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CREATING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY
MANUAL FOR NEW VISION BAPTIST CHURCH
IN MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

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APPROVAL SHEET

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MANUAL FOR NEW VISION BAPTIST CHURCH
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PREFACE

I am eternally grateful to the many people who have invested in me in the past three years to see this project and my doctoral education to fruition. First, I am so thankful to my loving and beautiful wife, companion, and friend. She is my number one supporter and at the same time, my honest but caring critic. Often in ministry it is only your wife who will tell you with grace and truth what you need to hear about a project, a paper, a position, an opinion, etc. At the same time, she is my biggest fan and puts wind in my sails when I feel like I have failed or even want to give up.

Second, I want to thank our children and grandchildren who have shown so much grace to me, when either physically, or at the very least mentally, I was not present because I was writing, studying, or completing a paper. There were birthday parties, ball games, days at the pool, playground dates, and backyard barbeques, that I either missed, left early, or was a no show. They cut my grass, hauled my trash, manned the grill, and showed grace and support every step of the way. Their love and support of me makes me want to be a better me. During the pursuit of this degree, the Lord blessed me with an increase from five to a present total of eight grandchildren!

Next, I am grateful to the pastoral staff of New Vision; the church that God used to bring me back to hope after a tough time in my faith and ministry. God used this church and its pastors to help me trust in God again. They helped remind me that loving God, loving His people, and making disciples is the supreme goal of my life. They mentored and supported me from a contract counselor all the way to their director of the counseling ministry. Not only were they personal encouragers, but they also approved the funding and gave me the opportunity to return to seminary to earn my Doctor of Educational Ministry in Biblical Counseling.

Fourth, I am so indebted and grateful to the Godly counselors who serve alongside me in the biblical counseling ministry of NVBC. I am in full agreement with the apostle Paul who confirmed that these Godly men and women are “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another” (Rom 15:14). They have given me the opportunity to pursue my passion of bringing biblical counseling into the church. They have trained, supported, counseled, and sacrificially given themselves to caring for God’s people. I am proud to serve alongside of them and thankful God has given me an opportunity to now serve them as director. Thanks to Ray Moss, a faithful friend who believed in me. I strive to continually improve upon what the Lord gifted him to build. To Becky Johnson, thank you, the biblical counseling ministry is sustained daily by the many moving pieces that she balances with urgency, skill, and care.

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Finally, I am eternally grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ. My creator, sustainer, and rock of my salvation. My prayer is that I serve you well, all the days of my life.

Scott Reeder

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

New Vision Baptist Church exists to lead people to lives of gospel transformation. The transformation includes the process of putting off certain things that are according to the flesh, while subsequently putting on others that are according to the spirit (Eph 4:22-24). Believers are called to grow in a relationship with Christ. New Vision Care Ministry equips members called to counseling to utilize God's wholly sufficient Word in providing care to God's people. By trusting God's Word, following the leading of the Holy Spirit, and employing various elements of equipping and training, biblical counselors provide hope and healing to those battling sin and suffering, desiring growth as disciples of Christ.

Context

New Vision Baptist Church (NVBC) was established in 1989 and is located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It has a history of providing soul care to both its members and the surrounding community. In early 2016, NVBC began to transition the counseling ministry from an integrated model of counseling to a more biblically-centered model.

In 2009, the church launched an off-site counseling center named Integrity House (IH). IH contracted with licensed counselors to provide integrated Christian counseling to church members and the community. To protect the confidentiality and remove prejudicial barriers of "church" counseling, the center was strategically located in the community, separated from the church campus by about two miles. The majority of counselors were licensed or seeking licensure, therefore the counseling provided was of

the integrated model. Also, the majority of policies and procedures for counseling were driven by state and federal guidelines.

IH experienced great success in terms of providing Christian counseling to those in need, however, two issues were an increasing concern. First, counselors relied more on secular models of therapy. There was an increasing awareness that in trying to support an integration model of counseling, that God's wholly sufficient Word was often seen as insufficient and secular methods were increasingly being deferred to. Second, there were concerns about the long-term effectiveness of integration counseling as it pertains to producing gospel-transforming life change.

The church leadership believed greater benefit would come by transitioning to a more Christ-centered model of counseling built on a theologically-informed practice of counseling. This counsel would be conducted in a prayer-saturated environment, wherein the Bible is understood as the sole source of authority in counseling. The decision to transition to a gospel-centered counseling model was made. In January of 2017, NVBC fully transitioned to a more biblically-centered counseling model. The church recruited and trained member-only counselors, who were committed to the sufficiency of Scripture in counseling.

The community counseling center (IH) was closed, and the counseling ministry was brought on-site to the main campus. Utilizing called and equipped members, the counseling ministry initially consisted of two dozen lay counselors initially trained in a brief three-session counseling model called Encouragers. This lay counseling model was pioneered by Seacoast Church in Charleston, South Carolina.¹ Encouragers came to serve

¹ The Encouragers' lay counseling model is built on a three-step meeting process which has the end goal of helping the counselee determine his next best step, in light of his presenting struggle. The first step is "story." In this step, Encouragers listen attentively and allow the counselee to simply tell their story. Minimal prompting or questions are employed. The Encourager concludes this step by providing hope from God's word. The primary goal in this step is to allow the counselee to feel safe, heard, and loved. A follow-up session called "truth" is scheduled to preferably take place within a week. In this session, the Encourager helps the counselee understand and apply God's truth in the context of the current struggle they are going through. The encourager uses God's Word as the basis of providing a clear understanding of

as the primary introduction to further serve as a biblical counselor at NVBC. Since the initial transition, biblical counselors have been discovered, developed, tested, and evaluated by serving first in the Encouragers lay counseling ministry.

Counselors foundationally and theologically affirm 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 Tim 3:16-17). Counselors are committed to providing scriptural counsel guided by the Holy Spirit and according to God’s Word, which serves as the final authority in counseling.

Over the course of the first year of transition, a number of Encouragers sought further training to fulfill an increasing call to the ministry of biblical counseling. Those who serve as NVBC biblical counselors are required to finish phase 1 of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) certification process before serving.² The majority of the church’s counselors hold advanced degrees in theological and counseling disciplines. Presently NVBC utilizes fifteen biblical counselors, who now provide counseling beyond the length and scope of the lay counseling ministry that still consists of some twenty Encouragers.

God’s love in the midst of the counselee’s struggles. This session likewise helps the counselee seek wisdom from God’s Word, as he rightly applies it in making gospel-centered decisions moving forward. Moving forward is what the final meeting is about, as the last session is considered “next steps.” In this step, the counselee is encouraged to take a healthy next step in response to understanding the truth of God’s Word, which he is learning to apply. Possible next steps include joining a small group, entering into a discipleship relationship, finding a place of service, etc. This is an example list, not an exhaustive list, of possible next steps. The counselee’s next step may include further counseling with an NVBC trained Biblical counselor. For more information on the Encouragers Lay Counseling ministry developed by the staff of Seacoast Church, see Seacoast Church, “Pastoral Counsel,” accessed March 11, 2020, https://www.seacoast.org/care_support/pastoral-counsel/.

² Biblical counselors must complete Encourager lay counselor training. Devine Design workshop training, and phase 1 of the ACBC certification process, which includes thirty hours of fundamentals training, one thousand pages of reading from an ACBC approved reading list, and ten hours of observing an ACBC certified counselor.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Since transitioning to a biblical counseling model, NVBC has experienced increasing health and growth concerning both numerical and spiritual growth. The number of counseling requests—individuals and families being served by the counseling ministry—has seen a near triple increase from inception. Spiritual growth measures in the life of biblical counselees have been apparent as well. NVBC has seen an increased number of counselees accepting Christ, being baptized, joining the church, connecting to small groups, entering into discipleship relationships, joining care groups, and finding serving opportunities.

Several areas of weakness emerged in the transition, including a number of ancillary challenges concerning space, logistical management, and safety of the counseling program, as NVBC moved from an off-site to an on-site location. There is currently a lack of confidential space for sessions and waiting room space for counselees wanting to be seen. A significant safety issue is ensuring after-hours security for both the counselee and the counselors.

