

FACTS ABOUT BIBLICAL COUNSELING

THE CONCEPT OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING: Biblical counseling is committed to the position that Scripture provides the only authoritative guide for what we are to believe and how we are to live (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Biblical Counselor is trained in the use of Scripture and the principles of biblical counseling. He or she does not base his or her counsel on man's wisdom, opinions, experience, or concepts of behavior, (Isaiah 55:8-11) but seeks to bring the full range of Biblical truth to focus on the counselee's need (Hebrews 4:12). At Missio Dei Counseling Ministries we emphasize the importance of change at the heart level.

THE SCOPE OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING: Biblical counseling deals with the entire range of problems confronting mankind including: broken marriages, parent child relationships, fear, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, tension, anxiety, worry and any other problems that may result in mental and/or physical immobility. In short, the Biblical Counselor is equipped to deal with any problem dealing with ourselves, our relationship to God or our fellow man (2 Peter 1:3).

MEDICAL NEEDS: Biblical counselors believe in the total health needs of the counselee. Your counselor may recommend that you have a full or specified medical examination. If medical assistance is required, counseling will continue in conjunction with medical advice.

1) Missio Dei Counseling Ministries is a biblical counseling and teaching ministry under the direction of Missio Dei Fellowship. The purpose of the counseling ministry is the equipping of the saints by the administration of the Word of God to their particular problem. The counseling ministry is not staffed by licensed psychologists or psychiatrists, nor does it prescribe medications. The counseling ministry should be considered a faith-based healing and teaching ministry rather than anything associated with the medical professions.

2) As a person using the services of the Missio Dei Counseling Ministry you must understand that if taking prescription anti-depressants or psychotropic medications you are to remain on them unless you consult with your prescribing doctor and he or she is in agreement that you terminate them.

3) If you have persistent thoughts of suicide, Missio Dei urges you to seek medical help and if you talk of suicide during a session you will be referred to the proper authorities.

ELEMENTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING: Your counselor will use all of his/her skill in applying Biblical principles to enable you to glorify God in your life and to enable you to gain victory over the problems that are depriving you of the peace and joy that God has promised to you in His Word. Your counselor will concentrate in three areas that are necessary for Biblical change to take place.

Hope - In Jesus Christ we have a great High Priest who has suffered and been tempted in all things, yet He never sinned. Because of Christ, even though you may be facing every sin common to man, you can have victory. God has promised that He will not let you be tempted beyond your endurance and that He will provide a way for you to have victory in the midst of your temptation (1 Cor. 10: 13; Heb. 4:14-16).

Change - In Christ we can learn how to lay aside the old selfish ways of living and put on the new ways of living in a manner worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can learn to please God in every area of our lives. We can learn to live a godly life and to live in such a way that we will be increasing in our knowledge of God and our ability to relate to others. Biblical counseling will enable you to make practical changes. (Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 1:10).

Practice - We need to prove ourselves to be doers of God's Word and not merely hearers of the Word. It is only in the actual practice of the Scriptures shall we be blessed in what we do, and only then will we please the Lord (James 1:22-25; Proverbs 28:13).

LENGTH OF COUNSELING: Normally, counseling sessions will last one hour per week and will continue for eight to twelve sessions. If you respond quickly to Biblical counsel the number of counseling sessions may be lessened. However, if the counselor does not observe definite change in the first few weeks, he or she will seek to identify the cause of the failure, discuss it with you in order to help you to correct it.

APPOINTMENTS, WAITING PERIOD: Your appointments will be scheduled with your counselor and there may be a waiting period depending on volume.

Appointment Clarification regarding the counseling of females: Please note that our pastors do not counsel females alone. If you are female and wish counseling you must be accompanied by a friend. We do have a limited number of volunteer female counselors and you may be assigned one schedule permitting. Your first appointment will always be with a pastor.

LOCAL CHURCH INVOLVEMENT: In order to achieve lasting victory over the problems of life, it is vital that each person become established in a consistent Christian walk. The Lord has provided the local church as the discipleship center (Hebrews 10:24-25). Therefore, it is important that counseling sessions be accompanied by church attendance at Missio Dei Fellowship.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND EXPECTATIONS: **You will need a notebook and your Bible at all sessions, including the first session.** The biblical counselor counsels from their theology, not psychology, so we also recommend that you obtain a MacArthur Study Bible to assist you in your studies of the Word. We have found this Bible to be of great assistance in helping our counselees understand key theological concepts. Be sure to bring the Bible with you each time. Come with high expectations. You will find hope and encouragement even during your first session. We are confident that the Word of God has solutions to all of life's problems (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:3), and that includes an answer to the difficulty that prompted you to come.

COST: There is no cost for the counseling at Missio Dei Fellowship apart from assigned books and other materials.

CONTACT POLICY: Our desire is to help you in the process of biblical growth and change. We

understand that there are times you may have a question or situation that arises between your scheduled appointments. We welcome your questions in these cases. However, our counselors can be inundated with email and phone calls from people wanting our counselors to counsel via email and over the phone. It has become necessary to request that our counselees reserve phone calls and emails for emergency issues or short clarifications about your counseling. Thank you for your cooperation in this area!

Commitment to Limited Confidentiality—

*A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy man keeps a secret (Prov. 11:13).*

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 26:20), invites confession (Prov. 11:13), and thus encourages people to seek needed counseling. Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of the local church, all members and attenders are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our leaders will carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.

Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when our leaders believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- when a leader is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other leaders in our church or, if the person attends another church, from the leaders of that church (Prov. 11:14);
- when the person who disclosed the information, or any other person, is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Prov. 24:11-12);
- when a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to promote repentance through accountability and redemptive church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20); or,
- when leaders are required by law to report suspected abuse (Rom. 13:1).

CONSENT TO COUNSEL: We ask all individuals to read and sign our Consent to Counsel Form that is found in the information packet. This form must be returned before you begin your counseling sessions. This form enables the counselee to affirm that he or she understands that all of our counseling is entirely based on the Word of God.

I have read the above Facts on Biblical Counseling and I acknowledge my understanding of those facts as explained in this document. I also understand that the counseling I receive at Missio Dei Fellowship will be based on the counselor's understanding of the Bible.

Dated _____

Signed _____