

Institute for Integration Belief Statement

The Arena of Marriage

- Marriage is the first and most foundational relationship that God created among humans; it was designed for a husband and a wife to join together in serving as stewards of God's creation. (Gen. 1:26-28)
- Marriage is a life-long covenant between a man, a woman, and God in the very center. The nature of the union entails the man and woman becoming one-flesh. (Mal. 2:14; Gen. 2:24)
- Marriage has been established by God to reflect the unity and diversity that exists within the Trinity. Although the husband and wife are one (unity), they have distinctive roles that serve to complement one another (diversity). In so doing, they serve one another, and also meet the needs of the family. (Gen. 1:26-27)
- Marriage was created for the purpose of procreation. This does not merely entail having children; but rearing and cultivating them in a way that equips them to live in relationship with God, and serve as representatives of God. (Gen. 1:28; Eph. 6:4)
- Marriage is a gift from God that is to be engaged and enjoyed. (Song of Solomon; Proverbs 18:22)
- Marriage is an opportunity to demonstrate the sacrificial love that Christ has for His church to a broken world. (Eph. 5:1-2; 5:22-25)
- Marriage provides an opportunity for developing in Christian growth. It is one of God's sanctifying tools. (Eph. 5:25-26)
- Married Christians are neither spiritually superior nor inferior to their single brothers and sisters; God can use both. (1 Cor. 7:25-28)

The Arena of Health

- We believe that all of humanity is created in the image and likeness of God and thus have dignity whether born or unborn. (Gen. 1:27; Psalm 8; Psalm 139:13-16)
- We believe that God is concerned with all facets of man, consisting of his inner and outer being. (1 Thess. 5:23; Pro. 4:20-27)
- We believe that our bodies have been paid for by Christ, and being that He is the rightful owner, we are accountable to Him regarding how we manage it. Although our present bodies are temporary, we are called to be good stewards of it because it is the vehicle through which God reveals His glory. (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- We believe that the ultimate cause of all defects, flaws, and sickness is man's fall in the garden. However, we do not believe that every sickness, illness, or disability is directly related to sin in a person's life. Sometimes it is a result of disobedience towards God; and sometimes it is to glorify God. Each case should be taken on its own merit. (Rom. 5:12; John 9:1-3; James 5:14-15)
- We believe that God is a healer and that He can and will heal according to His sovereign will. In addition to this we believe that healing our present bodies are temporary, and we will receive redeemed bodies when we are resurrected. So then, we believe that it is consistent with faith to go to the doctor and use prescribed medicine for the purposes of healing. God created both medicine and doctors. (James 5:14-16; 1 Cor. 15:51-58)
- The Church is to have a ministry to the sick that consists of prayer, compassion, and visitation. (James 5:14-15)

The Arena of Work

- God created humanity with the responsibility of working, and with the capacity to find fulfillment in it. (Gen. 2:15-18)
- Although work was originally designed to be satisfying, when man disobeyed God in the garden, work became a struggle and a burden. (Gen. 3:17-19)
- There is dignity in work and earning a day's wage; it is the means by which one not only provides for himself and his family, but he also contributes to his community. (1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:10-11)
- Although there is dignity in work, we are not defined by our work. We find our identity in our relationship with God who is both our Creator and Redeemer. (1 Cor. 7:20-24)
- Our relationship with God should always take precedence over our work; your ultimate loyalty is to God and not your place of employment. (Dan. 6:1-28; Eph. 5:5-9)
- God uses our places of employment as means to accomplish His purpose, and He will use us to represent Him. (Gen. 39-50)

The Arena of Finances/Stewardship

- God owns all that we have, and we are accountable to Him for everything in our possession. (Ps. 24:1; Matt. 25:14-30)
- The blessings of God serve to equip us for carrying out the divine-ordained assignment for our lives. (Gen. 12:1-2)
- God's Purposes for Wealth
 - ❖ To meet our needs (Matt. 24-34)
 - ❖ To take care of our families (1 Tim. 5:8)
 - ❖ To invest in the body of Christ (2 Cor. 9:1-15)
 - ❖ To invest in those who are in need (Luk. 10:25-37)
- Spirituality is not determined by riches or poverty; but by faithfulness to God. (1 Tim. 6:6-10)