Another concern has been that financial resources needed to support the ongoing and future growth of the care ministry have been a factor. Early on, due to the rapid growth of the ministry, monthly counseling expenses well exceeded the initial budget for the ministry. Therefore, policies on how to assign requests in terms of severity, allocated number and length of sessions, counselee session fees, and the overall compensation structure for a counselor must be stewarded well. Another significant concern is a deficit of documented belief statements, policies, and procedures. There is not presently a biblical counseling manual, which would define the practice of counseling and guide the overall program of biblical counseling at NVBC.

Rationale

NVBC has always had in its DNA a clear understanding that God's church is called to responsibly provide spiritual care to the body of Christ and the surrounding

community. Resources including people, funds, buildings, and many sacrificial hours have been given to that very conviction over the past thirty years. Shifting culture is never easy, and recognition for the need to make a change is sometimes the most difficult first step toward growth. NVBC was given a clear vision to transition its counseling ministry to a more biblically-centered model of counseling. In many ways, the early indicators of this decision have proven to be a successful endeavor.

In the face of many successes, a number of concerns have been identified. A primary weakness in the transition has been the failure to develop a documented system of management that includes a comprehensive biblical counseling ministry manual that contains belief statements, policies, and procedures to guide the ministry. A manual containing these documents guides the practices of the ministry and provides consistency among counselors to whom NVBC entrusts this work. A manual ensures the future success of the rapidly growing biblical counseling program at NVBC.

A biblical counseling manual lays out the particulars of the biblical counseling ministry plan. The manual includes beliefs, policies, and procedures to guide the structured operations and management of the biblical counseling program. The primary pieces of this multifaceted resource lay out the particulars of the biblical counseling ministry plan and include various elements ensuring the ongoing health of the ministry of biblical counseling at NVBC.

To strengthen the overall ministry of biblical counseling, a manual begins by biblically defining the beliefs, mission, values, and philosophy of the counseling ministry. This includes several belief statements concerning the practice of biblical counseling. Policies and procedures were developed to inform the newly developed belief statements. These policies and procedures serve to ensure that the practice of biblical counseling is Christ-centered and theologically driven.

Mission and Philosophy of Biblical Counseling

To strengthen the overall ministry of counseling, belief statements were developed that help to biblically define the mission and philosophy of the counseling ministry. Belief statements are informed by the Scriptures, which give a sufficient theological foundation for the development of a biblical counseling ministry for the church. Having belief statements informs a biblical philosophy of counseling and further defines the methods by which counsel is provided to the church. As well, having established belief statements, policies, and procedures sets the expectations for both the counselors who give care and the counselees who receive it.

Documented Policies and Procedures

A comprehensive biblical counseling manual introduces biblically-informed policies and procedures for the ongoing growth and maintenance of the biblical counseling ministry at NVBC. The biblical counseling manual includes issues such as confidentiality (informed disclosure) statements, intake forms, fee structures, requirements for members and non-members receiving counsel, records and database administration, reporting protocols, room requests, assessment tools, gender boundaries, and other policies guiding the process of biblical counseling. There are a number of benefits to having documented policies and procedures. One benefit of policies and procedures for the New Vision counseling ministry is having a counseling ministry based on the centrality of God's Word, which serves as the all-sufficient means of caring for the nonphysical needs of God's people. Second, having these statements and policies gives New Vision Counseling Ministry a firm foundation for recruiting, training, and supervising the counseling staff. Finally, a biblical counseling manual sustains a program that is ethically and legally responsible, thereby better safeguarding the ministry of care conducted through God's church.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to establish a manual to guide the biblical counseling ministry of New Vision Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Goals

To accomplish the stated purpose of developing a biblical counseling ministry manual for New Vision Baptist Church (NVBC), this project focused on meeting four goals. The first goal established oversight of the process by representative leadership. The second and third goals developed the appropriate belief statements, policies, and procedures required to manage the overall program of biblical counseling. The fourth goal ensured executive church leadership approved the biblical counseling ministry manual.

1. The first goal was to appoint a steering committee to oversee the creation and approval of a biblical counseling ministry manual for NVBC.
2. The second goal was to develop an inventory of belief statements, policies, and procedures required to effectively administer the biblical counseling ministry of NVBC.
3. The third goal was to write governing belief statements, policies, and procedures to administer the biblical counseling ministry of NVBC.
4. The fourth goal was to gain final approval of the biblical counseling ministry manual by the executive church leadership of NVBC.

The definitive research methodology measured when these four goals were accomplished. The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal are detailed in the following section.

Research Methodology

The first goal is to appoint a steering committee to oversee the creation and approval of a biblical counseling ministry manual for NVBC. The steering committee was comprised of myself as the chair, and an additional four members: a member of the NVBC executive leadership team, the NVBC director of counseling, and two NVBC counselors. This goal was measured by qualifying committee members based on the

selection guide that defines criteria.³ Each committee member was required to meet a minimum of three of the four criteria. Members were drawn from a diversity of church staff and those in the practice of biblical counseling. This goal was considered successful once a steering committee was in place committed to overseeing the process, having signed an agreement to participate that defines the commitments of the members.⁴

The second goal was to develop an inventory of policies and procedures required to administer the biblical counseling ministry of NVBC. As the chair of the steering committee, I drew upon resources of other established biblical counseling ministries manuals, state and local laws, and current church policies and procedures, in order to develop a list of potential policies and procedures deemed necessary. This goal was measured by a scoring guide that determined if the policy or procedure would be further developed for inclusion in the manual.⁵ This goal was considered successfully met when there was a list of policies and procedures identified for inclusion in the finished manual.⁶

The third goal was to write governing policies and procedures as identified in goal 2. This goal was measured by a timeline for completion.⁷ This goal was considered successful when each of the policies and procedures were written on a policy and procedure template⁸ and approved by steering committee signatures.⁹

³ See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee before use in the ministry project.

⁴ See appendix 2.

⁵ See appendix 3.

⁶ See appendix 4.

⁷ See appendix 5.

⁸ See appendix 6.

⁹ See appendix 5.

The fourth goal was to gain approval from the executive church leadership team for the manual. The committee distributed a draft manual for leaders to review and revise. The committee incorporated changes requested by leaders until approval was granted. Once the manual was approved by NVBC executive leadership team, it was published and distributed to the pastoral staff, counseling supervisory staff, and biblical counselors. The manual employs appropriate revision and document control procedures ensuring the ongoing administrative success of the biblical counseling ministry. This goal was measured by a timeline for completion.¹⁰ This goal was considered successful when the policies and procedures were approved by the executive leadership team signatures and distributed to relevant personnel.¹¹

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of terms used in this ministry project are defined to aid the reader's understanding of certain terms.

Biblical counseling. “Biblical Counseling is the process where the Bible, God’s Word, is related individually to a person or persons who are struggling under the weight of personal sin and/or the difficulties with suffering, so that he or she might genuinely change in the inner person to be pleasing to God.”¹²

Biblical counselors. Those who serve as biblical counselors at NVBC have completed Encourager lay counselor training, Divine Design workshop training, and phase 1 of the ACBC certification process (thirty hours of fundamentals training, one thousand pages of reading from an ACBC approved reading list, and ten hours of observing an ACBC certified counselor).

¹⁰ See appendix 5.

¹¹ See appendix 7.

¹² Faith Biblical Counseling, “Definition,” accessed 16 July, 2021, <https://www.faithlafayette.org/counseling/what-is-biblical-counseling>

Encouragers. *Encouragers* is the name of a three-step lay counseling process developed by Sea Coast Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Encouragers* are seen as the lay counselors in the care ministry of NVBC. The three-session model includes Story, Truth, and Next Steps. The end goal of *Encouragers* is to help the counselee determine their next best step in light of their presenting struggle.

Lay counselors. *Lay counselors* are volunteer members, who are trained to use the Scriptures in providing counsel to those seeking help for various struggles they face. At New Vision, lay counselors use the *Encouragers*' lay counseling model.

Sufficiency of Scripture. The *sufficiency of Scripture* means that the Scriptures alone are capable of bringing hope and help to those suffering from nonphysical struggles. Sufficiency is the understanding that the Bible alone is necessary to provide the believer with the knowledge needed to live a life pleasing to God.

