

LIBERTY WAY TASK FORCE SCHOLARLY DOCUMENT

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On behalf of the Liberty Way Task Force

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Introduction¹

Genesis 1 and John 1 present heaven's ordered disclosures to earth. *The God Who is There*² reveals Himself by the manifestation of the world by His spoken Word and, in similar fashion, by the incarnation of Himself by His Living Word, Jesus, the second person of The Trinity.³ After examining various moral philosophies, Arthur Holmes summarizes, "A divine Word ordered the creation and formed human rationality in his own image (this is what ultimately overcomes moral skepticism and anti-realism), and that Word became incarnate, full of virtues of grace and truth."⁴ The imperative of ordering disclosure begins beyond human will and understanding, thoroughly an intentional, planned action from the transcendent source of all that is known, the Hebrew God YHWH of the Bible's First Testament manifest in the person of Jesus in the Second Testament.⁵

At the same time, "a true act of belief" must include "understanding, feeling, and will, synthesized in the individual person."⁶ Necessarily, before students can be transformed by their educational experience, administration through faculty to staff must be committed to mission.

¹ Every statement of belief has a starting point: a source of knowledge that shapes how that knowledge is applied. Before Liberty University can explain the process and result of its education, Liberty must first pursue the origin of its creed. This document is the end result of a task force put in place by Liberty President, Dr. Dondi Costin.

² Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who is There: Speaking Historic Christianity into the Twentieth Century* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1968). Schaeffer's title emphasizes the importance and permanence of God's existence as the foundation of all things.

³ Gen. 1:3–31; John 1:1–18.

⁴ Arthur F. Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 180.

⁵ The biblical account of creation centers on the Creator rather than the creature. God acts according to His own purpose and glory (Ps. 135:5–7; Isa. 43:7, 46:9–11; Eph. 1:9–11). Questions concerning God, humanity, purpose, reality, and knowledge ultimately find their answers in divine revelation (Deut. 29:29, 30:11–20).

⁶ John H. Gerstner, *Reasons for Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 231.

Such academic synthesis⁷ is to be “controlled,” the necessary Christian construct:

The religious beliefs of the Christian scholar ought to function as *control* beliefs within his devising and weighing of theories. This is not the only way they ought to function. For example, they also ought to help shape his views on what it is important to have theories about. Nor does that exhaust their function. But their functioning as control beliefs is absolutely central to the work of the Christian scholar.⁸

A controlled Christian “preunderstanding”⁹ or faith commitment lays the foundation for any study. Everyone has a view of the world—where it came from, how it works, what is important to know—because in the mindset of the individual or institution, ideas have consequences. Accordingly, Liberty University grounds its mission in seven controlling commitments:

1. **God as REALTY**: the personal, eternal, triune Creator exists; therefore, He is the fixed, permanent presence from Whom all other existing, actual things flow.¹⁰
2. **Scripture as REVELATION**: the eternal God has unveiled Himself through His word to humanity¹¹ and the fine tuning of His creation by the very breath of His Word.¹²

⁷ Biblical synthesis encourages everyone within their time to anticipate God’s consummation of history (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1–11). Scripture consistently foresees those who would follow (1 Pet. 1:10–12). The nature of the Old Testament is to point forward to the New Testament. The seed of sin sown in Genesis is rooted by Christ in the Gospels. Jesus teaching about Himself throughout God’s testament to the Hebrews is explained in His testament to Christians (Luke 24:25–27). Passages such as 1 Peter 2:9–10, Revelation 1:5–6 and 5:10 never lose God’s missional purpose.

⁸ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 70.

⁹ William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 154–68.

¹⁰ Scripture describes God’s reign (Ps. 102:12), glory (Ps. 104:31), righteousness (Ps. 89:14), faithfulness (Ps. 117:2), love (Ps. 118:1–4), Word (Ps. 119:89), kingdom (Ps. 145:13), power (Rom. 1:20), unseen realities (2 Cor. 4:18), purpose (Eph. 3:11), and redemption (Heb. 9:12) as eternal.

¹¹ The personal, eternal, triune Creator, who has revealed Himself in His Word, His world, and His works, prompts the researcher’s passion to learn (Eph. 1:15–23; Phil. 1:9–11; Col. 1:9–10). Those who study Scripture ponder what God has done (Ps. 64:9), stand in awe of His wonders (Ps. 65:8), and behold His awesome works (Ps. 66:5)—all of which cause a fear of Him to spread throughout the earth (Ps. 67:7).

¹² Job 26:7–14; Ps. 33:6; Rom. 1:18–20.

3. **Creation as REALITY**: the all-inclusive aggregate, the unified collection of everything which has been created by and is sustained through the Creator.¹³
4. **Humans in RELATIONSHIP**: the original intention of God with humanity was—and still is—a personal bond with His image-bearers.¹⁴
5. **Designed for REASON**: the God Who is, the revelation of Himself, and His desire for communion with His creatures grant sense and significance, imbuing meaning in all things.¹⁵
6. **Education in ROOTEDNESS**: The distinctive nature of Christian education necessitates all disciplines are fixed in the soil of biblical teaching.¹⁶

¹³ God is to be praised in all things (1 Pet. 4:11); He gives life to all things (Neh. 9:6; 1 Tim. 6:13) and gives people everything needed for life (Acts 17:25; 2 Pet. 1:3). All things are created by, through, and for Him (Prov. 16:4; Col. 1:16); He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3); He is before all things and by Him all things consist (Col. 1:17); through Jesus, He reconciles all things to Himself (Col. 1:20); and in all things He has preeminence (Col. 1:18). God will restore all things (Acts 3:21) and make all things new (Rev. 21:5). Meanwhile, He gives all things for people to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17), and believers are to give thanks for everything (Eph. 5:20).

¹⁴ For those in the ancient Near Eastern world, being made in “the image of God” (Gen. 1:26, 1:27, English Standard Version) carried great weight. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews & Mark W. Chavalas, eds. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p. 29. To bear the image or likeness of the divine was to reflect the deity’s nature and characteristics. This relationship did not involve a one-to-one correspondence: the image-bearer was not God in the flesh (Gen. 2:7; Isa. 31:3; John 4:24). However, humankind bore delegated authority from God over the earth (Gen. 1:28; Heb. 2:8) yet remained under His authority as Creator (Isa. 57:16; Zech. 12:1; Rom. 1:25; 1 Tim. 6:15–16), dependent upon Him (Job 12:10), and belonging to Him (Matt. 22:20–21). The Hebraic-Christian teaching concerning God’s image in humanity can therefore be summarized as follows: human beings represent God and serve as His representatives on earth (Ps. 8:5–8).

¹⁵ The Hebrew Bible focuses on knowing God over other forms of knowledge (Hos. 4:6, 6:6). Knowledge originates in God since He is the author of all information (Isa. 40:14). In the West, focus resides on the five senses, what can be seen, whereas Scripture directs attention to what cannot be seen (2 Kings 6:15–17). All material things depend on immaterial origins (Neh. 9:6; Ps. 33:6–9); therefore, all of life is sacred; “secular” does not exist in the Hebrew Bible (Lev. 25:23; Ps. 89:11). History for pagan people in the Old Testament was cyclical: never ceasing repetition. For Hebrew people, God’s purpose was founded on a Person with purpose, best represented by a line, indicating Israelite history had an end in sight (Mic. 4:1–6, 12; Acts 3:21). The intention of the Hebrew Bible is that everything is theological; everything, every action, every person, every event points to God (Prov. 16:1, 16:4, 16:9, 16:33; Isa. 46:9–11).

¹⁶ All truth originates from God (Isa. 28:23–29), is unified by God (Josh. 2:11; 2 Kings 19:15; 2 Chron. 2:12), and is God’s truth (Ps. 119:152, 119:160). Scripture provides an objective standard for truth (Prov. 30:5; John 17:17). Believers seek to uphold and magnify truth in life (Prov. 2:1–5; 23:23; 1 Pet. 1:22–25), answer life’s questions with the true, universal wisdom God has embedded in His world (Prov. 22:17–21; James 1:19–27), apprehend Christ’s wisdom and mature in it (Col. 1:9–10, 1:28–29, 2:3, 5), and countering the human-

7. **Goals toward RESTORATION:** God's original intention for His creation and His creatures, distorted by sin, can be renewed by the transformation of the believer to do good works.¹⁷

The seven controlling biblical faith commitments make possible the pursuit of Liberty's mission:

At Liberty University, the mission is to develop Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact the world. This mission is deeply rooted in the scriptural foundation of Mark 12:30: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." Our student development model at Liberty University aims at and creates the condition that students are not only academically prepared but also spiritually, socially, physically, and emotionally equipped to serve their communities as Champions for Christ.

Biblical Worldview¹⁸

All thought and study have their genesis at the pre-philosophical level. It begins, without either systemic planning or theoretical intensions, with the beliefs, attitudes, and values on which people act. In this sense, everyone has the beginnings of a worldview.¹⁹

centered, deceitful delusions sourced by this world's spiritual adversaries (Col. 2:4, 2:10, 2:15), not being held captive by their teaching (Col. 2:6–8), nor allowing that teaching in the church (Col. 2:10–23).

¹⁷ Titus 3:1, 3:8, and 3:14 explain that Christians bear responsibility to "do good works" (New International Version) as a result of their salvation (Eph. 2:10). Jesus changes Christians (1 Cor. 1:30) through the work of the Holy Spirit at regeneration (Titus 3:5). While sanctification begins at one's conversion, the process is lifelong (2 Cor. 3:18) and completed "at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23, ESV; Phil. 3:21). So, sanctification is said to be progressive, meaning a continuous, ongoing progression of being conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29). God is at work in the lives of believers (Phil. 2:13) to wholly sanctify Christians (1 Thess. 5:23). He equips (Heb. 13:20–21) through the Spirit who indwells saved people (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2) who are said to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16–18, ESV). The internal development of conformity to Christ looks forward (Phil. 3:13–14), affecting thought process (Col. 1:10), emotions (1 John 2:15), will (Phil. 2:12), body (2 Cor. 7:1) and spirit (1 Cor. 7:34). The Christian is changed by the Holy Spirit's inner working (2 Cor. 3:18; Titus 3:5). Teachers bear the responsibility of "guard[ing] the good deposit" (2 Tim. 1:14, ESV).

¹⁸ Both words are necessary and important. "Biblical" denotes the need for an authoritative base, a source out from which an individual or institution finds not only its standard but the criterion that will frame approaches and outcomes. "Worldview" arises out of the transcendent teaching found in the Bible. Belief provides the unifying core that shapes thought, being, action, and every other aspect of human existence.

¹⁹ Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a World View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 31–32. For a similar

The words “assumption” or “presupposition” are normally used to denote the starting point of any worldview system.²⁰ Christian belief begins with the assumption that God is eternal.²¹ Everything temporal—reality, knowledge, ethics²²—comes from Him.²³ All things are created through, by, and for God.²⁴ Since God is the Creator of all things,²⁵ humans do not create but simply discover truth²⁶ from God’s disclosure of Himself through His verbal²⁷ and creational word.²⁸

argument that reason functions in service of prior commitments, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Religion in the University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 118, ProQuest Ebook Central: “Reasoning is fundamental to our existence; to be human is to reason. But though reason may often appear king in the realm of learning, close scrutiny shows that, in scholarship and teaching, our capacity for reasoning is always functioning in the service of some particular faith or love, or in the service of some intuition or interpretation of how things are.”

²⁰ “Yet ‘the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’ . . . Christianity (and other worldviews) affect our thinking at other levels than explicit biblical understandings. There is no presuppositionless science.” Arthur F. Holmes, “Is a Christian university possible?” *Faculty Dialogue*, no. 21 (1994): 28–29.

²¹ The temporal, finite world exists because there is One who is “from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. 90:1–2, ESV), whose “dominion is . . . eternal” (Dan. 4:34, 35, NIV), and whose work within time benefits humanity (Pss. 31:15; 39:4–7). Temporal matter was brought into being by the eternal God (Neh. 9:6; Job 12:10; Acts 17:25, 17:28; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).

²² For instance, God is the source of law (Exod. 20:1–17; Deut. 4:5–8) because He is transcendent (Neh. 9:6; Eph. 4:6) and immutable (Num. 23:19; Ps. 102:25–27). So, scientific laws are made and directed by the Almighty (Job 36:27–33, 37:3, 37:12, 37:13, 37:15, 38:26–27; Jer. 8:7; Matt. 6:26–30). In the same way, the conscience of all people is directed by the external compulsion of God’s law (Rom. 2:14–15), though the internal nature of the person cannot be the ultimate arbiter of ethics (Eph. 4:17–19). The application of ethics, such as state-sponsored law, is authority given from above (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–15).

²³ Isa. 44:24, 45:7; John 1:3; Acts 7:5, 14:15, 17:24; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6.

²⁴ Ps. 8:6; John 13:3; 1 Cor. 15:27, 15:28; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 2:8.

²⁵ Prov. 16:4, 26:10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 4:11, 10:6.

²⁶ Gen. 1:29, 2:15, 2:19–20; 1 Kings 4:29–34; 1 Chron. 29:11–17; Prov. 25:2; Eccles. 8:14–17.

²⁷ “And God said” is a repetitious phrase throughout Scripture. The implications of God’s speech for humans are multitudinous (i.e., Isa. 40:8; Matt. 24:35; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 4:12).

²⁸ Gen. 1:1–2:3; Job 12:7–9; Ps. 19; John 1:3; Rom. 1:19–20. Psalm 147:15–20 deserves special attention. Twice God’s word is sent out in creation (vv. 15, 18) immediately followed by God’s word given to Jacob (v. 19). There is no distinction made between the two “words.”

Assumptions, then, both form the foundation for a worldview²⁹ and are informed sources of the pre-existing mindset³⁰ of how the person sees life exemplified by the Walsh–Middleton model.³¹ The faith or trust³² that a person places in an idea or thing, whether consciously or unconsciously—that person’s belief commitment—then creates the lens through which that person will see their world. James Sire captures both the pre-theoretical and practical dimensions of worldview in his definition:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.³³

²⁹ “The Bible’s implicit understanding of the nature and meaning of life and reality, and *basic Christian philosophy* – that which lies underneath and undergirds as a foundation the truths explicitly revealed in the Bible.” Roger E. Olson, *The Essentials of Christian Thought: Seeing Reality through the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 14.

³⁰ “Mindset” can be defined as a pattern of thinking established through habitual practice of a life philosophy. Ecclesiastes compares “life as a gift of God” with those who only see things “under the sun” (Eccles. 2:24–26, 3:13–14, 5:18–20, 8:15, 9:9). The refrain which runs throughout the book establishes the baseline barometer for human meaning. Solomon gives his readers two mindset options. For believers in the personal eternal triune Creator, mindset shift is first upward, then inward, then outward: “In all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18) who will “reconcile all things unto Himself” (Col. 1:20, KJV) that we should do “all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17, ESV).

³¹ Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping Christian World View* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 32–33.

³² The Hebrew concept of faith or trust conveys firmness and reliability; it entails assurance that produces confidence and invites the response “amen” (“so be it”). Faith is human confidence (Heb. 11:1, ESV: “assurance” and “conviction”) in an objective, supernatural content (Heb. 11:3, ESV: “what is seen was not made out of things that are visible”) to which one gives their commitment (Hebrews 11:7–40 “by faith . . .”).

Christ is preeminent “in everything” (Col. 1:18); through Him, God acts “to reconcile to Himself all things” (Col. 1:20, ESV); and believers are instructed to “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3:17, ESV).

³³ James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 17.

