

Week 1            WHO IS THE CHURCH? / WHO IS GRACE CHURCH?  
Big Idea        Participation in a local church is God's plan for all Christians  
Big Rocks      This is the Church (30,000 ft view)  
                    -This is Grace Church (Mission, Values, Vision)

PREP TIPS!

- Watch the teaching video and work through the questions yourself
- Review the Week 1 "drawer" at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) so that you're familiar with the content

[Before the Video]

**LIVE HOST:**    **Introduce yourself and allow participants to introduce themselves**  
*"Tell us who you are, how you found Grace church, and something you hope to learn in this class."*

**Briefly overview the 4 weeks (use the headings for each week)**  
*"We're going to explore the answers to these questions- who is the church? Who is Grace church? What is the mission? Who am I? and What is next?"*

**Open in prayer**

**Introduce Week 1 teacher: Pastor Sarah Burt**  
[Sarah oversees curriculum for CORE, LifeGroups, Challenge Groups. She is also a member of the preaching team and has been a LifeGroup leader for many years. She loves the Word of God and loves sharing it with others.]

[Video Teaching #1]

Hello! Welcome to CORE class at Grace Church. I'm Sarah and I'm so glad that you've taken this next step with us. In this first session we're going to explore the answers to two big questions. First, WHO IS THE CHURCH? And then, WHO IS GRACE CHURCH? We've got a lot to cover so let's get started.

The first step in answering the question, WHO IS THE CHURCH?, is to understand that our God is a relational God. From the opening chapter of Genesis to the final chapter of Revelation, God reveals Himself to us as a God of relationship. God is 3 persons- Father, Son and Spirit- eternally existing in relationship as 1 immutable God. God created man and declared it was not good for him to be alone, so he created woman. And He commanded them to multiply- to be the father and mother of many and to populate the whole earth. God called Abraham out from his homeland and declared that he would be the father of a great nation, the people of God. And God made a covenant with Abraham that He would not forsake that great family, He would bless them, giving them a great land and making them a blessing to all the nations. And God kept His promise. The people of God, the Israelites grew into a great nation. The story of the Old Testament is the story of that great big family of God. Through all their ups and downs, God faithfully remained in relationship with them. And when the time was right, He sent His Son to live in proximity with His people. Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us.

And it doesn't stop there. God isn't only interested in His relationship with us, but He is also interested in our relationships with one another. It is true that Jesus Christ came as Savior- to bring salvation to all who believe in Him. He also came as the Good Shepherd- to *gather* His sheep into one fold. The New Testament uses the word "church" and language such as "the body" to describe this gathering of believers. Throughout Jesus' ministry and the ministry of His apostles we see the Good news of the gospel spreading through families and communities, people meeting at the temple, in synagogues, in homes. The gathering of God's people is His Church. For 2,000 years the Church has continued to gather- growing beyond the borders of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and into all the world. The people, the culture, the buildings all look different, but we His people are all part of His Church.

I invite you now to take a few minutes to pause this video and explore some Scripture with your Host. What does the New Testament teach us about the function of the Church?

[Video Paused]

**LIVE HOST:     Lead participants in a discussion of Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 1:22**

*42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awed came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

Acts 2:42-47

*24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Hebrews 10:24-25

**Large Group Questions:**

**-In Acts 2:42-47, what are all the activities the church was doing together? Underline the phrases.** (see underlines)

**-Where have you seen those things happening at Grace or other gatherings? In large Groups? In small groups?** (share 1 or two of your own examples)

**Small Group Questions:**

**-What is the encouragement for us in Hebrews 10:24-25? Why do you think we need reminded of this today?**

**-When and where can you model *stirring up one another to love and good works, meeting together, and encouraging one another*?**

**-Which Hebrews 10 activity can you engage in this week?**

[Video Teaching #2]

Now that we have a kind of picture in our minds for what Jesus Christ's church is as a whole, let's zoom in and start answering the question, WHO IS GRACE CHURCH? We're going to look at three key aspects of Grace that will give you a good idea of who we are. Those key things are our Mission, our Vision, and our Core Values. Imagine you're on a sailboat- the Mission explains what you're doing there; the Vision explains where you're going; and the Values are the rudder that help you stay on course.

Our Mission at Grace Church is based upon the Great Commission given by Jesus to His followers. We exist to MAKE and to BE fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. In other words, we want to make MORE and be BETTER followers of Jesus. But what exactly does it mean to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus? A simple definition is this: a fully devoted follower is a student who imitates the words, the character, and the lifestyle of his or her teacher, and then teaches others to do the same. Now, we can be fully devoted followers of many things, but as Christians, our Teacher is, of course, Jesus. If we return to the image of the boat, the mission of our journey, of our lives, is to fully devote ourselves to following Jesus and to teach others to do the same.

