

Foundational Documents

Statement of Faith

To more explicitly define the meaning of Christian higher education as used in the Articles of Incorporation, and the methods and policies by which the proposed results are to be achieved through the University or any affiliated educational institution under the control of the University, the following statements of belief and practice are set forth:

Taylor University is firmly committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ and evangelical Christianity. To assure the central place of Christian principles in the philosophy and life of the University, the trustees, administration, faculty, and staff believe that:

- There is one God, eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the only Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all things in heaven and on earth.
- The Bible is the only inspired, authoritative written word of God, true and trustworthy in all it affirms.
- Jesus Christ is the eternal, living Word of God. Through his incarnation he revealed God's plan of redemption by his virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death, bodily resurrection, and ascension. He will return in power and glory to judge the living and the dead.
- The Holy Spirit is present in the life of every believer, testifying to the lordship of Christ, illuminating the Scriptures, and empowering believers for fruitful service and obedience to God's commands.
- Humankind, though uniquely created in God's image, rebelled and stands in need of redemption. God, by his grace, extends salvation, reconciliation, and eternal life to anyone who comes to Christ by faith.
- The Church is the global body of believers across time who affirm that Jesus Christ is Lord and demonstrate their faith and unity in Christ by loving and serving him and all people.

Sanctity of Life Statement

Scripture affirms the sacredness of human life, which is created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 NIV states: So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Therefore, human life must be respected and protected from its inception to its completion.

Multicultural Philosophy Statement

Taylor University is a community of Christians intentionally joined together for academic progress, personal development, and spiritual growth. From Genesis through Revelation, the Scriptures testify to God's reconciling and redemptive work to restore broken relationships. Accordingly, the University is committed to fostering healthy relationships in our community – regardless of differences in race, ethnicity, or national heritage. We affirm that every person is made in the image of God and has immeasurable worth (Gen. 1:27).

We proclaim our commitment to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). We acknowledge that the Gospel calls us to live and love as citizens of Christ's kingdom. We embrace diversity as we live out the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world and pursue the University's mission. Indeed, our Life Together Covenant calls us to be an intentional community based on the Gospel, which transcends ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, and national divisions. Jesus' love compels us to practice true friendship by loving our neighbors as ourselves, extending hospitality, forgiving one another, defending the persecuted, and living in peace with everyone.

This is a high calling that is often difficult to achieve. In this spirit, we acknowledge that our individual and community actions do not always demonstrate our commitment to treat one another as equal image bearers of Jesus Christ. When any of us falls short of obedience, God calls us to come before him in repentance and to be reconciled with one another. When we harm one another, we are expected to forgive one another, restore relationships and make restitution (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17). We pledge to live out this commitment in repentance, forgiveness, and grace.

We aspire to be a welcoming place where we show respect and love for all people. We want to honor one another and celebrate our diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, socio-economic, and national backgrounds in all dimensions of our life together. Through our relationships and programs, we actively strive to increase multicultural diversity in our community. We commit that Taylor University will emulate the beautiful, diverse multitude from every language, ethnicity, and nation who will gather in eternal praise to Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven (Rev. 7:9).

Human Sexuality Statement

Biblical Standards

As Christians we are called not only to right belief, but good conduct. In fact, Scripture tells us that obedience is essential to the life of faith (Jn. 14:23-24; Jm. 2:20-24). This is critically important in the area of sexuality, as the body is the "temple of the Holy Spirit." Thus, we are called to honor God with our bodies and "flee from sexual immorality" (1 Cor. 6:18-20). Taylor University therefore affirms the following biblical standards for human sexuality, which constitute the consensus of the Christian church, both East and West, for nearly 2000 years.

All human beings are created in God's image and are, therefore, of immeasurable value (Gen. 1:26-27). Our male and female genders are also a part of God's original good creation, and our sexuality is to be celebrated. The God-ordained context for virtuous sexual expression and procreation is marriage, a sacred covenant between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:4-6; Heb. 13:4). For Christians, the sanctity of the marital covenant is further reinforced by the New Testament use of marriage as a metaphor of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31-33).

The biblical design for human sexuality demands sexual faithfulness for married couples (Exod. 20:14; 1 Cor. 6:13-20) and chastity for those who are single (1 Thess. 4:3-8). All premarital and extra-marital sexual activity (e.g., fornication, adultery, incest, prostitution, homosexual behavior, and all sexual activity involving children) is immoral. And all use or involvement with pornographic materials is sinful, as are all forms of sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment (1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10).

Applications

We endorse compassion, care, and mercy for all of us who struggle with sexual sin (James 3:17). We strive to follow the model of Christ, who did not condemn but called for repentance (John 8:1-11).

In all of these matters we recognize the critical distinction between sexual orientation and behavior. The former pertains to attraction or desire, which are not necessarily of a person's own choosing. Behavioral conduct, however, is under one's control and thus reasonably subject to biblical standards governing sexual expression.

The biblical call to sexual purity is challenging. Therefore, we encourage rigorous, sensitive, biblically informed discussion of sexuality, whether in the classroom, outside the classroom, or in the context of scholarly research. We pledge a principled and loving response to those who disagree with the university's stance on these issues, whether those within or outside of the Taylor University community. And in this matter, as with all others related to the Christian life, we depend upon and pray for God's wisdom and mercy as we seek to do his will and proclaim his Gospel to a world in need.

