

Facts about Biblical Counseling

1. ***Biblical Counseling: A Ministry*** - Biblical counseling is a ministry that all committed believers within the body of Christ are to have toward all who have need (based on Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-5). Biblical counselors deal with a wide range of problems. They include broken marriages, parent-child relationships, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, tension, turmoil, anxiety, fear, worry and any number of other problems resulting in mental and physical distress.

2. ***Training of the Biblical Counselor*** - The biblical counselor is trained in the use of the Scripture and the principles of biblical counseling. He is committed to the position that the Scriptures are the only authoritative standard for faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:16-17). He does not base his counseling knowledge on his own or others' opinions, experience, or concepts of behavior (Isaiah 55:8-11); but, instead he seeks to marshal the full range of biblical truth to bear on the individual's need (Hebrews 4:12). In counseling sessions, he will hold to the essential truths of Scripture without particular theological emphasis on any practice not specifically advocated in the Scriptures (Titus 2:1).

3. ***The Focus of the Biblical Counselor*** - Biblical counselors provide their time and energy as a service to God and as a demonstration of their love toward one another (based on I Thessalonians 2:7-8; I Timothy 1:5). Therefore, each counselor serves without any charge or fee, or any financial requirement, actual or implied.

4. ***Team Counseling: A Biblical Concept*** – Typically, biblical counselors work in teams; since team counseling has many biblical benefits, both for the counselee(s) and the counselors (Proverbs 11:14, 15:22, 18:17, 20:18, 24:6; Matthew 18:16). Normally, sessions are conducted by a team of counselors, with one responsible for leading the team and one or two others assisting. You, as a counselee, are also a vital member of the team as you seek to overcome the problems in your life. The most important member of the team, however, is the Lord Himself, in the Person of the Holy Spirit. It is He who will provide the hope, the enabling, and the wisdom (through God's Word) for you to face and deal with your problems (John 14:26; Romans 5:3-5; 8:26-27; Ephesians 3:16).

5. ***Discipleship and Maturity through Biblical Counseling*** - Biblical counselors are committed

not only to help you overcome the current problem(s) in your life, but also to train you to live all your life in a manner that leads to increasing maturity in the Lord (Psalm 119:165; Proverbs 2:6-12a; Galatians 6:1-5; I Timothy 4:7-8; I John 5:1-5). Thus, in the scriptural sense, biblical counseling is a ministry of discipleship that teaches you to walk in God's way even in the midst of serious problems (based on Matthew 28:19-20; I Timothy 1:5; II Timothy 2:2).

6. **Confidentiality** - A commitment to trustworthiness is an important quality of biblical counselors (based on I Corinthians 4:2). Thus, although your biblical counselor may talk with others about a particular situation, you may be confident that the discussions will be restricted to whatever is necessary to help you overcome your problems (based on Proverbs 10:18-21; 15:28, 18:8; 25:11). For a list of exceptions, please see the blue "Consent to Biblical Counseling" form.

7. **Medical Needs** - Biblical counselors believe in considering your total health needs. Your counselor may recommend that you have a full or specified medical examination. If medical assistance is required, counseling will continue at the same time, whenever possible.

8. **Elements of Biblical Counseling** - Biblical counselors will use all of their biblical counseling training and skill to help you overcome whatever problem is depriving you of the peace and joy that God has promised in His Word. Your counselors will concentrate on four essential elements from Scripture:

Understanding your problem - There is the need to apply biblical principles to all of your difficulties, not just "fix your feelings" or change your circumstances. Your counselors, in a spirit of gentleness, will make biblical inquiry into the various levels of your problems and help you gain God's perspective on your difficulties (based on Proverbs 18:13; Isaiah 55:8-9; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 5:3-5; 8:28-29; Galatians 6:1-4; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:2-4; 19, 22-25; 4:17).

Your Hope - In Jesus Christ you have a great High Priest who has been tempted in all things, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14-16). Even though you may currently be going through a difficult test or even though every sin common to man may be tempting you, God has promised that He will not allow any trial in your life that is beyond your endurance. He has promised to provide a way of escape so that you may be able to endure it without sinning (I Corinthians 10:13), and He will use trials for your benefit as you respond to them in a biblical manner (Romans 8:28-29; James 1:2-4).

Your Change - In Christ, you 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 (Romans 6:11-13; Ephesians 4:20-24). In learning to change biblically, you will begin to please the Lord in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9-12).

Your Practice - You need to prove yourself to be a doer of God's Word and not merely a hearer, thus forgetting what kind of person you are and deluding yourself. Only in becoming an effectual doer of the Word will you be blessed in what you do, and only then will you please the Lord (Hebrews 13:20-22; James 1:22-25; 1 John 3:22).

9. ***Waiting Period*** - If a counseling team is not immediately available to begin extended counseling with you, you will be counseled as soon as possible on a one-time basis. During this session, your counselors will provide a plan for you to follow while you are waiting for the regularly scheduled sessions.

10. ***Length of Counseling*** - Normally, counseling sessions will last one hour each week and will continue as determined by the counselor.

11. ***Counseling Appointments*** - Because effective counseling requires consistency and faithfulness in your applying God's principles, it is important that you reserve the designated counseling time for the entire counseling period, barring unforeseen circumstances (based on Luke 14:27-30; I Timothy 4:7). If you find you are unable to come to a particular counseling session, please notify the counselor at least 24 hours before the session,

12. ***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 to help in this process (Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25). Therefore, it is important that biblical counseling sessions be accompanied by church activities that encourage discipleship and fellowship. If you do not have a church home, you are welcome to join us in our church's fellowship. If you are part of another church family, the assistance of your church's leadership may be requested so that you may more fully receive the benefit of all the spiritual resources given to you by God. One of your pastors, elders, or deacons may even become part of the counseling team to provide the most effectual help for you. It is our commitment to do what will best help you walk in obedience to God's Word and thus experience victory over your problems.

13. ***Materials Needed and Expectations*** - You will need a notebook and your Bible at all sessions, including the first. Be sure to bring them each time. Come with high expectations. You will find hope and encouragement even during your first session. From then on, with your cooperation, we are confident that you will find trustworthy and biblical answers for the difficulty that prompted you to contact us.