



What We Believe

Our Identity and Values in Community



God First Since 1899



Dear Friends,

Our identity in Christ gives meaning and purpose to our existence. Knowing who we are as a Christ-centered university informs our behavior, guides our decisions, and provides a clear identity for our community. This collection of documents represents our values and ethos. They serve as our guideposts as we traverse the landscape of higher education and an evolving and increasingly complex cultural context. They fashion our foundation as we lean into our Shared Vision 2022 and strive to become that “city on a hill that reflects the life of Christ and shines the light of Truth.”

Those exploring our community will find a warm and welcoming environment, where relationships matter, none more so than our individual and collective relationship with Jesus Christ. Please familiarize yourself with these statements. Consider how they give expression to your own values and faith journey. We believe this framework embraces the healthy, God-given diversity of the Body of Christ and know our community is enriched by the Christian traditions represented at APU. We pray that your thoughtful and thorough review offers clarity about your fit as a prospective member of our university family and guides your path forward.

For those already employed by the university, I love that this brochure captures all of our important documents that affirm our identity in a single place. As we navigated our recent Values and Ethos conversation, I felt myself drawn back to these pages. I invite you to do the same. These statements serve as an anchor for us; they represent our unwavering commitment to Jesus Christ, unchanged since our founding and responsive to the challenges and opportunities of a hurting world. You see, through our respective roles on campus, we have the potential to play a leading role in students’ transformation. That’s why it is so critical that we, too, live transformed lives and model who we are in Christ, all so that we can provide appropriate support and challenge for our students. Revisit these statements. Make sure they continue to resonate with who you are in Christ. Then commit with me to support, sustain, and affirm them.



Blessings,

Jon R. Wallace, DBA
President

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Mission Statement

Today at Azusa Pacific University, we work together as a team of difference makers to advance the work of God in the world through scholarship, teaching, and building disciples across all levels and delivery systems of collegiate education. When Azusa Pacific was founded in 1899 in a simple home in Whittier, California, as the Training School for Christian Workers, that modest beginning came with the bold resolve of homeowner Philena B. Hadley and others to forge an educational enterprise that would impact the world for Christ. This foundational understanding of our common purpose finds expression in the Mission Statement as established in 1990 under the leadership of Interim President Ted Engstrom and President Richard Felix, who had just begun his tenure.

The Board of Trustees has adopted the following statement of mission and purpose for Azusa Pacific University:

“Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.”

Statement of Faith

As an educational institution with a Wesleyan tradition at its core, it seems natural to us to embrace a statement of faith that is common among many Christian traditions. APU's Statement of Faith first appeared in 1900, introduced by Philena Hadley and Mary Hill as "History and Spirit." It was revisited and clarified in 1956, under President C.P. Haggard. To provide application to these guiding beliefs, "Daily Living Expectations" were added to offer a deeper understanding of the character of the faculty, staff, and administration at APU.

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative word of God.

We believe that there is one God, creator of heaven and earth, eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, and in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return to power and glory.

We believe in the fall and consequent total moral depravity of humanity, resulting in our exceeding sinfulness and lost estate, and necessitating our regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the present and continuing ministry of sanctification by the Holy Spirit by whose infilling the believing Christian is cleansed and empowered for a life of holiness and service.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life and those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Daily Living Expectations

The following are fundamentals held to be essential, and the university expects faculty and staff not only to believe in them, but to practice them in daily living:

- a caring, effective love both of God and humanity
- a Christ-like unity and acceptance between believers
- a lifestyle dedicated to God's will in society
- a growing, victorious state of mind because of the indwelling Christ
- a daily affirmation of Christ as Lord
- a willingness to serve the Lord, even when it means sacrifice
- a desire to be sensitive to the personal work of the Holy Spirit
- a working faith in God's promises for all needs and daily life situations
- a witness for Christ without hypocrisy
- a firm, committed desire to be God's person

Motto and Four Cornerstones

Our Motto *God First*

The earliest declaration of the university motto, *God First*, appeared in the early part of the 20th century, reflecting the community's desire and commitment that the institution remain spiritually alive and vitally Christian. An early publication affirms that heartfelt intent, stating, "It is the foremost thought of our every activity, the principal lesson of every class and the utmost desire of every soul." Our *God First* approach infuses how we move forward into God's preferred future, holding fast to our identity, mission, and purpose.