Let's talk now about the second key to answering the question WHO IS GRACE CHURCH? And that is our Vision- where are we going? Pastor Derek wants to share that with you himself [Video]. Thank you, Pastor Derek!

The third key to answering the questions WHO IS GRACE CHURCH? is our core values. Remember the sailboat- our values are the rudder, they help us stay on course. Let me briefly summarize our 5 core values:

Accessible Biblical Truth is the first. We value the Bible and won't pull punches or water it down. At the same time, we strive to make the Scriptures clear and applicable for real life.

Our next value is Authentic Relationships. We won't just put on our "Sunday best" and pretend everything is okay. We create environments where it's safe to share stories of struggle, triumph, sadness, doubt, and hope.

Spiritual Vitality is one of our values. Our gatherings are marked by spiritual energy and passion. We're fueled by our desire to continually take next steps in our relationship with Jesus.

The value All In is a critical one for Grace. God created us with unique skills to do ministry. We strongly believe that everyone at Grace is here for a reason. The church doesn't function well unless we're all involved.

And finally, Outward Focus is our fifth core value. The stakes are high. Our hearts will beat fast, our hands will be busy, and our wallets will be open for those who are far from God.

Now that you have the big picture of who we are at Grace Church, I want to give you time to pause this video, discuss what you have learned and ask your Host any questions you may have.

[Video Paused]

**LIVE HOST:     Lead participants in a discussion of Grace Church’s vision and values.  
                  [\*Note- mission will be discussed at more length in session 2]**

**Large Group Questions:**

**-Growing businesses like Google, Apple, Chik-fil-a have clear mission, vision and values. Why do you think it’s just as important for a church to have a clear mission, vision and values as it is for a business? How do churches benefit from being clear about Christ’s mission, vision, and values for us?**

**-Ask different participants to share the Mission statement, an overview of the vision and the 5 core values.**

Mission: Grace Church exists to make and to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ

Vision: Transformed communities through transformed lives

Core Values:    Accessible Biblical Truth  
                  Authentic Relationships  
                  All In  
                  Spiritual Vitality  
                  Outward Focus

**Small Group Questions:**

**-Looking at each core value, what does it look like when an individual embodies one of these? What does it look like when individuals come together as the church to embody these?**

(Consider assigning 1 or 2 core value to each group)

**-Ask a member from each group to share an answer with the larger group**

[Video Teaching #3]

Perhaps the most beautiful image of the church is found in Revelation 7.

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"* -Revelation 7:9-10

What a wonderful day it will be when all the people of God are gathered together to sing praises to Jesus!

Now I know that until that day there is no perfect local church, because we are all sinful people. The New Testament letters show that even the early church struggled to live in right relationships with one another. However, this church thing was God's design for His followers and that future glimpse of all of us gathered gives us hope. So, we yearn to live obedient, fruitful lives that build His Kingdom and bring Him glory. That's what we're chasing - we want to be and to make fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Thank you again for joining us in CORE. I hope that today you have gained more insight and understanding into who we are as a church. Session 2 will explore more fully the Mission of the Church, the mission of Grace Church and our mission as followers of Jesus. I want to remind you that your host is a great resource if you have questions and invite you to find additional resources for this class at [www.whoisgrace.com/core](http://www.whoisgrace.com/core).

[Video End]

**LIVE HOST:** Ask participants to share a “stand out” moment from today’s class.

Close the class with prayer.

Remind students to Dig Deeper:

- Email [core@whoisgrace.com](mailto:core@whoisgrace.com) with any questions

- Find more content at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) (\*Note- none of this is homework)

  - description of a fully devoted follower with Scripture references

  - list of “one another” verses from the New Testament describing how the church lives in community together

  - Grace Church Statement of Faith

- \*\*Participants should take SHAPE assessment if they have not yet done so (discussion during week 3)

Week 2           WHAT IS THE MISSION?  
Big Idea        Christians are Christ’s ambassadors to the world.  
Big Rocks      Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:7-9)  
                    WHO-WHERE-HOW

PREP TIPS!

- Watch the teaching video and work through the questions yourself
- Review the Week 2 “drawer” at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) so that you’re familiar with the content

[Before Video]

**Live Host:**       **Welcome everyone back and ask an opening question (choose 1)**  
                          *“Will someone share an example of one of the core values you saw lived out this week?”*  
                          *“Does anyone have an example of a Hebrews 10 activity that you experienced since we last met? (meeting together, encouraging one another)*

**Briefly (1-2 sentences) review Week 1**

**Introduce Week 2 teacher: Jalonna Krueger**

[Jalonna is the Grace Global Missions lead after many years leading GraceKids. She is passionate about Jesus and about sharing the gospel with all generations all over the world.]



