

NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

BIBLICAL COUNSELING

CONSENT TO COUNSELING

Our Commitments to You in Biblical Counseling

You will read the term “biblical counseling” throughout this process. We would like to explain what we mean by it. Biblical Counselors are spiritual friends who commit to the historic roles of *soul care* and *spiritual direction* through:

- Empathizing with your suffering, helping you to understand that “*It’s normal to hurt.*”
- Encouraging you to see life from a biblical perspective, helping you to know that “*It’s possible to hope.*”
- Examining and exposing your current responses to life and suggesting new ways of handling problems, helping you to see that “*a self-directed life is a destructive pattern.*”
- Exploring how and empowering you to mature through Christ, helping you to grasp that through His Spirit He wants to renew your mind and ultimately heal your relationship with God and others.

Biblical Basis – We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, our counseling is based upon scriptural principles. *Our counselors are trained in Biblical Counseling, they are not trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.*

All counseling will be conducted in accordance with the counselor’s understanding of the Scriptures. However, our counselors do not know all there is to know about biblical teaching and its application to life. Therefore, when necessary, they will seek help, input, or advice from pastors, mentors, or colleagues.

Our Goals

- Loving God wholeheartedly and loving others sacrificially.
- Wisely living according to the truth of Christ’s Gospel of grace.
- Courageously choosing to pursue God’s purposes in your life through the Spirit’s power.
- Deeply and honestly experiencing life with integrity, fully open to God while managing your moods for God’s glory and with a ministry focus.

Not Professional Advice – If you have significant legal, financial, medical or other technical questions you should seek advice from an independent professional. Our counselors will cooperate with such advisors and help you to consider their counsel in light of scriptural principles.

Counseling Observers – Because of ongoing training, our counselors at times will “team counsel.” You will meet with a biblical counselor, who will lead the session, and a counseling trainee(s), who will observe as part of his/her certification requirement.

Confidentiality – Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. There are situations, however, in which the counselors may believe that it is wise or mandated (biblically or legally) for them to share certain information with others. Some examples would be:

When a counselor is uncertain how to address a problem and needs to seek advice from another pastor or counselor and then only issues and circumstances are shared and not names.

When there is concern that someone may be harmed unless others intervene.

When abuse or another crime must be reported to the authorities.

When observers sit in on counseling sessions to assist the counselor or for training purposes (including audio & video recordings—only with permission).

When the counselee’s pastor, staff and/or church leadership is needed to provide pastoral assistance.

All Counselees must understand that absolute confidentiality is not scriptural. Scriptures provide circumstance under which facts may be disclosed to select others (Matt 18:15-17). Covenant church members of New Vision who through the counseling process are found to be in open rebellion and unrepentant sin will be lovingly and compassionately dealt with in a biblical manner by church leadership and Senior pastor. If this group inquire about the status of his or her sessions, the Director of Biblical Counseling will disclose to them the information that is necessary for them to effectively and biblically fulfill their shepherding responsibility. Confidentiality, however, will remain within that small group of individuals.

Please be assured that our counselors strongly prefer not to disclose personal information to others, and they will make every effort to help you find ways to resolve a problem as privately as possible.

Our Fee – Though it may be necessary for you to purchase materials for your own use, the actual biblical counseling is done *free of charge*.

Appointments: Our Biblical Counselors are church members who have dedicated their training and time to this ministry. Our Biblical Counselors work by scheduled appointment, they are typically not on

site and are making arrangements to meet you here and in some cases that includes childcare for their children. Therefore, we need your prompt and consistent participation in your scheduled meetings. Please contact our office 24 hours in advance if you must cancel an appointment. This will allow us to schedule another individual during this time.

If you have not completed the required forms online, please arrive 30 minutes early for your first appointment.

During the initial meeting, you will determine the goals you would like to work toward. After 3-5 sessions, you and your biblical counselor will evaluate your progress toward those goals and together determine what further action needs to be taken

Your Commitments to Christ, to Yourself, and to Us in Biblical Counseling

We ask that you commit to:

- Honestly and openly sharing your hurts and struggles.
- Evaluating your own emotions, actions, motivations, beliefs, and relationships.
- Actively participating in the growth of renewed emotions, actions, convictions, and affections.
- Coming to each meeting prepared to review your progress throughout the week (including the completion of personalized “homework” assignments) and prepared to share your goals for the present meeting.

Because the Scriptures teach that growth in Christ requires all the resources of the Body of Christ (not only biblical counseling, but also discipleship, worship, fellowship, stewardship, and ambassadorship), we believe that it is essential that those seeking biblical counseling at our church commit themselves to the following:

1. Regular church attendance (at your church or our church).
2. When assigned, participation in a support group/small group.

If the counselee is not sure that they will be interested in biblically-based counseling, they may first attend one or two sessions to discover what biblical counseling is like. If they or the counselor determines that the counselee is unwilling to use the Bible as the final authority for life, or if he/she is uninterested in learning to do so, future counseling sessions will not be scheduled.

Resolution of Conflicts (Arbitration) – On rare occasions a conflict may develop between a counselor and a counselee. In order to make sure that any such conflicts will be resolved in a biblically faithful manner, we require all of our counsees to agree that any dispute that arises with a counselor or with The Care Ministry of New Vision, as a result of counseling will be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation; judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court having

jurisdiction. *It is expressly understood that by agreeing in advance to arbitrate that the counselee is giving up his right to a trial in the civil courts.*

Conclusion & Signature – Having clarified the principles and policies of our counseling ministry, we welcome the opportunity to minister to you in the name of Christ. If you have any questions about these guidelines or conditions, please speak with your counselor or someone with the NVBC Care Ministry.

Having read the foregoing information and conditions fully and completely, my signature below indicates that I understand all the material presented and fully agree to comply.

Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Name* (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

* only required if counselee is under 18 years of age