



# Advancing Warriors International

## Doctrinal Statement of Faith

### The Bible as God's Inspired Word

We believe the Bible to be the perfect and inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and without error, contradiction, or incompleteness which was authored by the Holy Spirit by the inspiration of various human "writers". The Bible itself is the best tool for interpreting, understanding, and authenticating what is told to us in Scripture. Furthermore, secular historical records, paleography, and records of already fulfilled prophecies speak to the Bible's remarkable accuracy.

We believe that we are instructed to rightly divide, know, and apply His Word to our own lives, (2 Timothy 2:15) and this is best done through interpreting Scripture literally while prayerfully considering the application; for every passage, there is one interpretation, but potentially countless applications for the individual.

Our programs follow a literal, grammatical, and contextual approach to the interpretation of Scripture. This means that our studies, content, and programs are based on a foundation built from examining what Scripture literally says, how the specific words, punctuation, and grammar are used in translations and the original text, as well as considering the context for the original purpose, audience, setting, and point in history.

This does not negate the use of parables or figures of speech in the Bible. Figures of speech and parables are neither explained as purely figurative nor purely literal, instead, use imagery and figurative language to teach one or many principles. This is where contextual analysis is key.

We apply this literal approach to interpretation consistently, especially regarding debated topics such as creation, baptism, communion, repentance, Israel and the Church, the Millennial Kingdom, eternal rewards, eternal security, contextual uses for the words "salvation" and "sanctified", and many more.



## The Trinity

We believe that God has and will always eternally exist as one God manifested in three distinct, yet completely equal, persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. How three can exist in one is beyond our human ability to comprehend, nevertheless, we believe this statement to be true. (Genesis 1:26, Isaiah 7:14, John 1:1, John 10:30, John 14:26, 15:26, Revelation 22:13).

We hold that no human has ever seen the Father (John 6:46) and that Jesus manifested Himself not only as the incarnate perfect Man who is also fully perfectly God but as all physical manifestations of God's glory and presence in the Old Testament (Gn 3:8, Gn 15:7, Mt 1:24).

A simple way to view this is that God is One "What" manifested by Three "Whos".

## Eternal Salvation

We believe that salvation from eternal condemnation and torment is through faith alone (Romans 4:5) in Jesus Christ alone (John 3:16, 5:24, 6:47, 20:31), apart from any works we do (Ephesians 2:8-9); simply believing in Him for everlasting life (1 Timothy 1:16).

**This means that no outward works or demonstration of obedience, commitment, repentance, or surrender are prerequisites to obtain eternal salvation.**

This includes the sacraments of water baptism and communion. While we are instructed to observe and obey these sacraments, they have no bearing on our eternal destiny whatsoever (Acts 10, 1 Corinthians 1:17, Acts 2:38, John 1:12-13, 3:16, 11:25-27, 20:31).

Our services and ministry are grounded in the truth that God offers everlasting life as a free gift to all who believe in Jesus Christ for that everlasting life (John 3:16) which can never be lost (John 5:24).

Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus fully atoned for all of our sins past, present, and future, which then makes every human savable. However, one is not saved until one believes in Him for everlasting life.

Our belief in Him thus consists of belief in the irrevocable Gift He offers [everlasting life] and the Giver [Jesus the Christ] (John 4:10, John 11:25-27).

The following is a more detailed explanation of our position regarding some words associated with eternal salvation.



## “Salvation”

Not every mention or use of the word “salvation” or “saved” or any of the similar renderings in English in the New Testament (or the Bible as a whole) refers to eternal salvation. In fact, in most cases, it does not.

In most cases, the word is used to describe some kind of deliverance (Romans 1:16-17, Hebrews 1:13), but only in some of the cases do these words mean deliverance in the eternal, everlasting life sense (Eph 2:8-9).

For example, in Romans Paul’s word to express eternal salvation is “justification” or “justified,” whereas his use of “salvation” and “saved” in this book refers to a temporal deliverance from God’s wrath (Romans 5:9).