[Video Teaching #1]

Welcome back to CORE! In our first session we answered the questions, WHO IS THE CHURCH and WHO IS GRACE CHURCH. Today, we're asking, WHAT IS THE MISSION of the church? Last week we introduced you to the mission statement of Grace Church- we exist to make and to be fully devoted followers of Christ- and we're going to take some time now to unpack why we landed on that as our mission statement. And for that, we need to go back- way back to Father Abraham and the first book of the Bible, Genesis. It is important for us to know that God made a promise to Abraham. Listen to Genesis 12:1-3.

*Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great family and that God would give them a great land- both fulfilled in the nation of Israel. But did you hear the third promise? That Abraham would be a blessing, that in Abraham "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Now, we believe that God is a promise-keeper, so how was this promise fulfilled? Let me read John 3:16-17...

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."*

The fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham is Jesus. *Whoever* believes in Him receives eternal life. Now, that's a blessing I'm thankful for and I hope you are too! So why is this important? How does this help us answer today's question- WHAT IS THE MISSION? Well, for the whole world to believe Jesus and to receive eternal life, the world needs to know about Jesus. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus has some final words for His disciples before He ascends to heaven. These words are commonly known as the Great Commission.

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

So, WHAT IS THE MISSION? The mission is to go and make disciples of all nations. This is the basis for our church mission statement and we'll unpack in a moment the details of WHO, WHERE, and HOW. But first, take a moment to reflect on what you've learned so far with your Host.

[Video paused]

**Live Host:**

**Large Group Questions:**

**-Compare the Grace Church mission statement with the Great Commission in Matthew 28. How well are we aligned with Jesus' mission?**

Grace Church Mission: We exist to make and to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*Matthew 28:18-20*

**-What does a fully devoted follower look like? What do they do?**

(point participants to Fully Devoted Follower description at the end of their week 1 materials- this is also a PDF on the webpage)

**Small Group Questions:**

**-Share how someone or something (an event or sign) told you about the good news of Jesus.**

**-How have you been able to share Jesus with the people in your life?**

**-What are the practical ways that we can BE devoted followers and MAKE devoted followers?**

[Video Teaching #2]

So we know WHAT the mission is, now let's answer WHO and WHERE we make disciples. Back to Matthew 28- *make disciples of ALL NATIONS*. That's everyone! And that sounds a lot like God's original promise to Abraham- that he would be a blessing to the whole world. Indeed, the good news of Jesus is good news for everyone. So, WHERE do we find everyone? In the same timeframe as Matthew 28, before he ascends to heaven, Acts 1:8 records Jesus explaining the where in greater detail.

*"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."*

The WHERE begins with the people and places most familiar to you. that's your Jerusalem. And then it moves out to the geographically near and culturally alike. That is Judea. And further out, to the geographically near and the culturally distant. That is Samaria. And finally, to the geographically and culturally distant- the ends of the earth. At Grace we visualize it as an expanding circle and personalize this to- your relationships, our site, our city, our world.

[Video paused]

**Live Host:**

**Large Group Questions:**

**-Let's look more closely at these 4 different groups, but we're going to go in reverse order:**

**Ends of the earth: Geographically & culturally far off**

**-How do we participate in this? How do we SEND or GO or SPONSOR?**

(Ask for short stories of how class participants have done this and/or briefly share your own story)

**Samaria: Geographically near but culturally different**

**-What are some ways for us to push into this circle? How do we cross the bridge and get proximate with people to listen, to build relationships, to serve, to work?**

(locally- volunteer with ServErie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest, City Mission)

**Small Group Questions:**

**Judea: Culturally and geographically near**

**-Who are they?** (Work, neighbors, school, etc.)

(Invite a couple of people to briefly share their experiences.)

**Jerusalem: Your relationships**

**-Take the 3-3-3 Challenge! Write down 3 names and commit to praying for them for 3 minutes at 3pm over the next week. Ask God for opportunities to share Jesus with them!**

[Video Teaching #3]

Now, one final question to dig into today- HOW do we live out this mission? Right at the beginning of verse 19 is the word “Go.” Usually, we think that is the central command of this verse. But it would be better translated as “as you are going.” And if we read the sentence using that translation, “as you are going therefore, make disciples...” The mission is then highlighted- wherever you are, whatever you do, make disciples. As you are in your workplace, as you are taking care of your families, as you are running errands, as you are serving in your community, as you are giving your time and resources. As you are going...

