

Two Rivers Church

Disciple Values Definitions

(The biblical DNA of a follower of Jesus)

Gospel-centered

Ultimately, “the Gospel” is all about Jesus. Jesus gives new life and transforms lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. This truth is at the center of all we do.

Jesus has revealed God’s reconciliation of people to himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). God is making all things new through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ (Revelation 21:5). The good news of Jesus is that he not only saves people (Romans 1:16), but he also transforms people in his image (Romans 8:29). At the center of the Gospel is God’s ability to give us new life through the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:4-5). We are a community of faith being transformed by the empowering presence of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Gospel drives our vision, impacts our decision-making, and determines how we apportion resources (Matthew 6:33). We invest in joining God’s mission in this world (Matthew 28:18-20). Knowing that we are only a part of the greater body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), we seek to partner with individuals, organizations, and other churches, locally and globally, that are likewise invested in multiplying the kingdom of God (Acts 1:8).

A life centered on the good news of the Kingdom of God is marked by **generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Because the Gospel reveals a God who gave everything for us (John 3:16; Romans 8:32), generosity is a natural overflow of transformed lives. True generosity is more than financial giving; it’s a heart attitude that reflects God’s self-giving nature (Philippians 2:3-4). It means giving of our time, resources, abilities, and love, seeing everything we have as entrusted to us to further God’s kingdom (1 Peter 4:10). When we embrace this Gospel-centered generosity, we live open-handedly, partnering with others to meet needs, serve our community, and support the spread of the Gospel both locally and globally (Galatians 6:9-10). This type of generosity displays our confidence in God’s provision (Philippians 4:19) and our commitment to join him in his mission to make all things new (Revelation 21:5).

We believe the Gospel-centered life is **winsome** to those who do not know Jesus because it reflects the transformative power of his love and truth (John 13:34-35; Matthew 5:16). When our lives are centered on the Gospel, our values, actions, and relationships point to God’s reconciling work through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). It reveals a community shaped by humility and grace (Philippians 2:1-3) that stands out as a joy-filled and compelling witness in a world longing for hope and purpose (1 Peter 3:15). As we live out the Gospel in our words and actions (Colossians 3:17), people are drawn to the beauty and authenticity of a life that is rooted in the good news of Jesus (John 15:8), inviting them to experience the same transforming power for themselves.

A Gospel-centered life will naturally be defined by **excellence**, as we seek to honor Jesus in everything we do (Colossians 3:23-24). Excellence is not about perfection or performance but about reflecting Jesus through our wholehearted commitment in every endeavor (1 Corinthians

10:31). Whether it's serving in ministry (Ephesians 4:11-14), using our talents, or engaging in everyday relationships along with the work we were created for (Ephesians 4:1-3), we strive to give our best because we believe that all we do is ultimately for God's glory (Matthew 5:16). We are intentional and prepared in what we do, believing this gives us maximum flexibility to respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting in any given moment. We pay attention to the details because they speak to the value we place on God's mission in this world and the people he loves (1 Peter 4:10-11). Pursuing excellence demonstrates that the Gospel transforms not just *what* we do but *how* we do it, as we are motivated by love and a desire to represent Jesus well in every aspect of life (Romans 12:1-2).

Word-dependent

God has chosen to reveal himself to people through the Word—both the written Word and the Living Word, Jesus. We build our lives upon God's Word.

As followers of Jesus, our lives are being transformed into his image (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29). To be dependent upon the Word, we seek to understand what God has spoken through the Scriptures by the illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14). We then diligently apply what the Spirit has revealed to our lives (James 1:22-25). Our lives are built upon doing what Jesus says, not simply accumulating information about what the Bible says (Matthew 7:24-27; John 14:23-24). To be Word-dependent is to believe in the authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17), inerrancy (Psalm 19:7-9), and sufficiency of the Scriptures for life and practice under the power of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 4:12). Being Word-dependent is inseparable from being Spirit-empowered (John 15:26-27; Ephesians 6:17).

Building a life upon God's Word requires **obedience** and **intentional effort**. Obedience means not just hearing God's Word but putting it into practice, allowing it to shape our attitudes, actions, and decisions (James 1:22). Jesus reminds us that those who hear his words and do them are like a wise builder who constructs a house on a solid foundation, able to withstand the storms of life (Matthew 7:24-27). This kind of life does not happen by accident; it involves surrendering our will daily to God's revealed truth, trusting that his commands are good and lead to a flourishing life (Psalm 19:7-11).