These two words exemplify a guiding principle for us that both captures and focuses our commitment to providing the highest levels of education and service to our students, our community, and the larger world. As an institution of higher education, we see beyond the bricks and mortar and consider our university to be a living structure, composed of competent and compassionate believers who vitalize our mission and purpose with an understanding of the distinct calling Azusa Pacific has to be an excellent academic institution distinguished, too, by our warmth, our relational nature, and our desire to serve the world as Christ followers.



Four Cornerstones

In the mid-1990s, President Richard Felix introduced the Four Cornerstones. President Jon Wallace later identified Scripture verses that aligned each cornerstone with the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture, and clarified our purpose and values for our community of scholars and disciples.



Azusa Pacific University is an institution built on four cornerstones: Christ, Scholarship, Community, and Service. These four components define why APU exists.

Christ

Belief in Christ is central to all that we think and do, and who we are. It is this understanding of God's love that informs all our pursuits: academic, service, and community.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy." –Colossians 1:15–18

Scholarship

We are called to scholarship permeated by our Christian faith. We are committed to teaching excellence. The liberal arts are central in the curriculum, for we are dedicated to the education of the whole person. At the same time, we value the role of professional offerings that prepare students for specific careers.

"Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor." –Proverbs 4:5–9

Community

We believe in community. We are a richly diverse people who value the worth of each individual. Our mission is to encourage, equip, and enable each student to fulfill his or her great potential, and in turn, encourage, equip, and enable others.

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." –Romans 15:5–7

Service

Service is at the heart of our local and international outreach, missions, and service-learning endeavors. Our students often find these experiences to be among the greatest of their lives.

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." –Romans 12:9–13



Statement of Academic Freedom

The freedom found in following Christ invites us to cultivate and support an environment that promotes true learning and scholarship because we seek to reflect the light of Truth. As a university, we value excellence in our service and in our scholarship and see it as an expression of our identity in Christ. The Statement of Academic Freedom adopted in 1992 and then revised in 2010 depicts this shared understanding and challenge for our scholars.

At Azusa Pacific University, we believe that all truth is God's truth. Furthermore, God has made it possible for humankind to access, discover, and understand truth. We also affirm that the knowledge of truth will always be incomplete and that people, including those with educational credentials, are fallible and may interpret data and ideas imperfectly. Academic freedom, therefore, from a Christ-centered perspective, must be carried out with civility, mature judgment, and the awareness of the broad representation of Christian faith that exists within this institution. Accordingly, Azusa Pacific University affirms its commitment to freedom of inquiry and expression in academic endeavors.

The university recognizes that academic freedom has historically been defined both by broadly accepted academic standards, and by the mission and character of the institution in which it is practiced.

Azusa Pacific University seeks to maintain an academic community in which faculty are free to engage in rigorous scholarly inquiry and expression within an intellectual context shaped by the evangelical Christian tradition. In addition to this freedom, Azusa Pacific University seeks to pursue scholarly inquiry and expression in a way that extends and enriches the academic disciplines out of the unique resources provided by our institution's identity.

Thus, at Azusa Pacific University, academic freedom is defined both by the commonly accepted standards of the academy and by those commitments articulated in the documents that are central to the university's identity as a Christian university. These documents articulate the central commitments that shape the academic community, and thus the practice of academic freedom, at Azusa Pacific University: a belief in God as the creator of all things, in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, in the Holy Spirit as teacher and guide, in Scripture as God's authoritative and infallible revelation, and in the Christian community as an expression and vehicle of God's redemptive work in this world.

The University follows these principles in its practice of academic freedom:

Faculty are entitled to the rights and privileges, and bear the obligations, of academic freedom in the performance of their duties. Specifically, faculty are free to pursue truth and knowledge within their disciplines in the classroom, in their research and writings, and in other public statements in their field of professional competence. At all times faculty should strive for accuracy, exercise appropriate restraint, and show respect for the opinions of others.

Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Faculty should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to the subject.

While faculty are members of the global community, as scholars and members of the Azusa Pacific University community, faculty should remain cognizant that the public will form perceptions of their profession and their institution by their utterances.