At Grace, we live this out through one of the core values we learned about last week- Outward Focus. One of the specific ways in which our church invites you to participate in this is through our Global Missions ministries. Let me briefly highlight the different arms of this ministry and invite you to find out more [[www.whoisgrace.com/missions](http://www.whoisgrace.com/missions)]. First, we have local partners. ServErie [[www.servErie.com](http://www.servErie.com)] is one of those and it is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that began as a Saturday morning movement. This community organization in the city of Erie mobilizes and equips volunteers from all walks of life and connects them to the pressing needs of our community. Second, we have missionary partners whom we support financially and through prayer. And third, we have three Global Partner churches in Japan, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Why do we do all of this? Back to Acts 1:8- God calls the church to go into their communities, into their region, into the whole world with the good news of Jesus.

And before we go today, let’s look at HOW this mission is powered. Jesus’ final words are the key, “*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*” How is it possible that He is leaving them and staying with them? Because He sends the Helper, the Holy Spirit. It is not by my power or your power or the good intentions of a church that we embark on this mission. It is in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Spirit that we go and we make disciples.

[Video End]

**LIVE HOST:** Ask participants to share a “stand out” moment from today’s class.

Close the class with prayer.

Remind students to Dig Deeper:

-Email [core@whoisgrace.com](mailto:core@whoisgrace.com) with any questions

-Find more content at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) (\*Note- none of this is homework)

-Evangelism tools from the Billy Graham Association, CRU, and the Navigators (Bridge Illustration)

**\*\*Participants should take SHAPE assessment if they have not yet done so (discussion next week!)**

Week 3            WHO AM I?  
Big Idea        Each Christian is uniquely gifted and called to God's Mission.  
Big rocks       The Body of Christ  
SHAPE

PREP TIPS!

- Watch the teaching video and work through the questions yourself
- Review the Week 3 "drawer" at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) so that you're familiar with the content

[Before Video]

**Live Host:**        **Welcome everyone back and ask an opening question (choose 1)**

*"How has serving locally or globally impacted your life?"*

*"Would someone who decided to take the 3-3-3 challenge this week (pray for 3 people for 3 minutes at 3pm every day) share with us something from that experience?"*

**Briefly (1-2 sentences) review Week 2**

**Introduce Week 3 teacher: Matt Kent**

[Matt is the GraceYouth Lead. He is a graduate of Liberty University, husband to wife Sadie, and dad to baby girl Carson. Matt is passionate about using his own gifts to serve the Lord and serve the church and he is excited about seeing youth and adults discover their gifts and calling.]

## [Video Teaching #1]

Hello everyone and welcome back to CORE class! My name is \_\_\_\_ and it is my hope for you that by the end of this session, you will understand that God has uniquely designed you for a role in His kingdom and at Grace Church. Psalm 139:14-16 captures what we believe about each one of you:

*14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.*

*15 My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

*16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.*

When we grasp the magnificent way in which we were made and combine that knowledge with an awareness of God's goodness toward us, then we are both filled with gratitude and with a desire to spend our lives in service to God and His people. Last week we answered the question, "WHAT IS THE MISSION?" We explored and discussed Jesus' commission to the church and to us from Matthew 28 and Acts 1:8- that we His people are to be His witnesses to a lost world. And this week we want to explore how each of us is called and equipped for His mission by helping you discover the answer to the question, "WHO AM I?"

To do this we're going to use a framework developed by Saddleback church called SHAPE. Hopefully, you have all taken the SHAPE assessment online, and so you're familiar with the acronym. SHAPE stands for- spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences. This framework helps us discover who we are and how we are gifted for ministry in Christ's church. We want you to serve God in the best possible way and we believe that when we're using our Gods given gifts and passions, we bring the hope and love of Jesus to our church, our communities, and our world. We believe you are uniquely gifted and called to God's mission and we are committed to helping you discover that gifting and that calling.

Before we get to your SHAPE we're going to begin with a very churchy word- ministry. "Ministry" is from the Latin word for "service." If Ministry is service, then a minister is a servant. We can describe Ministry as using whatever God has given you to serve Him and the needs of others. There are several key New Testament passages that describe the nature of ministry and four of them are highlighted in your participant guide. I want to read just two of them. First, Ephesians 2:10 says, "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*" What an encouraging and purpose-filled word that is to each of us today. You are intentionally crafted and designed because He's got work for you to do! And it gets even cooler- not only are we individually designed for this work, but He has brought us together as a body, as a church, so that we can accomplish more and better together. Listen to Paul's letter to the church in Rome. Romans 12:3-8 says,

*"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith*



*that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them; if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."*

You and me and every single one of God's children is made to work together to serve Him, to serve one another, and to be His servants in the world so that His mission of bringing the good news of Jesus is accomplished. I don't know about you, but I get so excited thinking about every one of us unleashed in our calling and serving Him to our full potential. Imagine what He will do through us!

Quickly, before you break for a short discussion with your host, I want to talk through 7 ministry principles:

First- A person's ministry is determined by his or her design. Who God made you to be determines what He intends for you to do.

