

COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY DISPOSITIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS

GCU's Doctrinal Statement, Ethical Positions Statement and College of Theology Covenant outline the biblical, theological and moral bases for cooperation within the college in accord with the biblical mandate to live life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As ministers of the gospel, students in the college are asked to affirm the doctrinal basis of the university and standards for conduct that agree with those beliefs. By doing so, the college asks students to commit to a lifestyle worthy of the gospel ministry to which they have been called.

As ministers of the gospel, theology students are expected to conform to dispositional and behavioral standards that are consistent with biblical teaching, sound doctrine and the commitments they make at the start of their program. "Dispositions" refer to one's attitudinal inclinations, mental and emotional outlook, integrity and character. Sincerely held dispositions lead to actions and patterns of conduct, which is to suggest that dispositions, at some level, contribute to behaviors.

The College of Theology has adopted the following dispositional and behavioral standards that align with the college's Covenant. Although these standards are not exhaustive, they represent the essential values and qualities that should characterize gospel ministers. Students are encouraged to acknowledge their struggles and shortcomings without fear and for the sake of working through challenges with the support and encouragement of the community. Students who disregard the standards or fail to demonstrate these dispositions and behaviors may be subject to disciplinary action.

Dispositional and Behavioral Standards

Growing in love and desiring to become more like Christ in their character, ministers of the gospel pursue practices that help them love. They choose to let go of behaviors that are not loving. Accordingly, ministers of the gospel:

- **EMBRACE TRUTH:** Ministers of the gospel embrace the truth of Christ, and speak and act truthfully. This includes integrity with respect to the commitment to uphold doctrinal and ethical positions and behaviors consistent with those of the university, within their academic work, within the GCU community and in any internship or supervised ministry/field experience setting. They pursue their own mental and emotional health, seeking to be grounded in reality.
- **DISPLAY A HEART FOR GROWTH, TRANSFORMATION AND LEARNING:** Ministers of the gospel have a heart for growth and transformation. They demonstrate humility and pursue Christlikeness by taking correction, having a charitable spirit and not thinking of themselves more highly than they ought. They do not hide sin but, rather, acknowledge it and learn from mistakes as they progress through their program of study. They demonstrate eagerness to learn and engage faithfully with their coursework, classmates, Scripture, scholarly research, faculty and ministry supervisors.
- **AFFIRM THE VALUE OF PEOPLE:** Recognizing that all people are created in the image of God, ministers of the gospel treat people in ways that demonstrate their intrinsic value and dignity. They abide by GCU's student code of conduct, which governs the conduct of all students who attend GCU. Accordingly, ministers of the gospel reject discrimination and show the value of others in the way they interact with people of all races, nationalities, ages, genders, socio-economic levels, abilities and faith traditions. These principles extend to all forms of communication, including phones, social media and the Internet.

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- **DEMONSTRATE GRACE AND RESPECT:** Ministers of the gospel demonstrate grace and respect in their attitudes, actions and words. They embody the fruit of the Spirit, speaking with kindness and patience, as well as communicating respectfully in all situations. They avoid actions and speech that could show disrespect, a sharp tongue, harassment, prejudice, racism, sexism, vulgarity, foul language or bullying. Students extend grace and charity at all points, including discussions with others who differ with them on matters of doctrine and ethics. They strive for unity, which requires careful thought about doctrinal dialogue, genuine love for one another and a resolve to be “quick to hear, slow to speak [and] slow to anger” (James 1:19).
- **PROMOTE PEACE:** Ministers of the gospel seek to be peacemakers, approaching conflict with the goal of restoration and reconciliation. They follow biblical practices for conflict resolution and glorify God by taking responsibility for their own contribution to a conflict, and asking for and offering forgiveness when needed. They bring peace and joy to their classrooms and congregations, avoiding words and actions that might bring discord, dissension or destruction.
- **MAINTAIN SEXUAL PURITY:** Following the teaching of the Bible, ministers of the gospel maintain personal sexual purity, reserving sexual expression for a marriage relationship between one man and one woman. They refrain from the use of all pornographic materials and any explicit content that would grieve the Holy Spirit. Ministers demonstrate an openness to accountability, counsel and prayer in areas of struggle and perceived powerlessness. They refrain from sexually charged language and behavior inside or outside the classroom.
- **AVOID EXCESS:** Ministers of the gospel avoid excess and abuse of any substances that could move them from a place of health to harm. Students embrace moderation in all things for the sake of safeguarding against idolatry and protecting their gospel witness.
- **SEEK FIRST GOD’S KINGDOM:** Ministers of the gospel pursue God’s purposes for the world even when this requires abandoning the pursuit of their own selfish interests. They cultivate love, justice, beauty, grace, wisdom and wholeness in their relationships. They eschew worldly desires that result in consumerism, materialism and the pursuit of fame and prestige. They show compassion for and bring about justice on behalf of marginalized people who are overlooked or rejected by society.

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