The primary limitation of this project was the time limit of sixteen weeks. While a great deal of progress can be made to develop an initial biblical counseling manual, it will take significantly more time to produce a complete manual that would cover every aspect of biblical counseling at NVBC.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project produced a biblical counseling manual, but the scope and length of the project did not provide sufficient time to conduct comprehensive training of the newly developed belief statements, policies, and procedures. Second, this project's completion was dependent on the commitment of at least four selected participants who served the steering committee. To overcome this delimitation, a timeline of activities was communicated and a signed agreement was required. Finally, this project was limited by existing policies or belief statements in use in other ministries of the church that may not be in agreement with the newly established belief statements or the policies and procedures produced as a result of this project. Where conflicts arose, every effort was made to resolve differences by working with various departmental heads or through the executive leadership team.

Conclusion

God has tremendously blessed NVBC with gifted and trained biblical counselors. These counselors wholly trust God's Word as sufficient to do the work of caring for God's people through biblical counseling. The following chapters establish the theological basis and procedural protocols for the work they are entrusted to do. Chapter 2 focuses on the development of a biblical philosophy of counseling and supporting belief statements, while chapter 3 focuses on developing policies and procedures to uphold a faithful biblical counseling ministry.

CHAPTER 2
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR
THE PRACTICE OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Biblical counseling is founded on a knowledge of God and the application of His Word, which serves as the all-sufficient means of caring for the nonphysical needs of God's people by God's people. Biblical counseling flows out of the clear calling and mandate of God, given to believers through the Great Commission. The Christian believer is called out by God to make and then to teach disciples. A *disciple* is a follower of Christ who makes followers of Christ. *To disciple* is to teach the Word of God. *To teach the Word of God* is to make disciples. Teaching and discipleship are not mutually exclusive mandates but the same. Biblical counseling in its essence is a counselor and a counselee(s) engaged in the practice of teaching and discipling.

Committed and gifted believers are competent to give counsel to those who possess the knowledge of God. The practice of biblical counseling happens as the counselor guides counselees to apply Scripture to their specific trials and struggles. Understanding and application of the Scriptures produces gospel transformation in the life of a believer. Counselors can confidently use the Scriptures to help people who possess the knowledge of God to grow into the image of Christ.

The Call of God

Every Christian is called to be a discipleship counselor. This sweeping statement can be deduced from a thorough understanding and application of the Great Commission. God speaks to us today, just as he did to those early disciples. God spoke through His Son in part to deliver to the church a divine mandate to do precisely what he wanted them to do concerning Him but likewise concerning one another. The primary

imperative of this command is for disciples to make disciples. Believers are commanded to teach each other all that God has commanded through His Word. Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20).¹ Therefore, every believer is called to “make disciples” (discipleship), and to “teach” (counsel) those disciples. Being a biblical counselor is in many ways much more than a teacher, but it is no less a teacher. A biblical counselor is a teacher who teaches others how to obey God’s word.

Biblical counseling is about teaching and concerns itself with aiding another in the process of sanctification. Sanctification is a lifelong process by which the believer is set apart and made holy (2 Cor 3:18; cf. Col 3:10; Heb 12:14). It is a progressive act that begins in regeneration and carries through the entire life of a believer, only being completed in glorification when believers are at once fully sanctified. Sanctification can be that which is seen as was (past/positional), is (present/progressive), and will be (future/completed). This middle stage of present/progressive sanctification is the focus. Systematic theologian Millard Erickson further defines this stage of sanctification as “the process of being set apart from sin toward becoming holy and toward the goal of leading a sinless life.”² Heath Lambert, former executive director of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), has this middle progressive stage of sanctification in view when he states, “The work of counseling is fundamentally the work of helping Christians to grow in this grace of sanctification.”³

¹ All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

² M. J. Erickson, *Christian theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 979.

³ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 333-34.

The apostle Peter confirms that, as children of God, believers are to make every effort to be found spotless (as to character), blameless (as to reputation), and to be found at peace with God. Peter affirms that to be at peace with God the Christian believer will dutifully seek to grow and mature in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:14-18). A growing Christian is not content to remain as an immature Christian but seeks rather to distinguish good from evil in this life and thereby grow in righteousness (Heb 5:12-14).

Progressive sanctification is an ongoing component of a believer's salvation and therefore is something one continually works out in every area of their earthly life. Believers continue to work out salvation with both fear and trembling. Fear and trembling mean that they maintain a humble view of God's transforming power in their lives and that they rightly understand that it is ultimately God working in them, to bring them to perfection (Phil 2:12-13).

Progressive sanctification begins with God as a work of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2) who aids one to be supernaturally transformed more and more into the image of Christ. Nineteenth century Systematic theologian Charles Hodge states, "Sanctification is not a work of nature, but a work of grace. It is a transformation of character effected not by moral influences, but supernaturally by the Holy Spirit."⁴ Progressive sanctification is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, as the believer willfully starves the flesh and walks in the spirit. The Holy Spirit is the key agent in both saving and sanctifying the counselee. The same Holy Spirit that is active in bringing about salvation is the one who works in completing salvation through an act of grace he places upon believers in progressive sanctification. The biblical counselor likewise relies on that same Holy Spirit to carry out the ministry of admonishing fellow Christians with that same God-breathed Word (2 Tim 3:14-17).

⁴ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 2:522.

When speaking of conversion, the apostle Paul states that some who were formerly controlled by sin are now washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God (1 Cor 6:11). The substitution of Christ is that which the doctrine of sanctification is ultimately founded upon. Believers must not conclude that by nature they begin this process. Rather it is a work of grace that God promises to every believer. That act of grace gives believers the ability to begin a process of transformation from who they are in Christ to who they will at last be.

Since Christian discipleship is the work of the church body, biblical discipleship counseling should rightly be done by members of God's church. It is evident from Scripture that the call of every minister of the gospel is to admonish one another and to teach each other with all wisdom, and every member is a minister of the gospel (Col 1:25-28). It is right to scripturally conclude that God has thoroughly equipped all believers to counsel one another and to spur one another on toward love and good works (Rom 15:14; Heb 10:24). It is also right for the church to acknowledge that God has given officers to the church who as part of that calling are responsible to counsel the body of Christ under their care (I Tim.3:4-5; Titus 2:9ff; II Tim.4:1-2). Finally, it is appropriate to acknowledge that some members are given various gifts to a greater degree, and this would include the gift and calling to a ministry of counseling (1 Cor 12:6-11; Eph 4:11-16).

As with any ministry calling, a call to serve is a call to prepare and grow in that calling. Effective biblical counselors continually grow in theological understanding. Biblical counselors know and understand the theology of progressive sanctification and how it works in the believer's life. The responsible practice of biblical discipleship counseling requires a theologically trained counselor who will guide the counselee in a process of biblical growth. This is not to say one must be a master theologian with countless degrees, it is however to say that one must be of sound theological training to guide another in righteous living. The alternative is to take a secularist approach to guide one in self-righteous living, which is likely where the counselee's problems have indeed

derived. Over the years, believers have questioned the definition of biblical theology and its implications for discipleship counseling. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Director of the Center for Biblical Studies at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, quotes the Swiss-German theologian Adolf Schlatter who over a century ago defined the nature of biblical theology in this way: “We turn away decisively from ourselves and our time to what was found in the men through whom the church came into being [i.e. the NT writers]. Our main interest should be the thought as it was conceived by them and the truth that was valid for them.”⁵ Being a biblical counselor means leaning on what the Bible has taught and not on what man has come to believe apart from the bible. Biblical theologians practice turning away from themselves and focusing rather on what God has said through his divinely inspired Word.

The Knowledge of God

The knowledge of God is central to a philosophy of biblical counseling. An exegesis of 2 Peter 1:1-11 affirms that Christians may share in the divine nature of God so that they might live gospel-transformed lives. Those who seek counseling often state that the goal of counseling is to find “peace” in their lives. In the opening of his second epistle, the apostle Peter makes clear that as one finds grace, it brings about true peace. Grace is a gift and the gift of grace brings peace to the believer through the knowledge of God. David Wheaton, commenting on 2 Peter 1:1, reminds, “True grace and peace are to be found—only in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”⁶ The knowledge of God means specifically to accept and trust the calling of God in one’s life and then to live out that calling.

