



Thank you for your interest in Steps at Citizens Church. We are who we are as a church, in part, through the influence this program has had on the culture of our church. *“At the end of the day, Steps enables us to create a culture in which the ongoing ethics of confession and repentance take root in the life of the church.” - Matt Chandler*

The mission of our Recovery and Steps ministries is to *bring glory to God through lives changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ*. We are a heart-focused biblical discipleship program. We believe that the scriptures are sufficient and the gospel is relevant to address the deepest issues of our lives.

We seek to provide a safe place for men and women to pursue redemption in Christ from the otherwise enslaving interplay of sin and suffering. We provide sound gospel-centered counsel in the context of a loving redemptive community. Steps provides the structure and support in our relationship with God.

## Overview

*Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” - Matt 28:18 – 20*

Steps is a gospel-saturated intensive discipleship program. As we can see from the above scripture, discipleship is more than just learning about God and His word, but actually observing it. Steps provides a framework to not just hear God’s word but actually apply it. The fruit comes in the application.

*“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” - James 1:22 – 25*

It is intensive because it requires a considerable commitment that consists of daily Bible study and reflection, assessments, 1-on-1 mentoring, sharing in small groups and a large group teaching time. Steps is also intensive because it shines light into the deepest parts of our stories.

Steps begins by laying a foundation of all the gospel accomplishes for those who believe (gospel truths) and then bids people to follow in Christ's steps (gospel pursuits).

*“No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.” - 1 Cor 3:11 – 13*

## Four Components

- **Homework** (3 hours/week)
  - **Bible Study** – The program is rooted in the scriptures. Throughout much of the program there is daily bible study and reflection. The pattern is 6 days of digging into the scriptures and on the 7th day stopping to reflect. The questions vary in difficulty and some might even be difficult to understand. You are not expected to know everything. A right answer is an honest answer. We begin at the beginning of the story...Genesis 1:1.
  - **Assessment** – In the middle of the program time will be spent examining our hearts before God. We first examine the fruit in our lives (or moral symptoms). As we move through the assessment process, we will uncover the roots of any ungodly fruit (pride and idolatry) that drive our ungodly thoughts, actions and emotions. We are seeking to examine and rid ourselves of those things that hinder the freedom Christ intends for His people. There are 6 separate assessments.
- **Meeting 1-on-1 with a Mentor** (2 hours/week) – Participants should schedule time each week to meet with their mentor to review their *Going Deeper* questions or walk through their assessments.
- **Weekly Teaching** (1 hour) – Each week the entire class will gather for large group teaching related to that week's homework. This comprehensive lesson is rooted in scriptures, aimed at the heart with the gospel of Jesus Christ and exhorts the greatest command.

- **Weekly Small Group** (1 hour) – Community is an important aspect to the program. Each person will be assigned a small group, led by a qualified leader to shepherd the group through the process. This gives participants the opportunity to learn and be encouraged by others. These groups will process what was taught during the teaching and what transpired throughout the week.

The level of commitment for completing Steps as it is designed *requires an average of 7 hours per week*. Two of those hours are the weekly Saturday morning meetings, 3 hours are related to homework (bible study or writing assessments) and the rest is meeting with your mentor. It is similar in commitment to taking a college course.

### **Philosophy of Ministry** – *“Church engaging culture with the gospel.”*

Steps seeks to equip the church with a confidence that the scriptures speak to the deepest issues of our lives and that the gospel is relevant and even superior in addressing these issues. When we think that the scriptures are insufficient and the gospel is irrelevant we will look to the world for answers. To this end, there are 2 aspects going on philosophically.

- **Gospel Reform** – *Reconnecting the church to the gospel*. Much of the surrounding ideas and ideologies of the world have infiltrated the walls of the church. We must recover a right understanding and application of the gospel as the remedy for all that ails us.
- **Gospel Mission** – *Connecting the church to the culture*. Reaching out to the non-gospel recovery culture and secular psychology by understanding, engaging and speaking redemptively into the culture in a language that is understandable.

We do engage the 12-Steps, but to clarify, we are not attempting to legitimize the 12-Steps as presented in traditional, non-gospel recovery contexts. It follows Jesus’ pattern of correcting the misunderstanding and application of truth when he says repeatedly, “You have heard it said, but I say to you...”.

We will examine and deconstruct each step. We will claim whatever truth it may hold. But we will reconstruct that truth within the biblical narrative, and apply it within a gospel context, so that truth is not misapplied. To this end we have developed *Redeemed Truths* which serve as a gospel apologetic toward the 12-Steps.