Second- Using your spiritual gifts is fruitful and fulfilling. We'll talk more about spiritual gifts in a minute, but we believe that the Spirit in you wants to be fruitful in your life and to bring your life a whole new level of fulfillment.

Third- Everyone has a calling. Listen, an uncalled, non-serving Christian is a contradiction. Jesus said, "A slave is not greater than his master," and then Jesus modeled radical servanthood. Every believer is created, saved, called, gifted, authorized, and commanded to live by His example.

Fourth- Personal ministry builds up the local church. God knows how to make churches and Grace church needs you! 1 Corinthians 12:7 tells us, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." If you are not serving in a ministry, our church is like a big puzzle with a missing piece.

Fifth, The Grace staff members are administrators, while the people of Grace are ministers. When the church functions correctly, the staff won't be able to give away ministry fast enough, to people eagerly wanting to serve!

Sixth, "Church" is a team sport. What do the Trinity, the disciples, and the early church fathers all have in common? They are all groups that ministered in community. The Holy Spirit distributes gifts in a way that promotes interdependency and deep relationships.

And, finally, number seven- Serving changes you. You grow when you use what God has given you to serve others and to serve His church.

Whew- that was a lot of content and I want to give you a few minutes now to talk through some of it with your host. How have you seen these principles in action? What is your reaction to the truth that you are a minister, a servant, called to serve God and His church?

[Video paused]

**Live Host:**

**Large Room Questions:**

- What is your reaction to the truth that you are a minister, a servant, called to serve God and His church?

-Let me read Ephesians 2:10 again for us: *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* The Greek word for “workmanship” is *poemia*. The Greeks used it to describe any artistic masterpiece. How is the Church God’s masterpiece? How are you His masterpiece?

**Small Group Questions:**

- **How does Ephesians 2:10 encourage you personally?**

*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*

*Ephesians 2:10*

- **Look through those 7 ministry principles again. How have you seen these in action at Grace or in other churches?**

## [Video Teaching #2]

Let's go back to that acronym I mentioned earlier- SHAPE. Remember that it stands for Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences. God has uniquely shaped you to do His good work. And there is no way we can fully cover the breadth and depth of who you are in this one class. What we want to do today, and what we hope the SHAPE assessment will help you to do, is to give you language and tools with which you can think and reflect and prayerfully discover who you are as God's uniquely designed child and what your place in His kingdom and His church might be. Remember, if the church, the body of Christ is a puzzle, you are a crucial piece. And that also means that you are created to fit within the body in a way that only you can. That's pretty awesome!

I want to give you time to discuss each of these, so let me quickly give you an overview of Spiritual gifts. You can find more information for further learning on the CORE class webpage.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul said, *"concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed"* (1 Cor 12:1). And he goes on to say to them,

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. [5](#)There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. [6](#)There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

*[7](#)Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. [8](#)To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, [9](#)to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, [10](#)to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. [11](#)All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Cor 12:4-11)*

The spiritual gifts are given to you and to me by the Holy Spirit. He decides which gifts we are given and He empowers us to use those gifts for the common good. That means that we can't keep these to ourselves, we're meant to use them for the good of the church, God's Kingdom, and for one another.

We want to make sure here at Grace to never take a ho-hum approach to the gifts. These are supernatural expressions from God born out of love and care for His church. Sometimes there is a natural expression of the gift and sometimes a supernatural expression – but we want to acknowledge that all gifts come with Spirit-filled power.

For example – the gift of healing may come in the form of people who are trained in counseling or in medicine, where God uses your unique gifts and training to help make people well. But there is also a supernatural expression like in Mark 16:18 where Jesus said some people *"will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."* At Grace we believe in both expressions of this gift.

Here's another example. One of the spiritual gifts is the gift of knowledge. This could express itself in a Life Group when a person with this gift has an insight into what the Bible says that they share with the group as a result of their study and knowledge of the Bible. But this gift can also express itself through a supernatural revelation, a word of knowledge, that God gives to one person to share with another person in the atrium at church on a Sunday morning.

God hasn't stopped working supernaturally through the spiritual gifts, and at Grace we want you to be open and prepared for God to use you!

Take some time now to review the spiritual gifts with your host and share what you discovered in your SHAPE assessment.

[Video paused]

**Live Host:** *“There are, of course, different reasons why all of the spiritual gifts in the church don’t get used. One reason is that many people aren’t sure what their spiritual gifts are. You’ve taken a spiritual gifts assessment, and while this isn’t a 100% accurate way of identifying your gifts, it gets you started and helps give you some direction. Let’s review part of that together.”*

**Large Room Questions:**

- **Optional Activity for LIVE classes: Animal Puzzles** [Supply each table with an animal puzzle. Each puzzle must be missing at least one piece. When participants discover a piece is missing, ask: *How is this puzzle like the body of Christ? How important are the missing “pieces?”*]
- **Looking at your spiritual gifts results from the assessment, what are some additional ways you can work to confirm and discover more about your gifts?** [ask trusted Christian friends/family, talk with a mentor/pastor, serve in a ministry and try it out for a while, etc.]

