

# BIBLICAL COUNSELING

## **What is Biblical Counseling?**

Biblical Counseling is first and foremost counsel that comes from the power of God's Word. It is counsel that is designed to help equip the counselee in meeting the challenges of life through the transforming power of Jesus Christ, all to the glory of God. Biblical Counseling draws its wisdom from God's Word, the Bible, which is sufficient for everything that pertains to life and holiness (2 Peter 1:3-4). Biblical Counseling is also an element of discipleship and sanctification.

Whereas preaching is the public ministry of the Word, counseling is the private ministry of the Word. We believe in speaking the truth and in love. It is not a new idea. You can find it as early as in Acts 2. Paul preached it in Acts 20:17-35 and he encouraged Timothy to practice it in 2 Timothy 2:2. While discipleship and counseling happens at an informal level throughout our church, NVBC Biblical Counseling happens at a more formal level.

## Biblical Counselors

Biblical Counselors at NVBC have had extensive training in biblical counseling and must meet various training requirements established by NVBC Care Ministry.

Those interested in becoming a Biblical Counselor must first complete approximately 15 hours of Encourager's Training.

Second, Biblical Counselors must complete phase 1 of ACBC (Association of Certified Biblical Counselors) Certification. This includes 30 hours of training from 9 different speakers, a minimum of 1000 pages of theological and counseling reading with a minimum of 10 observation hours of an ACBC certified counselor.

The third step is a minimum of 50 counseling hours under supervision. Some prospective counselors may choose to become certified by the ACBC while others will receive training leading to other advanced certifications. All NVBC Biblical Counselors will receive on-going training and feedback and are encouraged to attend seminars and conferences.

What can you expect from NVBC counselors? They are people who will love you, be faithful to you, work hard for you, pray with and for you, and care for you in a Christ-centered, biblically-based Holy Spirit-led, prayer-saturated environment. With the exception of marriage counseling, all counseling will be limited to female to female and male to male. These counselors will not have all the answers to everything but will work diligently to care for you and help you search for answers through the study and application of God's Word.

Finally, all counselors are under the authority of Scripture and the senior leadership of NVBC.

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## The Role of Scripture

Persons seeking counsel from NVBC Biblical Counseling are assured that all counseling will be conducted in accordance with the counselor's knowledge and understanding of the scriptures and the application of Scriptures to the issues of life. We believe that "all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Consequently, all our counseling is biblically based with the Scriptures as the only authority in all cases.

## The Role of Medicine

As a Biblical counseling ministry, it is not within our scope to recommend using, or not using, or to discontinue using legal medications to any counselee. No counselee on medication should make any decision about that medication without consulting with their physician.

## Counselee Responsibility in Counseling

Counselees are intricately involved in the counseling process. While the counselor provides scriptural teaching and counsel, the counselee must work toward making the practical application in his or her life. The counselee must take full responsibility for how he or she implements that counsel.

To assist the counselee in life application, most of the counseling sessions will conclude with the counselor assigning homework for the counselee to complete and to be discussed at the next session. The goal of the homework is not to get the work done, but through it to cause growth in Christ. Since this is such a vital part of the counseling process, completion of homework assignments is a requirement for counseling to continue. If the counselee is unwilling to complete the assigned homework, future counseling sessions will not be scheduled until the assigned homework has been completed to the satisfaction of the counselor.

Any difficulties that the counselee has in completing homework assignments should be discussed with the counselor. There may be times when the counselee has an extenuating circumstance that prevents completion of the homework. In that case, the counselee should advise the counselor so that appropriate adjustments to the schedule can be made.

## Termination of Counseling

It is the desire of NVBC that each counselee be graduated from counseling after having gained the ability to apply biblical principles for growth and change in Christ,

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not only for the issue that brought them to counseling, but also for any future issues. Other than graduation, at any time future sessions can be discontinued by either the counselee or counselor.

## The Cost of Counseling:

New Vision is blessed with a well-trained and qualified staff of biblical counselors whom we compensate to provide you with the best of care. While there is no set fee for our counseling services, we do ask for a minimum suggested donation of \$35 per session. For comparison, the fair-market-value for counseling in our area ranges from \$75.00 to \$140.00 per 50 minute session.

Please know your care is of primary importance to us and we will neither refuse nor stop counseling on the basis of your ability to make a donation. We simply ask you to consider this donation prayerfully as a means of investing in your care and the New Vision Counseling Ministry. Please know your generosity in donating helps to provide quality biblical counseling to as many people as possible.

## Counselees and Church Attendance

God has instituted his church body as a primary means by which you can be cared for and grow spiritually. This is why Scripture teaches that we should not forsake assembling together with other believers (Heb. 10:25). In addition to requesting that counselees attend church, we sometimes will give homework pertaining to a sermon (i.e., write down three ways that God spoke to you through His Word in the message). This will help you to develop a habit of listening well and applying the proclamation of God's Word.

Counseling is not intended to replace the provision of God through the local church and if a counselee is currently not regularly attending another church, NVBC will request the counselee regularly attend NVBC while being counseled. After graduation, we are happy to assist the counselee in finding a church home, in which the counselee is welcome to examine NVBC as a possibility.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important part of the counseling process. Confidentiality will be maintained; however, all counselees must understand that absolute confidentiality is not scriptural. Scripture provides special circumstances under which facts may be

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disclosed to select others (Matthew 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 counseled with in a biblical manner by church leadership and Senior Pastor. The intent and goal is always restoration for the church member. If the church leaders or Senior Pastor 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.

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):

Where it is proven that children are physically abused, neglected, or sexually abused.

In emergency situations where there may be proven danger to the counselee or others, as with homicide or suicide, confidentiality may be broken.

If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena relating to a child abuse case, NVBC counselors may be required by law to provide the information specifically described in the subpoena.

If an unreported life-threatening felony has been committed, NVBC counselors are required by law to report it to the police.

## Counselors in Training

Training is an important feature of NVBC Biblical Counseling and on-going training is provided to our biblical counselors. This means that the counselor may have another counselor in training shadowing them during sessions. Rules of confidentiality are respected by the trainee.