

A. FOUNDATIONS

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:1-2 is my life verse and it sums up why we are here, what we are discussing — thinking Biblically and living Covenantally. To navigate this life in this fallen world, we need a new mind. We need a transformed mind. We need to know how to think Biblically. So, let's get started....

Now, we need to establish foundations for our Biblical Thinking and Covenantal Living. We need a level surface, a starting point, somewhere our terms are defined and we agree we can begin....

Have you ever seen a building or a house built? What is done first? A foundation is poured. Usually a level concrete base is set first because a sound, level surface must be assumed before anything can be built — in a house, in an argument, in life. In Matthew 7, Jesus preaches from the Sermon on the Mount and He compares building on the Rock in which the building withstands the rain, flood and wind to building on the sand where the building has a great fall when the wind and rains come. Winds and rains and the storms of life WILL come. The wise man builds on a firm foundation. The foolish man is satisfied to build on sinking sand. The wise Believer needs to build his life on the Rock of Christ, letting Christ establish everything. Every word. Every act. Every feeling. Will we do this perfectly? Unfortunately, no! Should we aim to let Christ inform every area of our lives progressively, more and more, better and better? Yes! How? By thinking Biblically and living in light of His Beautiful Covenants. Now, let's talk about the corners of this foundational thinking....

OUR NON-NEGOTIABLES — there are four non-negotiable truths we must all understand before we can move forward with building our foundations

- 1. God is Our Reference Point**
- 2. His Word is Our Authority**
- 3. His Glory is Our Purpose**
- 4. His Presence is Our Promise**

We will come back to these over and over. To continue the building metaphor, as a site is prepared for a foundation, footers are poured in the corners. Footers are typically made with reinforced concrete to help the structure bear its load evenly. Footers are poured deep and thick. We have 4 footers, or non-negotiables, in our Biblical foundation. These four truths reinforce our foundation and give us a place on which to build. Let's look at number one - God is Our Reference Point.

1. **God is Our Reference Point** —

What is a reference point? A reference point is a fixed spot that everything else is defined by and by which everything else is put in perspective. On a ship, the horizon is often the reference point. One is less likely to be sea-sick if she can see the horizon. It balances the person swaying on the waves to fix their eyes on something that is not moving, a fixed point. What choices do people have on which to fix their lives? Many, many choices! Once the universe was thought to have Earth at its center, as its fixed point. Ptolemy's Geocentric Model was accepted for over a thousand years. Copernicus came along and discovered that the Sun is actually the center of our Universe and

founded the current Heliocentric Model. Something accepted as being an immovable center for centuries proved false. Anything created has the capacity to change or to be moved. To be wrong or false. The only fixed point that does not move is God. He alone is unchangeable. God is our Reference Point in life.

As the Creator of all that is, and the only one who is perfect and unchangeable, we should primarily look to Him in all issues of life.

The Creator God has the Right to be our Reference Point as we are His created beings. We were intelligently designed by Him. We operate best if He is our horizon as we navigate the seas of life.

In the beginning God ... Gen 1:1

In the beginning was the Word ... John 1:1

Q4. What is God? (Shorter Catechism)

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable —
in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

This shorter catechism answer is the same for all believers. (Catechisms are precepts or truths taught through fixed questions and answers). Does this truth of God being infinite, eternal and unchanging affect me? You? How does the Truth that God is Creator of all things and that He created ex nihilo (Latin: out of nothing) affect me? He is Powerful! What about the fact that He always has been and always will be? He has no beginning and no ending. He does not change. His person, His wisdom, His omnipotence, His utter otherness, His absolute Justice, Goodness and Truth are FIXED. He defines Himself as TRUTH. Am I to be looking to others, to my emotions, to someone else's ideas upon which to build my life? I may do one thing or believe one thing when I am happy that I would not do or think when I am sad or mad. I change. I change my emotions. I change my mind. Don't you? Why would I foolishly not look to my Creator? God NEVER changes. He is Faithful and True. We can trust Him. We can depend on Him. He created us and knows us and loves us. He is our firm foundation. Everything else in life can make sense only through the lens of His perspective. If He is fixed, we can trust Him to be our Reference Point in all things. The author of Hebrews admonishes us to fix our eyes on Christ, the Author and Perfecter of our Faith as we run the race marked out for us.

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. **Spirit**

Job 11:7 Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?
Unsearchable, Unknowable, Omniscient

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. **Eternal**

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. **No change**

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'" **His Being, TO BE=I AM (1st person singular)**

Psalms 147:5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.
All powerful (omnipotent), All knowing (omniscient)

Revelation 4:8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" **Eternal, WAS (past), IS (present), IS COMING (future)**

Revelation 15:4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." **JUST, HOLY**

Exodus 34:6-7 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God **merciful and gracious, slow to anger**, and abounding in **steadfast love and faithfulness**, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." **JUST, Steadfast, Unchanging**

Non negotiable truth number one — God is our reference point. Now, let's look at non-negotiable truth number two - His Word is Our Authority.