**Small Group Questions:**

- **Share your top 3 spiritual gifts from your assessment results. Do these seem true for you? What surprises you?**
- **What have you learned about yourself by looking each part of your SHAPE assessment separately and together?**

## [Video Teaching #3]

As the SHAPE acronym implies, there is more to who you are and the work God made you to do than just knowing your spiritual gifts. Other aspects of how God created you often come into play in your personal ministry. Let's say, for example, that you are a gifted administrator. But you also love children. Your spiritual gifts determine what you *do*. The next four parts of the SHAPE acronym help provide the setting of *where* you will best serve and *who* you will serve.

Let's move on to the letter "H" of the SHAPE acronym. That H stands for Heart. We believe your ministry is determined by your heart. Now, when we talk about the "heart" for SHAPE purposes, we are talking about passion. This God-given motivation serves as an internal guidance system for our lives. It determines what our interests are and what will bring us the most satisfaction and fulfillment. It also motivates us to pursue certain activities, subjects, and environments. Psalm 37:4 says, "*Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*" God gave you your inborn interests. Are you passionate about music? That came from God. Are you passionate about carpentry? God gave you that passion. Whatever it is, He has given it to you for your fulfillment and for the good of His church and the world.

And now the letter "A". Your ministry is also determined by your Abilities. The good news is that God creates masterpieces, not cogs in a wheel. We are not all the same and that is good. We just heard Paul say, *There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.* (1 Cor 12:6) Unfortunately, many of us believe that only a narrow set of gifts and abilities are needed in the church- abilities like music and public speaking. But the truth is that all abilities are God-given and able to build up the church.

In the Old Testament book of Exodus there is a fascinating story that highlights this. For context, the Israelite nation has been led out of slavery in Egypt by God through His prophet, Moses. God has miraculously rescued them and now they're in the wilderness, making their way toward the promised land. In the meantime, they need a place in which they can worship and come to God's presence. Eventually, that will be the Temple in Jerusalem. For now, it needs to be a mobile temple. And it is called the Tabernacle. In Exodus 31, starting in verse 1,- God is speaking to Moses, giving him very specific instructions its construction:

<sup>1</sup> *The LORD said to Moses,* <sup>2</sup> *"See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,* <sup>3</sup> *and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship,* <sup>4</sup> *to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze,* <sup>5</sup> *in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.* (Exodus 31:1-5)

And it wasn't just Bezalel- God goes on to talk about his buddy Oholiab and the work he will do. Maybe these guys didn't view their abilities as particularly spiritual. But that's not how God viewed them. God said that He filled them with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship to do the work God created them to do.

Okay, let's look next at the "P" in the SHAPE acronym – it stands for **Personality**. We need to pay close attention to the way God made us. If we pay attention to our unique personalities, we will be better able to serve God in a way that feels natural. But we should also be aware that God stretches us and challenges us and quite often it is outside our comfort zone that He uses us.

Let me finish now with the “E” in the SHAPE acronym – it stands for Experiences. There are four broad categories- spiritual, educational, ministry, and painful. A really powerful exercise that you can do on your own is to map out the experiences of your life in those four categories. Ask yourself questions about your spiritual experiences like, “When have I felt closest to God?” or “What have been significant moments of growth in my faith?” Take a look at your educational experiences, both formal and informal- what things have you learned and studied and become an “expert” in? Many of you have some sort of past Ministry Experiences within the church- were those filling or draining for you? And we all have Painful Experiences. The problems, hurts, and trials we’ve endured have taught us valuable lessons. We believe that God never wastes a hurt, that even the hardest moments of our lives can be redeemed for the good of ourselves and for others.

As we pay close attention to how God made us and what we have already experienced in our lives, we become more aware of the Spirit’s work in our hearts to prepare us for ministry. I’m going to turn the time over to your host now to **walk through some discussion of your heart, abilities, personality and experiences**. Before I do that, let me say that I am so excited to see how God fills and calls and uses each of you in His church!

[Video End]

**LIVE HOST:** *“The Grace Church family needs you to make your mark on this church. Blessings and thanks in advance for joining us on this journey of discovery so that we can share our gifts and grow together.”*

Close the class with prayer.

Remind students to Dig Deeper:

- Descriptions of the Spiritual Gifts are in their participant guide with corresponding scriptures. (PDF available online)

- Email [core@whoisgrace.com](mailto:core@whoisgrace.com) with any questions

- Find more content at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) (\*Note- none of this is homework)



Week 4           WHAT'S NEXT?  
Big Idea        God is calling you to take the next right step.  
Big rocks       Next Steps [LifeGroup, Serve, Baptism, Care & Support, Challenge Group]

PREP TIPS!