The Hebraic-Christian worldview begins with the personal eternal triune Creator who has spoken through the prophets and apostles in the Bible,³⁴ the authority upon, by, through which believers interpret reality.³⁵ The biblical worldview is God's redemption story,³⁶ The Almighty's interpretation of His creation, from ontology to teleology.³⁷

Seven pre-existing pre-philosophical premises, implicit and inherent in creation,³⁸ tacit and presumed by humans,³⁹ set the stage for a broad overview of which the Hebraic-Christian perspective of life and things consist:

1. **Coherence**: a complete, unified whole of all things; how everything fits together, and life makes sense. There must be an intersection and unification of heaven and earth, supernatural and natural. From the very first statement in Scripture, unity and wholeness were necessary; "the heavens and the earth" meant "everything from A to Z" in the Hebrew mindset. There is a unity

³⁴ "Prophets" are God's mouthpieces – those who spoke His Words – in Scripture (Matt. 5:17–19; Luke 16:16–17, 16:29–31, 24:25–27; Acts 28:25; 1 Pet. 1:10–12; Heb. 1:1–2). "Apostles" were witnesses of Jesus's resurrection, capturing God's story in the Second Testament (Matt. 19:28; John 14:26, 16:13, 17:20; Acts 1:21–22; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20).

³⁵ Authorship is an orthodoxy test. The following passages explain the importance of authorial intent: Gal. 1:6–10; 2 Cor. 11:1–4, 11:13–15; Eph. 4:11–16; Col. 2:6–8; 2 Tim. 2:15–19, 2:24–26.

³⁶ Robert E. Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008). Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Ourselves in God's Story*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2024).

³⁷ A person surmises that something must be true because there are universal affirmations which emanate from a source of being. So, our epistemology must arise out of ontology, the existence of being makes thinking possible. Any idea has an origin from which thinking about that idea begins. Choose a word like "justice," "freedom," "identity," or "empathy." Before any ethical discussion on these ideals, we must admit that the very thought of having an idea about those words has an ontology, a locus of being that made that word important or even possible to contemplate in the first place. The phrase "first things" has been used by many to unequivocally state a beginning; but the very thought of the *need* for "first things" precedes even that discussion. As a Hebraic-Christian thinker, my thought emanates from the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End (Isa. 44:6–8; Rev. 1:8, 22:13). Mark J. Boone and Mark D. Eckel, eds., *Originalism in Theology and Law* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024), 39, <https://doi.org/10.5771/9781666932133>.

³⁸ Something understood to be existing within the operation of all made things.

³⁹ Something people have come to expect without thought based on unspoken acceptance of reality.

of Truth.⁴⁰ All truth is inclusive within His Truth since God alone made “the heavens and the earth”⁴¹ and the whole of creation gives Him praise.⁴²

2. **Comprehensive**: ultimate reality, inclusive of all things, a Christian metaphysic is thorough; nothing is left out as God’s wisdom is embedded within His creation, beyond human comprehension; what is understood are but “the outskirts of His ways.”⁴³ Natural law comes from supernatural Law from whence comes God’s instruction to humanity,⁴⁴ Heaven’s ideological perspective imposed on humanity.

3. **Cosmic**: farthest reaches of space to the structures of subatomic particles to the unseen spirit world, the cosmos needs the immortal⁴⁵ omnificent,⁴⁶ immutable⁴⁷ orderer who is knowable⁴⁸ by His unchanging Word.⁴⁹

4. **Consistence**: a settled condition, the endurance, the permanence of status; once begun, timeless truth remains firm. The God who “made . . . formed. . . and established” (Jer. 33:2, NIV) the universe did so by the “fixed laws” of heaven and earth (Jer. 33:25, New English

⁴⁰ Rahab the prostitute (Josh. 2:11), King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:15), and Hiram, King of Tyre (2 Chron. 2:12), all agreed on one thing: the Lord made the heavens and the earth. Confessing the unity of creation was done by believers as well as unbelievers.

⁴¹ Gen. 1:1 (ESV); Neh. 9:6; Prov. 30:4; Isa. 44:24.

⁴² Ps. 69:34.

⁴³ Prov. 8:12–34; Job 26:14 (ESV).

⁴⁴ Rom. 1:19–20; Ps. 147:15–20; Isa. 28:23–29.

⁴⁵ Ps. 90:2; Isa. 40:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16.

⁴⁶ Gen. 1–2; Neh. 9:6; Isa. 45:18; Jer. 10:12; Col. 1:15–20; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 4:11.

⁴⁷ Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Isa. 46:9–11; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8.

⁴⁸ Jer. 9:23–24; Hosea 6:6; John 1:1–18, 17:3.

⁴⁹ Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:22–25.

Translation). The stable, ordered universe is the reason why God can call heaven and earth as the standard by which He can judge.⁵⁰

5. **Constructs**: axioms or postulates which endure based on their claims alone, providing the ground for systems of logic, reason, facts, truth. Human arguments for or against have no impact on the concepts' veracity, including the scaffolding, the steps of knowledge, the process by which anything works; all subsist based upon understanding beyond human comprehension.⁵¹

6. **Cosmopolitan**: impact and application for all people crossing boundaries of time, culture, identity, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, economy, or geography.⁵² God's care for the cosmos (the heavens and the earth) extends through every geographical locale much less every people group.⁵³

⁵⁰ Jer. 33:2, 33:25–26; Deut. 4:26, 30:19, 32:1.

⁵¹ Job 40:1–6, 42:1–6; Isa. 40:12, 40:15, 40:17, 40:22, 55:8–9. Biblical words such as “wondrous” and “marvelous” suggest what is beyond human capability of explanation (Job 5:9, 37:5). The only explanation possible is the extraordinary work of God (“you would not believe even if you were told,” Hab. 1:5, ESV).

⁵² Referenced in Scripture by “all flesh” (Isa. 49:26, ESV; Joel 2:28), “the earth” (Isa. 11:9, ESV, 19:24–25), “the nations” (Jer. 33:9, ESV; Amos 9:12; Mic. 4:1–5; Zech. 2:11), “all the peoples” (Ps. 67:3, ESV). The inception of these claims that God's people, the Hebrews, would be a blessing to the whole earth, begins in Genesis 12:1–3.

⁵³ It is important to note that the whole cosmos—the English iteration of the Greek word *kosmos* used in John 3:16: God loved the whole *kosmos*—is to be redeemed. From the earliest statements of Scripture, God cares for people and land. One cannot read Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy without a concern for territory either given to God's people or for care of the soil for which a group may be responsible. James Strong, *Strong's Greek Lexicon*, s.v. “G2889, *kosmos*,” Blue Letter Bible, accessed August 21, 2026, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2889/esv/mgnt/0-1/>.

7. **Confessional**:⁵⁴ affirmation of a declaration containing purpose and hope as revealed in answers given to the eight worldview questions everyone asks.⁵⁵

Étienne Gilson referenced the gods of modern philosophy as “mere by-products born of the philosophical decomposition of the Christian living God.”⁵⁶ The seven-point worldview overview above also identifies the errors found in incomplete worldview competitors.⁵⁷ A biblical worldview is the foundation for a Christ-centered view of the university.⁵⁸

Values

Values as ascribed by any individual or institution declare what is acceptable,⁵⁹ followed by an accepted action. The problem is the cultural milieu of any time and place will dictate attitudes and behaviors deemed to be reasonable for a given group.⁶⁰ The phrase “value

⁵⁴ One of the purposes of a scholarly document such as this is to give footing for belief, not unlike any Protestant catechism. “We confess” is an important idea in Scripture. We confess Jesus for salvation (Rom. 10:9–10; 1 John 4:15), which is corroborated by Jesus (Matt. 10:32; Rev. 3:5); a testimony should be heard by others (1 Tim. 6:12), witnessed by our practice (Acts 24:14), a faith to which we should hold firm (Heb. 4:14), including adherence to essential doctrinal beliefs (1 John 4:2–3; 2 John 7), held in community (Heb. 3:1, 4:14, 10:23), which will be universal one day—a declaration that Jesus is Lord (Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:11).

⁵⁵ What is real? Who is God? What is the source of knowledge? How do I view history? What is a human person? What is my purpose in life? What is the basis of ethics? What happens when I die?

⁵⁶ Étienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1969), 115.

⁵⁷ Naturalism, materialism, scientism, rationalism, humanism, behaviorism, individualism, relativism, pragmatism, nihilism, are examples among many. The “-ism” suffix in these terms marks a worldview.

⁵⁸ The true university's quest for interdisciplinary truth may be properly called “Christian,” not because of some imperialist attempt at takeover by the churches, but because those who seek the truth without reserve, whether they know it or not, are ultimately searching for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. John C. Polkinghorne, “Christian Interdisciplinarity,” in *Beyond Integration? Inter/Disciplinary Possibilities*, ed. Todd C. Ream, Jerry Pattengale, and David L. Riggs (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2012), 53.

⁵⁹ Individuals and organizations today focus on what is referred to as “values.” The meaning of *values* can be characterized as (1) arbitrary—individual or institutional choice reigns, (2) acceptable—current conditions or culture dictates what matters most, and (3) authority—tied to the consumer, “what sells” is often the basis for *values*. Mark D. Eckel, *I Just Need Time to Think* (Bloomington, IL: Thomas Nelson, 2014), 1.

⁶⁰ “In the actual world which we inhabit, the language of morality is in the same state of grave disorder as the language of natural science in the imaginary world . . . we lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have –

judgments” must have factual meaning with verifiable content. The phrase “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” is purely an emotive value statement about aesthetics.⁶¹ The phrase “hierarchy of values” depends on what one thinks is good based on some human evaluation.⁶² How one defines a word is based on that person’s values. But what is the definition, explanation, or example of “values”?

The word “values” identifies what one prizes or deems important.⁶³ The reason why the word may sound vague is because values are seemingly left up to the judgment of the person’s opinion or taste⁶⁴ or “the expectations of society.”⁶⁵ “Values” need an objective standard by which one measures acceptability. And the objective standard needs to have an orientation, a direction from which it proceeds, an alignment born of its source.⁶⁶ So, *values* must have a position predicated not on personal or social interest, because human-centered interests can change, but on changeless, timeless, enduring principles of thinking-being-living.⁶⁷ In order to be

very largely, if not entirely – lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality.” Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1984), 2.

⁶¹ Garrett J. DeWeese, *Doing Philosophy as a Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 180–81.

⁶² “For the concept of value is in fact always present in the mind of all men; every man always orients his thoughts and his actions towards some good, and he cannot do otherwise.” Simone Weil, “Some Reflections on the Concept of Value,” in *Simone Weil: Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. D.K. Levy and Marina Barabas (New York: Routledge, 2024), 151, Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003205913-13>

⁶³ “Men, it is true, almost never give any thought to the values that orient their efforts; but that’s because they believe they have sufficient grounds for adopting them.” Weil, “Reflections,” 151.

⁶⁴ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 49.

⁶⁵ Oliver O’Donovan, *Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 225. He goes on to say that “the only precautions we can take are theological” a protection “against social conformity” (p. 226).

⁶⁶ God’s immutability, the teaching that He does not change (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8), is the Hebraic-Christian foundation for acceptance of God’s “forever” teachings (Isa. 40:8, ESV; Matt. 24:35).

⁶⁷ “Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you” (Ps. 119:91, NIV). “He set them in position for ever and ever; he gave an order that will never pass away” (Ps. 148:6, Christian Standard Bible). God stationed unseen principalities, powers, or pillars (“endure,” “set them in place”; Job 9:6; Ps. 75:3) that permanently, continuously control the physical world as “laws” (God’s sovereign reign over every ordinance of creation). These

unalterable, *values* assume an authority structure from an immutable Person.⁶⁸ Unalterable absolutes arising from a fixed position create what have been referred to as “permanent things.”⁶⁹

The term *values* by itself, is an insufficient term to hold the great weight of what is expected when some individual or institution explains the orientation of their fixed standards. Anyone can say, for instance, that they esteem individuals, respect rights, or abide by an ethical code.⁷⁰ The source and standard of those ideals must be identified.⁷¹ Otherwise, *values* can just be as nebulous a term for a university as any other institution that claims them.⁷² There is then a need for “a new orientation of the soul.”⁷³

For Liberty University, values begin with “[t]he fear of the Lord.”⁷⁴ Based on the authority from the Person of the eternal God, “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”⁷⁵

eternal laws (Ps. 119:89; Isa. 59:21) include His embedded wisdom, described as “everlasting” (Prov. 8:23).

⁶⁸ “The Everlasting God” is one of God’s names (Gen. 21:33, ESV), based on His nature (Exod. 3:15; Ps. 93:2).

⁶⁹ The phrase was coined by T.S. Eliot, later extrapolated further by Edmund Burke, Russell Kirk, and Charles Taylor, to mean universal touchstones for ethical judgments imprinted in humans. See Andrew A. Tadie and Michael H. Macdonald, *Permanent Things: Toward the Recovery of a More Human Scale at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁷⁰ *Humanist Manifestos I and II* follow the ethical dictates firmly planted in persons within their time and place, excluding a supernatural authority. Paul Kurtz, ed. *Humanist Manifestos I and II* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973).

⁷¹ See James K. Dew Jr. and Paul M. Gould, *Philosophy: A Christian Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), 223–54.

⁷² See the full and practical discussion on “What Should I Value?” developed by Garrett J. DeWeese, *Doing Philosophy as a Christian* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 178–216.

⁷³ Weil, “Reflections,” 154.

⁷⁴ Job 28:28, ESV. *Fear* is the motivation for right living (Lev. 19:14, 25:17; Deut. 17:19; 2 Kings 17:34) learned by reading the Law (Deut. 31:11–12) demonstrated by kindness to foreigners (Deut. 10:18–20, 25:18). Fear is interwoven with obedience to the Law and collective worship (Deut. 14:22–23; 2 Kings 17:32–24). Fear of God’s law is to be passed on to generations that follow (Deut. 4:10; 6:13).

⁷⁵ Prov. 1:7 ESV, 9:10; cf. Prov. 1:29, 2:5; Pss. 34:11–14, 111:10. In so saying, one stands in the presence of a superior Person (Ps. 19:9).

The idea of *beginning* does not reference the chief or sum, but rather the start or inception of moral righteousness.⁷⁶ Bowling states, “Fearing and proper living are so closely related as to be virtually synonymous ideas.”⁷⁷ Bullock concurs: “The phrase ‘fear of the Lord’ encapsulates the totality of man’s religious faith. It is not merely the emotion of fear, nor do the terms *awe* and *reverence* exhaust its meaning. It is a comprehensive term for the worship of the Lord or religion, the sum total of man’s relationship with God.”⁷⁸

“You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord”⁷⁹ certainly maintains this nuance of right relationship with the Person from whom comes the authority. What a person values must be premised on that authority incorporating the whole person⁸⁰—what Scripture refers to as the heart. In the First Testament, *heart* meant the mind, the place of thought processes, where the will was enacted; a person’s mission control center.⁸¹ One’s heart was to be guarded; it was also the recognized place where a person decided for or against sin.⁸² The Hebraic concept of the person was holistic—there were no pieces and parts where knowledge, attitude, will, or behavior

⁷⁶ William White, “*rē’shūt*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:826.

⁷⁷ Andrew Bowling, “*yārē’*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:400; see also Lev. 19:14, 25:17; Deut. 17:19; 2 Kings 17:34.

⁷⁸ C. Hassell Bullock. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 52.

⁷⁹ Ps. 115:11 (ESV).

⁸⁰ Eight times in Chronicles the statement “whole heart” is used. It is fitting that the final book in the Hebrew Bible would focus on the totality of personal responsibility of the second generation out of Egypt (1 Chron. 12:38, 28:9, 29:9, 29:19; 2 Chron. 15:17, 16:9, 19:9, 25:2, ESV).