In 2 Peter 1:2, the apostle greets the church as those who are “in the knowledge

⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Present and Future of Biblical Theology,” *Themelios* 37, no. 3 (2012): 460.

⁶ David H. Wheaton, “2 Peter,” in *New Bible Commentary*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 21st century ed., 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 1389.

of God.” Thomas Schreiner, professor of New Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, notes, “In this verse knowledge refers both to the knowledge of God they had at conversion and for its increase in their lives. It follows, therefore, that we have an *inclusio* since the book ends with an exhortation to grow in grace and knowledge (*gnōsis*) of Jesus Christ.”⁷ This knowledge begins with eternal life since Peter states that it gives believers the power to live both a godly life and a life of godliness, thus distinguishing at some level between the two. Schreiner further notes, “When Peter referred to ‘life’ (*zōen*), eternal life is intended.”⁸ The knowledge of God concerns itself first with regeneration and coming to the knowledge of God in salvation and then proceeds throughout the life of the believer in a process of sanctification.

In regeneration, people are being transformed from enemies of God to those who live lives to both love and please God. Lambert states, “Regeneration is the work of God, where one who had been dead in their trespasses and sins is rendered to be a completely new creation.”⁹ As believers are being transformed, they can be assured that God has freely given them everything they need for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). Believers have received from God in salvation that which is necessary for eternal abundant life (John 10:10), and to live a godly life.

Exceedingly great and precious promises and rewards are granted to those who put their trust in God for eternal life. Through the promises the believer is first granted the right to “participate in the divine nature”; furthermore, believers are granted the power to “escape the corruption in the world caused by [evil] desires” (1 Pet 1:4). So, the apostle Peter first shares the positive aspect of the promise, which is that believers “might be partakers” of the divine nature. Late 1800s theologian Marvin Vincent states that to be

⁷ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 288.

⁸ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 291-92.

⁹ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 281.

partakers means more specifically that believers “may become, conveying the idea of a growth.”¹⁰

The second promise given helps believers escape the negative. The promise tells that by partaking of the divine nature they are given an escape route against the evil lusts of this world. This too is understood as an ongoing and active promise that must be applied throughout one’s life. The lust of evil “desires” will be an ever-present struggle in this life. However, the apostle Paul articulates to the Corinthian believers a similar promise, a promise that God will not allow the believer to be “tempted beyond what they are able to bear,” and furthermore that even with that temptation, God will always “provide a way of escape” (1 Cor 10:13).

In sanctification, believers are giving an increasing amount of divine knowledge, which is required to live a godly life. This knowledge comes to the believer as a result of gifting from the Holy Spirit of God. The fruit of the spirit brings many desired qualities into the life of the believer, which is an increasing ability to live a life pleasing to God. In particular, exercising the Spirit-given fruit of self-control results in a life of increasing godliness for the believer (Gal 5:23; 2 Pet 1:6).

Believers have access to the “divine power” of God working in their lives. This divine power comes “through our knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Pet 1:3). The knowledge of Jesus both to the Christian counselor and counselee alike is fully obtainable that all who are in Christ might live a life pleasing to God. While an increasing knowledge of God is fully obtainable, it does not happen without effort; the Christian is called to do his part to make a moral effort in attaining knowledge. Christians are called to “work out” their salvation. Working out one’s salvation is not to be confused with working for one’s salvation. To “work out” salvation is indeed opposed to “working for” salvation (Phil 2:12). Schreiner brings clarity to the issue of making a

¹⁰ Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 1:678.

sincere effort to work out salvation: “As is typical in the New Testament, grace precedes demand. The priority of grace, however, does not cancel out strenuous moral effort. Believers are to ‘make every effort’ or apply ‘all diligence’ in carrying out Peter’s commands. A godly character does not emerge from passivity or lassitude.”¹¹

While believers are given a great gift in salvation, they must work out this gift to receive the promises and benefits of living a life pleasing to God. The biblical counselor counsels God’s people in part to “make efforts,” which often means to “make decisions” that are pleasing to God. The term the apostle Peter uses to “apply all diligence” literally means, according to Vincent, “to bring in by the side of: adding your diligence to the divine promises.”¹²

Believers work diligently with God to apply the great promises that God has already granted to all who sincerely desire and then strive to partake of them. Pastor and Bible scholar John MacArthur states, “The Christian life is not lived to the honor of God without effort. Even though God has poured His divine power into the believer, the Christian himself is required to make every disciplined effort alongside of what God has done (cf. Phil. 2:12, 13; Col. 1:28, 29).”¹³

Continuing in 2 Peter 1:6-7, the apostle gives an example list of the strivings present in the life of a believer. It is easy to see how the pursuit of any one of these virtues would benefit the life of a counselee seeking wisdom to overcome struggles. The list Peter gives begins in faith and ends in love, and beyond that, there is no reason to believe the order has a particular priority or significance.

It is not a list of one thing to be obtained followed by a list of other successive virtues to be conquered. Rather, it represents what pursuit of faith looks like and how it

¹¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 298.

¹² Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 1:678-79.

¹³ John MacArthur, Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word, 1997), 1952.

results in love toward God and his people. Warren Wiersbe, in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, states, “Peter listed seven characteristics of the godly life, but we must not think of them as seven beads on a string or even seven stages of development. The word translated ‘add’ really means ‘to supply generously.’ . . . These graces relate to each other the way the branch relates to the trunk and the twigs to the branch.”¹⁴

The primary reason for the pursuit of these virtues is linked to the previous verses by the phrase “for this very reason.” This very reason Peter points to is that God has given great and precious promises. Schreiner states, “Peter exhorted his readers to a godly life (vv. 5–7) because Christ has given them everything they need for a godly life, and they possess magnificent promises of future perfection. It would be a serious mistake, therefore, to dismiss the call to virtue as legalism or moralism.”¹⁵

The apostle Peter explains that these qualities should be present in an increasing measure throughout the life of a true believer. To lack growth in these virtues is indeed a blind-sighted forgetfulness to the gift of God in one’s life. Accordingly, Peter then doubles down in verse 1 Peter 1:10, stating that growing Christians must “be all the more diligent” throughout their lives to make their calling certain. It is not by practicing these things that one becomes a Christian, but in doing so they keep themselves from stumbling in the faith and consequently seal the believer’s entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ.

Many people seek counseling because they have lost hope. They feel hopeless and feel as though there are no real solutions to their problems. They come seeking knowledge as to how they might overcome their struggles. Often they believe that this knowledge is somehow outside of them as opposed to something they already possess.

¹⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 2:438.

¹⁵ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 298.

Second Peter 1:1-11 is a great portion of Scripture to bring to counselees as a reminder that God has already given them all that they need to live a gospel-transformed life.

Simply reading and encouraging a counselee with 2 Peter 1:1-11 serves to remind them of what they already possess. Counselees can be confident that God has given them in salvation the knowledge needed to live a gospel-transformed life. It will not happen automatically and will require sincere effort by the believer. However, that effort is not so much to make this transformation happen by human efforts, as it is to lay hold to the promise in faith that God has already provided how one can be transformed more into the image of Christ.

Many counselees have exhausted themselves in the knowledge of the world and the pursuit of virtuous living by self-driven human efforts. Only by faith in God can believers trust Him to give them great promises, and by allowing the Holy Spirit to live through them and empower their moral efforts can they find peace with themselves and their God. It is indeed a transformative work of God that moves one from faith to love, both for their good and ultimately for His glory.

The Word of God

The Word of God is sufficient for biblical counseling. Exegesis of 2 Timothy 3:10-17 affirms that Scripture is sufficient in producing a counselee who is competent and equipped. Biblical counseling is first and foremost counsel that comes from the power of God's Word. It is counsel 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 and is sufficient for everything that pertains to life and holiness (2 Pet 1:3-4). God's Word comprehensively addresses the sin and suffering that every person experience as part of living as a natural man. By reading, understanding, and then applying God's Word the believer learns to understand properly who they are, who God is, and how God provides help and hope for the problems they face.