Understanding the context of the use of these words is key to understanding when eternal salvation is in view for a passage versus when some other temporal deliverance is in view.

## “Faith”

Faith, translated from *pistis* in the original Greek, is synonymous with “belief” or “trust”, and in the context of salvation, means “reliance” on Christ for eternal salvation and also carries the additional meaning of assurance. Faith is simply trusting God in what He says. Saving faith is trusting God in what He says about the Gospel (John 3:16).

We also hold that there are different references to “faith” in Scripture. Simple saving faith is faith in Jesus’ promise of life is reliable and true.

We hold that the believer’s faith is further matured through works (Jas 2:20-24) but that these works which mature faith are not an automatic by-product of a “real” Christian or proof that one is a “real” Christian.

## “Belief”

**The meaning of “believe”.** “Believe”, translated from *pisteuo* in the original Greek, is simply being objectively convinced and firmly persuaded of something to be true. **This does not carry any implicit meaning which indicates any effort, commitment to obey, or action on the part of the believer.**



For both "faith" and "believe", there are no biblical uses or emphasis of any adverbs or adjectives attached to these words in the context of saving faith or saving belief (eg, "genuinely" belief, "real" faith, etc...).

## "Choice"

We hold that the unbeliever's effort to seek after God and be open is a choice (Acts 16:13-14) based on the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8) and is an effort that the unbeliever is absolutely able to make the choice to ignore (John 5:39-40) but that is not in any way a meritorious work that earns salvation (Eph 2:8-9, Romans 3:21-23, 11:6).

After the unbeliever is convinced that Jesus' promise of life is true, we hold that choice once again applies in that the believer has a choice to remain faithful and pursue a life aimed at being refined into Christ's image (2 Cor 3:18, Mt 6:21) and that the believer who perseveres and continues to spiritually mature in faith will be eternally rewarded (Rom 8:17).

We hold that God's choice, predestination, and/or election is not in terms of one's eternal destiny, but for the purposes and works in life to which God calls the individual (Rom 8:30) and the Church (Eph 4:1, 1 Peter 1:1).

## Sanctification and Fellowship

We believe that while eternal salvation and eternal security are unconditional, not based on our works and behavior, the degree to which we live an abundant life (John 10:10), and the degree to which we are in fellowship with God is conditional based on our choices, thoughts, and actions.

Eternal salvation does not remove our capacity for sin (Romans 7:14-25) nor is the presence of sin proof that one is unsaved (1 John 1:8,10), but we are guided and convicted by the Holy Spirit (Psalm 139:23-24, John 16:8) and can restore broken fellowship with God by repentance of habitual sins and confession of our sins (1 John 1:9).

Words and phrases like "commitment", "surrender", "obedience", and "making Jesus Lord", have nothing to do with eternal salvation from Hell, but everything to do with refining us to be more conformed to God's image and character.



## Our Views on the Life-Long Process of Discipleship

We view discipleship as a commitment to a process of serving God and others, which is completely separate from salvation from Hell.

While receiving salvation is an unconditional once-and-for-all free gift by God's grace through faith, the quality of your relationship with Him is conditional based on your actions and choices.

We recognize that all disciples are believers, but that not all believers are disciples.

1. The first step is to believe in Jesus Christ for everlasting life which makes you a child of God permanently.
2. Recognize that there is a difference between eternal salvation and the process of sanctification to refine you to be more like Christ in this life. Then, let your gratitude drive you towards a desire to follow Him, not obligation or guilt.
3. Build daily habits with prayer and study of Scripture. "Doing good" isn't just the absence of "doing wrong." Allow the Holy Spirit to work through you to transform you, guilt-free.
4. Think like an apprentice, growing in your knowledge and application of Scripture. Scripture is "living and active" and can always teach you something for you to apply to your situation.
5. Adopt a process-oriented mindset. Discipleship isn't a "destination" to be reached, but instead a lifelong "journey". Seek to be in tune with the Holy Spirit more and more.
6. Engage with the body of Christ and other believers. Seek out, build, and contribute to the community. There is immense personal growth from giving to and helping others.