

# OUR ESSENTIALS



First Baptist  
GULFPORT

# First Baptist Gulfport

## Our Mission:

Amplifying hope across the Coast by connecting people to life in Jesus.

## Our Values:



**Christ-Centered Worship**



**Joy-Filled Unity**



**Bible-Dependent Truth**



**Grace-Fueled Acceptance**



**Mission-Minded Service**



**Generational-Focused Equipping**

## **Our Strategies:**

**Celebrating Hope in Worship**  
**Cultivating Growth in Groups**  
**Caring People through Service**  
**Connecting Others to Life in Jesus**

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# Our Essentials

How often do you give thought to your personal core values? Everyone has core beliefs and convictions that inform their outlook and actions in life. Whether we can clearly articulate our values or if we just have a vague awareness of them, they impact who we are and what we do.

And, just as everyone of us individually has values, a church family collectively embodies a set of values that manifest as shared convictions. Our shared values serve as filters for decision-making, guidance in setting priorities, and springboards for daily action. At First Gulfport, we have six core values - “essentials” - that guide our actions and reveal our strengths. Our ESSENTIALS or Core Values are the motivational flame of our church. Our values distinguish our philosophy of ministry and shape our culture.

For the next six weeks we will study our Core Values with the expressed goal of creating a culture with a bias toward taking the actions that best help us accomplish the mission Christ has given us. As we look at our values, we will examine scripture to see why we value what we do. We will ask questions and make commitments to Christ and one another as we discover how we can apply biblical truth to our everyday living.

Our prayer is that God will use this series to invigorate your faith and use you to create a stronger church. He has placed us on mission together right here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. **Remember, you will get the most from this experience by listening to the sermon in the series that corresponds to the Essential being examined. If you do not experience the teaching in person, you can quickly find the series as it unfolds by going to [fbcgulfport.org/essentials](http://fbcgulfport.org/essentials).**

Let's go!

Pastors Jimmy and Eric



# Christ-Centered Worship

**Summary:** We worship our risen Savior who left heaven to be born as an infant so He could die for our sin and make a way for us to live forever with Him in heaven. When we accept His free gift of salvation and surrender to Him as king of our lives we begin to worship Him. In the words of the beloved hymn: "Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow. O praise the One who paid my debt and raised this life up from the dead: Jesus!"

Making Jesus Christ the center of our lives and worshiping Him in our everyday living is our aim. Gathering on Sundays with fellow believers is an important aspect of worshiping Jesus. Believers are encouraged to incorporate daily worship habits into their lives and families. Reading the Bible, praying, and singing can create intimate worshipful moments whether alone or with family and friends. Worship is everything that gives praise and glory to Jesus for who He is, what He has done in expectation of His return.

**Matthew 28:1-10, 16-17; Philipians 2:5-11, Romans 12:1-2, Revelation 5:8-14 Isaiah 6:1-8**

## Life Application

1. Read Romans 12:1-2
2. What does it mean to worship? Is it possible to worship someone or something other than Jesus?
3. Read Philipians 2:5-11
4. What or who do you worship? How do you know?
5. What does it mean to fear God? Jesus?
6. Should Jesus be the focus of your worship? Why should we worship Jesus?
7. Remember and describe a time when you and others were truly worshiping Jesus.
8. What doubts do people have in relation to believing in and worshiping Jesus?
9. How would you help people deal with their doubts?
10. Spend time in prayer. Communicate your desires to worship Jesus and for First Baptist Church to value Christ-Centered Worship.

**Verses to Remember:** Philipians 2:9-11

**Point to Ponder:** *Jesus came to make a way for us to live with Him forever. He paid the price for our sin. As believers in Jesus, we owe Him nothing less than for Him to be the center of our lives.*

**Put Into Practice:** *Worship Jesus daily.*

**Website to Visit:** <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christ-centered-life.html>

**Playlist:** Jesus paid it all <https://youtu.be/D5DyeCx8H4U> (Fernando Ortega)

Jesus Paid it All/O Praise the One <https://youtu.be/-FHwdx5Blvc> (Kristian Stanfill)

Center <https://youtu.be/g0SbohrAssw> (Charlie Hall)



# Joy-Filled Unity

**Summary:** Jesus gives life - spiritual, eternal life - to those who are dying. His gift of life includes joy in abundance. The joy Jesus gives transcends circumstances because it is anchored in Him. His joy becomes the fuel to experience joy-filled unity in Christian community no matter the circumstances.

Community is so much better experienced joyfully. Jesus' expressed desire for those who trust Him is to experience UNITY (John 17:21) and JOY (John 16:24). The bible tells us that to REJOICE is a choice (Philippians 4:4-7). Joy is the second fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22!