Counselees need the Word of God to direct their lives to experience transforming work in their lives. Second Timothy 3:10-17 is at the very heart of the work of the counselor and is the hope of the counselee. Paul is writing to Timothy in this passage and is encouraging him to hold fast to the Word of God and to faithfully use it as he teaches, rebukes, corrects, and trains those entrusted to his care.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:10-17)

The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God and it indeed can bring change into the life of the believer. Scripture gives them a right view of how people truly change and gives them the means of that change through the power of the transforming gospel in their lives. Scripture is the only true source of knowledge that equips the counselor to guide counselees in bringing about change that transforms the heart (Ps 19:7-8).

Scripture Is Inspired

Scripture is inspired by God and therefore produces Godly counsel. The inspiration of Scripture affirms that God used men guided by the Holy Spirit to truly and accurately record his thoughts and words. The divine words of Scripture are the spoken Word of God, which has been delivered to mankind by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God allowed these men to use their writing styles and distinct personalities to shine through the text, and yet the words they wrote are the very words he revealed to them. God supernaturally guided these men to write down what he intended them to as a revelation of both his mind and will (2 Pet 1:21).

Scripture is both verbal and plenary in its inspiration. The inspiration of Scripture extends to the actual words (verbal) and every part of the entire (plenary) bible (2 Pet 1:20). Therefore, the revelation of God recorded by human authors is the Word of God revealed and written down for all of mankind to know and relate to God. A most

notable verse affirming inspiration is 2 Timothy 3:16, which affirms that all of Scripture is “breathed out by God.”

Speaking on this phrase, “All Scripture is God-breathed,” Ralph Earle writes, “‘All Scripture is God-breathed.’ That is exactly what the Greek says. The adjective *theopneustos* (only here in the NT) is compounded of *theos*, ‘God,’ and the verb *pneō*, ‘breathe.’ This is one of the greatest texts in the NT on the inspiration of the Bible.”¹⁶ Paul further states that God’s Word is not that of mere human wisdom, but rather it is the Word of God, given by the Holy Spirit, and can only be properly understood by those who possess that same spirit (1 Cor 2:13).

Scripture Is Inerrant

Scripture is inerrant and therefore can be fully trusted to do all that it claims. The inspired Word of God, which has been supernaturally written down by men and guided by the Holy Spirit, contains complete truth and no mixture of error. The doctrine of inerrancy affirms that all of God’s words are at every point to be trusted and to be that which is wholly true. Apologist Norman Geisler defines *the inerrancy of Scripture* in this way: “When all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm.”¹⁷ James Montgomery Boice expands on that definition: “Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach, whether that teaching has to do with doctrine, history, science, geography, geology, or other disciplines or knowledge.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Ralph Earle, *2 Timothy*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 409.

¹⁷ Norman L. Geisler, *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 294.

¹⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Does Inerrancy Matter?* (Oakland, CA: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, 1979), 13.

Equally, believers hold that Scripture does not at any point contradict itself. Christians understand Scriptures are wholly true (Num 23:19; Heb 6:19), and therefore the law of noncontradiction holds that Scripture cannot contradict itself. Scripture is as well infallible. To be infallible means believers can rely on Scripture to do what it says it will do. Speaking about the infallible nature of the bible well-known apologist Norman Geisler states, “It is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.”¹⁹ The Bible is infallible because it is inerrant, and it is inerrant because it is infallible. In addition, systematic theologian Wayne Grudem, speaking of the Bible’s infallibility, states, “Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.”²⁰

This doctrine of inerrancy is scripturally affirmed in many places. The prophets spoke of the inerrancy of Scripture as they prophesied and spoke the word of the Lord. The late Scottish New Testament scholar I. H. Marshall states, “Many texts purport to express what God was saying (‘the word of the Lord’) through revelations to prophets or other divinely accredited messengers”²¹ Other Old Testament writers, such as the Psalmist King David, support the doctrine of inerrancy. He affirms the flawless nature of the Word of the Lord (Ps 12:6) and that the Word of God is perfect, true, and righteous (Ps 19:7-11). Christ believed in the inerrancy of Scripture since in many places he affirmed the Old Testament and prophets as an authoritative and inspired revelation.

Christ often spoke of historical incidents in the Old Testament in a manner that showed His total confidence in their factual historicity. Christ spoke of Adam and Eve being created by God (Matt 19:3-5) and of the flood as a historical event (Matt 24:38-39). As well, New Testament authors, such as the apostle John, relay Christ’s high priestly

¹⁹ Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, rev. and expanded ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 183.

²⁰ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 1206.

²¹ I. H. Marshall, “Infallibility and Inerrancy of the Bible,” in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, ed. Martin Davie et al. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2016), 453.

prayer. Christ prays to God the father that he would build up His believers in the truth, which he declares to be the very word of God (John 17:17). Theologian Charles Ryrie reminds that Christ “accepted as true the story of Jonah and the great fish (Matt. 12:40) and acknowledged the historicity of Isaiah (12:17), Elijah (17:11–12), Daniel (24:15), Abel (23:35), Zechariah (23:35), Abiathar (Mark 2:26), David (Matt. 22:45), Moses and his writings (8:4; John 5:46), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 8:11; John 8:39).²²

Scripture Is Authoritative

The Word of God holds all authority, meaning that the Word of God demands that Christians both believe and obey what it teaches. If believers fail to do so, then they by default disbelieve and disobey God Himself. Scripture represents and reveals the will of God for His special creation of mankind. Among God’s attributes are omniscience and omnipotence. God has perfect and complete knowledge and at the same time, he is all-powerful. Those two attributes alone give Him the right to exercise His divine authority both in and over the life of all mankind. Believers are wise to recognize that the very word of God, which brought everything out of nothing, which sustains the heavens and the earth, and which created them, breathed life into them, and ultimately redeemed them, has the authority to demand of them all obedience to that same spoken word.

The creator God claims full authority over His creation at many points and likewise confirms that the full authority of God is granted to the son (1 Cor 15:27-28, Phil 2:9-11) over the believer’s life. The authority of God over mankind and all the creations is demonstrated nowhere more clearly than in Matthew 28:18. Here Jesus declares His full authority over all of heaven, earth, and mankind to the extent that every person has a divine duty to believe and obey if they intend to receive the very promise of God which is both continual (always) and without end (forever).

²² Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 99.

Scripture Is Sufficient

The sufficiency of Scripture means that the Scriptures alone are capable of bringing hope and help to those suffering from nonphysical struggles. Believers further affirm that the Scripture indeed defines and speaks to everything experienced, by any person, in any situation. According to theologian Matthew Barrett, the sufficiency of Scripture means that “only Scripture, because it is God’s inspired Word, is our inerrant, sufficient, and final authority for the church.”²³ Pastor and teacher John MacArthur states, “When godly people, armed with the confidence that God’s Word is entirely sufficient, prayerfully and skillfully, gently but firmly come alongside those who are confused, lost, hurting or otherwise struggling with some personal or spiritual dilemma, the Lord is sovereignly disposed to use His Word through such counsel in ways that please Him.”²⁴

God’s Word is sufficient to provide all that believers need to both know Him and to live as he intends them to live. Likewise, Scripture is sufficient to answer all questions about life that they would need to know. This is not to say, that Scripture will answer every question they have, but rather, it sufficiently answers the questions which God has predetermined they ultimately need answers to. Believing in the full sufficiency of Scripture demands that they are content in the reality that Scripture contains everything believers need to know. This includes questions concerning faithful living, salvation, truth, and living in obedience to His will. Grudem defines the sufficiency of Scripture as “the idea that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended His people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.”²⁵

²³ Matthew Barrett, *God’s Word Alone: The Authority of Scripture: What the Reformers Taught . . . and Why It Still Matters, Five Solas* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 402.

²⁴ John McArthur, preface to Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, *Counseling the Hard Cases* (Nashville: B & H, 2015), ix.

²⁵ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1255.

