



**ONE FOUNDATION**  
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

## INTEGRATION OF FAITH, LEARNING AND WORK AT GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

**G**rand Canyon University is a Christ-centered educational institution that seeks to promote the common good by intentionally integrating faith, learning and work. The university's initiative to integrate faith stems from its mission to educate students from a distinctively Christian perspective and prepare them for careers marked by kindness, service and integrity. In addition to helping students find their purpose, the university endeavors to carry out its mission in ways that are marked by compassion, justice and concern for the common good.

The message of Jesus Christ offers wisdom for the present and hope for the future. It is good news for individuals and for the communities in which individuals live and work. Jesus himself taught that Christians should live as salt and light within the world, which suggests that the Christian worldview relates as much to the public arena as it does to the private lives of individuals. As a university, we are convinced this calling should shape the ways we think and act within academic disciplines and various career fields.

Our desire to integrate faith, learning and work flows out of an institutional commitment to cultivate and exemplify the biblical ideals of glorifying God and loving neighbors as ourselves. By God's grace we seek to honor Him in all that we do and to serve others in ways that are consistent with the loving kindness of Jesus Christ. These ideals are lofty but they represent appropriate goals and should serve as standards for Christian educational institutions. For these reasons, GCU is devoted to the intentional and pervasive integration of the Christian worldview.

### What is the Integration of Faith, Learning and Work?

The integration of faith and learning may be understood as the scholarly process of joining together knowledge of God and knowledge of the universe for the sake of developing true, comprehensive and satisfactory understandings of humans and the world they inhabit. As a Christian university, we view the integration of faith and learning as a matter of institutional integrity and a matter of practical wisdom.

At GCU, integration of the Christian worldview also extends to the workplace as we strive to instill a sense of vocational calling and purpose in our students, faculty and staff. It is our conviction that

our work within the world matters to God and our neighbors and must be carried out with integrity and excellence. While few doubt that it is possible to serve God through ministry and mission work, we are convinced that God is also honored by faithful service within "secular" vocations. Integrating faith and work is a practical and logical extension of faith-learning integration.

The integration of faith and work may be understood as the application of the Christian worldview within the context of work in ways that honor God, serve neighbors and contribute to the advancement of the society. Work represents a vital opportunity to integrate Christian convictions, ethical principles and vocations in ways that glorify God and benefit others. Thus, we seek to honor God by educating students from the perspective of the Christian worldview and by equipping them to serve others through their respective vocations.

### Why Does GCU Integrate Faith, Learning and Work?

GCU has grown from a small, Christian college into a large and comprehensive university in Phoenix's West Valley with a significant national presence. Yet, the university remains committed to the central convictions that have long characterized quality Christian education and faithful Christian institutions. Chief among these convictions are the principles that God is both Creator and Redeemer, that fallen humans need to be redeemed and that God is restoring the entire world through his Son, Jesus Christ. These convictions represent foundational beliefs that are central to the Christian worldview and derive from the consistent biblical emphasis on creation, fall, redemption and restoration. This four-fold framework undergirds the university's approach to education and career preparation by providing a comprehensive and compelling view of the world.

The understanding that God created the universe and everything within it serves as a unifying principle and vital starting point for making sense of the world in which we live. Furthermore, by faith we recognize that God continues to work in our day to redeem the brokenness and inadequacies of humanity and society in ways that offer hope for the future. God is not only Creator but also Redeemer, and He has promised to make all things new through Jesus our Lord.

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In some cases Christians have placed emphasis on sin and the need for personal redemption to the neglect of the doctrines of creation and restoration. While concern for individual salvation is entirely appropriate, we are convinced that the Bible actually sets forth a more holistic vision for life. This vision encompasses the restoration of the created order as well as the renewal of human creatures and communities. These understandings are rooted in the biblical narrative and reflected in GCU's Doctrinal Statement. As such, they deeply shape the identity, mission and vision of the university.