Genuine joy is a CONTAGIOUS gift received from God to be personally experienced and generously shared. Jesus infused joy can be the catalyst for joy-filled unity. What enhances your experience of joy in community? What diminishes your joy? How do you share joy with those around you?

Philippians 4:4-7; John 16:20-24, 17:11-13; Galatians 5:22-24

## Life Application

1. Read John 16:24
2. When was the last time you truly experienced unrestrained joy? What were the circumstances?
3. Think about the last time you had no joy whatsoever. What were the circumstances?
4. John 16:22
5. Do you believe Jesus came to give you life and joy?
6. Do you struggle to be joy-filled? Are you around joy-filled people? What choice do you have?
7. Joy-filled people who are believers are walking in the Spirit. Have you experienced the joy that comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit?
8. What steps could you take to be regularly filled with the Holy Spirit? Is there someone you could share your desire with and with whom you could be accountable?

**Verses to Remember:** John 16:22-24

**Point to Ponder:** *Joy is an attitude.*

**Put Into Practice:** *Express joy in new ways, especially to one another in the church.*

**Website to Visit:** [https://bit.ly/FBG\\_Joy-FilledUnity](https://bit.ly/FBG_Joy-FilledUnity)

**Playlist:** Make Us One, Lord (Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir) <https://youtu.be/Ui2SYqn7GqM>

They'll Know We are Christians by our Love <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Cl4qefRAi4>



# Bible-Dependent Truth

**Summary:** God has given and preserved His Word for us in the Bible. The Bible provides documented truth of all that God has done from creation through the cross and to the second coming of Jesus. The Bible helps us connect with God and His purpose for our life and His plan for the world. “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Baptist Faith and Message 2000

Psalms 119:9-11, 105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12

## Life Application

1. Read Psalm 119:105 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17
2. In what ways has the Bible helped you connect with God’s purpose for your life? His plan for the world?
3. What passages of the Bible are the most meaningful to you?
4. Read Psalm 119:11
5. Have you memorized any scripture passages?
6. Which translation of the Bible do you use most often? Are you familiar with the New Living Translation?
7. Do you read and study the Bible as often as you would like? Why not? What benefit would you experience if you spent more time reading, studying and even meditating and memorizing the Scriptures? Is there any reason why you wouldn’t set a new priority?
8. Reading and studying the Bible together with others (spouse, family, friends) can be a source of great spiritual strength and growth. If you are not active in a Life Group consider joining one today! If you are committed in a group, how has your participation helped you respond to God’s word?

**Verses to Remember:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Point to Ponder:** *The Bible is God’s presentation of His truth for your life and the world!*

**Put Into Practice:** *Reading and Studying the Bible with others regularly*

**Website to Visit:** [https://bit.ly/FBG\\_Bible-DependentTruth](https://bit.ly/FBG_Bible-DependentTruth)

**Playlist:** Thy Word <https://youtu.be/a6LC8cu03Iq> Word of God Speak [https://youtu.be/4JK\\_6osCH74](https://youtu.be/4JK_6osCH74)



# Grace-Fueled Acceptance

**Summary:** When Jesus loved a person who did not yet love Him, that was grace. Grace is Jesus giving His life for someone when they would never deserve to receive that gift. Grace is Jesus doing for people what they can never do for themselves, that is, saving them from their sins and giving them forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. “Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.”<sup>2</sup> Christians are to love one another the way Jesus demonstrated love for them. Loving others this way is not easy and frankly, it’s not supposed to be. Christians can depend on the working of the Holy Spirit to help them in their weak moments to love one another the way Jesus loved them and to extend grace to one another the way Jesus extended grace to them.

<sup>2</sup>The Baptist Faith and Message 2000

John 3:16-17; Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 15:11-32, 19:1-10; Romans 15:1-7, Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 10:25-37

## Life Application

1. Read John 3:16-17. What stands out to you in verse 16? Verse 17?
2. Did Jesus call you to judge others and condemn them for their sins?
3. Read Matthew 7:1-5
4. What does it mean to judge someone? How can a judgemental attitude be avoided? Changed?
5. Define prejudice. Reread John 3:16. What can be done to limit or eliminate prejudice?
6. Read Luke 19:1-10
7. How had Zachaeus been judged? Who had judged him? What did Jesus do that began to change everything for Zachaeus?
8. How does Jesus want you to follow His pattern of grace-fueled acceptance? Consider how Jesus saw and treated Zacchaeus, the father saw and treated his prodigal son and the Good Samaritan treated his neighbor. What would it take for you to begin extending grace-fueled acceptance like they did?
9. How can you begin to practice grace-fueled acceptance to more people where you live, work and play?