The Life Together Covenant

Responsibilities and Expectations for Community Life at Taylor University

INTRODUCTION

Taylor University is a community of Christians intentionally joined together for academic progress, personal development and spiritual growth. The mission of Taylor University is to develop servant-leaders marked with a passion to minister Christ's redemptive love, grace, and truth to a world in need.¹ Together we seek to honor Him by integrating biblical faith and learning while our hearts and lives embrace the process of maturing in Christ.

The Taylor community consists of those who, in furtherance of our mission, are living together in intentional, voluntary fellowship, aware that we are called to live our lives before a watching world. Although primarily centered on the Upland campus, this community is not defined by geography, but rather by active engagement in the Taylor educational mission.

The Life Together Covenant (LTC) identifies the expectations for living in community as we seek to fulfill our mission. It is impossible to create a community with expectations totally acceptable to every member. Nevertheless, certain responsibilities and expectations must be specified to assure orderly community life. When individuals join the Taylor community, they freely and willingly choose to take upon themselves the responsibilities and expectations outlined in this covenant. The University Expectations are not intended to measure spirituality or to promote legalism. Nevertheless, Galatians 5:13-14 reminds us that while we were called to be free, our freedom is best used when we serve one another in love. (Romans 14:1-23; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, 10:23-33)

A foundational support for the Life Together Covenant is the Taylor University Statement of Faith. The Statement of Faith affirms that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative word of God, and it provides the essential teachings and principles for personal and community conduct. The Statement of Faith also affirms the presence of the Holy Spirit in every believer; God, through the Holy Spirit, places in every believer the inner resources and attributes to minister to others through supportive relationships.

¹Taylor University Mission Statement

Biblical Responsibilities

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LOVING GOD, OTHERS, AND SELF

We glorify God by loving and obeying Him. Because we are commanded to love one another, relationships and behaviors which reflect such love confirm our allegiance to God and are glorifying to Him. (Matthew 22:36-40; John 15:11-14; Romans 15:5-6)

Living in daily fellowship with other Christians is a privilege and an expression of God's will and grace. In recognition of this privilege, great value is placed on the quality of relationships in our community. We acknowledge that we are living in a fellowship where we are dependent on and accountable to one another. The New Testament word for fellowship is *koinonia*, which is translated as a close mutual relationship, participation, sharing, partnership, contribution, or gift. Members, therefore, are encouraged to seek opportunities to demonstrate *koinonia*. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:1-6)

All persons are created in the image of God, and each person is known by God and knit together in the womb with intentional design. God's attention to creative detail is uniquely applied in each person in whom is given the capacity to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength. The commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves reminds us of our potential to minister to others while at the same time recognizing our own need for care and support. (Psalm 139:13-14; Mark 12:29-31; 1 Corinthians 6:19)

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COMMUNITY

Within our community the greatest expression of fellowship and the highest principle for relationships is love. Since God first loved us, we ought to demonstrate love toward one another. (1 John 3:11, 16, 18; 4:7-21) For the purpose of our community we have identified the following specific expressions of love as being among the most desirable.

- **Building Up One Another:** We expect each member of the community to strive consciously to maintain relationships that support, encourage and build up one another. (Romans 15:1-2)
- **Making Allowance for One Another:** Because of our fallenness, difficulties in relationships do occur. In such cases we are to respond with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, making allowance for each other and forgiving one another. (Colossians 3:12-13)
- **Caring for One Another:** We are responsible to come alongside those experiencing grief, discouragement, illness, tragedy, or other personal trials. Expressions of bearing one another's burdens include comfort, encouragement, consolation and intercession. (Galatians 6:2)
- **Respecting One Another:** Because of the God-given worth and dignity of persons, each member of the community is expected to be sensitive to the image of God created in every person. Therefore, discrimination against others on the basis of race, national origin, age, gender or disability is not acceptable. Any kind of demeaning gesture, symbol, communication, threat or act of violence directed toward another person will not be tolerated. (Colossians 3:11-14; 1 John 3:14-18)
- **Speaking the Truth in Love:** A community such as ours can be strengthened by speaking the truth to each other with love. Problems in relationships and behavior can be resolved constructively by confronting one another in an appropriate spirit. If the welfare of the one being confronted is paramount and if the confronter is motivated by and acting in love, the process can produce growth. (Ephesians 4:15)
- **Reconciliation, Restoration and Restitution:** Healing broken relationships is necessary for a healthy community. When relationships have been harmed, regardless of the reason, individuals are expected to reach out to one another, forgive one another, restore relationships and make restitution. (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17)

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

- **Attributes of the Heart:** Scripture gives us mandates for daily living through the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. (Exodus 20:2-17; Matthew 5-7) In addition, Scripture teaches that certain attributes are available to individuals through the Holy Spirit. These attributes include: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-24 NIV) This "fruit of the Spirit" is to be sought, encouraged and demonstrated in our relationships. We are also called to live lives characterized by peace and holiness. (Hebrews 12:14) In contrast to encouraging these positive attributes of the heart, Scripture condemns injustice and attitudes such as greed, jealousy, pride, lust, prejudice and hatred. Although these attitudes are sometimes difficult to discern, they can hinder relationships with God and others and lead to unacceptable behavior. (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:31; Micah 6:8)