These principals rightly applied are basic principles of spiritual formation and growth for everyone pursuing redemption in Christ.

We should not view Steps as an attempt to climb a staircase to God through a religious system but rather as steps of obedience in faithful response to what the gospel has already accomplished and promised.

## Ministry Distinctives

These distinctives exist to identify a healthy ministry from that which the world offers. These ideas flow from the gospel and speak to ideas found in popular culture that may hinder freedom rather than bring it.

- ***Programs don't heal people!*** Much of what you hear in mainstream secular recovery revolves around “the program”. Steps or any other ministry or program do not heal. Fundamentally, sin is the worship of the creation rather than the Creator. When you give yourself to a program you enslave yourself to a program. Only Jesus Christ can deliver us from bondage and reconcile us to God. We are not here to exalt a program, but a person. That person is Jesus Christ.
- ***Not just for addicts.*** Our ministry is open to anyone seeking help in overcoming the enslaving interplay of sin and suffering. The message of the gospel offers redemption from sin and suffering.
- ***Recovery cannot be reduced to a program.*** God has been in the business of redeeming people for thousands of years. His work did not start with or is not confined to a program. To reduce God's deliverance to a program is at least sectarian and borders on cultish. This sort of thinking leads people to fear leaving programs. There are those who are delivered from the bondage of sin and suffering by Jesus Christ and those who remain enslaved to sin. So we are either enslaved or in Christ.
- ***Sobriety is a by-product.*** Sobriety is not the goal, but a by-product. Reconciliation with God is the goal. He is our joy. As we come to know and worship Him, our affections for the things of this world which hold us in bondage are displaced. Religion is our attempt to appease God to get what we want. To work steps to appease God to get sobriety is dead religion.
- ***Ministry of Movement.*** Our hope is not that you would spend the rest of your life in a recovery program. Every person's season of healing is different. Many will come out of Steps and remain in Recovery. Others will continue practicing these principles in Home Groups. We want everyone to experience the healing

and freedom that comes from knowing Christ, so we can all live our lives for the Kingdom of God.

- ***It's not about a single issue.*** It is dangerous to reduce our walk with the Lord to one issue. If we haven't sinned in a particular way, we then believe that we are "ok" with God. Abstinence is not the way to God — Jesus is!

## **Mentors**

The importance of walking through Steps with a qualified mentor cannot be understated. Our desire is that mentors would be in place prior to the start of Steps. If you are in community here at Citizens Church, we ask that you take the initiative in seeking out a mentor. A mentor is committing to meet with you weekly throughout the semester, complete the trainings offered throughout the semester, join you for the Night of Worship and Prayer and the Celebration Service following the completion of Steps. They are also responsible to work with you on an aftercare plan and Go Serve ministry and mission.

A "qualified" mentor is someone who has completed all aspects of the program or completed the Steps Intensive, has been recommended by their mentor for mentorship, is currently in a good place spiritually, and has either completed the mentor training or is committed to attending the training during the semester.

A "non-qualified" mentor is not necessarily unqualified but simply has not completed Steps. They may be qualified in every other way to mentor but may not be familiar with the content and terrain of Steps as it is laid out at Citizens Church. Though we do allow non-qualified mentors, it is at the participant's discretion, and is *not recommended*.

A great way to find a mentor is to ask your Recovery Group, Home Group or ministry leaders. You can communicate to the group or leader that you will be going through Steps and are wondering if they or someone they know might be available to mentor. Again, if a leader has not been through Steps, they may become qualified by attending the Steps Intensive.

Lastly, for those who are not in community here at Citizens Church or those who have completely exhausted your relationship network here, please let us know and we will attempt to identify a mentor for you. You cannot embark on the program without a mentor. Once a mentor is identified, participants can sign-up through the on-ramp provided through Recovery and the link in the next Steps Prep Handout.

## **On-ramp to Steps**

We believe there are some key things a person should have in place prior to entering Steps, in order to hit the ground running this semester. Therefore, we are asking those who desire to participate this semester to on-board through Recovery on Wednesday nights (6:30–8:30 pm). The following benefits will come through attendance on Wednesdays.

### **Benefits of providing an on-ramp**

- Acclimate to a community that practices honest confession
- Gain an understanding of a framework for Biblical Counseling
- Hear testimonies of lives changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Find a mentor and share your stories
- Resourced with the Steps curriculum
- Work through the first week's homework