In Psalm 19:7-8 are six attributes of God's sufficient Word. It is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true. Then, in poetic parallelism, the psalmist declares what it is capable of. It brings revival to the believer's soul, wisdom to misunderstandings, rejoicing in their hearts, clarity to their minds, and finally it is understood to be lasting and righteous. The apostle Paul likewise makes it clear that believers have been given from God in Scripture that which profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, as well as being all-sufficient to save their very souls.

The biblical counselor has a necessary duty to point counselees to Scripture and to share the gospel. The counselees who God has entrusted to the biblical counselor have come with problems that need real solutions. Those problems will not ultimately be satisfied, void of the greatest solution to the greatest problem facing mankind. More than anything biblical counselors must call their counselees to apply the counsel of God to their struggles. It is ultimately the Word of God and through it saving faith that brings both effective answers to the temporal non-physical problems of mankind, and more importantly to the eternal problem of mankind, which is eternal separation from God. To be saved from their problems means to be saved from their sin, and to be saved from their sin, they trust the sufficiency of Holy Scriptures, which can give them the wisdom of the saving knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord (2 Tim 3:15).

Beyond the resolution of their eternal problem, which is to be separated from God, believers likewise lean on the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Scripture as fully sufficient about the ministry of counseling for temporal problems. Scripture does contain all that is needed to both understand and to treat the mental, emotional, and spiritual problems experienced in a fallen and sinful world. The doctrine of sufficiency proclaims to the counselor and the counselee that the Bible alone can give wise counsel concerning whatever problems counselees may be facing.

The People of God

The people of God are fully equipped to care for the non-physical needs of others. Exegesis of Romans 15:14-16 shows that Christians are competent to counsel one another. Lambert states, “The church is the organism through which God accomplishes His mission in the world. It is the main agent for all ministry of the Word, including the ministry of counseling and discipleship.”²⁶ The apostle Paul issues a firm reminder that Christians are fully capable of instructing one another.

The ESV Study Bible states, “Instruct translates Greek *noutheteō*, “instruct, admonish, warn, counsel,” which is often used of warning against wrong conduct (Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:28; 1 Thess. 5:12, 14; 2 Thess. 3:15). Paul encourages ordinary Christians (no doubt esp. those who have greater maturity and wisdom) to give one another practical, real-life wisdom and counsel.”²⁷ Instruction is not simply to give information but to counsel while imparting the knowledge of God. Everett Harrison in his commentary on Romans states, “This word ‘instruct’ (*noutheteō*) reflects more than the imparting of information. ‘Inculcate’ comes close to expressing its force (cf. Col 3:16, ‘counsel,’ and 1 Thess 5:14, ‘warn’). In the absence of resident pastors, brethren were the more under obligation to exercise such a ministry among themselves.”²⁸

The basis of the work of the biblical counselor is most rooted in appreciation and response to God’s saving work. Believers have a call to care for and counsel one another in recognition of the work that God has done in Christ on their behalf. God has chosen them and set them apart. Therefore, he desires to empower them to personal ministry of caring for each other. This care is rooted in love the supreme virtue that binds all other virtues into a perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-15 says,

²⁶ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 333.

²⁷ Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2182–2183.

²⁸ Everett F. Harrison, *Romans*, in vol. 10 *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 155.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Believers have long understood disciples of Christ are called to love God and love His people (Matt 22:37-39; John 13:34-35). In essence, to love God is to love His people, and the two have never been mutually exclusive, but rather are the same. This is true to the extent that the Word of God questions, if one sees his neighbor in need and turns his back on them, then how the love of God can truly be in that person (1 John 3:17-18). Real religion—religion that is pure and undefiled—takes care of God's people in times of distress (Jas 1:27).

Christ is their model. In addition to training disciples, preaching to the people, and other forms of ministry, so much of the observable ministry of Jesus through Scripture is him directly caring for people. This is seen in narratives where Christ counseled the brokenhearted, comforted the grief-stricken, healed the sick and lame, uplifted the downtrodden, brought calm to those gripped with anxiety and fear, and ultimately gave hope to the hopeless. Over and over again Christ and the Scriptures point to people who care for one another.

In Romans 15:14 the apostle Paul assures the Roman Christians that he recognizes their God-given qualities and abilities. Paul states that the believers in Rome are full of goodness and complete in knowledge, and therefore are competent to instruct one another. They are full of goodness because they belong to Christ; they are complete in knowledge because they are those who have trusted in Him and trust in His Word. Being full of goodness and complete in knowledge means they were functionally competent to instruct one another. The apostle Paul wants them to be confident that God has given them everything they need and therefore they can be confident as believers in their ability to counsel and instruct one another.

This word *noutheteō* in the original language is where counselors get the word *nouthetic*. To counsel *nouthetically* means one who “gives instruction” or “admonishes” according to the Word of God. But biblical counseling is indeed more than simple teaching or giving knowledge. To instruct is to teach with a certain level of authority and even warning. Robert Mounce, in his commentary on Romans, states, ‘Romans 15:14 is essentially a calling to the people of God to provide personal counsel to one another. The believers in Rome were expected to help one another toward spiritual maturity. They were to advise and instruct one another.’²⁹

Believers are fully sufficient to counsel and encourage God’s people because they do so with God’s fully sufficient Word (2 Tim 3:16). Unfortunately, in the context of an ever-growing secular therapeutic culture, the church has relinquished the task of biblical counseling and turned it over to non-biblical therapeutic philosophies. These secular counselors rely on interventions, which often never consider, much less include, a hint of biblical application. The apostle Paul however reassures these ordinary Christians that they have an extraordinary God who has equipped them sufficiently to give to one another practical counsel containing God-given wisdom.

In Romans 15:15, Paul reminds his fellow Christians with boldness that this message is nothing more than what he had formerly communicated to them. Paul had previously explained that they possessed the knowledge of the gospel message and that they could apply it practically both to their own lives and the lives of others. Paul could speak boldly due to the grace that previously had been given to Him. What was that grace? It was his office; he was called to be a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul appeals here to his apostolic authority. This appeal is not born out of a boastful heart; rather, Paul attributes it to the Holy Spirit of God who is doing a sanctifying work in his own life. R. C. Sproul writes, “Paul is saying that all that was acceptable to God was

²⁹ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 266.

done by Christ through the Holy Spirit. He is not boasting of himself and of his own accomplishments; he is boasting in the Lord, he is boasting about what Christ has accomplished.”³⁰

The leadership of the modern church has a responsibility to reaffirm what the apostle Paul affirmed long ago to God’s first-century church. The church must reclaim the place of biblical counseling by faithfully called out Christians equipped with the Word of God. The church exists as the body of Christ, which is where the truth of God’s Word is proclaimed and lived out. The church is likewise called out to uphold the doctrines of the Christian faith. Heath Lambert states, “Every area of Christian doctrine about the church is important in the ministry of counseling.”³¹

The church should be encouraged to provide counsel to the body of Christ first through the appointment of called out and qualified elders and deacons (1 Tim 3:1–13; Titus 1:5-16). These offices are set up by God to guide the church in matters of governance, but likewise in areas of counsel to right living. This task of providing counsel to God’s people would include the work of elders as they are called to teach and lead the body of believers (1 Tim 3:2, 5; 5:17). However, the elders are likewise called to equip the saints to the work of the ministry (Eph 4:16). That ministry includes biblical discipleship counseling that produces mature believers built up in the knowledge of God.

Conclusion

The responsibility of the church to equip the body of Christ by providing biblical counsel for its members is indeed unmistakable. Thankfully, the church has a clear mandate, a competent and equipped counselor, the knowledge of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the sufficiency of Scripture to enable the task. Not providing a

³⁰ R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1994), 245.

³¹ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 304.

ministry of biblical discipleship counseling in the life of the local church is negligent of the church leadership, to the same extent as to not provide a teaching or preaching ministry. The church that neglects this responsibility to counsel one another does so to the detriment of the health of the church and its members. The church together is called to contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all handed down to the saints (Jude 3). A defense of the faith includes fellow Christians working together as they fight against the very errors of belief in their hearts, souls, and minds that necessitates biblical counseling in the first place.