⁸¹ Andrew Bowling, “*lēb, lēbāb*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:466–67

⁸² Prov. 4:23; Jer. 3:17, 5:23, 9:8, 17:9–10.

could be separated out from one another. What a person did, a person did as their whole self from their heart.⁸³

Knowledge

Who a person is, how a person is formed, is built upon what they have been taught.⁸⁴ The Proverbial concept of acquiring *knowledge* goes beyond information-comprehension-experience, instead becoming internalization-transformation-affection.⁸⁵ Knowing demands not only the delivery of content, but the responsibility of conformity based on *hearing*. One who learns, “hears” from an outside source.⁸⁶ The word has a three-prong impact: receive, perceive, conceive, or hear-listen-obey.⁸⁷ Learning should combine the totality of the person in their cognition, affection, internalization, transformation, and application.⁸⁸

Hebraic knowledge should be a literal *fixation*.⁸⁹ God’s original intention was that people would know Him through words.⁹⁰ Reading and hearing are the gateways for growth in

⁸³ Jer. 3:10; 2 Kings 23:25.

⁸⁴ There is no better Christian book to show the relational understanding of “knowing” than Esther Lightcap Meek’s *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People* (Grands Rapids: Brazos, 2003).

⁸⁵ Prov. 1:2, 1:4, 1:7 with Prov. 2:5, 3:6.

⁸⁶ Prov. 1:5, 1:8.

⁸⁷ *Šāma* ‘ is the Hebrew equivalent for the English words *hear*, *listen*, and *obey*, depending on the context. *Hearing* persons physically know there is communication to their brain. *Listening* messages comprehension where knowing becomes understanding. *Obeys* is the active compliance to what is heard and understood. A good example of all three definitions appears in the nine times the word *š-m-* ‘ is used in 1 Samuel 15 (vv. 1, 4, 14, 19, 20, 22 [twice], 24).

⁸⁸ Lawrence Richards and Gary Bredfeldt wrote *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), an exceptional biblical primer for understanding the wholistic source, process, and outcomes of Christian education.

⁸⁹ “*Fix* these words of mine in your hearts and minds” (Deut. 11:18, NIV, emphasis added). See also Deut.: 31:9–13, 31:19, 31:24–26.

⁹⁰ Gen. 3:8.

knowledge of God and His world.⁹¹ Imbibing God's words provides a vehicle for life and liberty.⁹² Words make freedom possible.⁹³ But freedom comes with responsibility. Knowledge of God's Word begins with parameters for both law and liberty.⁹⁴ Independent thought is not loosed from restrictions. Accountability comes with reading words.⁹⁵

Ownership suggests we should hyphenate teaching-learning. The process goes both ways. A student learns when he or she teaches and is able to teach when he or she learns. One Hebrew word, *lāmad*,⁹⁶ can be translated either "teaching" or "learning" depending on the context. We should be less concerned with the delivery of material and more concerned with how we deliver the student to the material. Becoming skilled at how to craft questions, create projects, and construct discussions brings learning to the learner.

Understanding the world and people's place in it necessitates listening. Active listening means interrelationship. Relationships lead to responsibility. Reading brings:

- **Literacy**—Reading or hearing the words of Scripture leads to submission to the Bible's authority.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Prov. 8:1–11; 9:10

⁹² John 6:63; 8:31–32.

⁹³ Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 lay out the benefits of "*šāma*" (and detriments if one does not "*šāma*"). Of course, the whole of Scripture echoes the call to hear-listen-obey punctuated and exemplified in Proverb's "Hear my son" passages (e.g. Prov. 2:1–5), Jesus's "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15, ESV) statements, or James's famous line, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak" (James 1:19).

⁹⁴ Gen. 2:16–17.

⁹⁵ Matt. 11:20–24.

⁹⁶ Walter C. Kaiser, "*lāmad*," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:480.

⁹⁷ For instance, notice the italicized terms in Deuteronomy 32:44–47, "Moses recited all the *words* [emphasis added] of this song...When he had finished speaking the *words*...take to heart all the *words*...do all the *words* of this law...it is no empty *word* for you, but your very life, and by this *word* you shall live." (Deut. 32:44–47, ESV; emphasis added).

- **Comprehension**—Translating a person’s words, interpreting the author’s meaning, brings meaning to the hearers.⁹⁸
- **Benefits**—Reading or hearing heaven’s words creates opportunities to accept or reject wisdom, experience, and abilities beyond the scope of human wisdom.⁹⁹
- **Internalization**—Two examples: (1) “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight.”¹⁰⁰ We speak Truth as a compulsion—now that we know Truth we must tell the Truth.¹⁰¹ (2) God’s Word is a treasure to be kept for a future purpose: an ordered life set apart from sin.¹⁰²
- **Transformation**—People are changed in their thinking and living with the merits and joy of reading¹⁰³
- **Adoration**—Scripture teaches God’s thoughts are precious resulting in rejoicing, delight, and sweetness.¹⁰⁴ Paul ends the dense, rich teaching in Romans 1–11 with a hymn full of wonderment.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ An obvious example is God’s peoples’ response to the Law being read to them after Babylonian exile in Nehemiah 8.

⁹⁹ Examples of acceptance would include Genesis 41 especially verses 37–40 and Exodus 4 especially verses 15–17. Examples of rejection would include Israel’s kings doing “evil in the sight of the LORD” (1 Kings 11:6, ESV; see also 13:33; 14:9–14:10, 14:22; 15:26, 15:34, 16:7, 16:19, 16:25, 16:30, 17:20, 21:20–21:21, 21:29; 22:8, 22:18, 22:23, 22:52) and many more citations in Second Kings.

¹⁰⁰ Jer. 15:16, NIV; see Pss. 19:10; 119:103. Ezekiel 2:9–3:3 is a more detailed metaphor.

¹⁰¹ Jer. 20:9; see Acts 4:20.

¹⁰² Job 23:10–12; Ps. 119:11.

¹⁰³ “Your words were found, and I ate them” (Jer. 15:16, New King James Version); see also Ps. 119:111, 119:162; Ezek. 3:2.

¹⁰⁴ Pss. 19:8, 119:14, 119:103, 119:111, 119:162, 139:17.

¹⁰⁵ Rom. 11:33–36. See Rod Dreher, *Living in Wonder: Finding Mystery and Meaning in a Secular Age* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2024).

Knowledge acquisition should lead to adoration in Liberty's educational setting. Focus is not only on content (what is taught) but also on communication (how a subject is taught). Knowledge is not static in the teaching-learning setting; the process should go both ways. Professors should be lifelong learners, training students to do the same.

Paul often tells his listeners that reception of his teaching should translate into a lived internal change.¹⁰⁶ The apostle's teaching must also be applied to interpersonal relationships.¹⁰⁷ Paul sets himself up as a model to be followed in practice.¹⁰⁸ He then expects that others will follow the models which are based on Paul and his following of Jesus.¹⁰⁹ Of course, all reception of any Christian teaching is premised upon the reception of Jesus's Lordship in one's life.¹¹⁰ Heavenly revelation is the source of all received teaching that is now accepted by believers.¹¹¹ The First Testament declares that the Creator created by His Word.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul says they "received . . . the word of God, which is at work in you" (ESV) and "we instructed you how to live". "Received" and "instructed" are the same Greek word which in fact has similar crossover ideas: instruction of teaching or tradition is to be delivered, handed over to the control of another. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek- English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 2, *Indices*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 184.

¹⁰⁷ 2 Thessalonians 3:6 says brothers must agree to live by the instructions given by Paul.

¹⁰⁸ Phil. 4:9.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:7-9.

¹¹⁰ Col. 2:6.

¹¹¹ Gal. 1:9, 12.

¹¹² Gen. 1:3("Let there be . . ." ESV); Pss. 33:6, 148:5; Isa. 48:13.

Skills

In Genesis, God gives all good things in life to humans from Himself, including the skill to create.¹¹³ The creation account focuses on God's finesse and craftsmanship.¹¹⁴ In Genesis 2 alone, God works as craftsman, artisan, gardener, fashion designer, zoologist, potter, and builder.¹¹⁵ We mirror God's skill of creation since humans create based on what God has created out of nothing.¹¹⁶ Made in God's image, humans mirror His attributes.¹¹⁷ Not only has the material world been given by God for humanity, but God also gives people skills and specific giftedness to work at their crafts. According to Isaiah 28:23–28, the farmer, “is rightly instructed; his God teaches him” and again “This [the skill] also comes from the LORD of hosts.” (ESV)

The Hebrew word *hokmâ*, translated “skill,” focuses on one's understanding or discernment in creating.¹¹⁸ The personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8 explains that at the creation of the world, God's skill was on display.¹¹⁹ Exodus 31:3–5, for instance, explains that

¹¹³ All good things come from God (1 Chron. 29:14, 15; James 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:17). Creative skills come from God—including intelligence, knowledge, and craftsmanship (Exod. 28:3; 31:1–11; 35:30, 31, 36:2; Isa. 28:23–28).

¹¹⁴ Genesis 2:2 references God's *work* which is described as having made “the heavens with skill” (Ps. 136:5, New American Standard Bible) and “with understanding” (Jer. 10:11–12).

¹¹⁵ For “craftsman,” see Gen. 2:2; for “artisan,” see Gen. 2:7, 9; for “gardener,” see Gen. 2:8; for “fashion designer,” see Gen. 2:18; for “zoologist,” see 2:19; for “potter,” see Gen. 2:19; and for “builder,” see Gen. 2:22.

¹¹⁶ *Bara*, Hebrew for “create,” in context highlights the idea “created out of nothing.” It is used with specific emphasis in Genesis 1:1, three times in verse 27, and pointedly in verse 21. The material world being distinctive from the immaterial world is evident throughout 1:1–2:3 (ESV).

¹¹⁷ See footnote #14.

¹¹⁸ In Proverbs 1:1–6, one of the words for wisdom is *binah* which is translated “discernment” or “understanding.” The idea of “discernment” or “understanding” in various contexts is that someone, like Joseph (Gen. 41:33, 39), David (1 Sam. 16:17–21), Solomon (1 Kings 3:9–12) or Daniel (Dan. 9:22–23) has mastered his skillset. *Hokmâ* can refer to practical or artistic skill, particularly God-given craftsmanship (Exod. 28:3; 31:3, 6; 35:31, 35; 36:1–2). Louis Goldberg, “*hākam*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:282–83.

¹¹⁹ See Prov. 8:22–31, especially verse 30, where wisdom was beside God “like a master workman” (ESV).

the Spirit of God filled Bezalel – tabernacle furniture craftsman – with “skill, ability and knowledge of all kinds of crafts . . . and to engage all kinds of craftsmanship” (NIV 1984). Instructions for the tabernacle tell of human creative skill using God-given gifts of artistic design and abilities of intelligence, knowledge, and craftsmanship; people who could also teach and who were stirred to do the work.¹²⁰ Unbelievers, too, contribute excellence in their artwork, which pleases God.¹²¹

Like design, singing and teaching music are skills.¹²² First Chronicles was written during the Babylonian captivity: people had lost their sense of identity, history, and destiny.¹²³ So, the prophet concentrated on the exploits of David to keep Israel’s history alive through song. Three major statements about musical skill are established: (1) singing was responsive to God’s world, His words, and His works; (2) singing was rehearsed, noting skill, order, arrangement, preparation, creativity, and professionalism as important; (3) singing was a regular, repeated remembrance as the story lives in the song.¹²⁴ Rehearsal and repetition in skill development is both an acknowledgement of dependence upon the triune God and humanity’s fallen, finite state which necessitates continual renewal. Hence, the reason Proverbs 3:5 uses “skill” to say people should not lean on it.

¹²⁰ For “gifts,” see Exod. 26:2. For “design,” see Exod. 35:32. For “craftsmanship,” see Exod. 35:31. For “teach,” see Exod. 35:34. For “do the work,” see Exod. 36:2.

¹²¹ For “artwork,” see 1 Kings 5:6 and 2 Chron. 2:17–18; for “pleases God,” see 2 Chron. 7:12–16.

¹²² Exod. 35:30–35; 1 Chron. 25:7–8.

¹²³ The ability to communicate with appropriate psychological understanding is a skill not to be missed within the corpus of Scripture itself. Knowing what to say, giving hope in this case, is highlighted in Proverbs.

¹²⁴ (1) 1 Chron. 15:16, 15:25, 15:28; Exod. 15. (2) 1 Chron. 15:19–22; 15:16–16:6 records a full choir, orchestra, and a dance troupe punctuated with “shouts” and percussion (vv. 25, 28). (3) 1 Chronicles 16:6, 16:37; music is “sacred” (16:42, ESV).

The book of Proverbs gives clear direction: skill (understanding) should be acquired.¹²⁵ “Skill” is the way to live, coming from God, the purchase of which buys truth.¹²⁶ The best way a life can be built is upon “skill.”¹²⁷ The creative physical arts are not the only way a person can benefit from “skill;” it takes “skill” to navigate human relations, not to mention one’s own cognition.¹²⁸ Of all the necessary connections to living “skillfully” in the world, perhaps the most important is to know its origin, thereby understanding how to avoid evil.¹²⁹

A biblical overview of *skill* gives opportunity for Liberty University to reinforce the following:

- Everything in life, including human abilities, are gifts from God.
- Discernment is crucial for a godly life, well lived.
- Physical— emotional connections encompass human wholeness.
- Every field of study is a skillset waiting to be studied and applied.
- What a person says should be seen in how the person lives.¹³⁰
- Passion should keep in step with understanding.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Prov. 4:5.

¹²⁶ Prov. 9:6, 9:10, 23:23.

¹²⁷ Prov. 24:3–4.

¹²⁸ Prov. 14:29, 17:27.

¹²⁹ Job 28:20–28.

¹³⁰ Consistency should be on display, making sure that what we say matches how we live. Paul argues that what people see in him is the same as what they hear from him (Phil. 4:9; cf. 1 Thess. 1:5; 2:10).

¹³¹ Truth should be the uniform of our lifestyle. While “zeal is not good without knowledge” (Prov. 19:2, CSB) it is also wrong to be out of “step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25, ESV). “Our competence comes from God” (2 Cor. 3:5 NIV, 4:7) since “God’s testimony is greater” (1 John 5:9, CSB) and “the Spirit is the truth” (1 John 5:6–9). Consistency happens when lips and life become one.

- Philosophy and communication need discernment.¹³²
- Sciences and humanities must have supernatural insight.¹³³

The life of the Christian is not simply cerebral, physical, spiritual, or personal: the life of the Christian is all the above. Since there is nothing outside the purview of the Creator, so the whole world and all of life is before Christ followers to study and enjoy. A biblical view of one's craft begins with the Creator to be employed by His creatures.

The foregoing explication is essential for what Liberty University labels, defines, explains, and applies as *values*:

Liberty University instills four core values within¹³⁴ its students. Each value is integral to a fully developed Champion for Christ, and each deeply rooted in the inerrant Word of God. **Spiritual Renewal** calls us to a restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ and to a life lived in obedience to Him as we are formed through the work of His Spirit (2 Cor. 5:17). **Social Responsibility** calls us to live in right relationship with and act responsibly toward the people that God brings into our lives (Phil. 2:3–4). **Intellectual Rootedness** calls us to pursue knowledge and wisdom which teaches us to seek understanding and apply it in our lives (Prov. 2:6). **Physical and Emotional Resiliency** calls us to affirm the value of our bodies and minds, urging us to honor God with our whole being (1 Cor. 6:19–20). Together, these values form the foundation of our student development model, ensuring that students are well-equipped to impact the world for Christ.

¹³² Paul emphasizes with two separate, similar words (“message” and “speech”) that reasoned argument is not enough (1 Corinthians 2:1 and 2:4). Skillful or clever words from educated classes are not the basis for Paul’s wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18–25). Gullible people might be swayed by “fine-sounding arguments” (Col. 2:4, NIV). But a veneer of intelligence, while making people sound erudite, is thin thinking to those who know.

¹³³ Prov. 2:2–5.

