

# Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

## Woodcreek Church



### General Statement

We believe each person is created as an image bearer of God and is loved by God. We believe each person is created male or female and that marriage was designed to be between one man and one woman. We recognize the reality of differences in sexual orientation and gender expression that some Christians face. We believe that all Christians can faithfully obey God's will for sexual purity regardless of sexual orientation by the power of the Holy Spirit. While we are all different, we strive to create a loving community of true belonging through Christ and do not permit hateful speech or action against others. We welcome all people to come and share in the good news of Christ. (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18-24; Eph. 5:22-33; Matt 19:4-6; 1 Cor 6:12-7:9; Eph. 2:19)

### Detailed Explanation

#### Personal Identity

We believe each person is created as an image bearer of God. Each person is loved by God on a personal level and can be forgiven and adopted, regardless of merit, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus. We believe that our primary identity is found in Christ as children of God, and other aspects of our personhood serve as descriptors of who we are in light of our identity in Christ. While our flesh and personhood remain the same, we are justified and will continue to be sanctified as believers. (Gen. 1:26-27; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 3:1; Eph. 1:3-7; 2:19; Gal. 3:28; Rom. 6:5-14)

#### Marriage

We believe God ordained marriage to be between one man and one woman. He created the institution of marriage to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and his Church. We also believe that God intends for sexual intimacy to be expressed and enjoyed exclusively within the marriage context in order to glorify God with one's body. (Gen. 2:18-24; Eph. 5:22-33; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; 1 Thess.4:3-8)

#### Sexual Orientation and Attraction

We understand the reality of differences in sexual orientation and attraction for individuals. As a result of the Fall, we all experience brokenness in our sexuality, regardless of our sexual orientation. Differences in sexual orientation or attraction do not constitute a failure regarding the design of marriage. Though we may experience attractions to either the same or opposite gender, each of us must honor Christ by aligning our actions with God's good plan for sexual activity to be exclusively between a man and a woman in marriage. All Christians should refrain from lust and maintain self-control and holiness through the working of the Holy Spirit. (1 Thess. 4:3-8; Gal. 5:19-25; Rom. 6:5-14)

#### Gender

We believe that God created two biological sexes, male and female, as beautiful complements to one another. We understand the reality that some experience differences in gender identity and expression. While gender expression may be influenced by cultural norms or personal context, we believe God has

created each individual as either male or female as image bearers. We believe each individual should walk in faith concerning their gender identity in accordance with their biological sex. In the event that an individual presents a gender different than his or her biological sex, we expect them – when involved in our official and unofficial events – to participate in accord with their biological sex. This includes but is not limited to appropriate bathrooms, locker rooms, assigned sleeping arrangements, groupings, classes, etc. We encourage individuals of either sex to ultimately find their identity in Christ, and He is faithful to walk beside them. (Gen 1:26-27; Gen 2:18-24; Eph 5:22-33; Matt. 19:4-5)

### **Sin and Temptation**

We believe that there is a difference between temptation and sinful action. Experiencing a temptation is not sinful but acting on the temptation results in sin. Therefore, while individuals may experience temptations to express sexuality either outside of marriage or with the same sex, the temptation is not sinful. Only the action on the temptation results in sin, which may be either mental or physical. Everyone experiences temptations to sin, and we understand that all sin breaks fellowship with God. (James 1:14-15; 2:10; Gal. 5:19-25)

### **Implications for Membership and Leadership**

We value the gifts, talents, and fellowship of every member of the church. We recognize that those with differences in sexual orientation or gender identity face unique challenges as they seek to faithfully follow Jesus. We want to help one another run the race of faith well. We want all people to know that they are loved by God and by His church. For the love and edification of this local body of believers, we expect all leaders to agree to uphold the beliefs stated above.