

## Grace Baptist Counseling Ministry

### Biblical Counseling

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Grace Baptist Church offers free biblical counseling anchored in the principles of God's word. We believe that in Scripture God has given us everything we need to live successfully. The role of The New Testament church is to minister to the needs of the body of Christ and influence the community at large.

The goal of biblical counseling is to disciple a person giving hope and help through biblical application so, a person can successfully navigate the problems of life in a manner pleasing to God (II Cor. 5:9). The goal of Biblical counseling is not necessarily to make the person feel better or simply to remove the problem. This will hopefully happen, however, root issues to life must be addressed. It is our desire and goal to come alongside a person who is struggling and seek to apply the principles of God's Word in such a way that the person responds in an obedient manner to the struggles they are facing.

#### The Role of Scripture to the Counselor

If you seek biblical counseling from GBCM, we want you to know that all counseling will be conducted in accordance with the counselor's understanding of the scriptures. All counseling will be biblically based acknowledging that Scripture will be the authority in all cases. Grace Baptist Church does not subscribe to the teachings and methods of modern psychology or psychiatry, whether expressly secular or any attempted integrations with biblical principles. Counselors are not trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health therapists, nor do we follow their methods of counseling. Also, it is not our policy to make referrals to such persons.

#### Counseling Non-Members of Grace Baptist Church

Grace Baptist Church is committed to the spiritual health of its members. Thus, in counseling at GBCM, members always take precedence over all non-members. If the counselee is a member in good standing with a church other than Grace Baptist Church, the counselee is required to invite their pastor or mentor to accompany them to the sessions. It is our first choice that your pastor/deacon from your local church accompanies the counselee to the counseling sessions.

We recognize and respect the authority of the counselee's church. If no one in a leadership position is available to attend the sessions with the counselee, the decision to move forward will be based solely on the discernment of the GBCM counselor. However, the counselee must provide written permission from the senior pastor to attend counseling at Grace Baptist Church. This letter must be signed on letterhead of the counselee's church.

Additionally, if counselee is unable to bring someone in leadership with them, or provide some form of accountability from their local church, GBCM will not be able to facilitate the counseling process. This requirement emphasizes our respect for the local church and the biblical mandate that shepherds know the state of their flocks and care for their souls (Heb. 13:17)

#### Counseling Non-Member of a Church

If a counselee is not a member of a local Bible believing church, GBCM will expect the counselee to attend Grace Baptist Church on a weekly basis or a church of like precious faith during the duration of counseling. It is our experience that for change to be growing and lasting, people need fellowship and corporate instruction. Therefore, if this requirement is not adhered to, counseling sessions will be terminated.

#### Confidentiality

Absolute confidentiality is not scriptural. In certain circumstances the Bible requires that facts be disclosed to select others (Matt. 18:15ff). In these areas we will follow biblical principles of restoration and policy procedures of GBCM. If a counselee is not a member of Grace Baptist Church, and their church leadership inquires about the status of their sessions, we will disclose to them the information that is necessary for them to effectively and biblically fulfill their responsibility to shepherd you.

BY LAW, there are certain situations in which information about individuals undergoing counseling may be released with or without their permission. These situations are as follows (Romans 13:1-3):

1. Where it is proven that children are physically abused or neglected.
2. In emergency situations where there may be proven danger to the counselee or others, as with homicide or suicide.
3. If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena relating to a child abuse case, we are required by law to provide information specific to that subpoena.
4. If an unreported life-threatening felony has been committed, the law requires a reporting.

At any time during the counseling the counselor, as also the counselee, shall have the option of terminating counseling.

#### Counseling Fees

GBC does not charge a specific fee for counseling. However, some cost may be incurred in purchasing resource material.

### Counselee Responsibility

It should be understood that biblical discipleship counseling will involve giving scriptural teaching and making practical application of the same to each counselee. The counselee is held fully responsible for how he/she interprets and implements that counsel.

### Counselor in Training

At Grace Baptist Church, we not only provide biblical counsel, but are committed to the training of biblical counselors. This may require one or two people assisting him/her in the counseling sessions.

### Our Authority and Hope

The Bible is the authority in life and Godliness (2 Peter 1:3), and this is maintained in the counseling sessions. We believe that God has given us all we need to know Him and to live in a way that is pleasing to Him. All of our difficulties may not evaporate. However, when a person willingly submits to God's instruction and clings to His promises, there is hope, help and change. Counselors are not infallible, nor are there any pretense in knowing all there is to be known in Bible teaching and its application to life. We at Grace Baptist Church are confident in the grace of God, His word, and the training received, to assist people in being well pleasing to Him and grow in this grace and knowledge. Counselors will make it a point to differentiate between God's commands and their suggestions. They will honestly address any limitations and seek guidance when needed.

### Medical/Legal advice

GBC does not give medical or legal advice.

If you are willing to engage into this kind of counseling, please fill out the forms attached below. Once you have completed these forms, please email them to us at [GBCM@gbckennewick.org](mailto:GBCM@gbckennewick.org) or mail them to us. Once this is done call 509-783-8415 to schedule an appointment.

## Grace Baptist Counseling Ministry Consent to Biblical Counseling and Release Form

### Expectations

What can you expect from GBCM?

1. Privacy – Everything will be held in strict confidence except where, in the counselor's judgment, there is a biblical requirement to involve others (Matt. 18:15ff).

This may involve:

- Proven child abuse or neglect
  - Court ordered subpoena
  - Any criminal activity that is proven
2. Care – We will strive to give the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and treat you with respect and in the love of Jesus Christ.
  3. Encourage toward Christ-likeness – During the counseling, you will be exhorted to think and behave in a way that pleases Jesus Christ. Working toward a commitment to Christ, a passion for people, with a desire for selfless service.
  4. We reserve the right to consult with other or appropriate minister staff members regarding your session. This consultation will be held in the same level of confidence as your sessions.

This may include issues such as:

- Church discipline
- Seeking out wise counsel to assure thoroughness
- Training and discipling when appropriate

What does GBCM Expect from You?

1. Be Honest – It is very difficult, if not impossible, to help if you're not honest.
2. Do Weekly Homework – Assignments will be given to encourage lasting change.
3. Give the Counseling Process Time – Habits are not developed overnight. Change is difficult. New habits will take several weeks to develop.

Resolution of Disagreements

If a dispute should arise between a counselor and counselee regarding the session or the counselor's advice or conduct, the matter should be brought first to the counselor. If the dispute cannot be resolved at this level, all parties involved agree to take the matter before the deacons of Grace Baptist Church. They will function as a conflict resolution team for a full and final resolution and reconciliation. Both parties agree not to take this matter to any secular court system (I Cor. 6:1-7).

Waiver of Liability

The undersigned counselee, having sought biblical counseling as adhered by Grace Baptist Church, hereby acknowledges their understanding of the above stated conditions and thereby releases from liability, Grace Baptist Church and any/all participating churches, pastors, deacons, or employees from claim or litigation whatsoever arising from the undersigned's participation in the above mentioned biblical counseling ministry.

It is further understood, in consideration for receiving any form of counseling, the undersigned agrees to release and waive any claims of any kind against the ministry and staff, pastor/lay counselors or any participating church, which may result out of or be related to advice/counsel given. Let it be known that all counsel given is in accordance with the biblical principles and faith and practice of Grace Baptist Church and is not provided in adherence with any local or national psychological or psychiatric association.

The undersigned agrees that he/she has read, and thoroughly understands and agrees to, what is expected of them and what to expect of GBCM. They now willingly (without coercion) consent to and request said biblical counseling from GBCM.

Signed on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, AD 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Signed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_