**Verses to Remember:** Matthew 7:1-5

**Point to Ponder:** Jesus came not to condemn the world but to save those in it.

**Put Into Practice:** See and treat people the way Jesus saw and treated Zacchaeus, the father saw and treated his prodigal son, and the Good Samaritan saw and treated his neighbor.

**Website:** [https://bit.ly/FBG\\_Grace-FueledAcceptance](https://bit.ly/FBG_Grace-FueledAcceptance)

**Playlist:** Amazing Grace <https://youtu.be/CDdvReNKKuk>

Amazing Grace/My Chains are gone <https://youtu.be/Jbe7OruLk8I>



# Mission-Minded Service

**Summary:** People love being served. Some people seem to think they cannot survive without being served. In today's culture consumerism is the predominant mindset, especially in the west. Conversely, Jesus said he came to earth "not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Jesus calls his followers to follow him into the service of others. To love them. To serve them. The mission of service is to point people to salvation found only in Jesus. His pattern of serving was not one of giving people what they want or demand but giving them what they need and may not yet realize they cannot live without. Namely, to be saved from their sins and to find abundant life and to receive the gift of eternal life. Mission-minded service is giving people what they need most. People who seem to have everything (see Zacchaeus) don't need the same thing as someone in physical distress (see the Good Samaritan). People in poverty (see the Prodigal Son) don't need the same thing as someone being verbally attacked (see the Woman Caught in Adultery) or the same thing as someone who is prideful (see the Rich Young Ruler). The Holy Spirit guides believers to people in need and aligns gifts with needs to lead them to connect to life in Jesus!

Luke 19:10; Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Matthew 25:31-40

## Life Application

1. Describe the last time you were served well. When was the last time you served someone in need?
2. Have you ever participated in a mission trip/effort? Local? National? International? Describe the experience(s).
3. Do you believe it is easier to be mission-minded in service locally, nationally or internationally? What makes it seem easier somewhere else? What makes it seem harder near home?
4. What does it mean to serve someone in need? How can serving someone in need lead to spiritual conversations? Do you know of people in need on the Mississippi Gulf Coast? Your neighborhood?
5. Are you familiar with Gulf Coast Community Ministries? Are you familiar with First Baptist Gulfport's Benevolence Ministry?
6. There are people in need all across the coast. What can you do to serve people in need? Read Matthew 25:31-40
7. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. What is the ultimate mission of serving others?
8. View the Opportunities for Serving available at First Baptist Gulfport found at the website listed below. Discuss the opportunities with others.

**Verse to Remember:** 1 Peter 4:10

**Point to Ponder:** *Serve others in Jesus name.*

**Put Into Practice:** *Look for people in need, praying for them, asking the Lord to guide you to serve them, making sure they know they can connect to life in Jesus.*

**Website to Visit:** <https://fbcgulfport.org/serve>

**Playlist:** Does Anybody Hear Her <https://youtu.be/OEhRucEVzH8> (Casting Crowns)

**Beautiful Offering** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbyYY6EfnvQ> (Big Daddy Weave)





# Generational-Focused Equipping

**Summary:** As long as there is breath in the body there is work to be done in the body of Christ. Every member of the church has a role to fulfill in the working of the church. Everyone is encouraged to use their gifting to serve one another in their service to the Lord! Among the ongoing challenges facing church leaders is the alignment and equipping of church members. Targeted information and effective training equips members in what to do and how to do it. Without proper alignment, church members might be doing the right thing but in the wrong place or at the wrong time. Equipping is centered in the fulfillment of the mission of the church as members of all ages are equipped and engaged in the work! Every age group cannot do every ministry related task, but all ages contribute to the effective and efficient working of the church.

Ephesians 4:11-16; Titus 2:1-8; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 12-31; Romans 12:3-21

## Life Application

1. List serving opportunities in the church.
2. What serving needs in our church or other churches are not being met? Do you know someone who might begin to serve in that area? Are you that person?
3. Name someone who commits time, energy and resources to serve in the church. What stands out about them? Are you serving in similar ways with similar impact/results? Where? How? Why not?
4. Have you been equipped to serve in the church? Describe your training and those who led it.
5. Have you been involved in equipping others? Outside the church? Inside the church? Describe your experiences.
6. What might be done at First Baptist to improve equipping for all generations? How do you think these improvements might impact those being equipped? How might it impact the church?
7. Take the Spiritual Gifts Inventory listed below. Discuss your results with others.

