



WELLFORD

BAPTIST CHURCH

MISSION AND VISION



FROM OUR PASTOR

At **Wellford Church**, we have one mission: to **grow as disciples** and to **make disciples**.

We believe this is what we were created and saved for. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37). That means we **cannot grow complacent in our pursuit of Him**. Loving God requires the totality of our being—our intellect, our body, our will, and our emotions. And the more we love Him, the more we want to know Him, and the more we know Him, the more we want to love Him—and to obey Him and be like Him.

But none of us will be fully like Him until that day we see Him face to face and are glorified with Him (1 John 3:2). That means we are all still works in progress. Therefore, growing as a disciple is **not just a one-time event**; it is a **journey** in which, by the Holy Spirit, little by little and day by day, we become less like our old selves and start acting more like a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). If you are a follower of Jesus, I know that is exactly what you want for your life. You want a biblical perspective on the world around you, you want to walk in truth and in step with the Spirit, you want to experience victory over sin, and you want to know and do God's will. But sometimes, **you might feel stuck**—unsure of what your next steps should be.

Our desire as a church is to equip you to reach the goal of becoming a healthy, mature disciple by following the pathway laid out in Scripture. We also want to bring clarity to what role each program in our church plays in moving us down this pathway so that everyone can know where to go to grow in each of these areas.

But as we go through this process, we know ***we can't keep this to ourselves***. The goodness of knowing Jesus and being transformed by His gospel cannot stay within the walls of the church. With the Great Commission, Jesus told us that we should go—not just to make converts but to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). In other words, Jesus told us we should likewise lead others down a discipleship pathway—just as we seek to grow into healthy, mature disciples, we should also lead others to do the same. In this way, spiritual growth and disciple-making should feed into one another because a growing disciple is going to make disciples, and making disciples means helping people grow in their relationship with Christ.

This symbiotic relationship between growing as disciples and making disciples reveals one other important component to this journey: ***we need each other to accomplish it***. Our relationship with Christ, while having individual and personal aspects, was never meant to be private. We were meant to walk together on this path, pointing each other to Jesus and helping each other become more like Him by grace through faith.

So over the next few pages, you'll find three key components of the discipleship pathway: ***adoration, alignment, and advancement***. We invite you to examine where you currently are in this journey. Then, ask yourself, "What's my next step to grow as a disciple and to make disciples?" Or as you are reading, you might begin to realize you're not even on the path. That can change today, my friend. You can turn from your sin and follow King Jesus. And we would love to tell you how you can do just that.

I believe God has great things in store for us here at Wellford as we seek His face and His kingdom together. ***So are you ready, Church?*** Are you ready to take your faith to the next level and grow as a disciple and make disciples?

***Then, let's prepare our hearts to
adore, align, and advance together.***



His,

Ricky

Ricky Stark
Lead Pastor



DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

The discipleship pathway ***begins and ends in adoration*** as we realize everything is worthless compared to knowing Christ. This ardent love of God results in an earnest pursuit of God—because we pursue what we adore. Therefore, ***the next step in discipleship is alignment***—we want to become like God in our thoughts, actions, emotions, and desires, delighting in what He delights in. As our hearts become more aligned with His, we will be on board with His mission ***to see His kingdom advance***; we will join Him in rescuing people from every nation, leading them to join in the adoration of our King, thereby starting the journey anew alongside them.

However, while there is a natural progression in this pathway, ***each step also simultaneously feeds into the others and takes us deeper into each of them***. The more we adore God, the more we will not only align our hearts with His but also advance His kingdom—because we want everyone to experience the joy of knowing Him. Likewise, the more we align our hearts with His, the more we will adore Him even as we lead others to trust in Him. And the more we advance His kingdom, the more we will line ourselves up with Him and grow in our affection for Him. Thus, while the journey of following Jesus begins and ends with adoration, we cannot proceed into any of these steps on the pathway without also making progress in all the steps along the pathway.