CHAPTER 3
DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING MANUAL
TO ENSURE CONSISTENT PRACTICE WITHIN
THE COUNSELING MINISTRY

God has blessed NVBC with a solidly growing biblical counseling ministry. In four short years the program has grown from 181 requests in the first year, to over 500 requests annually. Reflecting on errors of the past and the propensity of drift from a well-intentioned pathway, the leadership of NVBC understands the need to document its stance on theological beliefs, and to have policies and procedures to guide the counseling ministry. Having this manual will serve to ensure the continued integrity and success of the program. This manual defines the beliefs, policies, and procedures which are to guide the structured operations and management of the biblical counseling program. The manual gives the church leadership, administrative care team, biblical counselors, and counselees assurance that the church has done its best to state what it believes and to conduct ministry according to those beliefs. The manual will also help foster consistency and accountability among counselors whom NVBC entrusts to this work.

A Theological Framework for Counseling

A biblical counseling ministry that is faithful to the Word of God must be centered in what God teaches concerning how it relates to God, the world, ourselves, and other people. There is an essential connection between what the Scriptures teach (theology) and how the church is to employ the private ministry of God's Word to help people make a needed change (counseling). Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin, whom serve as former and current executive directors of the Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC), stress the importance of theology in counseling,

There must be theological unity rooted in a common understanding of the gospel and an understanding of the sanctification process. While some downplay the importance of theology in counseling, unity regarding the sufficiency of Christ and practicality of Scripture is essential if Biblical counseling is to take root from the top level of leadership down through the entire membership.¹

The counseling ministry of the Lord's church must be in harmony with the teachings of Scripture; therefore, at no point should the theology of the church disagree with the philosophy of counseling the church endorses. A church must build and maintain the counseling ministry on theological truths lest it is open to the many errors in counseling that are likely to creep in.

John Piper writes in the opening chapter of *The Glory of God: The Goal of Biblical Counseling* that “biblical counseling is nothing if it is not God-centered and Bible-saturated.”² To be God-centered means that biblical counselors build their counseling ministry on what the Bible teaches concerning man and the problems he faces. For example, if the counselor is to give counsel on premarital sex, the life of the unborn, integrity in business practices, how to handle grief, depression, anxiety, or even how one makes day-to-day decisions, then he is called to counsel what the Bible affirms on these matters. When facing real and perceived struggles or any of life's decisions, it is good to remember that the biblical counselor counsels according to what God says concerning those struggles and decisions. What the Bible teaches about these issues theologically is indeed what needs to be counseled practically.

The church must not counsel primarily based on people's feelings, which can change day-to-day or even minute-by-minute. The church counsels based on what God has said. His Word is unchanging and without error in what it teaches concerning how people change and face struggles. Biblical counselors do not ignore feelings, but they do

¹ Ron Allchin and Tim Allchin, “Equipping Biblical Counselors for your Church,” in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Robert W. Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 194.

² John Piper, “The Glory of God: The Goal of Biblical Counseling,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, rev. ed., ed. Bob Kellemen and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2021), 24.

examine the root heart issues of how those feelings have come about. The counselor must then help counselees see if their feelings match up to what they believe. Together, the counselor and counselee examine where the belief has derived from and examine it in the light of the Scripture.

The biblical counselor considers the theological interpretation of a feeling and then responds. To do otherwise would be to go the way of the secularized therapeutic culture. Once the counselor disconnects his theology from his counseling, he is simply left with theories and opinions. This usually ends up with the counselor only addressing the felt needs or feelings of the counselee, without consideration of whether those feelings are driven by truth or error. This is similarly true for the ministry of preaching or the public ministry of the Word.

Biblical counselors possess the greatest truth that exists. They hold the truth of the gospel story, which is in essence one God in three persons who created, loves, and cares about every counselee entrusted to their care. God cares not just in the singular crisis or difficulty that brought the counselee to seek counseling, but in every moment of every day, and all circumstances concerning a counselee. One of the most important truths counselees must come to know is that God's story is part of their story. Furthermore, God's story has the truth needed to change their story. God's goodness, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence all point to a God who knows them and the struggles they face.

A counselor trained in the theological truths concerning God has access to the most powerful intervention ever created. A responsible counseling ministry connects theology proper to the biblical solutions that face counselees. Biblical counselors take a generalized systematic approach to understand biblical theology and particularly how each has relevance in the life of the counselee. Doctrines accurately relate directly or indirectly to real-life issues in counseling.

New Vision Counseling ministry adheres to the doctrinal statement of the BCC. It is understood that the statement is not exhaustive but rather summarizes the core doctrinal beliefs by which the counselors and the New Vision Counseling ministry affirms. The statement covers the core affirmations regarding the central doctrines of the Christian faith.³

Policies and Procedures

Implementing specific policies and procedures will help ensure consistent counseling practice. A biblical counseling ministry is best established with a set of agreed-upon policies and procedures that help to ensure the ministry is protected from the many potential errors that come as a result of not having such guiding and governing beliefs. Where policies and procedures are not provided, the ministry opens itself up to individual interpretations and the very real potential of conflicting policies and procedures concerning the planned and organized operation of the ministry. Among the benefits of having established policies and procedures for a counseling ministry is ensuring a program based on the centrality of God's Word. Likewise, a firm foundation for recruiting, training, supervising, and maintaining a program that is ethically and legally responsible is produced.

Having a vision, plan, and process for developing and deploying a biblical counseling ministry involves a tremendous number of considerations. It is said anything worth doing is worth doing right. This cannot be truer as one considers how the church might provide quality and competent care within the body of Christ. Kellemen writes,

There is a need for organizing the organism. It does no good and wastes valuable time to envision, enlist, and equip, only to stop short of the ongoing administrating of the ministry. Without mobilizing and deploying, those we equip can become

³ Biblical Counseling Coalition, "The Doctrinal Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition," accessed 16 July, 2021, <https://www.Biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/doctrinal-statement/>.

consumers rather than ministers; they soak in without serving; they take in without giving out.⁴

Policies and procedures should be established to cover things such as financial matters, intake forms, donations (counselees) and counselor pay (counselors), the rights and limits of confidentiality, protocols and procedures for suicidal counselees, building use and meeting spaces, session length and length of counseling guidelines, safety measures and guidelines for sessions, general philosophy of counseling, record keeping and use of database systems, ongoing opportunities for growth (education), and supervisory requirements. This list is not exhaustive; therefore, it certainly does not cover every important decision regarding a biblical counseling ministry. Instead, it is intended to provide a minimum of operating policies and procedures.

The following are some guiding principles and intended outcomes for establishing a fundamental set of procedures and guidelines. These policies and procedures are considered both fundamental and necessary to the establishment of a responsibly managed biblical counseling ministry.

Intake Forms and Procedures

A reliable, structured, and easy-to-use system of receiving requests for counseling is critical to connecting counselees to counselors. A user-friendly request system should be developed and implemented. In this age of technology, a request system should be web-based if possible, and yet a simple phone call should get a counselee connected as well. The system must gather enough pertinent data to be used for connecting the counselee to the appropriate counselor. Kellemen notes, “A detailed intake policy and procedure . . . provides a safeguard so that the person needing care is assigned to a person qualified to care”⁵

⁴ Robert W. Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 279.

⁵ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 311. New Vision Baptist care ministry utilizes a simplified form on their counseling website to initially request counseling. Once this data is

Minimum demographic data should be gathered at the initial request level to ensure proper follow-up and a successful counselor connection. Valuable information would include such data as name, gender, age, marital status, address, church membership, etc. Phone or email contact information should be requested for follow-up. Data about the actual request could include responses to a few brief questions, such as “why are you seeking help?” and “what do you hope to gain from a counseling relationship?” Some request systems will use a quick contact form with minimal data requested but enough general data to assign the counselee to the appropriate counselor. This is the practice of Cornerstone Community, which is under the direction of Paul Tautges. Prospective counselees first fill out a brief request to get connected, then once they connect and agree to counsel, the counselor then utilizes assessments, personal information forms, and other data collection methods to obtain additional information.⁶ While it is important to ask for enough information up front to make an informed connection, one can run the risk of requesting too much information initially, which might overwhelm counselees or even intimidate them. As well, it is important not to reduce people to a set of collected data. Kellemen states, “Data collection without soul connection can end up treating image bearers like lab specimens to be analyzed and dissected. It can become aloof, impersonal, and uncaring—and even un-Christlike.”⁷

It is also critical during this request phase to provide information such as limits of confidentiality and how to receive immediate emergency care. Ancillary information could also include follow-up procedures (response time), fee or donation structures, and a link to frequently asked questions. The request system itself should be developed,

processed by the intake coordinator and assigned to a counselor, a follow up Personal Information Form (PIF) is often requested to gather more data. Other forms, such as a family history, marital assessment, and parenting assessment, may be requested before or shortly after intake at the discretion of the counselor.

