People are created in God's image and are set apart from all other created life. Therefore, human life should be protected and respected at all times from conception to the end of life (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 9:6; Matthew 22:37-39; Psalms 139:13-16; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Proverbs 22:2; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 12:9-18; James 2:1-8; Jeremiah 1:4-5; Proverbs 6:16-17, 1 Corinthians 15:39).

**WOMEN IN MINISTRY.** Men and women are equal in value but differ in role. Women of notable godly character are free to minister in the church wherever they are called, equipped, and released except for the position of Elder. Eldership (defined as senior governmental authority in the church) has the dual responsibilities of expounding the Scriptures and exercising final governmental oversight of the body of Christ. We see eldership is a fathering role for the local church. Elders should be male and operate as an eldership team. All other wider leadership roles in the church can be fulfilled by suitably qualified men and women. Elders should do the bulk of the teaching. Non elders (male and female) can and should teach the church under the authority of the elders. Both women and men can and should contribute through small group leadership, ministry leadership, worship leading, welcome, testimony, announcements, prayer, prophecy, songs, scripture reading, art, etc. (1 Peter 5:1-3; Titus 1:5-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Luke 2:36; Acts 18:26; Acts 21:9; Romans 16:1-2; Romans 16:7; 1 Corinthians 1:11; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; 1 Corinthians 10:23; 1 Corinthians 9:22-23).