So just take that next step. Soon, you'll find you want to take another. And another. Indeed, once you taste and see that the Lord is good, you won't be able to hold yourself back.

And you won't want to take these steps alone—because knowing God is too good a thing to keep to yourself. Rather, joining with others and inviting others in, we will ***adore, align, and advance together***.



ADORE

We adore the King.

We believe a relationship with God is the greatest joy we can experience in life because He is the source of all that is good (James 1:17; Psalm 16:2). He is the most glorious, beautiful, and excellent being in existence: mighty, powerful, and holy, yet merciful, loving, and kind. That's why we cry out with the psalmist, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!" (Psalm 96:4) and echo the song of heaven: "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" (Revelation 4:11).

The journey of discipleship thus begins in delight as we are captivated by the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:8). As His image bearers, we find our greatest satisfaction and flourishing when we fulfill our purpose of reflecting His glory in the earth (Genesis 1:27; Psalms 16:11, 73:25). But when we chase after anything else, we wither to our demise. In other words, what we adore determines who we are and what we pursue. That's why Jesus once warned, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

The Obstacle

Unfortunately, our ancestors Adam and Eve sought to find their treasure in something other than God, disobeying the one command He gave them and choosing the fruit of the tree instead of the God who made that tree. As a result, all of creation was distorted, including our desires, to the point where we do not pursue what is good, we do not seek God, and we do not delight in righteousness but in evil (Romans 3:10-12). Left to ourselves, then, we are cut off from the treasure that is the presence of God and are without access to the good life we were created for.

The Solution

However, when we rejected God, He pursued us. When we sinned against Him, He offered forgiveness through the death and resurrection of His perfect Son Jesus. When we were His enemies, He adopted us as His own. In short, when we were unlovable, He loved us. Indeed, it is only because He first loved us that we can likewise love Him (1 John 4:19), turning away from our sin and pursuing a relationship with Him (Romans 12:1; Hebrews 12:28; Psalm 103:1-5). Therefore, as His rescued children, we adore God not only as our Creator but also as our Redeemer.

The Response

Therefore, we believe that the beginning and the end of what it means to be a disciple is to "worship [God] in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). But we cannot walk in truth if we do not know the truth, and as those who were born in sin, we cannot desire truth unless our hearts have been transformed by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-6; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26). In other words, we will not obey God if we do not delight in God (Matthew 22:37). But by His grace, God is our delight. We cannot get enough of Him. We want more and more of Him. He is what our hearts long for. That is why we seek Him daily in His Word and in prayer and why we gather as a church each week to remind one another of the goodness of God and to adore Him together.

NEXT STEPS

- **[Personal Time with God](#)**
- **[Family Devotions](#)**
- **[Sunday Morning Worship Gathering](#)**



ALIGN

We align our hearts with His.

The adoring heart pursues the object of its affection. Therefore, it's not enough that we admire God from a distance; we want to know Him intimately. More than that, we desire to be like Him and to live a life that is pleasing to Him. Indeed, if we truly delight in God, we will obey Him (John 14:15)—not in an attempt to earn His approval but because we adore Him. After all, when Jesus taught us to pray to God, "Hallowed be Your name," he also petitioned, "Your will be done" (Matthew 6:9-10).

Now, recognizing the disconnect between our own inclinations and His, we begin to pray, "Not my will but Yours be done." In other words, we turn from our sinful patterns of behavior, longing for our thoughts, affections, and pursuits to match those of our Father in heaven. Our earnest desire now is no longer to "be conformed to this world" but to "be transformed" into the likeness of God (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:1-2). We want to align our hearts with His.

The Obstacle

As sinners, we want our own way, and our hearts are out of line with the will of God. Left to ourselves, we resist what is good and true and reject the things of God (Romans 1:18, 21; 1 Corinthians 2:14). Instead of honoring God, we pursue “dishonorable passions” with a “debased mind” (Romans 1:26, 28; Ephesians 2:3). Rather than reflecting the character of the One whose image we were created to bear, we follow the enemy of our souls, Satan, and carry out his will. The entirety of our life is therefore out of alignment with God, and we are powerless to do anything about it.