¹³⁴ The verbiage is a change from the original statement on values to reflect not only the university’s active responsibility (“seeks opportunities to instill” to “instills” as a present, deliberate, intentioned act) but includes the student’s accountability (a shift from “into” to “within”). What the student, or any individual, does with what has been given is the very basis for the parable of the soils (Luke 8:4–15). The parable is not about the seed or the Sower as much as it is about the reception of the ground where the seed lands. The same could be said of Matthew 11:20–24 where revelation brings responsibility; the named cities had the benefit of Jesus’s presence, words, and miracles. So too do Liberty students have the opportunity to receive full-orbed Christian teaching, discipleship, and formation.

It is also necessary to explain that the four categories are not reflective of a Gnostic separation¹³⁵ of the human person. The partitions are a purely human attempt to acknowledge aspects of the whole person.¹³⁶ Even the use of the word “and” in the mission statement should be seen as an attempt bring together rather than divide. A hyphenated expression *values-knowledge-skill*, where hyphenation draws all the terms together,¹³⁷ best explains the wholeness of the person.¹³⁸ In similar fashion, true biblically integrative processes should be invested throughout human life and academic disciplines without qualification or limitation.¹³⁹ There is a need to counter the human tendency to segment and shape Truth toward personal desire.¹⁴⁰ Because of the human propensity to follow a fact-value split in education,¹⁴¹ there is a need for reclamation in the academy with the mindset toward biblical synthesis.¹⁴²

¹³⁵ A core teaching of Gnosticism is to separate the spiritual from the physical. The dichotomization leads to incompleteness and compartmentalization. See DeWeese, *Doing Philosophy*, 228, and Robin Mark Phillips, *Rediscovering the Goodness of Creation: A Manual for Recovering Gnostics* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2023).

¹³⁶ Note the section on the image of God in humans in Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, vol. 2, *Our Primary Need: Christ's Atoning Provisions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 131–37.

¹³⁷ Hyphens are used in grammar to join multiple words, making them one word.

¹³⁸ Examples might include Josiah in 2 Kings 23:25 (heart, soul, might), Ezra in Ezra 7:10 (heart, study, teach), or Levi in Malachi 2:5–7 (fear, instruction, walked).

¹³⁹ There are a multitude of books on biblical worldview integration within the disciplines including *Opening the American Mind: The Integration of Biblical Truth in the Curriculum of the University*, edited by Liberty University professor emeritus of philosophy W. David Beck (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991).

¹⁴⁰ Ever since Genesis 3, we inherently corrupt humans have been “segmenting and shaping” by displacing ourselves from God, deceiving ourselves about our own intentions, revolting against Transcendent standards, and blaming others for our failures, all the while wanting to redefine the measure by which we evaluate, harming others when we refuse to play by the rules. Read the story in Genesis 3–4.

¹⁴¹ See the result of Gnosticism “asserting its independence from God” in chapter 4 of Arthur F. Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 31–40. Here is the explanation for splitting the spiritual and physical worlds into facts and values, a view antithetic to Christian education.

¹⁴² Lesslie Newbigin, in *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 79, explains, “We cannot forever live our lives in two different worlds. We cannot forever

Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual Renewal calls us to a restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ and to a life lived in obedience to Him as we are formed through the work of His Spirit (John 14:15; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17–19).

Of necessity, the concept of *spiritual* must begin by acknowledging an immaterial nature of the human person and some kind of ability to interface with something beyond the five senses.¹⁴³ Deuteronomy 6:5, “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (NIV) does not express three parts of a person. S. Dean McBride Jr. argues that “heart” (*lēbāb*), “soul” (*nepeš*), and “strength” (*mē’ōd*) “seem to be semantically concentric” and “were chosen to reinforce the absolute singularity of personal devotion to God.”¹⁴⁴ As sensory beings, humans made sense of life by complying with the unseen world.¹⁴⁵ The preunderstanding of spiritual connections must begin with that which humans can only experience within and without because of an ethereal, life-giving awareness orchestrated by the Spirit of God.¹⁴⁶ The first question for a Christian educator to ask is, “How are we able to know and interact with this other world?” The authority of Scripture supposes the supernatural because

postpone this question: What is the real truth about the world?”.

¹⁴³ Genesis 2:7 explains that God’s “*breath*” combined with “*dust*” brought human life into being. The “physical” and “spiritual” are not separate but, a synthetic whole.

¹⁴⁴ S. Dean McBride Jr., quoted in Walter C. Kaiser, “*mē’ōd*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:487

¹⁴⁵ Michael Heiser’s *The Unseen Realm* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015) is foundational background.

¹⁴⁶ Christian educators should have a biblical pneumatology. The third person of the Trinity, the Spirit, plays a role in a Christian’s understanding of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:10–16; 1 John 2:20, 27); indwells the Christian, helping the Christian understand Scripture (Rom. 8:9–11); is different from the human spirit in teaching (2 Cor. 3:5, 4:7); imparts creativity for service affecting Christian teaching (Exod. 28:3, 31:1–5); and gives teaching as a spiritual gift (Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:8–11, 12:28; Eph. 4:11–12; 1 Pet. 4:11).

of the eternal Godhead, orchestrating all things within an eternal plan, scripted with eternal designs, the functional foundation of a physical world, and the opportunity humans are given to conform to God's eternal plan.¹⁴⁷

The requirement of “renewal” and “restored relationship” necessitates a recognition of human rebellion against God's plan.¹⁴⁸ Beginning in Genesis 3, God initiated a restoration of humans to the fellowship He had with people had in Genesis 2.¹⁴⁹ After human sin, God imposed the assured sentence of death for rebellion, separated the possibility of eternal life from present life, promised the downfall of anti-God forces, continued human procreation, set the stage for a redeemer, and demonstrated the need for redemption from an outside Source.¹⁵⁰ The reclamation of God's original intention in Genesis 1–2 is settled in the eternal plan before creation, consummated in Jesus's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.¹⁵¹ The “call” for restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ begins in the Trinity's eternal, unseen realm.¹⁵²

“A life lived in obedience to Him” is the conformity to the spiritual expectations after salvation, begun in Genesis 1–2.¹⁵³ Once people are convinced of their own separation from God

¹⁴⁷ For “Godhead,” see Dan. 4:34–35; Rom. 16:26. For “plan,” see Rev. 13:8, 17:8. For “designs,” see Heb. 13:20–21. For “foundation,” see Rom. 1:20. For “opportunity,” see 2 Thess. 2:16–17.

¹⁴⁸ Ps. 2; Rom. 1:18–32.

¹⁴⁹ The statement in Genesis 3:8, “the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (ESV), establishes the original, intentional connection God made with humans.

¹⁵⁰ For “imposed,” see Gen. 2:16–17; for “separated,” Gen. 3:23–24; for “promised,” Gen. 3:14–15; for “continued,” Gen. 3:16, 3:20; for “set,” Gen. 3:15; and for “demonstrated,” Gen. 3:21.

¹⁵¹ Rev. 13:8; 17:8.

¹⁵² For the eternal “call,” see Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; for the promised “restoration,” see Acts 3:21.

¹⁵³ Here it is important to say that *obedience* is a result of regeneration, a joyful response to salvation, and is in no way a requirement for redemption from sin. If obedience is necessary for salvation in any way we are given to legalism devolving into moralism, where works will save. Titus 3:3–8 make it very clear that “good works” are expected *as a result of* salvation (v. 8), “not because of works done by us in righteousness” but “by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (v. 5 ESV).

because of their trespasses against heaven's command and humble themselves before Him, the opportunity for restoration begins.¹⁵⁴ The expectation for anyone during any time for spiritual renewal remains admitting our inherent corruption, declaring our inability to save ourselves, confessing our need for salvation by grace through faith alone, accepting the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin, obeying God's commands to live worthy of our calling as produced by the gospel, and living by the Spirit by doing good which we have been created to do.¹⁵⁵

The work of God's Spirit in a Christian's life is both an eternal and internal work—a transformative process prompting a redeemed person's commitment to constant gratitude for grace, dependence upon the Spirit's intercession in prayer, in obedience to Scripture's directives toward conforming to the image of Jesus.¹⁵⁶ Personal change is augmented in a like-minded, communal atmosphere of God's people where we gather together to encourage each other in the faith to which we have been called through Scripture reading, teaching, communion, celebration, discipleship, prayer, vocational gifting, and good works.¹⁵⁷ The essence of our efforts as believers is to proclaim the name of Jesus, exemplify Christ in our lives, set an example for the church, give evidence of our belief, practice virtue before outsiders, seek the welfare of our place

¹⁵⁴ The emphasis here is for the believer who seeks restoration after sin (2 Chron. 7:14, 12:7; Rom. 15:1–2; Gal. 6:1–2; 1 Thess. 5:14).

¹⁵⁵ For “admitting,” see 1 Tim. 1:12–17. For “declaring,” see Rom. 6:6–12. For “confessing,” see 1 John 1:7–8. For “accepting,” see 1 John 1:9. For “obeying,” see Eph. 4:1–3. For “living,” see Gal. 5:13–26.

¹⁵⁶ Romans 8:1–29 (ESV) highlights the Spirit's eternal (from above) and internal (“the Spirit of God dwells in you”) work that changes a person's thinking (“the mind of the Spirit”) so that the believer could be “conformed to the image” of Jesus.

¹⁵⁷ Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–37.

in the world, and anticipate the blessed hope—the glorious return of Jesus.¹⁵⁸ The work of the Spirit is ongoing, prompting and compelling the Christian to do good.¹⁵⁹

Liberty leadership has highlighted the following areas of campus life where the above teaching can be owned by and exemplified in the life of board members, administration, faculty, staff, and students:

- **Christian Community:**¹⁶⁰ The values-knowledge-skill of learning to live in the context of Christian fellowship, students' participation in community groups on residence halls, off-campus settings, and in the context of the local church (Ps. 133:1; Prov. 27:17; John 13:34–35; Acts 2:42–46; 1 Thess. 5:11)
- **Worship:** The values-knowledge-skill of learning to participate regularly in corporate worship, students' attendance in Convocation, Campus Community, and worship on Sunday in a local church setting (Matt. 18:20; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:13; Heb. 10:24–25)
- **Biblical Literacy:** The values-knowledge-skill of growing in one's capacity to read the Bible and comprehend it in the context of its own authoritative claim as sufficient for life and godliness, via one's personal devotion to and habitual reading of God's Word (Ps. 1:1–2; Matt. 4:4; Luke 24:27; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 4:12)
- **Prayer:** The values-knowledge-skill of learning how to personally practice consistent intercession, students' communally participating in campus prayer life (Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6–7; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16–18)

¹⁵⁸ For “proclaim,” see 1 Thess. 1:8–10. For “exemplify,” see Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:21. For “set,” see 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Thess. 3:9. For “give,” see 1 Pet. 3:15–16. For “practice,” see 1 Thess. 4:11–12; 1 Tim. 3:7. For “seek,” see Jer. 29:1–7; 1 Tim. 2:1–4. For “anticipate,” see Titus 2:11–14.

¹⁵⁹ Titus 1:8, 2:3, 2:7, 2:14, 3:1, 3:8, 3:14; 1 Pet. 2:11–17.

¹⁶⁰ See footnote #135.

- **Service:** The values-knowledge-skill of seeing one's gifts and talents employed in the context of service to others, students' engagement with Christian/Community Service (CSER) and other opportunities to serve both in the Lynchburg community and around the world (Matt. 20:26–28; John 13:14–15; Gal. 5:13; Heb. 13:16; 1 Pet. 4:10)

Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility calls us to live in right relationship with and act responsibly toward the people that God brings in our lives (Phil. 2:3–4).

The Hebraic-Christian focus of both Testaments is both spiritually vertical and humanly horizontal, yet these two are to be one; indeed, the second cannot exist without the first.¹⁶¹ Since Genesis 3,¹⁶² human history has been replete with the vapid efforts of exclusive human accomplishment described in three early examples: the fall, the flood, and the tower.¹⁶³ In each case, people left to themselves are incapable of overcoming the human condition: sin.¹⁶⁴ Because people are so focused on self, others outside themselves tend to exist for little more than greedy self-attainment.¹⁶⁵ Beginning and ending with the individual, there is no reason for cohesion of human life apart from forced acceptance. Civilization, depending on the definition of “civil,” will

¹⁶¹ Whenever people forget the Creator, they neglect His creation. Hosea directly links Israel's vertical relationship with that of her horizontal interests: specifically, the earth and its inhabitants (Hosea 4:1–3). God's blessing of production (Hosea 2:8) is rescinded because of corruption (Hosea 9:16). The earliest reference to vertical-horizontal expectations appears in Exodus 20 (the Ten Commandments), Leviticus 19, and Deuteronomy 10. God's love for His people is the same love believers are to have for all people.

¹⁶² See footnote #140.

¹⁶³ Gen. 3:1–24, 6:5–8:22, 11:1–9.

¹⁶⁴ Rom. 1:18–32, 3:10–18.

¹⁶⁵ Rom. 11:20, 12:3, 12:16; 1 Tim. 6:17.

need a wellspring of otherworldly virtue¹⁶⁶ totally apart from whatever humans ascribe as “value.”¹⁶⁷

Cultural hegemonies, leadership models, metaphysical ideals, or power structures are subservient to whatever worldview sustains them.¹⁶⁸ The humanities, for example, are premised on what is “human,” defined by the biblical God as made in His image. From the earliest pages of Scripture, the image-bearers are seen not only as the representation of but also the representative of the Creator on earth.¹⁶⁹ Accepting the responsibility of image-bearing, the obvious next step for any person should be the treatment of one’s neighbor, not out of self-concern but others-care.¹⁷⁰ Even the use of the word *should* demands an ethic turned to ethos generating a transformation in any social order.¹⁷¹ The Hebraic-Christian ethic depends not on identity, ethnicity, nationality, nor rationality, but on grace. For the Christian thinker, grace is not

¹⁶⁶ Christians are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). We are created to do good works (Eph. 2:10; Titus 3:8) but must appropriate virtuous characteristics to be effective and productive believers (2 Pet. 1:3–11). Our responsibility demands effort to possess (2 Pet. 1:5) the sum of virtuous qualities demonstrating Christian belief (2 Pet. 1:5–7). The words “excellence” and “virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3, 5, ESV) are manifestations of God’s power and a result of faith. Yet, the believer bears responsibility to be “diligent” to “practice these qualities” (2 Pet. 1:10, ESV).

¹⁶⁷ See footnote #59.

¹⁶⁸ Daniel 2:19–23 is a case in point where Daniel says that God “removes kings and sets up kings” (2:21, ESV). He expands on the idea that human authorities are subservient to God (Dan. 4:17, 5:20; see also Job 12:18; Ps. 75:7; Rom. 13:1).

¹⁶⁹ See footnote #14.

¹⁷⁰ Care and protection are always to be granted to those who are outside the believing community (“foreigner” [NIV] or “stranger” [King James Version] in Exod. 23:9; Lev. 18:26; Deut. 10:19; Mal. 3:5; Gal. 3:29, 6:9, 6:10). Others in relation to self is a key scriptural concept. The Trinity sets the standard: the Spirit glorifies the Son (John 14:26; 16:14) and the Son glorifies the Father (John 8:54, 17:4). “Doing unto others” (Matt. 7:12; Mark 12:30, 31) is often spoken and little practiced.

¹⁷¹ A Hebraic-Christian point of view of ethics demands the following: a righteous, revelatory standard founded in the Bible (Ps. 119; 1 Thess. 4:1–12), a transformed spirit, affecting the being, the interiority of the believer (Ps. 19:13–14; Rom. 8:5–9), Christians who submit themselves to the standard in word, attitude, and deed (2 Kings 23:24–25; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1), Christians who prompt the church toward the practice of Christian ethics (Ps. 15; Heb. 10:24; 13:1–7, 17), Christians who practice Christian ethics in the society where they live (Deut. 4:5–8; Titus 2:1–10); and social ethics in lived society that are influenced by Christian social ethics (Jer. 29:1–7; 1 Tim. 1:8–11).

only given as a gift of God but is expected to be given as a gift to others.¹⁷² The whole enterprise of Christ's Church is the declaration and demonstration of grace,¹⁷³ something undeserved now replicated in Christians' service to all.

