

FACTS ABOUT BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Grace Community Church

THE CONCEPT OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Biblical counseling can be condensed into these four basic commitments:

- gracious care and hope
- acquiring of personal information with a biblical interpretation
- presentation and explanation of biblical truth
- specific, real life application for growth and change

Biblical counseling is intensely practical and relies heavily on the comprehensive gathering of information for understanding.

Grace Community biblical counselors believe that while man is certainly influenced by his past, suffering, others' sin and his own sin, in Christ, we need not be determined, defined, or remain enslaved to these.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Our Biblical Counselors are 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

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Our Biblical Counselors are trained in the use of Scripture and principles of biblical counseling. They do not base their counsel on man's wisdom, opinions, experience, or concepts of behavior:

Isaiah 55:8-11

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Our Biblical Counselors seek to bring the full range of Biblical truth to focus on the needs of counselees:

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

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/or 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

...His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness...

COUNSELING and TRAINING-To-COUNSEL

The Grace Community counseling ministry is intended to serve the dual purposes of counseling and training-to-counsel. While we joyfully provide biblical counseling care, our counseling ministry also serves to increase this local church body's capacity to provide counseling care to more people. Consequently, much of the counseling provided by the Grace Community biblical counselors includes a counselor-in-training observing in sessions. Our hope is that through this ministry counselees are helped to grow and change toward Christlikeness *and* that more of God's people may be equipped to provide biblical counsel to the building up of the church body.

Normally sessions are conducted with a lead counselor and a counselor-in-training in attendance.

Proverbs 11:14

Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.

Proverbs 15:22

Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.

Proverbs 18:17

The first to plead his case seems right, Until another comes and examines him.

Proverbs 20:18

Prepare plans by consultation, And make war by wise guidance.

Proverbs 24:6

For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory

Matthew 18:16

But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.

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.

ELEMENTS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Your counselor will use all of his 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 is found in trusting God and obeying 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, yet He never sinned. You may be facing every sin common to man, yet, because of Christ, 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.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

CHANGE

In Christ, we can learn how to lay aside our 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 godly lives 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.

Ephesians 4:20-24

...if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Colossians 1:10

...so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

PRACTICE

We need to prove ourselves to be doers of God's Word and not merely hearers of the Word. 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

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

LENGTH OF COUNSELING

Counseling sessions are normally scheduled for one hour per week and will generally continue for about 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 will seek to identify the cause of the failure, discuss it with you in order to help you to correct it.

APPOINTMENTS

Your appointments will be scheduled with your counselor. If you are unable to attend a counseling session, please notify the counseling office at least 24 hours before the session. Although the ministry of biblical counseling at Grace Community Church is provided without cost, we hold a \$25 deposit which a counselee forfeits upon failure to attend a counseling session or if a counseling session is canceled within 24 hours of the scheduled appointment. Our Biblical Counselors joyfully volunteer to counsel, we want to value their time. When a counselee completes counseling and has attended his/her appointments without fail, his/her deposit will be returned.

WAITING PERIOD

If a counselor is not immediately available, you will be counseled as soon as possible on a one-time basis. During this session, the counselor will provide a plan for you to begin to work on solutions to your problems immediately while you are waiting for the regularly scheduled sessions. You may be asked to listen to audio resources or to read a book or other materials related to your problems.

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

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Therefore, it is important that counseling sessions be accompanied by church attendance, participation in a group Bible study, and other discipleship activities in your local church. The counselor may contact your church and request their assistance in involving you in these activities. One of your elders or deacons may even become part of the counseling process, to provide the most effectual help for you. It is our commitment to do what will best bring about victory over your problems.

EXPECTATIONS

Come with high expectations. You will find hope and encouragement even during your first session. We are absolutely confident that the Word of God has solutions to all of life's problems (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3, quoted above) and that includes an answer to the difficulty that prompted you to come.

COST

Counseling is a ministry of the body of Christ and by God's grace there is no cost to you.

CONSENT TO COUNSEL

We ask all individuals to read and sign our **Consent to Counsel**. This form must be returned before you begin your counseling sessions. This form enables the counselee to affirm that he understands that all of our counseling is entirely based on the Word of God.