- Watch the teaching video and work through the questions yourself
- Review the Week 4 “drawer” at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass) so that you’re familiar with the content

[Before Video]

**Live Host:**       **Welcome everyone back and ask an opening question (choose 1)**

**Briefly (1-2 sentences) review Week 3**

**Introduce Week 4 teacher: Pastor Scott Michel**

[Scott and his wife Heather moved to Erie with their two daughters in 2014 (and yes, he loves being a “girl dad”). Scott came on staff at Grace in 2018 and currently serves as the Executive Pastor for all Grace Sites while also serving as the Site Pastor for Grace McKean.]

[Video Teaching #1]

Hello CORE class and welcome to your final week! Thanks for sticking with us, for engaging in good conversation, and for taking time to explore the idea of church with us....and don't forget.... if you have any follow up questions, email us at [core@whoisgrace.com](mailto:core@whoisgrace.com)

Quick recap: In week one we helped answer the questions, WHO IS THE CHURCH and WHO IS GRACE CHURCH? Then in week two we explored the answer to WHAT IS THE MISSION? and last week you took a deeper look at your own self as part of the body of Christ as you used the SHAPE assessment to answer WHO AM I?

Today, as we wrap up this class, we want to encourage you to consider how you will answer THIS question- WHAT'S NEXT? We believe that being a fully-devoted follower of Jesus is more than a one-time decision. It's a lifelong process. The church word for that is discipleship and we like to think about it as a crockpot, not a microwave.

God doesn't rush us, but He does call us to make the next right decision, to do the next right thing, to take the next right step. We learn and practice and grow in our faith as we take those next steps, guided by the Holy Spirit and filled with His power. Here at Grace, you hear us talk about next steps A LOT!!!! We even have a next steps pathway- it's the way we've helped you chart a course to grow closer to God while you're at Grace Church. In fact, you're on the pathway right now! The CORE class is one of the first steps of our pathway and today we want to share with you a few possible ways you could take the next right step in your spiritual growth. If you have questions or you're ready for any of these steps, you can use link/QR code to fill out our connections form, or just let your host know and they will help you take that step.

[Video paused]

**Live Host:** *There are both people and practices that help us take next rights steps in our faith.*

**Large Room Questions:**

**-Who models for you being a fully devoted follower of Christ? What do you see them doing and saying?**

**-What does it mean to you that becoming a fully devoted follower is more like a crock pot than a microwave?**

**Small Group Questions:**

**-What are some of the spiritual practices and Next Steps that have helped you in your spiritual growth?**

(Bible reading- "Find Your Chair"- prayer- fellowship/community- church attendance- serving others- fasting- sabbath- giving/generosity- solitude- worship- etc.)

## [Video Teaching #2] Baptism, LG, Challenge Grp

Okay, let's dive into some of these next steps! First, let's talk about BAPTISM. If you have ever participated in a baptism service, or been baptized yourself, you know that it is a really exciting moment in a person's walk with Jesus. It is a celebration filled with joy for both the person getting dunked and for those who are witnesses. Now, baptism does not save someone, but Jesus commanded that those who believed in Him and chose to follow him take a step of obedience by being baptized, just as He was. Being physically baptized in water is a public declaration of the new life given by God. Through the cross, your life is forever connected to the life of Jesus. If you have never been baptized, or you were baptized as an infant, we invite you to take a next step and sign up for believers' baptism.

I want to talk about LifeGroups- these are the primary way in which we live in community here at Grace. This is where we want authentic relationships to develop as we encourage one another, learn from one another and support one another. As we learned in week 1, God designed us for relationship with Himself and with one another. And we believe we do that best in circles during the week with a small group of people, rather than rows on Sunday morning with a large crowd. Now, don't get me wrong, we need to gather together as the larger church on a regular basis, but repeatedly throughout Scripture we see discipleship happening in smaller groups. Jesus had 12 disciples who were closer to Him than the rest of His followers, and of those 12 He had an inner circle of 3. We see in Acts that the early church met regularly at the synagogue and then they broke off to meet in smaller groups in their homes. That's what we do here at Grace. What happens in a LifeGroup? Life change happens in a group! And that's accomplished through regular, committed meetings, prayer, learning from the Scriptures, encouraging one another in the faith, and actively engaging in one another's lives.

- I have the pleasure every so often of sitting in on LG's...and every time I do so.... I hear stories of people who were SO hesitant to join a group. I get it, because I was one of those people as well. I mean it's just hard to actually show up.....let alone share thoughts and feelings.
- BUT.... it never fails. At some point during their sharing with me, comes the story of breakthrough, or the story of people digging in God's word and encouraging one another, or the story of a person feeling so overwhelmed with love and support from a community that embodies and lives out the message of Jesus to love one another!
- And then comes the line...I just don't know what I would do without this group! That's the power of Christian community!!!