In the practice of the academic vocation, complaints against faculty may be generated. Faculty shall be protected from any request to retract or modify their research, publication, or teaching merely because a complaint has been received. Only complaints alleging faculty violations of professional standards of the discipline or of advocating positions incompatible with those commitments articulated in the documents that are central to the university's identity as a Christian university and then only when the evidence supporting the allegation is more substantial than rumor, inference, or hearsay shall be given consideration. Alleged violations of the academic freedom policy should be referred to the dean of the school in which the faculty member teaches. The dean may recommend a sanction appropriate for the case at hand including counseling, disciplinary action, or termination of employment.

In the event that a faculty member believes his or her academic freedom has been unduly restricted, he or she may pursue resolution of this issue through the existing faculty grievance procedure as articulated in the Faculty Handbook.



Essence Statement

At Azusa Pacific University, we strive to create an atmosphere that embraces our history and the work of those who helped to build what we enjoy today. Part of this legacy is found in the Essence Statement. Drafted in 1980, under the leadership of President Paul Sago, the statement was created by faculty members and reflects the collegial atmosphere that pervades the campus to this day. It is a philosophical description of the institution and its people—students, staff, faculty, trustees, administration, and alumni—who we are and who we are becoming.

While acknowledging that as individuals we are at different points along the way, we are all nevertheless journeying toward the ideals described in the four perspectives that follow: Christian, Academic, Developmental, and Service.

Christian

We are Christians who:

- believe that God is the origin of all things and the source of the values made known to us in His creation, in human experience, and finally and fully, in Jesus Christ.
- hold the Bible as the Word of God, the basis of our faith, and the primary record by which these values are made known.
- rely on the Holy Spirit to help us discover these values, understand them, and live a life consistent with them.
- live as citizens of the Kingdom of God, who model its values and thereby call into question the values of the world.
- confess Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, our university, and our world, and as the final authority for our faith and life.
- recognize that redemption by Jesus Christ and personal acceptance of His forgiveness are necessary for human wholeness.
- show love toward God (holiness of heart) and a love toward each other (holiness of life) which express themselves in worship, self-denial, and a special concern for the oppressed, and which encourage us to abandon those distinctions that divide us.
- practice community among ourselves as members of the one Body of Christ and maintain a nonsectarian openness toward all Christians.



Academic

We are scholars who:

- believe that all truth is of God; therefore, we recognize the importance of each field of study both for its own significance and for its interrelationship with other areas of knowledge.
- believe that God desires that we pursue excellence according to the standard of His will for us.
- exhibit intellectual curiosity, flexibility, and critical open-mindedness.
- are able to deal with complexity and ambiguity, and to communicate effectively, weigh evidence, and make decisions.
- recognize that a knowledge of history is key to understanding ourselves, our world, and our future.
- have a basic understanding of Christianity, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.
- know the language, art, and customs of at least one other culture or know the cross-cultural issues within one's own discipline in order to develop understanding of, respect for, and cooperation with those of all other cultures.
- promote and expand the body of knowledge related to our profession or discipline.
- have a thorough command of the primary courses, methodology and research skills, major issues, vocabulary, and facts in at least one academic field of study, and understand how the skills acquired in this way may be adapted to other fields of endeavor.
- encourage and make provision for any person to learn at any period of life.

Developmental

We are persons who:

- seek to develop a creative Christian lifestyle whose purpose flows from a commitment to God through Jesus Christ.
- honor our commitments and take responsibility for our personal behavior, decisions, and continuing growth.
- know from experience that self-discipline, struggle, risk, and confrontation are necessary for growth, and recognize that because of the grace of God we grow even through our failures.
- have experiences in self-assessment in every dimension of our lives, in values-clarification based on biblical truths, and in planning for continuous individual growth and renewal.
- understand the capabilities of our physical bodies and are committed to the lifelong nurturing of our physical selves.



Service

We are servants who:

- are able to follow joyfully Jesus' example of service in the world and pour out our individual and corporate lives for others because of God's love in Christ for us.
- share our faith unashamedly, disciple other Christians, participate in missionary endeavors, minister to the needs of all persons regardless of their agreement with our beliefs, and affirm the unique worth of every individual as one created by God, as one for whom Christ died, and as one who has been given individual gifts and talents to be discovered, developed, and directed toward service.
- are faithful stewards of our time, talents, and resources, and who welcome and seek opportunities for service as a means to clarify and practice our faith and knowledge.