2. His Word is Our Authority—

Authority - defined as the power of right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience in the Oxford Dictionary. In the parent-child or employer-employee relationships we know who holds the authority pretty clearly. In the USA, the Constitution is our Authority. Do you have a document, President or King?

We see a culture around the world with little regard for authority don't we? The Bible tells us there will be this godlessness in the last days that is characterized by disobedience and lack of self-control (2 Tim 3:1-9)

What is God's Word? God's Word is defined as the Holy Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testaments. 66 books. 40+ human authors. Spans around 10,000 years of history.

So back to the idea that God's Word is our authority. According to our definitions — The Old and New Testaments have the power to give orders, make decisions and enforce obedience for the believer. Wow!

His Word is Our Authority — It is the only rule as to how we may glorify and enjoy Him.

II Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

All Scripture (every Word) comes from God (is God-given, God-breathed) and is good for us as it shows us our sin and teaches the believer and trains us so we are prepared to do God's work.

Teaching - defined as transmitting skills by reproof (not this way) and correction (but this way) and training in righteousness - we are given everything for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3)

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Only a living Book can produce life. Scripture is powerful. It speaks directly to our issues revealing to us our hearts, our minds, our lives as they truly are through the power of Holy Spirit. The Word is used in our sanctification (our being made holy, more and more Christ-like) to bring conviction of truth and confidence to trust God for change.

Q2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Eph 2:20 ...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone... **apostles (NT) and prophets (OT); Christ is holding it all up**

I John 1:3-4 ...that which **we have seen and heard we proclaim** also to you, so that you too may have **fellowship with us**; and indeed our fellowship is **with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ**.

And we are writing these things so that **our joy may be complete**.

Q3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

Doctrine — what we think, what we say we believe; this has to come from Scripture

Orthodoxy — our doctrine (Thinking Biblically) informs our

Orthopraxy — our conduct; practice (Living Covenantally)

Our Life Love (Christ and His Word) informs

Our Life View (Thinking Biblically) which in turn informs

Our Life Style (Living Covenantally)

II Tim 1:13 Follow the **pattern of the sound words** that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

II Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. **Again! The Bible tells me so!**

Micah 6:8. He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? **One example**

In a sea full of conflicting and confusing voices, let's listen to the Word of God as our Authority while we fix our eyes on God as our Reference Point. Let's let our Life Love of Christ shape our Life View and how we think. And let our Life View inform our Life Style and how we live! Thinking Biblically to Live Covenantally!

Let's review: Foundational truth number one — God is our reference point. Number two — God's Word is our authority. Now, let's look at non-negotiable truth number three - His Glory is Our Purpose.

3. His Glory is Our Purpose —

Put another way — God's opinion is our value. He alone is sovereign. He made us . He defines us. Our chief (primary) end (purpose) is to glorify Him and enjoy Him. This is what we do.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God. I For 10:31. We enjoy God's good gifts and give Him the glory or praise for them. **We live in His presence and give Him all the Glory as we enjoy Him, His person and His creation.**

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. Rev 4:11 **God deserves our praise given back to Him as we reflect His glory back. Like the moon has no sunbeams, only reflects the sun's light, so we reflect back to God the opinion with which He looks on us. He makes His face to shine upon us!**

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" Rev 5:13 **John's glimpse into eternity shows us the praise that occurs actually in the presence of the Lord!!**

Q1. What is the chief and highest end of man? (Larger Catechism)

A. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever

God's Glory is Our Purpose — the best thing we are possibly capable of, what we were created to do. Not just on Sundays in corporate worship, but with our whole lives, whatsoever we are doing....

1. God is our reference point. 2. God's Word is our authority. 3. God's Glory is our Purpose. Last non-negotiable foundation footer — non-negotiable truth 4. His Presence is Our Promise.

4. His Presence is Our Promise —

So, if we know we can look to God because He is unchanging. We know His Word is infallibly true. We live to Glorify Him. What do we get? What has God promised? The easy street? Health? Wealth? Maybe. But we are promised HIS PRESENCE. He will be with us. He will walk with us and talk with us. Through Christ and Holy Spirit, we are given God. This makes Christianity unique among all world religions. Christianity speaks of a God who redeems and dwells with His people. We do not have to be good enough. Lovely enough. Walking the line. Obeying FOR God to be present. He promises to dwell, to tabernacle with, His people. Those He chooses, He redeems, He

indwells. Are we satisfied with this as our reward? In this world there will be trouble. There will be trials. We want deliverance but sometimes He perfects us more in and through the trial as we seek His face than He could if He removed the trial. He does not promise everything will be easy with the best human outcomes. That would be a nice genie, working what WE want how WE want when WE want. That takes away HIS Glory. His Glory is our Purpose. We trust His Word. We look to Him and fix our eyes on Him. HE IS WITH US — that is the best promise!! We can do all things because He give us strength, Himself. We have access through prayer to the thrown room of Grace because

Christ intercedes for us. He carries our prayers to God the Father as we pray through the Holy Spirit in the name of Christ. God wants us to know Him, to trust Him and His plan for us and for the world.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve but after the fall, no one could see His face and live. He dwelled in the tabernacles and the temples of the Old Testament in the Ark of the Covenant inside the Holy of Holies. They literally carried the Ark and God lead them with His presence as they wandered, cloud by day and fire by night. He was present to accept their sacrifices of atonement. In the New Testament, Christ came to dwell humanly with us. He emptied Himself and set aside His Deity to become man.

