



# INITIATE

## CONFERENCE 2020



*seeing common grace  
through the gospel of grace*

**AUGUST 28–29**  
**GHCC BRENTWOOD**

**CONFERENCE OVERVIEW & THEME**

# 2020 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

seeing  
common  
grace  
through  
the  
gospel  
of grace

**INITIATE**  
CONFERENCE 2020

## **TITLE**

*Initiate: seeing common grace through the gospel of grace*

## **DESCRIPTION:**

Life is filled with all kinds of gifts and blessings. There are the gifts of family and friendship, beauty and creativity, music and stories, food and laughter, snow and sunshine. But how should we view these blessings? Are they distractions from what really matters? Are we allowed to enjoy them? Is there any significance to the things of this world?

Each of these gifts and blessing are a part of God's creation—the cosmos. It is frequently called "common grace". The doctrine of Creation teaches us that God created the heaven and earth—things visible and invisible, physical and non-physical. Of the creation God said it was "good". But because of sin, the goodness of creation has been marred so that we often see more exploitation than godly enjoyment. This doesn't mean, however, that the goodness of God's creation is completely lost because of sin. Instead, there are moments when creation bursts with beauty and the goodness of what God has created is undeniably present. These instances of transcendence are gracious reminder that the world is the "theater of God's glory." From art and technology to worship and work, everything we do carries the potential to glorifying God.

The Initiate Conference is designed to train volunteer leaders by equipping them with gospel-centered theology and practice to love and serve others for the glory of God. This year's theme aims to help our leaders connect the gospel to ordinary, everyday things of life. As we grow in our ability to view the world through what God has done in Christ, we will be able to glorify God by freely enjoying the things He has given us. In addition, we can help other see how these ordinary, everyday things of life point us to a greater joy in God.

So, join us this year as we seek to grow in our discipleship by seeing common grace through the gospel of grace.

## **WHO IS THE INITIATE CONFERENCE FOR?**

The Initiate Conference is designed to train church leaders by equipping them with gospel-centered theology and practice to love and serve others for the glory of God. I will breakdown that description into categories to help flesh-out its meaning.

# INITIATE CONFERENCE — DEFINED

**Glory of God.** The glory of God is a significant theme in scripture. God's glory can be thought of as His fame, worth, or excellence. In verb form, to glorify God is to bring honor to God by displaying His worth and excellence through how one lives. To worship God is to bring glory to God, and to glorify God is to worship Him. The Apostle Paul wrote, 1 Corinthians 10:31: *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* So, in effect, we are to worship God in everything we do no matter how mundane it may be.

This is also true of discipleship and ministry. The very aim of our discipleship is *"that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God"* (2 Corinthians 4:15). The ministry we do to, and with, one another is ultimately for the glory of God and the good of our neighbor. For example, Paul writes, *"welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God"* (Romans 15:7).

**Love and Serve.** God calls His people to be distinct from the world. The most distinguishing mark of the Christian is the love that they show in their service to others—both in the church and outside of the church, but to those in the church especially (Jn. 13:34–35; Rom. 12:9–13; Gal. 5:13). Christians cannot say that they love others while neglecting to serve those around them (1 Jn. 3:16–18; Jas. 2:15–16). So, serving others through love for the glory of God is the distinguishing mark of disciples and we are to grow in this pursuit.

## **Gospel-centered Theology and Practice.**

Gospel-centered theology is fundamentally about Jesus. He is understood as the fulfillment of God's precious and great promises (2 Cor. 1:20), the Messiah and Savior (2 Pet. 3:18), the hope of every Christian (Eph. 1:12). Jesus is to have supremacy in everything (Col. 1:18) because he is the Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, Alpha, Omega, and glorious King.

Gospel-centered practice, or living, is also fundamentally about Jesus. Joe Thorn defines it as: "[T]he gospel-centered life is a life where a Christian experiences a growing personal reliance on the gospel that protects him from depending on his own religious performance and being seduced and overwhelmed by idols." In a nutshell, gospel-centered living understands the gospel as both the motive and the power to pursue Christ-likeness and puts no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3–4).

Christians  
cannot  
say that  
they love  
others while  
neglecting  
to serve  
those  
around  
them

**INITIATE**  
CONFERENCE 2020

# WHO ARE THE CHURCH LEADERS?

At the 2018 Initiate Conference, a definition of leadership was offered as: taking initiative for the glory of God and the good of others. Leadership, basically, is taking a person from “here” to “there”—whatever “here” and “there” means. For instance, helping someone go from no knowledge of the bible to reading the bible takes leadership. That person is being brought from ignorance to knowledge.

Using this definition helps us better understand what it meant by Christian leadership. Christian leadership is taking the initiative to do spiritual good to others with the aim of ultimately glorifying God through what is done. This kind of leadership is also an aspect of discipleship. For no disciple is ever permitted to not pursue the good of others and to do all things for the glory of God. So, every disciple is called to some form of leadership; every disciple is called to take initiative to do spiritual good to others for the glory of God.

Since leadership is taking the initiative for the glory of God and good of others, and is a vital aspect of discipleship, every disciple is called to some form of leadership. The Initiate Conference is designed to train church leaders (Elders, Pastors, Small Group Leaders, Sunday School Teachers, Greeters, Ushers, Prayer Room Workers, Musicians, etc.) by equipping them with gospel-centered theology and practice to love and serve others for the glory of God.

every disciple is called to take  
initiative to do spiritual good to  
others for the glory of God.