Identity Statements

In the more than 100 years since APU's founding, the university—like our increasingly complex and interconnected world around us—has grown and developed. As a vital part of the Christian academy, and in keeping with our interest as both disciples and scholars to engage with issues of contemporary importance, some cultural issues have been addressed individually in an effort to clarify the way APU will continue its mission of education, scholarship, and service. As a learning community, we strive to bring reconciliation to the people we encounter through our educational and service ministries. The following statements are included to clarify how these issues are understood in light of our mission and purpose.

From 2003–06, through collaboration with a committee of faculty, staff, and board members commissioned by President Jon Wallace, the university introduced several identity statements. Other topics may arise in the future that call us to respond as well.

Identity Statements:

Evangelical Commitment

Diversity

Human Sexuality

Alcohol





Evangelical Commitment

The Mission Statement of Azusa Pacific University identifies the institution as an “evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars.” The word *evangelical* derives from the biblical word *euangelion*, which is the Good News or Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. The word is used by those who emphasize the saving work of God through Jesus Christ; the primacy and trustworthiness of Scripture; the need for evangelism, conversion, and discipleship that leads to spiritual growth and acts of love; and the community of believers empowered by the Holy Spirit in pursuing the reign of God. Reflecting our Wesleyan-Holiness heritage, we consider right living important along with right belief. We seek truth primarily through Scripture and integrate other sources such as reason, tradition, and experience.

We honor and uphold the following distinctives:

- the exercise of grace in every situation
- evangelization of the lost
- transformational work of the Holy Spirit
- reconciliation and relief of human hurt
- unity in diversity
- service on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised
- teaching of every discipline in every class from a Christian worldview
- discipleship of believers
- celebration of spiritual gifts
- an affirmation of both men and women in all leadership at all levels of the Church
- bringing social justice/action to society
- sanctity and protection of human life from conception to the grave
- understanding that marriage is between one man and one woman
- upholding celibacy outside of marriage and fidelity within the marriage covenant
- modeling transformational Christian community
- responsible stewardship of creation
- efficacy of prayer in every situation

Diversity

As an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars, Azusa Pacific University approaches diversity from a biblical perspective, affirming that diversity is an expression of God’s image, love, and boundless creativity.

We believe that all people, without exception, bear the image of God (Genesis 1:27, 9:6; James 3:9). We also believe that, because sin has marred each individual, Christ, in His great love, chose to die on the cross for the sake of every person (I John 2:2; John 3:16) so that all may receive forgiveness for sin and be reconciled to God. Our pursuit of diversity involves fulfilling Christ’s command to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 19:19; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27). We support a diverse university across lines of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, socioeconomic status, class, age, and ability. In submitting to the Lordship of Christ we seek to eliminate attitudes of superiority and to fulfill Christ’s charge to reach all peoples. Therefore, we must submit to Christ and love one another as we appreciate individual uniqueness while pursuing the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17:21).

Biblical Foundations

Matthew 28:19–20—The Great Commission

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Matthew 22:37–40—The Two Greatest Commandments

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Truth

We believe that diversity can only be properly understood in light of God’s revelation to humankind through the Bible (John 14:6; 2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Love

We advocate a behavior regarding diversity that is anchored in the prerogative of love—God’s love for all people (John 3:16) and His command to love Him and each other (Matthew 22:37–40).

This love:

- begins with God's creation of humankind in His image (Genesis 1:27), which means that all people reflect something of God's character, and therefore have inherent worth and dignity.
- transcends human differences without ignoring or denying them, nor using them as occasions for prejudice, exploitation, or injustice (John 4:9–10).
- is offered to all human beings, who by their very nature are inclined to sin and violate God's desires (Romans 3:23).
- confronts the effects of sin within individuals, families, groups, cultures, and nations (1 Kings 8:46-50; Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:8–2:2).
- calls all to repentance, change, and holy living (Matthew 4:17; Acts 17:30, 26:20).
- offers hope for change through the power of forgiveness and reconciliation, with God and with each other (Ephesians 2:14–18; Romans 5:10–11; 2 Corinthians 5:18–21).
- demonstrates special concern for the poor, oppressed, and powerless (Deuteronomy 15:4–11; Psalms 35:10, 140:12; Luke 4:18–19).
- extends the hope of heaven, where there will be no more suffering, injustice, or conflict (Isaiah 2:2–4; Revelation 7:16–17, 21:1–4), and where people representing the diversity of creation will join together in worshipping their Creator (Revelation 7:9).