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). Matt 1:23

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8 The Apostles were told to wait for the Spirit of Christ, Holy Spirit to empower them to their Apostolic work. Christ left so that He could leave us another Helper in this life. Holy Spirit with the Word of God transforms our minds and therefore how we live changes.

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor 4:6 We have Christ indwelling us!

FOUR FOUNDATIONAL NON NEGOTIABLE TRUTHS — God is our reference point. God’s Word is our authority. God’s Glory is our purpose. God’s presence is our promise. Questions at this point?

B. BEING TRANSFORMED RATHER THAN CONFORMED

Now we are back to my Romans 12 verses.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Rom 11:33-12:2

Because of who God is as explained at the end of Romans 11, we should therefore be transformed as Pauls implores in the beginning Romans 12. Why? So we may glorify and enjoy God. When we are converted, we are a new creation. Immediately, we received positional holiness or righteousness. We receive Christ's perfect life and atoning death applied to us or credited to our account. He takes all of our sin by nature and by transgression in thought, word and deed upon Himself and pays the penalty for them for us. We are regenerated, recreated. We get a new record, new heart, new life, new family, new mission, new eternal home, but NOT a new mind. Our memory, our personality, who we are, is not erased. No, the Lord uses our past. BUT we are required to have our minds renewed or transformed. We are positionally holy or righteous with our sin record justified but Christ. We are not practically holy or righteous though. We will need to grow in Grace. We will need to put off sin and put on Christ and His holiness. We are to work out our salvation through sanctification. Justification is monergistic. We have no cooperation or involvement. God does all the work. Sanctification, though, is synergistic. God works in us as we seek and serve him having our minds renewed by the Word and Holy Spirit.

To be conformed conversely is to be molded. To be pressed into this world's ways via its news, its people, its methods of influence. We will be changed. We will not be static and unmoved. Will we let the Word and the Lord shape us or this world? Do not be conformed. Don't submit to the outside forces all around us. Be transformed. Let the Lord use metamorphosis to create in us a new mind. How? By knowing God is our reference point, His word is our authority, His glory is our purpose, and His Presence is our Promise. Why? So we can live by a Biblical Worldview!! What is a worldview you ask?....

C. WHAT IS WORLDVIEW?

If you wear 3D glasses how do things look? What about through glasses with pink lenses? The glasses shape or color how we see everything we look at. Having a Biblical worldview means we aim to look at all of life through a Biblical lens, through a Biblical perspective.

A worldview is created (by our minds) as we answer three important questions: How did all of this begin or where did we come from? What went wrong or where did evil and suffering come from? And What can be done about it or how can the world be set right again?

A Biblical worldview actually plainly answers these questions for us. God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. They created man and was present with them. Man had the ability to choose to obey or to disobey. Adam disobeyed. God removed His presence thereby removing restraint and allowing for more disobedience. God promised redemption of His creation. God delivered that redemption in Christ. Christ plus NOTHING. Christ is the Promised Redemption. Christ is the world set right again. He came in Grace as the Atonement. He will come again in Judgement. He grants us Faith to believe in this Gracious act and look to Him alone for Salvation.

Your worldview shapes your answers to this world's hardest questions. What are your current answers? Where do they come from? Who and what helped shape them?

D. WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.
Psalm 103:19

Where is a kingdom? Where the King reigns. Where is God's Kingdom? Where God reigns. Where does God reign? We just read God rules and reign over ALL. Over all of creation! There is no where God does not have dominion. I do not have to grant Him dominion. It is His. Do I live like everything is under God's reign? There is no Holy and unholy. There is no sacred and secular, no area or time that is God's and not-God's. He reigns and has authority over all but His church submits to that authority as Lord.

E. WHAT IS KINGDOM DISCIPLESHIP?

Kingdom Discipleship aims to bring knowledge, understanding and wisdom to what we believe and how we apply God's Word to every area of life. We also grow in godly behavior as we build a Biblical worldview and hold every thought captive to the Word of Christ.

F. FOUNDATIONAL BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

How do we apply these Foundational Principles as we navigate what it means to Think Biblically and Live Covenantally? We will explore the following questions in the rest of our time together:

1. What is Covenant Theology?
2. What is the Church?
3. What is Womanhood?
4. What is Discipleship?
5. What is Women's Ministry?