



committed to the core

Our Core Values

Committed to the Core

What's a “core value”? Put simply, it's a statement of something that you're committed to, right to the heart. It's a “value” that you build your life on, a principle that you're prepared to hold on to no matter what. Many businesses have found it useful to define their core values. Most individuals are aware of their own value system deeply held “non-negotiable” principles.

Exercise:

Can you find examples of businesses or companies with Core Value statements? What sort of “values” do they describe? (The Coffee Club at Brookside has their core values on a prominent sign.)

"Our Core Values, Integrity first, Service before self and Excellence in all we do, set the common standard for conduct across the Air Force. These values inspire the trust which provides the unbreakable bond that unifies the force. We must practice them ourselves and expect no less from those with whom we serve."



General Michael E. Ryan
Chief of Staff
United States Air Force



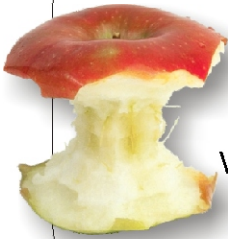
What are some of your own personal “core values”? Where have they come from? (Family? Individuals of influence? Bible? Other?)

Our mpc core values

Mitchelton Presbyterian Church adopted a set of statements back in 1999 that attempted to set out some of our own distinctive “values.” As Christians, we are committed to lives of faith in Jesus Christ and obedient submission to his Lordship. As a Presbyterian Church, we're governed by the biblical principles described in the Westminster Confession of Faith. But our Core Value statements try to capture some of the essence of those existing principles, as well as some of the other things that make us what we are as an effective, contemporary church.

These studies are designed to expand on and explain our Core Value Statements.

CORE VALUES 1 and 2 - It's all about Jesus!



We value **the good news that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave up his life for the sins of the world, and rose from the dead to rule the world.** We seek to share this news.

We value **clear, Christ-centred Bible teaching** that leads to trusting in Jesus as Saviour, and obeying Him as Lord.

The simple message of the crucified and risen Jesus was the seed the church grew from. The apostles preached it, wrote it down, and passed it around. It's that same "gospel" message that builds the church today. It's appropriate, then, that our core values begin with that message, that we seek to share.

But what part does the Bible play in the life of the Christian, and the life of the church? In some churches, "tradition" plays a key role in shaping church life and church teaching. In others, "experience" is the main authority... my personal "experience" through my feelings and emotions are seen as the path to truth.

While church traditions and emotional experiences can be helpful, they must always be checked against the teaching of God's word, the Bible. Most especially, this is because it is in the Bible that we meet Jesus Christ. We can't simply "make him up to suit ourselves." In fact, if we're not careful, emphasis on tradition and feelings can obscure the good news about Jesus the Bible makes so clear!

Let's see what the Bible itself has to say...

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17

- a. What is the source of "all Scripture"?
- b. According to verse 16, what is the Bible useful for?
- c. According to verse 15, where do the Scriptures lead us?

Paul wants his apprentice Timothy to keep teaching the Bible, because God breathed it! It's the way we know what righteousness looks like. But most important of all, it's the scriptures that make us "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

It's no surprise then, that Paul goes on to say to Timothy, "*I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.*" In other words, he is to "put the Bible to work" in patiently and carefully rebuking and encouraging his church.

- d. What warning does Paul give in 2 Tim 4:3-4? How can we avoid this?

Keeping Christ Central

The Bible is a big book. The Old Testament is notoriously difficult -- full of laws, rituals, and strange sounding customs. It's easy to be confused. It's also easy to be misled. The fact is, as Christians, the whole Bible speaks to us... but we constantly need to be reminded, especially as we read the Old Testament, that times have changed. We are NOT the original audience. Something huge has happened -- the promise of the Old Testament has been fulfilled in Christ. And that means as Christians, we need to always read the Bible with Jesus in mind.

e. Revisit your answer to question c. above. Hopefully, your answer was “faith in Christ Jesus.” So where should our understanding of any “old testament” scriptures lead us?

f. Read Luke 24:25-27, and 44-47. Two meetings are described, where the risen Christ speaks to his disciples. What *parts of the Old Testament scriptures* should have been helpful in their understanding of what “the Christ” had to do?

g. What had to be explained to the disciples? (v27)

h. What helpful thing does Jesus do for the disciples in verse 45?

Jesus makes the astounding claim that not just the prophets, but the writings of Moses (the Law) and even the Psalms all look forward to fulfilment in Him! (That’s the whole of the OT!)

As Christians, a good biblical goal would be to find ourselves in the place of the disciples in Luke 24:27... “*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*” In other words, our goal should be to understand what all the scriptures are saying concerning Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Being Clear

There's one more key idea in our Core Value. Because often, the point at which Bible Teaching fails is at the most important point - the point of final connection.

i. **Read Colossians 4:3-4.** Paul asks the Colossians to pray for his preaching. First and foremost, he wants to proclaim the “mystery of Christ” the gospel. But he asks for something more. What is it?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

j. How does Paul describe his own preaching style?

k. How does Paul describe the content of his message?

Paul's message was simple, and his goal was to deliver it as clearly as he could. Eloquence, rhetorical flair and an extensive vocabulary of Christian jargon weren't part of the package. Just clarity.

l. How have you seen clarity sacrificed in Christian communication today? What do we need to avoid?

Summary

Our Core Value emphasises three key points. As a church, we need to be centred on God's Word to us, the Bible. Our understanding of the Bible needs to be focused on the person of Jesus Christ. And importantly, as we teach the bible and speak the gospel, both in the context of church and in our everyday relationships, we want to be clear, so those who hear can understand that salvation comes only through trusting in Jesus Christ as saviour and submitting to his rule as Lord.

m. What part can you play in encouraging clear, Christ centred bible teaching to propagate, both here at mpc and beyond? What sort of feedback do you think would be helpful to people involved in Bible teaching ministries in our church?

o. What key features will you be looking for in the Bible teaching you hear week by week?