The key phrase in the above definition of social responsibility is "calls us."¹⁷⁴ Known before creation,¹⁷⁵ those who are transformed by Jesus's grace¹⁷⁶ are predetermined to do good works. The good works Christians accomplish are not a human-centered enterprise but rather the outworking of redemption, reclaiming God's original intention to care for creation and creature.¹⁷⁷ Saturated now by sin, persons by themselves are incapable of saving themselves;¹⁷⁸ dependent instead upon the conscience imbued by God's image and upon a culture of those called to do good.¹⁷⁹ The source of *civil* for any *civilization* is revolutionized by others-centered "live" and "act" biblical principles.¹⁸⁰ Any relationship must be directed by what is right, an

¹⁷² Rom. 5:15; Eph. 2:5, 2:8–9, 4:29–32.

¹⁷³ As Timothy Keller notes, "If a person has grasped the meaning of God's grace in his heart, he will do justice." Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* (New York: Dutton, 2010), 93.

¹⁷⁴ Throughout First Testament teaching, the verbs *fear*, *walk*, *love*, *serve* (e.g., Deut. 10:12) stand as the call for God's people to distinguish themselves in their thinking-being-living. In particular, social responsibility is directed toward the disadvantaged (Lev. 19:9–10; Deut. 10:18, 27:18; Job 29:15; Ps. 68:5; Prov. 4:14–16).

¹⁷⁵ John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rev. 17:8. See also Matt. 13:35; Luke 11:50.

¹⁷⁶ The circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16; 29:4; Jer. 4:4; 9:25–26; Rom. 2:25–29) is an outward symbol based on an inward change. Heart change is beyond the capacity and capability of anyone (Deut. 29:4, 30:6; Titus 3:4–5).

¹⁷⁷ Care for creation is given from the Caretaker: it is His world (Ps. 50:10–12). The definition of "rule" in Genesis 1:28 suggests management and conservation. God's laws protect both man and beast (Exod. 23:4–12). God's written word is to bring us back into right relationship with Himself which is accomplished through right relations with creation (Lev. 25:1–7; 2 Chron. 36:21). Future earth dwellers will do that for which Eden was intended: fruits of labor create wealth, health, joy, and benefit for all (Isa. 60–61).

¹⁷⁸ The human condition: people are born with the seeds of sin planted deep within the soil of their person (Gen. 5:3; Pss. 51:5, 58:3; Rom. 5:12); there is no way that human beings can do anything to gain God's acceptance (Rom. 3:19–20); and the "good" that people do is considered as putrid trash (Isa. 64:6; Phil. 3:7–9).

¹⁷⁹ Social justice must include economic justice (Isa. 11:5; 42:1; Ezek. 45:8; Zech. 14:14, 21).

¹⁸⁰ For instance, an indicator of a proper attitude of the rich is in how they treat the poor (Deut. 15:1–11;

origin outside human beings. Only then can people behave responsibly with their neighbors, the people God brings in our lives.¹⁸¹

A multiplicity of statements from one end of Scripture to the other underscores the constant refrain of social responsibility directed by heaven's revelation.¹⁸² The Creator's intention¹⁸³ is a complementary social engagement supporting our community. After sin, human jealousy—sidestepping God's rightness—devolves into the desire to control others and outcomes. God then raises up the Hebrew race to save the human race through His chosen people Israel.¹⁸⁴ Peppered throughout First Testament teaching is a repository of both social cohesion and personal compassion replicated for God's people in the Second Testament.¹⁸⁵ A socially responsible civilization will adhere to the directives of God's Word for the benefit of all people, lived out by believers who care for and contribute to the welfare of others in society with justice,

Job 29:12, 16; Ps. 112:9; James 2:1–7, 2:15–16, 4:13–16, 5:4; 1 John 3:17).

¹⁸¹ Exodus 20–25 and Deuteronomy 19–25 give multiple commands for protection of both people and their property. So, oppression of the poor was a statement of belief about “their Maker” (Prov. 14:31, NIV). Defenseless ones (Deut. 24–25; James 1:27) and even those outside the believing community (Exod. 23:9; Lev. 18:26; Deut. 10:19; Mal. 3:5; Gal. 3:29; 6:9–10) are the responsibility of caring, protecting believers.

¹⁸² Because of the example set by God toward all people (Acts 10:34–35), believers should give fair treatment to all people (Lev. 19:36; Deut. 16:18; Prov. 1:3, 2:9, 9:9, 17:26), granting a level place where no advantage is given (the Hebraic definition of fairness). This justice is stimulated by “fearing” God, having a personal relationship with Him (2 Sam. 23:3). No favoritism should be shown in the marketplace (Prov. 16:11; Isa. 59:14), the courtroom (Prov 17:15, 17:26; Amos 5:12), leadership positions (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17), financial markets (Deut. 16:18–20; 2 Chron. 19:7; Prov. 24:23, 28:21), the workplace (Lev. 19:13; Mal. 3:5) and the church (James 2:1–13). If people bear the mark of their Creator, helping others by whatever ethical means are necessary should be the concern of every Christian.

¹⁸³ Ps. 145:8–9: “The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made” (ESV).

¹⁸⁴ Gen. 12:1–3; Rom. 11.

¹⁸⁵ Historically, the early church practiced social responsibility through communal living and the redistribution of resources (Acts 2:44–45). Church history is filled with figures such as Basil the Great, who established hospitals and aid programs, William Wilberforce, who led the campaign to abolish the slave trade in Britain, and William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army.

mercy, and humility.¹⁸⁶ Structural social reforms cannot be divested from personal piety.¹⁸⁷ Spiritual formation and social engagement must go hand in hand.¹⁸⁸ Advocacy must exist for those in need of food, shelter, clothing, community, and legal aid. There is no dichotomy between evangelism and social action, between justice and gospel proclamation.¹⁸⁹ The believer in Jesus as Lord does not grow weary of doing good and embodying the love of Christ, a tangible expression of compassion and justice.

Such tangible expressions include:

- **Sociability:** The values-knowledge-skill to meaningfully engage in interpersonal relationships, form friendships, and share in social activities (1 Sam. 18:1–3; Prov. 17:17, 27:17, 18:24; Rom. 16:3–16)
- **Biblical Diversity:** The values-knowledge-skill to lay aside partiality for the valuation of every individual, and their unique contributions, leading to genuine community, irrespective of God-given differences (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14–17; James 2:1–9; 1 Pet. 2:17–19; Rev. 21:22–27)

¹⁸⁶ Isaiah 1:17 (ESV) exhorts, "Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." See also Mic. 6:8; Matt. 25:40; Gal. 6:10. "For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them" (Isa. 61:8, ESV).

¹⁸⁷ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 265.

¹⁸⁸ James 1:27 defines "pure religion" (NKJ) and James 2:17 describes that faith without works as dead.

¹⁸⁹ John Stott argues that evangelism and social action are "the wings of a bird." By way of reminder, Jesus says that we are to be both "salt" and "light" (Matt. 5:13–16, ESV). John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, updated and expanded ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2015), 34.

- **Civic Engagement:** The values-knowledge-skill to operate with integrity and compassion in interactions with society (Matt. 22:15–22; Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Tim. 2:1–4; 1 Pet. 2:13–17)
- **Shared Experiences:** The values-knowledge-skill of attending and creating events for engaging with others in a meaningful manner (Matt. 26:17–19; Mark 6:33–44)
- **Honor:** The values-knowledge-skill of actively showing respect, assigning value, or demonstrating deference to someone, particularly those in authority, through words, actions, and attitudes (Rom. 13:1–7; Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:13–3:6, 5:5; Heb. 13:7, 17).

Intellectual Rootedness

Intellectual Rootedness calls us to pursue knowledge and wisdom, which teaches us to seek understanding and apply it in our lives (Prov. 2:6).

The apostle James draws a stark contrast between wisdom from above and earthly wisdom: “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.”¹⁹⁰

Lust for others’ possessions (jealousy) and lust for power (selfish ambition) well summarize Cain’s clan.¹⁹¹ The two sources of wisdom, “from above”¹⁹² versus earthbound,

¹⁹⁰ James 3:13–15 (ESV). The staccato delivery of the last three words is written without connectives.

¹⁹¹ Jude 11, “They walked in the way of Cain.” See also Gen. 4:8; Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12.

¹⁹² Russell Kirk called this source of wisdom “permanent things” in comparison to “ideology,” which “maintains that human nature and society may be perfected by mundane, secular means” with the possibility of political “salvation” and “utopia.” Russell Kirk, *Enemies of the Permanent Things: Observations of Abnormity in Literature and Politics* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969), 154.

sensate, and hellish—focus on the origin of wisdom. The latter threefold derivation is located from a source (and place) separate from a transcendent source, originating from the first sin where humanity’s parents saw, “the tree was desirable to make one wise.”¹⁹³ Ever since Genesis 3, God has set before mankind the path of life, rescuing people from the path of death.¹⁹⁴

The fountainhead of authority for the intellectual path of life,¹⁹⁵ under which Liberty University stands,¹⁹⁶ is the Bible. Scripture communicates God’s revelation to all people, in all places, and at all times;¹⁹⁷ stands as the absolute authority over human wisdom;¹⁹⁸ provides the biblical lens through which all knowledge must be examined;¹⁹⁹ and calls people to inward transformation through the practice of its truths.²⁰⁰

The source of Truth for the Hebraic-Christian worldview begins in “the fear of the LORD, which is the beginning of wisdom,”²⁰¹ the motivation for right thinking and living,²⁰²

¹⁹³ Gen. 3:6, NASB.

¹⁹⁴ For “life,” see Prov. 15:24. For “death,” see Prov. 14:12, 16:25.

¹⁹⁵ An important book by that title should be read by every higher education student. A. G. Sertillanges, *The Intellectual Life: Its Spirit, Conditions, Methods*, trans. Mary Ryan (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998).

¹⁹⁶ Standing under, not on, scriptural authority communicates the proper submission to God’s Word, where the Bible is a lamp (Ps. 119:105), a fire and a hammer (Jer. 23:29), a sword (Heb. 4:12), and God (John 1:1). “I must allow the Bible to dictate how it seeks to reveal God’s truth . . . With this posture, I continue to learn and allow myself to be taught and corrected by the Bible.” Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 77.

¹⁹⁷ Matt. 5:17; John 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21. Psalms 96:3 and 97:6 extend the declaration to “all the peoples” (see also Isa. 40:5; 66:18), while Psalms 96:11 and 97:1 call the earth to rejoice.

¹⁹⁸ 1 Cor. 1:18–31.

¹⁹⁹ 2 Cor. 10:3–5.

²⁰⁰ James 1:19–27.

²⁰¹ Prov. 1:7, 9:10.

²⁰² “Wisdom” and “righteousness” are paired throughout Proverbs (1:3; 9:9; 10:31; 23:24), suggesting rightness, what it means to have order, stability, structure, and integrity.

learned by reading the Law.²⁰³ Proverbs 1: 2–4 outlines seven Hebrew words where right living begins. Each word has a nuance, a shade of meaning that augments the essence of a God-ordained way of life.²⁰⁴ A Christian’s map of the intellectual path is a designed, directed life based on “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.”

- **Fear:** the subject of a submissive life. This way of living acknowledges God’s complete control. There is a trust or confidence in God’s actions. An exhibition of high ethical behavior toward heaven and the practical affairs of earth are on display.
- **Yahweh:** the object of a well-lived life. The assumption is that God exists. Yahweh is a name that promises a covenantal relationship with the expectation of holiness in keeping with His character. “Character education” begins with the character to emulate.
- **Beginning:** the direction of a life well begun. This “beginning” is not a stage through which one passes. This is not a “launching pad.” The word denotes the foundation upon which all else is built and the continuation of building throughout one’s life.
- **Wisdom:** the result of a well-ordered life. The assumption of wisdom is that life is given purpose. A godly lifestyle is the outcome of commitment to Divinely established ethical regulations creating a heaven-sensitive impulse.

Proverbial education had a theological base. The study of life—history, humanities, science, the arts, logic—must yield to the sovereign provenance of an almighty Creator. Every subject and every thought must be integrated with and permeated by the belief that God created,

²⁰³ For “right living,” see Lev. 19:14, 25:17; Deut. 17:19; 2 Kings 17:34. For “reading the Law,” see Deut. 31:11–12.

²⁰⁴ Wisdom, instruction, understanding, discernment, prudence, knowledge, and discretion. A summary of each word can be found in John A. Kitchen, *Proverbs: A Mentor Commentary* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2006), 38–40, or Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1–15* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 76–78, 174–79.

sustains, and controls. A Hebraic-Christian worldview best explains how the universe becomes meaningful.²⁰⁵

Biblical theology produces an ethical framework. On the vertical level, man's right relationship with God must be established on God's terms.²⁰⁶ Faith, trust, acceptance, or belief restores the fellowship intended in Genesis 1 and 2.²⁰⁷ On the horizontal level, proper relations with the personal Creator allows proper conduct with all persons.²⁰⁸ Sociology, government, law, psychology, and a myriad of other subjects are directly affected. In short, wisdom in Proverbs is an intimate relationship with God that directly impacts humanity's ethical behavior with itself.

Humans certainly do not know all things, nor do we always use our knowledge with discernment, wisdom, or discretion. We must be careful, then, of the pride of knowledge and the snobbery of anti-intellectualism.²⁰⁹ Human attempts either to fathom or discover more of Christ's knowledge "are but the outer fringe of his works."²¹⁰

Any intellectual prowess humans have is owed to the line in Colossians 2:3, "*In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" Note the important takeaways:²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Marvin R. Wilson's *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) should be precedent reading for all in Christian higher education, from boardroom to classroom, especially chapters 8, 9, and 14.

²⁰⁶ Romans 5:10–11, 11:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:18–19 make clear that we were reconciled to God, not the other way around. The difference is important. God's standard is immovable; He does the work ("all this is from God," 2 Cor. 5:18). Humans are recipients. Christians "implore" unbelievers to come to "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20, ESV).

²⁰⁷ Col. 1:19–22 (ESV): once "alienated and hostile," humans can now be "reconciled."

²⁰⁸ Leviticus 19, Deuteronomy 10, and James 2, for instance, frame how believers are to treat others.

²⁰⁹ Prov. 1:7; Eccles. 7:23–25; Jer. 33:3; 1 Cor. 8:1; 2 Pet. 1:5–9. See a biblical theology of human reason in Mark Eckel, "Interdisciplinary Education within Biblical Theology: A Scriptural, Philosophical, Educational, Practical Overview," *Christian Education Journal* 12, no. 2 (2015): 386–88.

²¹⁰ Job 26:14 (NIV).

²¹¹ The following segments and ideas come from Mark D. Eckel, *I Just Need Time to Think: Reflective*

- **Christ is the storehouse of knowledge** (“hidden treasures”). Paul uses the Greek word *thesaurus*, a storehouse of words now, was a storehouse of valuables then. Christ is the layaway for the world’s information and its application: it is laid up, treasured, stored away.²¹²
- **Christ is the source of knowledge** (“wisdom and knowledge”). In Greek thought knowledge came through the senses and wisdom was equivalent to philosophical speculation. Paul’s use of the terms is exactly opposite. Hebrews personalized the heavenly origin of knowledge in wise living.²¹³
- **Christ’s control of knowledge is universal** (“all”). ‘All’ means all and that’s all ‘all’ means.²¹⁴
- **Christ’s knowledge is exclusive** (“in whom”). “In” tells both the location and instrumentation of a subject.²¹⁵ Exceptionalism demands there are no brute facts,²¹⁶

Study as Christian Practice (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2014), 134–36.