**Verses to Remember:** Ephesians 4:16-17

**Point to Ponder:** *Being properly equipped to serve is vital to the effective and efficient mission and subsequent growth of the church*

**Put Into Practice:** *Serve in the church, equipping others to serve alongside you.*

**Website to Visit:** <https://fbcgulfport.org/serve>

**Playlist:** Great is Thy Faithfulness <https://youtu.be/ErwiBz1QA4o>

My Story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIHmYBKkGa8> (Blg Daddy Weave)

# Leader Notes

## **A Note to Group Leaders and Discussion Facilitators**

*You make the difference! Thank you for helping every person in your group grow in their relationship with Christ and others. You will find some leader notes on the back pages of this guide. The leader notes are designed to help you go a little deeper as you prepare to lead your group on this Essentials journey. A great big thank you to Delana Varner who generated most of the material in the Leader Notes. We ARE better together.*



## **Christ-Centered Worship**

Why do we worship Jesus? We worship Jesus because He is victorious over sin and death. His victory is our victory and His name is above every name on earth. He is worthy of our worship. **(Phil.2: 9-11)**

How can we honestly assess who or what we are worshiping?

We can examine:

Our thoughts – what are we thinking about (over and over)

Our actions – what do we spend time doing – what takes up our day, our calendar?

Our money – what do we spend money on?

***As First Baptist Gulfport we seek to demonstrate Christ-centered worship by:***

1. Gathering together weekly to praise and honor Christ in corporate worship whenever possible, to help strengthen our body of believers. **Hebrews 10:19-25, 1 Corinthians 14:26**
2. Focusing small group Bible study on knowing Him and worshiping Him by the life we lead. **Romans 12:1-2**
3. Training and equipping small group leaders, and heads of households, in leading worship.



## **Joy-Filled Unity**

*As you prepare to lead the discussion on joy-filled unity remember that as we choose joy daily and live surrendered to the Holy Spirit, we can pursue Joy-filled unity.*

***As First Baptist Gulfport we seek to demonstrate Joy-Filled unity by:***

1. Following Jesus' example of humility through servant leadership. **Philippians 2:1-11**
2. Loving one another, speaking the truth in love with humility, gentleness, patience, kindness, and understanding. **Ephesians 4:1-3**
3. Participating in whole church activities: joint worship, VBS, Fall and Spring Festivals, Operation Christmas Child. **Acts 2:42-47**



## **Bible-Dependent Truth**

***As First Baptist Gulfport we seek to demonstrate Bible-Dependent Truth by:***

1. Acknowledging the Bible is the foundation, not just a reference. **Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 119:9-11**
2. Demanding that all Teaching is built on Scripture, with an emphasis on application.  
**Colossians 3:16, Deuteronomy 6:4-9**
3. Living out Bible teachings. **Matthew 7:24-27, James 1:22**



## **Grace-Fueled Acceptance**

***As First Baptist Gulfport we seek to demonstrate Grace-Fueled Acceptance by:***

1. Loving people as they are; focusing on their godly potential. **John 8:1-11**
2. Nurturing a welcoming environment and activities: discoverFirst class.... **1 John 4:19-21**
3. Providing outreach opportunities on and off campus for church and community participation and involvement. **Romans 15:1-7**



## **Mission-Minded Service**

***As First Baptist Gulfport we seek to demonstrate Mission Minded Service by:***

1. Following Jesus' example of sacrificial service: living life on mission deliberately increasing our awareness of the lost people in the world around us and connecting them to Jesus. **Mark 10:45, Acts 1:8**
2. Nurturing and fostering an inviting and gospel sharing lifestyle, using our spiritual gifts, talents and abilities, in order to produce fruit that will last. **Philemon 6**
3. Being wise stewards of all God has given us, and in turn giving generously to programs and organizations committed to reaching the world for Christ. **Malachi 3:1**
4. Learn about Gulf Coast Community Ministries here ([gulfoastministry.org](http://gulfoastministry.org)). FBG benevolence ministry is funded by our congregation after each service with Communion and facilitated by our Deacons. We help people in our congregation and across the coast with financial needs in the name of Jesus! From time to time groups are assembled to help people in tangible ways like yard clean up and handicap ramps.



## **Generational-Focused Equipping**

***As First Baptist Gulfport we seek to demonstrate Bible-Dependent Truth by:***

1. Bible teaching and study on generation specific instruction. **Matthew 28:18-20, Proverbs 22:6**
2. Fostering mentoring relationships between all generations: small group leadership, mentoring with the Deacon body, etc. **1 Peter 4:10, Psalm 78:1-7**
3. Training disciples to make disciples. **1 Peter 3:15, Ephesians 4:11-16**