In addition to those features mentioned above, a Christian approach to diversity should be characterized by the following:

Faith—Matthew 17:20; John 14:12

Grace—Ephesians 2:8-9

Humility—Proverbs 3:34; Ephesians 4:2

Respect—1 Peter 2:17

Community—Acts 2:42–47

Hospitality—Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9

Compassion—Psalm 86:1–5; Matthew 9:36; Colossians 3:12

Honesty—Ephesians 4:15

Patience—Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:2

Unity—Acts 4:32; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:1–4

Appreciation of Different Gifts/Roles—Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–31

Transformation—Romans 8:28, 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Servant Leadership—Mark 10:42–45; John 13:12–17; Philippians 2:5–1

To this end, we are committed to the following goals:

University Community

- Encourage and provide opportunities for the exchange of Christ-centered redemptive insights in all circumstances.
- Create and expand opportunities for students, staff, faculty, administrators, and trustees to engage in intercultural learning both inside and outside of the classroom through partnerships between the curricular and cocurricular.
- Implement an intentional marketing, recruitment and retention plan directed toward underrepresented Christ-centered communities at all levels of the university; Investigate and initiate outreach programs to churches, ministries, community organizations, and/or K–12 schools.
- Intentionally include a broad representation of diverse speakers, performers, and musicians at APU campus and public events.

Academic

- Expand and integrate diversity studies into the curriculum.
- Explore the development of ethnic and/or gender study programs.
- Recruit, support, and retain faculty who integrate intercultural perspectives and other diversity issues into their curriculum and research.
- Provide incentives for faculty to participate in intercultural experiences and training.

Cocurricular

- Facilitate the transformation of a campus culture that promotes an environment of Christ-centered love to the community.
- Provide a safe environment for students in which they are accepted, empowered and supported. Create an environment where differences of perspective are sought and respected for the enrichment of the entire community.
- Develop and support students who are agents of reconciliation and who understand their responsibility to advance diversity.
- Develop students who are prepared to interact within a diverse and globally minded society. Continue to develop and expand programs that challenge and encourage students to compassionately respond to diverse perspectives.
- Assess each university department's involvement in promoting the institution's mission on diversity.
- Strategically address ways to promote diversity.



Human Sexuality

As an evangelical community of disciples and scholars who embrace the historic Christian understanding of Scripture, Azusa Pacific University holds that sexuality is a gift from God and basic to human identity as well as a matter of behavioral expression. We hold that the full behavioral expression of sexuality is to take place within the context of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman and that individuals remain celibate outside of the bond of marriage. Therefore, we seek to cultivate a community in which sexuality is embraced as God-given and good and where biblical standards of sexual behavior are upheld.

Biblical Foundations

Foundational principles from the Bible on human sexual relationships are as follows:

1. Humans, being created in the image of God, are inherently relational beings (Genesis 1:26).
2. The inherent relational nature of humankind is expressed in a variety of contexts including family, marriage, work, and for Christians, the Body of Christ (Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 Corinthians 12:14).
3. Humans were created as gendered beings. They were expressly blessed by God to be fruitful and multiply and to exercise dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26–28).
4. Heterosexuality is God’s design for sexually intimate relationships. Sexual union between a man and a woman is only to take place within the marriage covenant (Genesis 2:18, 21–24; Hebrews 13:4).
5. Jesus reaffirms the marital covenant as existing between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4–9).
6. The New Testament teaches that followers of Christ are to remain celibate outside the bond of marriage. In sexual union, both body and soul are deeply impacted. A person who engages in sexual unions outside the bond of marriage sins against his or her own body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:13, 18–20).
7. The sexual union between a husband and wife has been designed by God to bring them together as “one flesh,” creating a solid foundation on which to build a family (Genesis 2:18–24; Ephesians 5:31).
8. In Scripture, several sexual behaviors are expressly forbidden, which include but are not limited to: fornication, adultery, incest, unnatural sexual intercourse, and homosexual acts (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7–23, 20:10–21; Matthew 5:27–28; Romans 1:20–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17–19; Colossians 3:5).