²¹² Jesus said a person focuses their attention on what they think is important, made obvious by life choices (Matt. 6:21, 12:35; Luke 12:24, 33–34).

²¹³ The believer listens to the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8:34 as she says, “Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.” Arthur Holmes says, “God’s goodness emanates like a light diffusing itself throughout the entire creation; he is the exemplar, the Logos of all created things, and he is the one to whom it leads and for whom it all exists” in *Building the Christian Academy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 43–44.

²¹⁴ Abraham Kuyper says, “There is not one square inch of earth over which Christ does not declare ‘I am Lord!’” Erasmus says, “All studies, philosophy, rhetoric are followed for this one object, that we may know Christ and honor him. This is the end of all learning and eloquence.” Abraham Kuyper, 1880, Inaugural Address, Free University of Amsterdam and Desiderius Erasmus, quoted by D. Bruce Lockerbie in *A Passion for Learning: The History of Christian Thought on Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 136.

²¹⁵ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 113.

²¹⁶ Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who is There: Speaking Historic Christianity into the Twentieth Century*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1968), 77.

neutrality is a myth,²¹⁷ equality of beliefs is impossible,²¹⁸ rejection of other presuppositions is necessary.²¹⁹

There is something special about the people who walk in knowledge; their relationship with the Lord sets them apart from others. “Knowledge” is a crucial term in Hebrew. Hosea, Jeremiah, John, as well as the rest of the prophets and apostles, used this term to parallel “the fear of the Lord.”²²⁰ Acquiring knowledge is a present, ongoing, lifelong purchasing process with an investment in future endeavors.²²¹ The acquisition of internalized knowledge shapes, molds, acceding to Spirit-directed change.²²²

Liberty University seeks to offer students the opportunity to biblically access knowledge by the following means:

- **Communication and Information Literacy:** The values-knowledge-skill of learning to effectively convey ideas and data through various forms of expression and to locate,

²¹⁷ Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 9, 52.

²¹⁸ Concerning “distinctively,” the Hebrew word for “holy” is “distinctive,” meaning set apart, different, unique. Just as God is holy (distinctive) so His people are to be holy (distinctive). The distinctiveness of the Christian life is because God is holy and requires this of His people (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:13–16). The difference in Hebraic-Christian teaching is explained in Colossians 1:28–2:8, creating a compare-and-contrast methodology with those who may hold differing worldviews (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:32–33; Titus 1:12).

²¹⁹ A Christian view of study is broadminded in the sense that everything is open for investigation. A Christian, however, is close-minded (as is everyone to their own beliefs) in this: all knowledge is from and through Christ.

²²⁰ “Knowledge” is a crucial term in Hebrew. Hosea (2:20, 4:1, 4:6, 6:3, 6:6), Jeremiah (10:14, 22:16), John (17:3; and many in 1 John), as well as the rest of the prophets and apostles, used this term to parallel “the fear of the Lord” (Prov. 1:7, 9:10).

²²¹ For “process,” see Prov. 4:7, 15:22, 16:16, 17:16, 18:15, 19:8, 23:23. For “endeavors,” see Prov. 24:27, 27:23–27.

²²² For “shaping,” see Isa. 64:8; Jer. 18:6. For “growing,” see 2 Pet. 3:18. For “internalizing,” see Ps. 119:111, 119:162; Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 2:9–3:3. For “acceding,” see Rom. 8:5–9.

evaluate, and ethically utilize the gathered material (Prov. 15:1, 15:23; Acts 17:11; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6).

- **Social and Scientific Inquiry:** The values-knowledge-skill to systematically investigate creation and human phenomena through technical observation, experimentation, and analysis leading to synthesis (Prov. 18:15, 25:2; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- **Biblical Thinking:** The values-knowledge-skill to analyze and evaluate information, arguments, and ideas in a logical and coherent manner based upon the authority of Scripture rather than the human mind (Prov. 14:15; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21).
- **Christianity and Contexts:** The values-knowledge-skill to understand, interpret, and apply the teachings of the Bible in all areas of life, considering historical, cultural, and contemporary situations (Exod. 20–25; Lev. 19; Deut. 10; Ps. 119:105; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 4:12).
- **Civic and Global Engagement:** The values-knowledge-skill to operate with integrity and compassion in exchanges with society and to participate with global issues from a Christian perspective (Gen. 41:37–57; Jer. 29:1–7; Dan. 1:8–21; Matt. 22:15–22; Rom. 13:1–7; 2 Cor. 8–9; 1 Tim. 2:1–2; 1 Pet. 2:13–17).
- **Technological Solutions and Quantitative-Qualitative Reasoning:** The values-knowledge-skill to apply creation-order mathematical concepts toward problem solving, decision making, innovative solutions (Prov. 16:16, 18:15; Dan. 1:17), understanding that in a fallen world, in a finite state, overcoming problems may be beyond humans (Eccles. 1:12–18).

Physical and Emotional Resiliency²²³

In this life, on this earth, believers are to enjoy the all-encompassing existence God has given.²²⁴ While denial of physical pleasures may be encouraged for a time,²²⁵ Jesus set the example of enjoying parties, food and drink, and gifts.²²⁶ Asceticism and monasticism have their place in the history of the church, fostering self-discipline and others'-centered care.²²⁷ However, a cloistered, self-serving focus was never the intent of the Christian life as demonstrated through Jesus coming to earth.²²⁸ Scripture is clearly anti-gnostic and anti-legalistic.²²⁹ There is never a duality of body and spirit from God's point of view but rather a whole people dedicated to heaven while devoted to God on earth.²³⁰ And there is never a separation of God's law from grace but a fulfillment of the first through living the second.²³¹

²²³ The conjunction "and" potentially leaves the reader with the impression that two items are separate or distinct from each other. The Hebraic-Christian perspective of life functions as a whole rather than a Grecian focus on pieces and parts. A person's physicality is not separated from their spirit, a constant theme, for instance, in wisdom literature. Consider the sleeplessness of the prayerful petitioner (Ps. 6:6–7) or the person repenting of their sin (Ps. 32:1–5).

²²⁴ For example, Eccles. 3:12–13, 5:18–20, or 2 Tim. 6:17.

²²⁵ For example, food (Matt. 6:16–18) or physical intimacy in marriage (1 Cor. 7:5).

²²⁶ For "parties," see Matt. 9:10–11; John 2:1–11. For "food and drink," see Matt. 11:18–19. For "gifts," see John 12:1–8, 7:37–38.

²²⁷ For example, Matt. 6:5–6 and James 2:14–17.

²²⁸ Phil. 2:1–11.

²²⁹ Those who disparaged the body's importance were heretics—people who condemned the good life God had created (1 Tim. 4:1–8; Col. 2:16–24; 1 John 4:1–6).

²³⁰ Deut. 6:4–5. Consider the all-inclusive description written about Josiah (2 Kings 23:25). Jesus's explanation of "heart" in Deuteronomy is expanded for Gentiles to include "mind" since in the Hebraic mind, the "heart" was the *mission control* of the individual (Mark 12:30; will, emotion, intellect).

²³¹ Consider the cities of refuge, one of many examples of grace within law (Exod. 21:14; Num. 35:19, 24–28; Josh. 20:7–8). Punishment for the unintended killing of another person ("manslaughter" in the 21st century) was limited, a transcendent understanding of the difference between intention and calamity in a fallen world.

The Hebrew concept of the person is holistic: the material and immaterial of individuals was seen as one. Conditions of spirituality and physiology converge.²³² Jesus's incarnation is essential to affirm the importance of the human person in the body:

- Jesus displayed God to man.²³³
- Jesus's coming to earth was the destruction of Satan's works.²³⁴
- Jesus's healing practices note the linkage between physiology and spirituality.²³⁵
- Jesus's temptation shows the tie between a person's spirit and their body.²³⁶
- Jesus atoned for human sin through His bodily death.²³⁷

God's immanence indicates His care for and interest in His creation.²³⁸ Not only was the body created for response to God but with obvious abilities to move for living and work.²³⁹

The worth and protection of the physical human body is dictated throughout God's laws.²⁴⁰

Examples of scriptural statements indicate God's direct concern for the human body:

- Genesis 2:2–3; Exod. 20:8–11—Rest is essential for humans after work.
- Genesis 2:7—Human creation is intimate, immediate, unique.

²³² Pss. 32:3–4, 38:3–8; Prov. 3:7–8, 14:30, 15:30, 16:24, 17:22.

²³³ John 1:14, 1:18; 2 Pet., 1:16–18; 1 John 1:1–3.

²³⁴ 1 John 3:8.

²³⁵ Luke 4:40–43, 5:18–26, 6:17–19, 7:21, 8:2–3, 13:10–16.

²³⁶ Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–11.

²³⁷ Col. 1:22; Heb. 2:14–16, 10:5, 10:10, 10:20; 1 Pet. 3:18.

²³⁸ Matt. 10:29–31; Luke 12:22–34.

²³⁹ Gen. 2:5; Job 28:1–11; Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:20.

²⁴⁰ Noted, for example, in a cursory review of Deuteronomy 22–25.

- Genesis 2:22—Woman is literally *built*; a personal construction of God.
- Genesis 3:21—Clothing—a result of sin—is a precursor to modesty.
- Psalm 94:9—The ears and eyes were purposefully created by God.
- Ecclesiastes 11:5—The body made in the womb is ascribed to God as Maker.
- 1 Corinthians 12:18—In the midst of a metaphorical use of “body” for the Church, Paul makes a factual statement: “God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose.”
- 1 Corinthians 15—Jesus’s bodily resurrection is the basis for, the guarantor of humanity’s resurrection.²⁴¹
- Colossians 2:16–23—A regenerated delight in earthly joys without guilt.
- Colossians 3:17—A renewed application of Christ’s lordship to the totality of life.

Jesus coming in physical body re-secured the delight in the totality of life the Godhead intended from the beginning, dignifying matter forever.²⁴² The Christian university can confidently contend for:

- Nutrition, wellness, hygiene, lifetime fitness, and preventative care for humans continue based on God’s immanence through the health fields

²⁴¹ Human hope of a future, glorious body is dependent upon Jesus’s literal, historical, physical resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3–8, 15:12–18; Phil. 3:21). Life after death “comes complete with” an incorruptible body, just like that of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:42–44, 15:52–53; Phil. 3:21; Luke 24:36–43). The ascension marked the physicality of eyewitness accounts and Jesus’s return to earth as a man (Acts 1:4–11). Eternal life consists *both* of the new heavens and earth, where redeemed people will live, give birth, build houses, grow food, and enjoy animals (Isa. 65:17–25).

²⁴² Salvation initiated a sanctification process that includes the body (Rom. 6:12–13). Life is lived in the body (Gal. 2:20). Devotion to God is shown in the body (1 Cor. 7:34). Responsibility for action in the body is borne by the person (2 Cor. 5:10). Control of the body is necessary (1 Thess. 4:4). Second Corinthians 4:10 expects that people will show Christ’s life in their bodies. Care for the body is assumed (Eph. 5:28) and expected (1 Tim. 5:8).

- Discovering cures for diseases, developing surgical procedures, indicating an interest in the redemption of life
- Movement and activity being imperative so that humans can fulfill their God-given responsibilities of stewardship on earth
- Care for the problems of human frailty expressed in problems with pain, loss, hunger, to name a few
- A pattern of work and rest established in all activities
- A rejection of hedonism (self-indulgence), perfectionism (self-glorification), and humanism (self-actualization through temporal fulfillment)

Scripture consistently affirms the value of the physical body along with caring for the emotional state of people. The Hebrew writers often had physical descriptors for human emotions. The heart is the source of emotions: anxiety, joy, fear, courage, despair, sadness, trust, anger together with desire.²⁴³ The heart can feel, become embittered, tried and tested.²⁴⁴ Kidneys were used figuratively to house the secrets of the heart, coming from the inmost being of a person which could be pierced with emotional pain.²⁴⁵ Kidneys also represented anticipation,

²⁴³ For “anxiety,” see Prov. 12:25. For “joy,” see Exod. 4:14; Prov. 15:13, 17:22. For “hate,” see Lev. 19:17. For “fear,” see Deut. 1:28. For “courage,” see Ps. 27:3. For “despair,” see Deut. 28:65. For “sadness,” see Neh. 2:2. For “trust,” see Ps. 28:7. For “anger,” see Ps. 39:3. For “desire,” see Gen. 34:3, 8; 2 Sam. 3:9; Ps. 37:4.

²⁴⁴ For “feel,” see Jer. 11:20. For “embittered,” see Ps. 73:21. For “tried and tested,” see Pss. 7:9, 26:2; Jer. 11:20.

²⁴⁵ For “secrets,” see Jer. 17:10; Rev. 2:23. For the “inmost” physical and emotional description, see Pss. 73:21; 139:13–14; Prov. 23:15–16.

instruction, thoughtfulness, and attitudes.²⁴⁶ “Bones wasting away” indicates an internal physical feeling when a person encounters guilt or a crushed spirit.²⁴⁷

Metaphysical concerns were expressed in physical language for unseen yet real human concerns.

The emotional and psychological responses to God include fear. Terror and fear confront both the believer and unbeliever.²⁴⁸ The fear of Yahweh includes horror or abject terror in His presence; reverence or awe on the part of humans toward God is more frequent in the First Testament.²⁴⁹ Fear is to be learned and lifelong, which fits exactly with the words of Proverbs: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (ESV).²⁵⁰ This is *not* the chief or sum; rather it is the start or inception of moral righteousness. The fear of God is the basis for living in Ecclesiastes.²⁵¹ Fear of God affects daily living, choices, and ethical questions. The purpose of a Christian academic setting is to teach how to make right decisions based upon right ethical conduct,²⁵² which has as its foundation a right relationship with the only true God.²⁵³ In the

²⁴⁶ For “anticipation,” see Job 19:27. For “instruction,” see Ps. 16:7. For “thoughtfulness,” see Pss. 7:9, 26:2; Jer. 17:10. For “attitudes,” see Jer. 12:3.

²⁴⁷ Pss. 22:14, 32:3; Prov. 17:22.

²⁴⁸ Exod. 20:18–21; Isa. 8:12, 13; Acts 5:1–11.

²⁴⁹ Ps. 14:5; Isa. 2:10, 19; Rev. 11:11, 18:10, 18:15. YHWH places this same kind of dread in His enemies to protect His people (Deut. 11:25; 2 Chron. 20:29–30). For reverence or awe on the part of humans toward God is more frequent in the First Testament (see Exod. 9:20–21; Job 37:23–24; see also Acts 9:31).

²⁵⁰ For “learned,” see Deut. 4:10, 14:23, 17:19, 31:12. For “lifelong” (“all the days”), see Deut. 4:10, 6:2, 14:23, 31:13. For “knowledge,” see Prov. 1:7. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” and wisdom (Prov. 1:7, 9:10, cf. Prov. 1:29, 2:5; Ps. 34:11–14). The first step in correct living is a relationship with God, remembering that demons tremble knowing Him (James 2:19).

²⁵¹ Eccles. 3:14, 5:7, 7:18, 8:12–13, 12:13–14.

²⁵² Deut. 6:2, 8:6, 10:12–13, 13:4, 28:58, 31:12.

²⁵³ For “the only true God,” see Exod. 14:31; Jon. 1:12–16; 2 Kings 5:13–17; Ruth 1:16–17; John 17:3.

wisdom literature as a whole, the fear of God has a moral orientation and is manifested by the avoidance and hatred of evil, as evidenced by an upright walk.²⁵⁴ The fear of the Lord in education includes a person's whole life, for all of life. Care for the physicality as much as the interiority of the person is an essential aspect of Christian care. The Christian university can confidently contend for any discipline of study, including behavioral sciences, psychology, and counseling.