The Solution

In order to escape this disorder, we need a new heart, and God provides just that for all who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26-27). Now, by His Word and through the Spirit, God is conforming us mind, body, and soul into the image of His Son, bringing our hearts back into alignment with His (Romans 8:29, 12:2; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). As His children, we follow His example and seek to walk in step with Him (Ephesians 5:1-2; Galatians 5:25) even as we await the day when we shall be like Him—not in part but in whole—because the good work He began in us will be completed (1 John 3:2; Philippians 1:6).

The Response

We therefore want to be a people who seek God in His Word (Psalm 119:9-11, 105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12). We want to walk in the Spirit and not the flesh (Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:22-24, 5:8-11; 1 John 2:15-17). And we want to turn from our sin and pursue His righteousness (Psalm 51:10; Matthew 6:33). But we cannot do this alone. Not only do we need the work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Word of God to experience transformation; we need each other—the gospel community—because if we want a heart aligned with His, we need the prayers, fellowship, accountability, and encouragement of His body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Hebrews 10:24-25). Indeed, we need the aligned hearts of other saints to propel us into further alignment with God—and our fellow saints need the same from us.

NEXT STEPS

- [**LifeGroups**](#)
- [**Discipleship Classes**](#)
- [**Men's Ministry**](#)
- [**Women's Ministry**](#)
- [**Youth Ministry**](#)
- [**Children's Ministry**](#)



ADVANCE

We advance His kingdom.

Since God is the greatest good in the universe and is worthy of our full adoration as both Creator and Savior and since the evidence of our adoration is our alignment with His will and mission, we also long to see His kingdom advance throughout the earth by leading others to worship Him and find their satisfaction in Him (Matthew 6:10). This is the final commandment Jesus gave us—that as His disciples, we would seek to make disciples.

This is also the fulfillment of the two great commandments; we tell others about Jesus because we love God with our entire being and because we care about our neighbors and know a relationship with God is their greatest good. So whether across the street or around the world, we want every person to have the chance to know Christ and to adore Him (Romans 10:14-17). Thus, in word and action, we seek to take the good news of the gospel where it is not yet prevalent, making disciples of all nations and leading them likewise to align their hearts with His (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Obstacle

In our own flesh, we tend to invest our lives in that which will pass away, seeking to push our own agenda and to increase our own kingdom. Rather than fulfilling our original image-bearing calling to represent God in dominion over the earth, we have rebelled against our King in an act of treason for which we deserve to die and be separated from Him forever. In our sin, we will not inherit the kingdom of God, much less advance it. We, along with all of humanity, live in the “domain of darkness” (Colossians 1:13) and under the “spiritual forces of evil” (Ephesians 6:12).

The Solution

Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus has dethroned the ruler of this fallen world, Satan, and has taken back what is rightfully His, setting us free from the captivity of sin. Thus, though we once walked in darkness, we are now children of light, taken out of the kingdom of this world and into the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). Now, having experienced freedom in Christ, our hearts are burdened for those who still walk in blindness—who are bound by their sin and ignorant of the goodness of knowing Jesus.

The Response

Therefore, we join in the mission of rescuing sinners by calling them to be reconciled to God. We seek to serve our neighbors, loving them as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). We seek to be agents of good in the world as people encounter the virtues of the kingdom in our lives (Matthew 5:13-16). And we seek to give sacrificially for the good of the church, the community, and the world. And we will not stop until that day when people from every tongue, tribe, and nation are gathered around the throne of God, adoring Him forever (Revelation 7:9-10).

NEXT STEPS

- ***Sharing the gospel***
- ***Serving in the church***
- ***Serving our community***
- ***Going on mission trips***
- ***Giving to kingdom causes***



**ADORE
ALIGN
ADVANCE
TOGETHER**



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