Azusa Pacific University pledges to guide the university community toward understanding and embracing their God-given sexuality as reflected in this statement. Any deviation from a biblical standard of sexual behavior is sin and therefore is an opportunity for repentance, grace, and redemption, so that as a community we might honor one another and glorify God.



Alcohol

As an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars, Azusa Pacific University seeks to model Christ-like behavior regarding the responsible and legal use of alcohol. We seek to cultivate a community in which members exercise freedom, responsibility, and discretion in responsiveness to the Holy Spirit. This is demonstrated by all members of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students aligning their actions and behaviors with university policies on alcohol. This positional statement reflects APU’s commitment to creating a God-honoring environment that is safe and healthy for all community members.

Biblical Foundations

1. Scripture makes clear that Christianity at its core is about loving God foremost and loving other people as ourselves (Matthew 22:37–40); it is not primarily about bodily habits of behavior. The apostle Paul explains that the kingdom of God is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” rather than “eating and drinking” (Romans 14:17). Only within the framework of fulfilling the law of love can the biblical warnings and instructions about drinking alcohol be rightly understood and applied. (See Romans 13:10, “Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.”)
2. Since believers find comfort and joy in the Holy Spirit, they do not take refuge in spirits of strong drink. The apostle Paul says, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

3. Unambiguously, the Bible condemns drunkenness. The prophet Isaiah, echoing the wisdom tradition, explains that drunkenness causes moral blindness (Isaiah 5:11–12; Proverbs 20:1). In the New Testament, drunkenness is associated with debauchery and deeds that oppose the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:19–21; I Peter 4:3).
4. According to Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, it is unacceptable to tolerate drunkenness in the Christian community. He exhorts members of the body of Christ "not to associate" with "any so-called" believer if he or she is an unrepentant drunkard (I Corinthians 5:11).
5. The apostle Paul explains that "nothing is unclean in itself" (Romans 14:14). The psalmist praises God for creation, acknowledging wine as a gift that gladdens the heart (Psalm 104:15). In keeping with the praise of the psalmist, Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine at a wedding (John 2:1–11).
6. According to Paul, it was "for freedom that Christ set us free" (Galatians 5:1). Believers are free, therefore, either to choose abstinence or moderation in accordance with their liberty in Christ.
7. The apostle Paul says that while it is wrong for believers to judge one another for drinking or not drinking (Romans 14:3–4), it is likewise wrong to put a "stumbling block" in another believer's way (Romans 14:13). Explicitly, he says, "If because of food [or drink] your brother [or sister] is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love" (Romans 14:15). We are to be concerned for the welfare of others and not merely for our own personal interests (Philippians 2:4).
8. Each believer is compelled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and personal love for God to sanctify Christ as Lord in his or her heart (I Peter 3:15) and to live the rest of the time on earth no longer for the lusts of humanity, but for the will of God (I Peter 4:2).

In summary, the university acknowledges that biblical teaching, church history, and data showing the dangers of alcohol abuse provide sound foundations for clear community standards related to alcohol. Therefore, the university has established specific policies, which can be found in the faculty, staff, and student handbooks. Any deviation from these policies presents an opportunity for grace, repentance, and redemption in accordance with the university's commitment to honor one another and glorify God.

Note: Scripture in the biblical foundations section on alcohol were adapted from the New American Standard Version. Expediency here prohibits a more thorough articulation of the way that biblical truth gives leads to these stated conclusions. Certainly, the Bible is to be read in context and handled accurately and responsibly. Thus, it is important to clarify from the beginning that citing the references throughout this document is meant not as proof-texting, but rather as an indicator that the theological grounding for the Azusa Pacific University Positional Statements is ultimately rooted in Scripture.



AZUSA PACIFIC
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901 E. Alosta Ave., Azusa, CA 91702

www.apu.edu