Now, if you're not yet ready to jump into someone's living room on a weekly basis, we have short term Challenge Groups meeting from one to three weeks. These groups help you develop the habit of connecting with God every day through Bible reading and prayer. As you follow the daily Challenge Guide, you will learn and reflect on the foundations of what it means to follow Jesus. You will be encouraged by your leader and group members as you interact through group messaging each day and end with a virtual celebration on a group video call. Accepting this challenge may be just the shot in the arm you need to fully engage with Jesus and with the church community.

[Video paused]

**Live Host:**

**Large Room Questions:**

**-Pastor Derek has said "Focus on Next Steps, not perfection." How does that encourage you?**

**-Would someone share with the group about their baptism experience? What were your emotions beforehand? What did you experience after you were baptized?**  
(be prepared to briefly share your own experience if no one else has been baptized)

**Small Group Questions:**

**-What do you think your next step might be? [Life Group? A Challenge Group? Baptism?]**

**-If you have already taken one of these steps, share why you decided to take that step and how it has impacted you.**

### [Video Teaching #3] Serve, Giving, Care & Support

Isn't this fun! Let's keep talking about Next Steps. Another step on our pathway is SERVE. Last week you learned all about your SHAPE and the idea that God has uniquely designed and created you for the work of ministry. Now, of course that doesn't mean all of you should quit your jobs and become pastors (though you never know what He might call you to down the road!). what it does mean is that God has designed the church like a house and each of us is a specific brick. Or we're a body and each of us is a different part. However you imagine it, the point is that church is not meant to just be watched or attended, rather God means for us to participate and serve alongside one another. I truly believe you are gifted and called to be a part of Grace church and I want to invite you to take a step to serve. That might look like any number of things....

- Online – as a chat host or part of the digital team
- Maybe you're a behind the scenes person who has gifts/passions for administrative support, tech set-up, event planning
- Or maybe it looks like using your gifts on a Sunday morning at one of our locations. Whether it be a greeter at the door, in the café, or in our Grace Kids or Grace Youth ministries, I promise you this...God is so desiring you to step up and use them to serve others!

Okay- just two more next steps to go. This next one can feel awkward to talk about, but it is something we are committed to and that is generosity and giving. Scripture teaches that Jesus' followers are generous people who invest in the Kingdom of God on earth. Giving to the local church is a way to not only support the workers and the work of ministry, but it is also a significant way in which we worship God and surrender our lives to His lordship. Through your giving, opportunities to reach kids and youth are multiplied. Through your giving, opportunities to support single moms, widows, the homeless and jobless are multiplied. Through your giving, we're able to send missionaries all over the world and to take the gospel to those who do not yet know Jesus. 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 says,

*He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.*

Praise God for His increase and thank you for your generosity.

Finally, I want to talk about CARE & SUPPORT at Grace Church. Sometimes, this is the right next step before anything else. Because you're hurting. Because you feel broken. Because you're too much in the middle of something hard to see a way around it. You need first to be seen and heard and known right where you are. Our Care and Support ministries and resources are in place for you- we want to offer hope, spiritual growth and authentic community to individuals and couples experiencing common life stressors and transitions. Some examples of our resources are: pastoral care, hospital visitation, marriage mentoring, Christian Counseling (CCA), benevolent assistance...Reaching out is easy and confidential. Simply email [gethelp@whoisgrace.com](mailto:gethelp@whoisgrace.com) and briefly describe your situation and you will receive a reply promptly.

Now, I talked A LOT today about A LOT of different next steps available for you to take here at Grace church. What I hope you hear.... is that God desires your faith to be active and moving forward. God is calling you to a next right step and the Holy Spirit will give you the power and the courage to take that step. What I don't want you to hear is that you need to take all of these steps that I described all at the

same time. That's crazy...AND... a bit unhealthy! I want you to spend some time with God in the coming days and ask Him this question- WHAT'S NEXT, God? And I believe you can trust Him to answer.

[Video End]

**LIVE HOST:** That's a wrap! Thank students for investing their time and participating in each class.

Close the class with prayer.

**Remind students to Dig Deeper:**

-Please complete the participant evaluation when you receive that email- help us make this class a great experience for everyone!

-You received a link to the Next Steps survey last week. If you haven't completed that, prayerfully consider doing so!

-Email [core@whoisgrace.com](mailto:core@whoisgrace.com) with any questions

-As always- Find more content at [www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass](http://www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass)

**\*\*For classes at a physical location, remind participants of the Site Pastor LUNCH details.**