Intentional effort **prioritizes spiritual practices** such as **devotional Bible reading, study, meditation, and memorizing Scripture**, making space to renew our minds (Romans 12:2) and transform our hearts (Psalm 119:11). Yet, this is not done in our strength. With the Holy Spirit's empowerment, we align our lives with what God has spoken, knowing that as we depend on his grace, he works in us according to his good purpose (Philippians 2:12-13). Obedience is not about striving to earn God's favor but responding to his love with a life that seeks to honor him in every area (John 14:15). Through Spirit-empowered effort, we become doers of the Word, rooted and grounded in the truth, and equipped to live out our faith in every season of life (Colossians 3:16-17).

The Word-dependent life leads to ongoing transformation, which includes being **willingly pliable**—allowing the Word of God and the Spirit of God to shape us into the image of Jesus (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). It means maintaining humility and surrender as we invite the Holy Spirit to convict, correct, and mold us according to the character of Jesus (Hebrews 12:5-11). Being pliable involves letting go of our preferences and comfort, instead choosing to submit every area of our lives to the truth of Scripture, even when it challenges our personal desires or cultural norms (Romans 8:5-8). This process of transformation is gradual, requiring patience and willingness to endure the refining work of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 1:6). As we yield to God’s shaping, we become more like Jesus, displaying his character in how we think, speak, and act (Ephesians 4:22-24). Through this Spirit-led transformation, we mature, reflecting Jesus more fully to a world that desperately needs to see his life and light in us (Matthew 5:14-16; Colossians 1:27-28).

The result is a **joy-filled** life that stands out, reflecting the abundant life that Jesus promised to those who follow him (John 10:10). This joy is not based on circumstances but is rooted in the deep and unshakable confidence that we belong to Jesus and are being continually transformed by him (Romans 15:13). As we align our lives with his Word and submit to his Spirit, we experience a supernatural joy that flows from abiding in his presence (John 15:11). This joy becomes evident in our attitudes and responses, even in the face of trials, because it is grounded in the hope and assurance of who God is and what he has promised (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:8-9). Such a life stands out in a world often drowning in anxiety, despair, and dissatisfaction. When we live joy-filled, it overflows into our relationships, drawing others toward Jesus himself (Philippians 4:4-5).

Spirit-empowered

God has given us his very presence, the Holy Spirit, to lead, guide, and direct our lives. The Spirit of God empowers us to follow Jesus.

The Holy Spirit gives us new life through regeneration (Titus 3:5) and enables us to live in an active relationship with Jesus, experiencing God both personally and corporately (John 14:16-17). It is the Holy Spirit who gives spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-7) and empowers a lifestyle of discipleship, prayer, worship, and service (Romans 8:26-27), equipping us to live in a Gospel-centered community (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Being Spirit-empowered is inseparable from being Word-dependent (John 15:26-27).

The fruit of the Spirit is the leading indicator of the Spirit-empowered life, reflecting the character of Jesus in us (Galatians 5:22-23). As the Holy Spirit works in and through us, his work becomes increasingly evident in our lives. These qualities are relational markers that shape how we interact with others, serve our community, and embody the heart of Jesus (John 15:4-5). When the fruit of the Spirit is visible, it serves as an indication that we are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). The Holy Spirit is at work, not just in

gifting and empowering us for ministry, but in forming us into people who reflect the life of Jesus every day (Ephesians 4:22-24).

The “**one anothers**” of Scripture are the second indicator of living a Spirit-empowered life, as they demonstrate how the Holy Spirit’s active presence shapes our relationships and life together. Commands such as “love one another” (John 13:34), “serve one another” (Galatians 5:13), “encourage one another” (1 Thessalonians 5:11), and “bear with one another” (Colossians 3:13) call us to demonstrate the self-giving love of Jesus in tangible ways. The “one anothers” reveal that true transformation is not merely about a personal experience or gifts but is expressed in how we live together as the body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5), pursuing unity, maturity, and Christlike love in everyday life (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Spiritual gifts are a vital expression of the Holy Spirit’s work within the body of Christ and in our formation in the image of Jesus. God graciously gifts every follower of Jesus to build up the church and glorify God (1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10). These gifts are distributed by the Spirit as he wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). Each gift is an intentional provision meant to equip us for ministry and to contribute uniquely to the health and unity of the community of faith (Romans 12:4-6). When we operate in our gifts by the Holy Spirit’s power, we serve others effectively and reflect the diversity and interdependence of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:14-20). Using our gifts is an act of stewardship and faithfulness that demonstrates our trust in Jesus’s purpose for each of us. It is also a tangible way to experience God’s power and presence, as the Spirit works through our efforts to accomplish what we could never do (Ephesians 4:12-13). Whether seen or unseen, each gift plays a crucial role in advancing the mission of Jesus, and when exercised in love, they help us mature as followers of Jesus, revealing him to a watching world (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Ephesians 4:15-16).