- The biblical means of receiving money for ministry is through grace giving; God has not ordained bake sales, chicken dinners, and yard sales as means of providing for His church. (2 Cor. 8-9)
- We must be wise in how we receive money (Gen. 14:17-24; 8:18-25)
- We must be compassionate in how we distribute money (Acts 6:1-7)

Arena of Social/Civic Engagement

- God has called us to engage society for His glory; in order to make an impact, we must first make contact. (Matt. 28:16-20)
- We must engage in our world in ways that maintain our identity and not assimilate into the culture. (Rom. 12:1-2)
- The uniqueness of the church is that we are responsible for bringing God's perspective to cultural dilemmas; we have a voice that is independent of social, political, and economic power. (Luke 3:2-20; Eph. 5:1-17)
- God has given us the privilege and responsibility to impact our world. We have not been called to make our civilization Christian; but we have been called to represent the character of our God within our culture through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:9-12)
- God has called us to submit to the government and to pay taxes. However, our ultimate loyalty is to God; if we are forced to choose between God and government, we must choose God. (Rom. 13:1-8; Acts 4:17-19)
- We are called to give assistance to those within our reach who cannot help themselves; this is not to be done merely to get them saved. People are worth helping because they are made in the image and the likeness of God. (Luke 10:25-37)

The Arena of Down Time

- We mimic our Creator when we take time to enjoy life; when God rested on the seventh day after creation, He did it to enjoy that which He made. (Gen. 2:1-3)
- Entertainment in its purest sense is the act of engaging life through the medium of enjoyment; entertainment is not for the purpose of escaping the world. (1 Tim. 6:17)
- Although life is full of suffering, pain, and trials, God has given us a tremendous capacity to enjoy life. It is God who not only blesses, but gives us the capacity to enjoy the blessing. (Ecc. 2:24-26)
- Joy in the heart provides health to the body (Pro. 17:22)
- Jesus endorsed the value of celebrating life by attending the wedding reception where he turned water into wine. (John 2:1-12)
- When Jesus comes back and brings in His kingdom, it will entail enjoyment on every level of human consciousness; spiritual as well as physical. (Rev. 19:1-10)

The Arena of Education

- All truth is God's truth and must be pursued with Him as the goal (John 1:1-5)
- God has endorsed the life of the mind in that He created humans with the capacity to learn (Matt. 22:37; Matt. 11:29; Rom. 12:1-2)
- The ultimate goal of education is to know God and learn how to engage His creation in ways that give Him glory. (Pro. 2:1-22;)
- Knowledge must be accompanied by wisdom (Pro. 1:7)
- The church functions as a learning center that trains the heart and the mind in the things of God. (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 3:16)
- The primary educators of the child are the parents. It is their responsibility to pass on a godly heritage to their children. (Deut 6:4-9; Pro. 1:8, 6:20; Eph. 6:4)

The Arena of Relationships

- We serve a relational God and this becomes a model for all human relationships (Gen. 1:26-27; John 17:21-23)
- God endorses relationships to the extent that he has entered into a relationship with us
- Family is the foundational relationship of a stable society (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 128)
- Our relationships are to display the dynamic of unity and diversity; unity should not be emphasized to the point that there are no distinctions, and diversity should not be emphasized to the point of no unity. (1 Cor. 12:12-14)
- Although relationships were damaged in the garden, Christ has given us the gift of reconciliation through His cross. (Gen. 3; Eph. 2:11-22)
- Relationships that are rooted in God are driven by love; love is an unconditional, sacrificial commitment to invest for the best of the other person. (Eph. 5:1-2; John 15:12)
- Real change takes place within the realm of relationships (Pro. 27:17)