Present cultural connections to grit or resilience gain their credence from biblical ideals that transcend lived lives. Resilience suggests the result, whereas perseverance gives the process. Resilience is the end; perseverance is the struggle. Resilience is where the person finishes. Perseverance is the long trial. Resilience is the application of learning. Perseverance is the construction of that learning.

Persevering for God's Truth in an academic setting can be daunting, necessitating assent to essential doctrine along with a continuous evaluation of ideas set against God's rubric of Truth.²⁵⁵ During times of testing, believers must remain committed even when God's presence seems uncertain.²⁵⁶ Perseverance occurs when:

- Disasters encourage people to repent (Luke 13:1–5).
- God is glorified in negative circumstances (John 9:1–3; 11:1–4).

²⁵⁴ Lev. 19:14, 25:17; Deut. 17:19; 2 Kings 17:34; Job 1:1, 28:28; Prov. 8:13, 16:16.

²⁵⁵ For "doctrine," see Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:6–8; 2 Tim. 3:14–17. For "ideas," see Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:212 Tim. 2:24–26. For "truth," see Ps. 119:89–91.

²⁵⁶ For "necessary," see Isa. 26:8; Lam. 3:19–33. For "remaining committed," see Job 13:15; Ps. 31:23–24. Hebrews 10:23 declares, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." also holding "on to our courage and the hope of which we boast" (Heb. 3:6), showing "diligence to the very end" (Heb. 6:11).

- God disciplines His people (Ps. 103:10–11; Prov. 3: 11–12; Lam. 3:22–25; Heb. 12:4–11).
- Trials bring patience and maturity (James 1:2–4).
- Trials help to conform us to Jesus’s image (Rom. 8:28–29).
- Trials produce perseverance and character in us (Rom. 5:3–5).
- Trials help us to depend on Christ alone (2 Cor. 12:7–9).
- Trials test the genuineness of our faith (1 Pet. 1:6–7).

Believers are to “take hold of the eternal life” because faith and knowledge rest on “the hope of eternal life,” prompting Christians toward devotion “doing what is good.”²⁵⁷ “These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.”²⁵⁸ Perseverance is necessary for those who wait to be brought to eternal life.²⁵⁹

“Patience” is a confident continuation of perseverance, a hope of what one has been assured of, with expectant waiting.²⁶⁰ Heavenly anticipation of overcoming far outweighs earthly suffering. Scripture says a focus on endurance, perseverance, explains trouble now is “light and

²⁵⁷ For “eternal life,” see 1 Tim. 6:12. For “rests,” see Titus 1:2; 3:7. For “good,” see Titus 2:15, 3:1, 3:8, 3:14. “We fix our eyes not on what is seen but what is unseen . . . what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17–18, 5:1). Galatians 6:8 connects sowing to please the Spirit with reaping eternal life. Jesus’s sacrifice “through the eternal Spirit” moves us to “serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14) based on “the eternal covenant” which equips us with “everything good for doing His will” (Heb. 13:20–21). For in this life we have “eternal encouragement and good hope,” which strengthens us for every “good deed and word” (2 Thess. 2:16–17).

²⁵⁸ For “everyone,” see Titus 3:8.

²⁵⁹ For “life,” see Jude 21.

²⁶⁰ For “patience,” see Heb. 12:1; James 5:7–8. For “assured of,” see Heb. 11:1. For “waiting,” see Luke 2:25–38.

momentary” in comparison with eternal glory.²⁶¹ Faithful steadfastness is the response of the person who waits on and hopes in God.²⁶²

Called to honor God with their whole person through resilience in the whole of life, Liberty University students find supportive systems and programs to maintain:

- **Physical Activity:** the value-knowledge-skill of engaging in regular physical activity to support overall health is an act of stewardship (Gen. 1:27, 2:15; Ps. 139:13–14; 1 Cor. 6:19, 9:24–27; 1 Tim. 4:8)
- **Emotional Intelligence:** the value-knowledge-skill of recognizing, understanding, and managing one’s own emotions while responding to others with empathy, patience, and grace (Prov. 4:23; Rom. 12:15; Gal. 5:22–23; James 1:19–20)
- **Rest and Recovery:** The value-knowledge-skill of practicing rhythms of rest, sleep, and Sabbath to restore the body and mind, reflecting trust in God’s provision and design (Exod. 20:8–10; Ps. 127:2; Matt. 11:28–30; Mark 6:31)
- **Well-Being:** The value-knowledge-skill of synthesizing physical, emotional, and mental health practices to live a balanced life that reflects God’s design for human flourishing (Isa. 26:3; Luke 2:52; John 10:10; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Phil. 4:6–7; 1 Thess. 5:23)

²⁶¹ 2 Cor. 4:17.

²⁶² Job 13:15; Ps. 27:14; Isa. 40:31. “Waiting” and “hoping” are English words which give the emphasis on the time needed (waiting) for the outcome to be had (hoping). What is the source of “hope” which creates the possibility of “waiting”? Jeremiah explains in Lamentations 3:21, 24. Second Testament teaching suggests that persistence will be necessary to external opposition (Matt. 10:22; Mark 13:13; James 1:12). Jesus Himself set the example to be followed (Heb. 12:2–3).

The Model Overview —Discover-Develop-Deploy

At the center of the transformative experience at Liberty University is a commitment to and opportunity for biblically shaping students' thinking-being-living. The “Discover-Develop-Deploy” model follows the holistic framework of spiritual renewal, intellectual rootedness, social responsibility, with physical-emotional resilience that trains Champions for Christ who will impact their spheres of influence. This model is structured around three interwoven phases which are meant to permeate each student from matriculation through the whole of their Liberty University experience, for the rest of their lives.

Discover: Orientation with Exploration

The Discover phase orients students to God's truth through the complementary elements of revelation, creation, observation, resolution, and exaltation. Together, these elements establish an exploratory framework through which students understand God, engage His world, persevere in learning, and honor Him through their study.

Revelation: Doctrine²⁶³ or theology²⁶⁴ arises out of God's disclosure of Himself to humanity. A person is thought to be “healthy” or “well” with proper doctrine.²⁶⁵ All other belief systems depend on law which is applied to an external wound²⁶⁶ performing a ritual, dependent

²⁶³ “Doctrine” normally refers to specific beliefs (i.e., Christian instruction on sin, salvation, or angels). The New Testament most often uses the word “*didaskalia*” meaning “teaching” or “what is learned.” The content of teaching can be positive (Rom 15:4) or negative (Col 2:22).

²⁶⁴ “Theology” generally means the comprehensive overview of the church's teaching. Theology encapsulates the whole of a belief system. In the case of the Judeo-Christian viewpoint, everything is theological; all things must be viewed from heaven's perspective.

²⁶⁵ In 1 Tim. 1:10, medical terms were used as metaphors for the condition of one's spirit or teaching by Greek and Roman writers.

²⁶⁶ A salve or medication applied externally is the idea of 1 Timothy 1:8–10. The word translated “sound” or “healthy” is from the Greek root from whence comes our word “hygienic”

upon works for eternal life. But Christian doctrine teaches that the Gospel is wholly of grace from God, “making a person well” from the inside, out.²⁶⁷ For the Liberty University student, an understanding of God’s revelation is constantly necessary.

Creation: The triune, eternal, personal Creator brought into reality a structured, patterned, ordered world which is both reliable and knowable, given for human good.²⁶⁸ The supernatural God of the universe has created the natural world to praise Him²⁶⁹ and His human vice-regents²⁷⁰ to worship Him through their thinking-being-living. The proper response to God and His world is tied to a proper relationship with Him and His creation.²⁷¹ For the Liberty University student an understanding of God’s creation is intended to be an incessant exploration.

Observation: People discover—they do not create—truths resident within creation given from the Creator.²⁷² Humans continue to uncover truths hidden from earlier generations owing to

²⁶⁷ In 1 Timothy 1:8–17, law has a good function in society, keeping wrongdoing at bay. But “sound” or “healthy” doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10) comes from God and is entrusted to the church. Notice how many times Paul makes a point of saying “this is not about me” in verses 12–17. He ends with a hymn in verse 17, punctuating the truth.

²⁶⁸ Created out of nothing (Rom. 4:17, Heb 11:3), creation is the personal, intimate work of its Creator (Prov. 3:19–20, 8:27; Jer. 33:2; Amos 4:13). The sustaining governance of the world’s systems has been embedded within creation itself (Ps. 33:9); “stood firm” suggests a governor of creation maintains, supports, and oversees the works of God’s hands, evidenced through natural law. The reliable works of God’s creation (Job 28:25–26; Ps. 148:6; Prov. 8:29) can be known by humans (Job 28:3, 11). In this way, the discovery of knowledge by people is inexhaustible (Job 26, esp. v. 14).

²⁶⁹ Ps. 148:4; Isa. 44:23, 49:13.

²⁷⁰ Ancient Near Eastern kings set up images in places where they wanted to establish their authority. Theologians refer to the title for humans as “vice-regents.” In the ancient Near East, the image of the god contained the deity’s essence, the deity’s work accomplished through the idol. By contrast, the Hebraic view premised that all humanity was made in “the image of the god;” hence, the work of YHWH would be accomplished through His people. Theologians often describe the resulting human vocation—representing God’s rule within creation— as vice-regency (Ps. 8:4–8).

²⁷¹ To encourage young people to “remember the Creator in the days of their youth” (Eccles. 11:9–12:1) is an important foundation stone for life.

²⁷² Prov. 25:2; Isa. 28:23–29.

the unfathomable depths of God’s mysteries.²⁷³ Human probing and invention in God’s creation is uncovering creational truth by collecting data, applying information, exploring, then, revealing new information.²⁷⁴ Liberty University students are given opportunities to delight in discovery for human betterment.²⁷⁵

Resolution: Christians who live an earnestly²⁷⁶ devout life must practice personal resolve, determination, and perseverance.²⁷⁷ Academic teaching ought to propel students toward lived theology—what could be called “incarnational theology.” Christians should display an incarnational lifestyle in their persons.²⁷⁸ Classroom instruction through co-curricular experiences are meant to strengthen student learning at Liberty University. Every opportunity is given to students to encourage determination, enabling them to stand firm in the faith.²⁷⁹

Exaltation: Scriptural teachings are intended to produce rejoicing, delight, and sweetness, causing the psalmist to say that God’s thoughts are precious.²⁸⁰ Paul ends the dense,

²⁷³ The rhetorical questions of Job 38–41 point to human limitation.

²⁷⁴ Gen 4:20–22; 1 Kings 4:33; Job 28:1–11; Pss. 64:9; 65:8; 66:5; Eccles. 1:13.

²⁷⁵ Ps. 111:2. The goodness of all creation benefits all people. The scriptural emphasis is on God’s beneficence and goodness in weather, language, discovery, agriculture (Gen. 39:5; Pss. 107:8, 107:15, 107:21, 107:31, 107:43, 145:9, 145:15–16; Matt. 5:44–45; Luke 6:35–36; John 1:9; Acts 14:16–17; 1 Cor. 7:12–14).

²⁷⁶ 2 Tim. 3:12.

²⁷⁷ Hebrews 10:35–36 says, “Do not throw away your confidence” (NIV) and emphasizes their need for endurance. Romans 5:3–4 and James 1:3–4 tell us that trials actually build resolve. But the point of living one’s doctrine *devoutly* means a present, continuous adherence. Hebrew and Greek words for *endurance* demand an active response. Christians are “inspired by hope” (1 Thess. 1:3) producing inner strength for hardship (2 Tim. 2:3, 3:10) measured in a person’s character (2 Cor. 1:6; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:10; Titus 2:2).

²⁷⁸ Titus 2:12 uses the word “training,” translated from *paideuō*, which is the Greek word for *pedagogue*—step by step learning by someone less mature but teaching which manifests itself in self-control, uprightness (or fairness), and godliness (or devotion).

²⁷⁹ Josh. 1:6–9; Isa. 46:8; Luke 13:24; 1 Cor. 9:25, 16:13; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27, 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.

²⁸⁰ Pss. 19:8, 119:14, 119:103, 119:111, 119:162, 139:17.

rich teaching in Romans 1–11 with a hymn full of wonderment.²⁸¹ Fascination about any subject of study exists. The God who created the whole world has made much for human beings to discover which is the fringe of His works and too marvelous.²⁸² Liberty University students have ongoing occasions to honor God in their study.

Develop: Growth with Flourishing

The Develop phase moves students from initial discovery toward growth and flourishing through habituation, interpretation, maturation, collaboration, and integration. Together, these elements form a developmental framework through which students cultivate virtuous habits, interpret knowledge biblically, mature as learners, work faithfully with others, and integrate their learning into a life wholly devoted to God.

Habituation: Students' habits are formed by the way life is to be properly lived.²⁸³ Virtue is the proper ordering of one's life after God-ordained ends. Virtue is the development of these good habits. Virtue is creating a disposition toward the good.²⁸⁴ To do good is first to think and be good.²⁸⁵ Habits of the heart ultimately produce actions and behavior proved by deeds.²⁸⁶ If

²⁸¹ Rom. 11:33–36.

²⁸² Job 26:14, 28:20–28, 28:38–41. See also footnote #51.

²⁸³ The wise person seeks knowledge (Prov. 14:6, 15:14, 18:15) and accepts rebuke (Prov. 19:25). Wisdom becomes a part of him (Prov. 14:33), forming interior character (Prov. 16:21). The individual may have knowledge but stay silent (Prov. 12:23, 27:28) unless one can speak with wisdom (Prov. 10:13).

²⁸⁴ Some refer to these as “spiritual disciplines” (Gal. 5:13–6:5, 1 Tim. 4:7–8).

²⁸⁵ Since we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), we are created to do good works (Eph. 2:10) but must cultivate virtuous characteristics to be effective and productive believers (2 Pet. 1:3–11). Our responsibility demands effort to possess virtuous qualities demonstrating our Christian belief.

²⁸⁶ Acts 26:20; James 1:22–25, 2:14–26.

good people do nothing, for instance, evil triumphs. Living a virtuous life as a Liberty University student includes having an others-centered life-view while doing good.²⁸⁷

Interpretation: Recognizing the Scriptures as the final authority for faith and practice relegates all theories and theorists to be brought under scriptural critique. Every earthly idea must be assessed with a heavenly viewpoint. Human reason, from a decidedly Hebraic-Christian perspective, is profitable when brought under the jurisdiction of biblical revelation.²⁸⁸ Liberty University students are able to develop a lifelong ability to assimilate “true truth” with doctrinal instruction; discover truth, with ownership through self-study of Scripture; and thereby discern truth from untruth, exposing non-Christian beliefs.²⁸⁹

Maturation: Learners understand both responsibility for learning, at the same time teachers are encouraged to bring learning to the learner.²⁹⁰ Understanding steps in the learning process—stages of growth—helps instructors fine-tune their methods for their pupil’s learning.²⁹¹ Ultimately brought to a place of ownership, students become teachers.²⁹² In this way, the “holes” of human nature shot through with corruption, can be made “whole” through the

²⁸⁷ Titus 2:14, 3:1, 3:8, 3:14.

²⁸⁸ Second Timothy 2:14–15 uses the Greek word *orthotomeō*, which is linked to cutting straight furrows in soil, lines in fabric, or angles in carpentry throughout the NT world. The word also had the idea of someone who was skillful using tools and then came to be known as “handling rightly” the Word of Truth. A “workman” is the person who zealously (“do your best”) does the cutting. “Accepted after testing” is the Greek word *dokimos* means “approved after testing.” The point of the passage is that the “presentation to God” process takes time, precision, diligence, and inspection. In contrast, faithful believers should not “nitpick” (1 Tim. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:14). “Empty words” or “babbling” are pictures of the problem (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16; Titus 3:9). The Greek word *katastrophē* suggests “an utter catastrophe” in English. The figurative nature of the term suggests destruction which levels a building or when human life is destroyed.