In accord with Christian values and convictions, GCU affirms the universality and objectivity of truth and considers the pursuit of knowledge a worthy and attainable goal. Within secular academic contexts the search for knowledge tends to exclude areas of inquiry and sources that are not consistent with secularized views of the world. By contrast, GCU is committed to the pursuit of understanding and affirms that genuine knowledge may be derived from a wide variety of sources, including human reason and introspection, scientific investigation and divine revelation. The university strives to cultivate an academic environment in which students are empowered to seek truth wherever it may be found.

Students are encouraged to raise questions that cannot be answered adequately without exploring matters of ultimate concern. By broadening the conversation, we urge students to explore their personal worldviews as well as the Christian worldview to find their purpose within a world that displays the wisdom and glory of God. This provides unique opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, self-awareness, self-knowledge and depth of character. This educational strategy enables thoughtful people to understand Christian beliefs and Christian believers to become more thoughtful. As a result, graduates of GCU are prepared to engage the world with a sense of vocational calling and purpose.

### How Does GCU Integrate Faith, Learning, and Work?

The university strives to integrate faith at all academic levels, which includes its undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs. GCU's basic strategy of integration centers on the concept of a worldview, which refers to the complex network of assumptions that shape thought and practice. By exploring various worldview commitments, students are able to reflect on implications and practical value of major options available within the marketplace of ideas.

Students are introduced to the Christian worldview from the start of their programs of study. By thinking from a worldview perspective, students learn to reflect carefully on the underlying assumptions, motives and intentions that shape views of themselves and the world. They will be challenged to consider the practical implications of their personal perspectives and to refine understandings on the basis of investigation, reflection and dialogue. Students are encouraged to consider the needs and interests of others in addition to their own,

and embrace the Christian values of love and service as they prepare to enter the workforce.

This is not to suggest that all students are required to personally embrace the Christian worldview. They are free to do so, of course, but they are also free to embrace other views of the world. Christians believe that God grants common grace to Christians and non-Christians alike, a grace by which all truth and all that is excellent in our work may be considered good, regardless of an individual's beliefs. Faith is a matter of conscience that cannot and should not be forced upon anyone who is unwilling or resistant to embrace it for any reason.

As a Christian university, we aim to be persuasive in our presentation and practice of the Christian worldview, but renounce all forms of coercion and compulsion. Faith, when genuine, is a voluntary response to the person and work of Jesus Christ. As a matter of loving others as we love ourselves, we are committed to respectful dialogue and charitable engagement in all matters, especially in matters of faith and conscience. GCU invites students from all walks of life to seek truth and to find their purpose within a context marked by Christian charity and compassion. We welcome all who genuinely seek truth to join the conversation.

### Conclusion: Faith Seeking Understanding

As intelligent and moral creatures, human beings bear significant responsibility for what they know and how they live in light of such knowledge. Thus the pursuit of truth should be a means to the end of promoting human flourishing and the good of the communities in which we live. Similarly, we must carry out our work with excellence and integrity and serve others as if our service is unto the Lord. Strong economies, healthy organizations and virtuous people are foundational to vibrant communities and thriving societies. Realizing these ideals depends substantially on arriving at true understandings of who we are and how we are meant to live in this world.

As a Christian university, GCU encourages students to find their purpose in Christ while emphasizing biblical values and ethics within the workplace. GCU embraces the notion that faith is the appropriate starting point for honest inquiry and exploration. Faith, understood in this way, should not stifle research, suppress dialogue or inhibit scientific investigation. Rather, we believe in order to understand more fully and by doing so we expect to see the power of God at work in the lives of individuals and in the restoration of our culture and society.

This expectation is rooted in the steadfast character of the God of the Bible who has graciously promised favor and blessing to all who call on His name. To Him alone we look for wisdom as we pray and wait for the day when His kingdom comes, and His will is finally done on Earth as it is in Heaven. May He find us faithful on that day!