This Spirit-empowered life is also marked by **spiritual practices** such as **listening, expectancy, worship, and prayer** (Acts 2:42). These practices create space for the Holy Spirit to shape and guide us daily (Romans 8:14). Listening means we listen to both God and each other, being attentive to the Holy Spirit’s prompting through the Word (John 14:26), through others (Hebrews 10:24-25), and stillness (Psalm 46:10), cultivating a heart ready to respond to his leading (James 1:22). Living with expectancy involves trusting that God is always at work (Philippians 1:6) with our role being to look for how he is revealing his presence in every situation (Ephesians 5:15-16). Worship is more than a Sunday gathering; it is a lifestyle of honoring God in all we do (Romans 12:1), as the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with gratitude and praise (Ephesians 5:18-20). Prayer is an ongoing dialogue with the God who indwells us (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18), aligning our desires and actions with his will (Romans 8:26-27). Together, these spiritual practices keep us in step with the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:25), fostering a vibrant and active relationship with Jesus that shapes our inner lives and outward actions.

The Spirit-empowered life is **naturally supernatural**, as God’s presence in us enables us to live beyond our abilities, bringing the reality of his kingdom to bear in our daily lives (Ephesians

3:20-21). When we live empowered by the Holy Spirit, the ordinary becomes infused with God's extraordinary power, and we become participants in his ongoing work of renewal and transformation in the world (2 Peter 1:3-4).

Relationally Connected

We were made for relational connection with Jesus and other people.

Relationally Connected with Jesus:

Living relationally connected to Jesus means **cultivating an intimate relationship** with him, where we know him deeply and are known by him. As in human relationships, intimacy with Jesus involves spending quality time together, sharing our hearts, and learning to trust him more fully. Intimacy with Jesus is developed over time by engaging in spiritual practices, like prayer, Scripture meditation, and moments of stillness where we experience his presence (John 15:4-5). As we open our lives to him, allowing him to shape our thoughts, desires, and character, we create a bond built on love and transparency over time (Psalm 37:4; John 15:9-11). This closeness brings a sense of peace and fulfillment that cannot be found anywhere else, allowing us to walk with him daily, aware of his nearness and direction (Psalm 16:11). When we live out this kind of relationship, our intimacy with Jesus overflows into how we engage others, reflecting his love and grace in all our interactions.

Being relationally connected to Jesus means **acknowledging and submitting to his Kingship**. Jesus is not just our Savior but also our Lord and King, deserving of our complete allegiance and obedience (Philippians 2:9-11). True intimacy involves recognizing his rightful authority and allowing him to lead every area of our lives, affecting our decisions, priorities, and values. Living under his Kingship means we seek his will above our own, aligning our lives to his purposes, and trusting his wisdom and leadership (Matthew 6:33). As we submit to Jesus as King, we discover that his rule is not burdensome but freeing, leading us into a life of joy and purpose as we embrace the role he has for us in his Kingdom (Matthew 11:28-30). This kind of surrender fosters a more profound connection because it invites Jesus to have the rightful place of honor in our hearts, where his reign brings peace and direction (Colossians 3:15).

Honesty is essential in any close relationship; it is no different in our relationship with Jesus. To be truly connected, we must come to him without pretense. This requires that we bring our fears, doubts, struggles, and sins into the light of his presence (Psalm 139:23-24). Jesus invites us to be honest because he knows and loves us unconditionally (Hebrews 4:15-16). When we are honest with Jesus, it creates space for genuine healing and restoration, leading to spiritual growth. There is no need to attempt to hide our weaknesses or failures because we know Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). This gives us the freedom to embrace a transparency that builds trust and deepens our connection with Jesus, leading us into greater freedom and authenticity (John 8:31-32). Honesty with Jesus also shapes other relationships, making us people who reflect his truth and grace.

Gratitude is a natural outflow of a heart deeply connected to Jesus. When we recognize the magnitude of Jesus's love, grace, and faithfulness extended to us, our only logical response is a life marked by thankfulness (Colossians 3:16-17). Living in gratitude means acknowledging God's goodness in all circumstances, whether in times of abundance or struggle (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Expressing our thankfulness to Jesus in prayer, worship, and daily conversations keeps our hearts focused on his provision and presence, guarding us from discontent and self-centeredness (Philippians 4:6-7). Gratitude fuels joy, cultivates humility, and strengthens our trust in Jesus. It reminds us that every good and perfect gift is from him (James 1:17). When our lives are rooted in gratitude, it transforms our perspective, enabling us to see his hand at work in all things and to share that perspective with others, inviting them to experience the goodness of Jesus as well.