²⁸⁹ For “instruction,” see Ps. 119:102. For “discover,” see Acts 17:11. For “discern,” see 1 John 4:1–6.

²⁹⁰ For “learning,” see Prov. 2:1–6. For “learner,” see Ps. 71:14–18.

²⁹¹ Heb. 5:11–14.

²⁹² For “ownership,” see Acts 17:11. For “teachers,” see Gal. 6:6, 2 Tim. 2:2.

process of academic discipleship within the scope of scriptural principles.²⁹³ Liberty University students' growth is ongoing, continuous, and laborious, with an end in sight.²⁹⁴

Collaboration: The work of the body of Christ should be cooperative, a concept found in the recurrent phrase “fellow worker.”²⁹⁵ Operating in tandem partnership, working together, co-submission,²⁹⁶ and peer accountability is key in the work where personal status is supplanted by shared vision. Cooperation in confederation with others is key.²⁹⁷ Liberty University students are community-minded, focused on encouragement, support, accountability and help, demonstrating a unity of mission and a love for each other.²⁹⁸

Integration: A person's *core* is where one finds *integrity*. Words such as *integer*, *integral*, or *intelligence* express a connection to the whole—something complete, a tight, woven fabric. Mathematicians speak of whole numbers (*integers*), scientists speak of essential components (*integral*), educators speak of wholistic comprehension (*intelligence*). The Bible is interested in forming a person's full commitment.²⁹⁹ The end goal of this person is a wholesale,

²⁹³ For “maturation,” see Ps. 119:97–100. For “principles,” see Ps. 119:89–91. Colossians 1:28 summarizes, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

²⁹⁴ First Peter 2:2 says growth is based on a pure diet, which will make a person mature (Phil. 3:15) or fully grown (Eph. 4:13), in contrast to infancy (Eph. 4:14). First Corinthians 14:20 uses *teleios* (“mature”), which suggests that maturity is aspiring toward an end.

²⁹⁵ 1 Cor. 16:3–4, 16:12, 16:15–18, 16:21; 2 Cor. 8:16–24; Eph. 6:21–22; Col. 4:7–17; 1 Thess. 2:17–3:10; 3 John 8.

²⁹⁶ Because God has created governing authorities which order our lives (Ps. 119:91; Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:13), we practice submission by our correct response. Since we are commanded to give respect to a person based on their position in an institution (1 Thess. 5:11–12; Heb. 13:17), co-submission (Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:1–5) is expected.

²⁹⁷ Epaphras, for example, has an undesignated responsibility but is “vouched” for by Paul, who adds that the man “is working hard” for the Colossians (4:12–13).

²⁹⁸ Rom. 1:12; 2 Cor. 8:16–21; Phil. 1:14; 2 Thess. 2:17.

²⁹⁹ Deut. 6:5; 1 Kings 8:61; 1 Chron. 28:9; Mark 12:30–31. In contrast to Hosea 4:1–2.

blameless dedication to the Lord measured against a straightedge, an “upright” person.

Individual integrity is always walking a path, a road, a way.³⁰⁰ Liberty University students are encouraged to weave the entirety of their lives wholly devoted to their Lord.

Deploy: Launch with Purpose

The final phase moves students from formulation into faithful action. Having discovered biblical truth and developed the values, knowledge, skills, and character necessary to live it. Students are prepared to apply what they have learned and fulfill Christ’s commission within their vocations and spheres of influence under the follow themes:

Imitation: The biblical model³⁰¹ acknowledges that students emulate the One professors follow.³⁰² The Greek word *mimētēs* drives the imitator to develop character based on the given model.³⁰³ The imitators were then imitated, leaving an example for others to follow.³⁰⁴ Giving of

³⁰⁰ For “upright” person, see Prov. 2:7. For “way,” see Prov. 10:9, 10:29, 13:6, 19:1, 28:10, 28:18. “Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways” (Prov. 28:6).

³⁰¹ There are other words which further elucidate the model of modeling. “Walk the line” (Acts 21:24; Rom. 4:12; Gal. 5:25), “follow in his footsteps or tracks” (2 Cor. 12:18; 1 Pet. 2:21), and “devotion” (1 Tim. 5:10, 24–25) are metaphors which authenticate the talk with the walk (James 2:18). It is possible to follow the wrong behavior (2 Pet. 2:2, 15). The role model has a role to play. Developmentalists can theorize about the process of imitated behavior but have no basis for its authority. The reason something is done is tied directly to transcendent truth seen through the lives of our role models (2 Cor. 3:2).

³⁰² First Corinthians 4:16, “I urge you to imitate me.” The Greek concept of “imitation” (context in 4:14–21).

³⁰³ Developmental psychology gains its instruction from the English word *mimic*, which comes from the same Greek word family as *mimētēs* (“imitator”; 1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6, 2:14.). The present imperative verb *ginomai* gives the action – “to become imitators.” James Strong, *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*, s.v. “G3402, *mimētēs*,” Blue Letter Bible, accessed August 20, 2026, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3402/esv/mgnt/0-1/>.

³⁰⁴ First Thess. 1:6–7 describes believers who became imitators and then served as examples for others. The Greek word is *typos* which originally meant, a mark that left a blow or a design stamped on a coin, leaving a pattern—something to be copied, followed and attained (Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3). Those who might question a “results-centered” emphasis in the church could anticipate—, but be careful not to expect, results. Timothy the modeler becomes the model for others (1 Cor. 4:17). Paul was not asking the Corinthians to practice anything different from what was done elsewhere, “everywhere in every church” (1 Cor. 7:17, 11:16, 14:33, 14:36). The Corinthians were to become what the Thessalonians had already become—the developmental model that was now the model for others. James Strong, *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*, s.v. “G5179, *typos*,” Blue Letter Bible, accessed August 20, 2026,

oneself to another is necessary in order for maturity to take effect, a lifestyle accompanying the teaching.³⁰⁵ It is interesting that to reject an authority's recommended representative or model was to disrespect the authority who had written on their behalf.³⁰⁶ That the disciples "had been with Jesus"³⁰⁷ acknowledges that transformation is possible when time is spent *with* the modeler. Liberty University students, imitating their professors, can now mimic what they have learned.

Transformation: Having internalized Scripture,³⁰⁸ academic mission is based on God's, not human, directives. Since God is good and has given us good things to enjoy, our responsibility is to educate young people with that proper end in mind.³⁰⁹ Christian teaching makes no apologies for being countercultural,³¹⁰ refusing instant-gratification (the study and acquisition of knowledge takes time and hard work), superficiality (no apologies are made for high expectations and achievement), or results-oriented education (sanctification growth is progressive; "results" may not immediately be seen).³¹¹ Liberty University students have the

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5179/esv/mgnt/0-1/>.

³⁰⁵ For "others," see 1 Thess. 2:8. For "lifestyle," see Gal. 4:12; Phil. 3:17. Second Thessalonians 3:7, 9 takes yet another step—Paul commands ("must") that the church follow—imitate—his leadership.

³⁰⁶ Luke 10:16; John 13:20; Heb. 13:7; 3 John 11.

³⁰⁷ Mark 3:14; Acts 4:13.

³⁰⁸ See pages 10–12.

³⁰⁹ First Chronicles 29:10–20; 1 Tim. 4:1–5, 6:17–19.

³¹⁰ Acts 17:6 describes the missionaries who had "turned the world upside down" (See Acts 17:1–9 for context).

³¹¹ Deuteronomy 11:16–21 suggests that raising children takes time. Josiah's thirty-one-year reign in Jerusalem had certain positive outcomes which took time (2 Kings 22, 23). From Paul's conversion to his first missionary journey measured thirteen years—change takes time (Acts 9–13).

opportunity to take the learning they have received as a charge, to live with “the mind of Christ” as they work with God’s good gifts for the betterment of those they serve.³¹²

Intention: Motivation is internally controlled by a sanctified conscience properly applying love for God by loving others.³¹³ Preparation of mind, coupled with self-control, knowing one’s eternal destiny, should cause a person to live a life of obedience.³¹⁴ Motivations and intentions can be self-centered.³¹⁵ One’s inner life will be measured by God and seen in life,³¹⁶ so the teaching of “sound doctrine” must be intentional.³¹⁷ Conscious intention encourages the need for a summons to action, a call to commitment, renewal to faith, prompting to obedience, and comfort that strengthens.³¹⁸ Liberty University students have had opportunity to deliberately develop a directive for their individual lives.

Application: The book of James clearly explains faith and works must be one and the same.³¹⁹ Personal acquisition of course material and accomplishing course requirements to God’s

³¹² Rom. 8:5–17; 1 Cor. 2:16.

³¹³ Acts 23:1, 24:16; 2 Cor. 1:12, 4:2; 1 Pet. 3:16, 3:21. In every case cited, one’s internal character is directly tied to one’s external commendation before other people.

³¹⁴ 1 Pet. 1:13–14, 4:1–2.

³¹⁵ James 4:1–3.

³¹⁶ Num. 32:23; 1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 44:21; Prov. 16:2.

³¹⁷ Titus 1:10–16 addresses Cretan thinking and living, while Titus 1:9 and 2:1 provide the bookends: teach sound doctrine.

³¹⁸ The Greek word family represented by *parakaleō* and *paraklēsis*, translated “encouragement” or “exhortation,” includes a summons to action (Acts 20:40); a call to commitment (1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:17), continuance in the faith (Acts 14:22, Phil. 1:14), prompting to obedience (1 Thess. 2:12), and comfort that strengthens (Acts 13:15; 2 Cor. 1:3–7; Eph. 6:22; Phil. 2:1). James Strong, *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*, s.vv. “G3870, *parakaleō*” and “G3874, *paraklēsis*,” Blue Letter Bible, accessed August 20, 2026, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3870/esv/mgnt/0-1> and <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3874/esv/mgnt/0-1/>.

³¹⁹ See James 2:14–26: faith without works is dead.

glory³²⁰ must then be put into principled practice.³²¹ The most obvious teaching of Scripture for any time or place is Solomon's teaching that life is a gift from God.³²² Of the many biblical principles to practice would be (1) gratitude to God for life, (2) living to fulfill God's purposes, (3) understanding plans should be understood within Kingdom dynamics, (4) doing good for all, (5) recognizing that life is given, not owned, and (6) living for God's glory, not one's own.³²³ Liberty students can apply the multiplicity of scriptural lessons in whatever vocation they are called, wherever their spheres of influence may be.

Commission: *Mission* is the crucial core of any institution. Christian teaching of the Trinity establishes mission. Ephesians 1 shows the Trinitarian community where the three persons of the Godhead unite through different roles for one common purpose. The application for life impacts race relations, the unity of all humans, and the need for believers to agree on essentials.³²⁴ The knowledge of missional truth is revealed by the roles exercised by each person of the Trinity.³²⁵ Roles are important in any organization: home, church, school, or government.

³²⁰ 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23–24; 1 Thess. 4:11–12.

³²¹ Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1–12. Principles of scriptural teaching span millennia, to be put into practice by believers.

³²² Eccles. 2:24–26, 3:9–13, 5:18–20, 7:14, 8:15, 9:7–10, 11:9.

³²³ (1) Eccles. 5:18–20; (2) Gen. 45:1–8, 50:20; (3) Acts 13:36; (4) Gal. 6:9–10; (5) 1 Chron. 29:11–17; and (6) Phil. 1:21.

³²⁴ For “community,” see Eph. 1:3–14. For “race relations,” see Eph. 2:11–22. For “unity across human distinctions,” see Gal. 3:28; Eph. 3:14–15. For “essentials,” see Eph. 4:1–6.

³²⁵ In the “working” Trinity, generally, the Father plans (originator), the Son provides (agent), and the Spirit protects (sustainer). In creation, the eternal decree of the Father (1 Cor. 8:6) is carried out through the Son (John 1:3; Col. 1:16), sheltered by the Spirit (Gen. 1:2). In salvation, the Father chose believers before the world was (Eph. 1:3–6), the Son died for the sin of the world (Eph. 1:7–12), the Spirit sealed believers in the world for eternity (Eph. 1:13–14). In prayer, believers pray to the Father (Luke 11:2), through the Son (1 Tim. 2:5), helped by the Spirit (Rom. 8:26–27). The Spirit glorifies the Son (John 14:26; 16:13–14) and the Son glorifies the Father (John 8:54, 17:4).

Liberty students take with them the opportunity to be responsible in their vocation, showing commitment to a common purpose.³²⁶

Conclusion

When the apostle Paul says he “received”³²⁷ certain teaching and “passed it on,”³²⁸ the idea is one of transferring important information to be kept intact from one person to another. First Corinthians 15:3–, for instance, records the key content of the Christian belief system which Paul had both received and passed on: Jesus’s atoning death and resurrection. According to the first verse of chapter 15, the Corinthians themselves had also received this information. The gospel which Paul preached to them was now a place of security for belief and life.³²⁹

Paul often tells his listeners that reception of his teaching should translate into a lived internal change.³³⁰ The apostle’s teaching must also be applied to interpersonal relationships.³³¹ Paul sets himself up as a model to be followed in practice.³³² He then expects that others will

³²⁶ Eph. 4:1–6.

³²⁷ 1 Cor. 11:23, 15:1, 15:3; Gal. 1:9, 1:12; Col. 2:6; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 2:13, 4:1; 2 Thess. 3:6.

³²⁸ Oral transmission of religious instruction is meant. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 499, 548.

References to “received,” “passed on,” “hold to,” “teaching,” and “tradition” form a related conceptual field, making the meaning of this word multidimensional: content and its communication are fused.

³²⁹ “On which you have taken your stand” might be better understood as “in which”; the difference being not so much a change in location but our submissiveness to the Truth. See Romans 5:2 for the same construction.

³³⁰ In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul says they “received . . . the word of God, which is at work in you”; in 4:1, he recalls how “we instructed you how to live.” “Received” and “instructed” are the same word which in fact has similar crossover ideas: instruction of teaching or tradition is to be delivered, handed over to the control of another. Louw and Nida, *Greek English Lexicon*, 184.

³³¹ Second Thessalonians 3:6 says brothers must agree to live by the instructions given by Paul.

³³² Phil. 4:9.

follow the models which are based on Paul and his following of Jesus.³³³ Of course, all reception of any Christian teaching is premised upon the reception of Jesus's lordship in one's life.³³⁴ Heavenly revelation is the source of all received teaching that is now accepted by believers.³³⁵

Second Thessalonians 2:15 summarizes the synthesis of Christian content and communication: "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter." In order for the transfer of Truth to be generational, it is necessary to "entrust"³³⁶ the teaching to others. What seems quite clear in summary is that the content of apostolic teaching is more important than the people who are transmitting the teaching.³³⁷ It is clear from Scripture that the writings not the writers were inspired.³³⁸ It is the "sacred command" that must be "passed on."³³⁹

Liberty University is committed to passing on the teaching of the Bible to the next generation of students. In keeping with its mission, Liberty University is developing Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills to be academically prepared and holistically equipped to impact the world through transformative discovery, development, and deployment for the kingdom of God.

³³³ 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6–9.

³³⁴ Col. 2:6.

³³⁵ Gal. 1:9, 12.

³³⁶ 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:12, 1:14, 2:2. "A treasure entrusted to a bank for safekeeping" is the idea.

³³⁷ Rom. 6:17; 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:5–11, 4:1–2; Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 4:6, 13, 5:17; 6:1, 3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:17; 3:10, 17; Titus 1:11; 2:7, 10; Heb. 5:13; 13:9; 2 John 1:9, 10; Rev. 2:14, 15, 20, 24.

³³⁸ 2 Tim. 3:15–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21.

³³⁹ 2 Pet. 2:21.

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