A relational connection with Jesus inevitably leads to developing a **servant's heart** because Jesus himself came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). As we grow in intimacy with him, we are compelled to model his humility, seeking to serve others selflessly and sacrificially (Philippians 2:3-5). Having a servant's heart means we place others' needs above our own and willingly pour out our time, energy, and resources for their benefit (Galatians 5:13). This kind of servanthood is not motivated by obligation but by love and a desire to reflect Jesus' heart to those around us (John 13:14-15). Serving others becomes a natural expression of our connection to Jesus, as his love transforms us into people who live for the good of others and the glory of God. Through serving, we experience deeper intimacy with Christ as we join him in his mission and experience the joy of partnering in his redemptive work (Matthew 25:40).

Relationally Connected with others:

We are meant to live in community with other followers of Jesus. Living life connected to others is essential in our journey with Jesus. It is also the basis for life in the local church. Community is where we live a Gospel-centered life by loving God and demonstrating our love for others (Matthew 22:37-39).

Authenticity is foundational for genuine relationships with other followers of Jesus. It means living without pretense, being honest about who we are, and resisting the temptation to put on a facade to gain acceptance or approval (Romans 12:9). Authenticity invites others to see us as we truly are, with our strengths, weaknesses, and everything in between. Being authentic creates a safe environment for others to be authentic. A secure environment fosters trust, which helps to deepen our connections with others. Authenticity requires honesty about our need for grace and the ongoing work of Jesus in our lives (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). As we embrace authenticity, it paves the way for relationships marked by mutual encouragement and genuine love, where we can support one another as we follow Jesus together (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Vulnerability takes authenticity a step further, requiring a willingness to share not only who we are but also what we are going through—the fears, struggles, and hurts that we often prefer to keep hidden (James 5:16). To be vulnerable is to let down our defenses and allow others to

speak into the areas of our lives that are most sensitive or painful. In a Christian community, vulnerability creates space for the healing and encouragement that God intends for his people (Galatians 6:2). Vulnerability creates an environment where others can do the same, breaking down barriers of isolation and inviting others to walk alongside us in our highs and lows (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). This depth of connection is only possible when we choose to trust one another with our hearts, believing that Jesus's love binds us together even when we risk being hurt or misunderstood (Colossians 3:14).

Transparency in relationships with other believers means living in the light, choosing to be open about our thoughts, intentions, and motivations (Ephesians 4:25). It goes beyond simply being honest or vulnerable; it involves a commitment to bring everything into the light, allowing others to see our true selves (1 John 1:7). Transparency requires humility and courage because it means removing the masks and layers that we often use to hide behind, whether from shame or fear of judgment. When we practice transparency, we invite accountability and permit others to speak truth into our lives, helping us stay aligned with God's Word (Proverbs 27:17). This kind of openness cultivates a culture of grace and authenticity, where real growth and transformation can take place, and where our relationships become places of freedom rather than pretense (2 Corinthians 4:2).

Humility is essential for healthy, Christ-centered relationships because it places others before ourselves and acknowledges our dependence on God and one another (Philippians 2:3-4). To live relationally connected in humility means being willing to listen, learn, and admit when we are wrong. It seeks to serve rather than be served, allowing us to view others as God sees them, with value and dignity (1 Peter 5:5-6). Humility creates an atmosphere where pride and competition are set aside and where we can celebrate others' strengths and support them in their weaknesses (Romans 12:10). When we walk in humility, we become peacemakers and bridge-builders, seeking unity and reconciliation rather than conflict or division (Ephesians 4:2-3). This attitude of humility mirrors Christ's example, enabling us to grow together in love and reflect his heart to the world (John 13:14-15).

Listening is a key practice for building deep relationships, as it demonstrates that we value and care for others (James 1:19). It involves more than just hearing words; authentic listening means setting aside our thoughts and agendas to be fully present with another person. When we listen well, we create space for others to express themselves, feel understood, and share their hearts without fear of judgment (Proverbs 18:13). This kind of listening is both a gift and a discipline, requiring patience, empathy, and a willingness to withhold our responses until we truly grasp what the other person is saying (Philippians 2:4). In a world where so many are eager to speak but slow to listen, taking time to listen carefully and attentively models the love and concern of Christ, who listens to us with perfect understanding (Psalm 34:17). Listening strengthens our relationships, deepens our empathy, and opens the door to greater unity and shared wisdom in the body of Christ (Romans 12:15-16).