⁶ For examples of differing methods and forms see appendix 9.

⁷ Robert W. Kellemen, *Consider Your Counsel: Addressing Ten Mistakes in Our Biblical Counseling* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2021), 1.

maintained, and secured in such a way that it assures the confidentiality of counselees and their data.

Counselee Donations and Counselor Pay

Every ministry provided by the local church comes with a responsibility to both fund and steward those funds in a Christ-honoring way. Staffing, managing, and maintaining a biblical counseling ministry is no exception. Both income and expenditures should be considered. It is recommended that a biblical counseling budget be established before beginning the process.

Session Fees/Donations

Income items are typically easier to account for since they are normally limited to counselee fees and donations, gifts to the ministry, and budgeted church funds. Consideration should be given to the language employed to solicit monetary compensation for counseling. Some ministries use the word “fee,” which indicates a payment for a service. A donation, however, means the service is provided whether or not there is a donation made. Either way, it is likely that whatever is received will not qualify as a tax-deductible contribution since monies received are for services provided. There may be times when a contribution may be tax-deductible, such as when a charitable gift is given to the counseling ministry without counseling services rendered, or if a gift is given above the customary fee. This should be reviewed with the local church accounting department and in compliance with state and federal tax laws.

The actual means of collecting fees and donations should be considered as well. Direct pay options such as cash or checks for services rendered should be directed where possible to the church office to avoid putting the counselor in the place of handling donations. More ministries are using some form of electronic payment and process online donations and payments through church giving software or other direct pay systems. These pay systems allow merchants to accept mobile bank debit and credit card payments. Both

clear instructions and secure portals should be provided to protect financial integrity.

Following are a few considerations and suggestions in developing a fee/donation structure.

No pay: counseling is provided without cost to all counsees, both members and nonmembers.

Non-member pay: counseling is provided on a sliding scale or set fee for non-members but free to covenant members.

Set fee/donation: this fee is for all persons regardless of factors such as income or membership. For example, every counselee receiving counseling is required to pay (or requested to donate) \$35 per session hour.

Sliding scales: these scales are set based on criteria such as household income and often include a minimum and maximum fee. For example, one dollar per gross household income (\$70k household income = \$70 per session hour).

One church that uses a sliding scale is Providence Church in Cape Coral, Florida. The scale is calculated based on household income. Counsees pay one dollar per thousand dollars of gross household income with a \$25 minimum and \$100 maximum. A counseling ministry may employ a single policy or a combination of those listed.

It is noted that the fair-market-value for counseling in the Nashville community typically ranges from \$75.00 to \$140.00 per fifty-minute session. Some believe that asking or even requiring a counselee to pay a fee or donate for receiving counseling is a means of investing in their care specifically and the counseling ministry in general. Many times, a counselee will expect to and is pleased to pay a fee or donate. At other times, it is understood that a covenant member who gives regular tithes and offerings, might not expect to give additionally to receive this care. These decisions should be considered, documented, and communicated before launching a biblical counseling ministry.

Counselor Compensation

An effective biblical counseling ministry requires a well-trained and qualified staff of biblical counselors. A variety of types and levels of care will be employed in the counseling ministry. For instance, several biblical counseling ministries may have various levels of counseling, like lay counselors who provide brief encouragement counseling at

no cost, or pastoral counsel for specific matters of faith and church issues, again at no cost, care group counselors who lead support groups, who may or may be compensated. At times the ministry will be led by fully qualified and trained biblical counselors who sacrificially do their work at no cost to the church or the counselee personally. At other times, church counseling ministries choose to compensate their counselors on a per session basis or some other compensation agreement. While still others choose to employ a limited number of pastoral staff or biblical counselors on a salary basis to provide soul care.

Following are a few considerations and suggestions in developing a plan for counselor compensation:

No compensation: considered volunteers, where no compensation is provided as counselors provide care as a part of their stewardship to the body of Christ.

Fixed pay compensation: counselors are provided a set compensation regardless of the counselee's ability to pay or other tangential factors.

Skills-based (hourly) compensation: counselors are compensated based on a predetermined set of qualifications or criteria. For example, education level, specializations, certifications, years of service, etc., would result in an increasing level of compensation.

Salary-based compensation: In this instance qualified and trained staff would be hired and compensated with a salary. This typically means that all or part of their employment in the church would be dedicated to providing counsel through the counseling ministry of the church.

Counseling ministries decide which compensation system works best and administer it firmly, fairly, and consistently. Several factors are included in this decision of whether to compensate counselors. Are they a training center, do they require certified staff, can the church budget support paid counselors, will the counselee be required to pay a counseling fee? These decisions should be considered, documented, and communicated before officially launching a biblical counseling ministry.

Counseling Ministry Expenses

Investing in the counseling ministry is investing in the care of God's people. The Bible reminds believers to count the cost of decisions they make. Many of these costs are non-tangible, but many have dollars amounts attached to them as well. Several

expenses will be incurred and should be considered while implementing and maintaining a healthy biblical counseling ministry. Outside of the compensation that may be in place to compensate counselors, a counseling ministry will have administrative costs such as general supplies, and training and counseling resources that will be required. While implementing and maintaining a biblical counseling ministry, items will need to be budgeted for both one-time and ongoing costs. Following are a few considerations and suggestions in thinking through counseling ministry expenses:

Administrative Staff: directors, co-directors, support personnel, intake coordinators, data processing, database administrators.

Training, Conferences, Certifications: training materials (hard copy or web-based), audio and video resources, conference fees and travel, training subscriptions, cost of certifications, and membership in certifying bodies.

Promotional Resources: counseling pamphlets, books, flyers, business cards, displays, promotional videos and ads, mini-devotionals.

Room Space and Supplies: room space including waiting areas. This space is often equipped with furnishings and equipment such as bookcases, whiteboards, cleaning supplies, copiers, file folders, legal pads, computers, sound machines.

Support Services: Security services, answering services, desk receptionists.

Software Services: database records management, payment processing, web-based resources, social media, phone app and communications.

The preceding list does not suggest that a faithful counseling ministry cannot be provided wherein a gifted counselor simply meets in a confidential space with a counselee. It is provided to help in consideration of some of the many resources that might be needed while employing a biblical counseling ministry in the local church. The work of providing gospel-centered biblical discipleship counseling can certainly be done with little to no cost.

Limits of Confidentiality

Establishing, communicating, and maintaining policies about confidentiality in the biblical counseling relationship is essential. By law, there are certain situations in which information about individuals undergoing counseling may be released with or

without their permission (Rom 13:1-3). A biblical counseling ministry therefore will responsibly develop a clear policy stating both the rights and limits in a biblical counseling relationship. Kellemen notes, “Each Biblical counseling ministry must develop clear organizational policies. These policies need to be in writing, explained to the counselee at the start of counseling, and signed.”⁸

A policy should be developed in such a way that it responsibly protects confidentiality in the counseling relationship while fostering trust, integrity, and safety in counseling. Once a procedure for confidentiality is established, it is the responsible duty of the biblical counseling ministry to put this policy in writing and train each counselor. A policy statement should provide any counselee with an understanding and clear expectation of confidential communication in the counseling process.

The confidentiality agreement is presented to the counselee as early as the counseling request stage, since the information that could break the limits of confidentiality may be shared even in a request for counseling. It is suggested that the counselee agree to such an agreement by signature before any consultation or certainly at the very beginning of the counseling relationship. Kellemen explains, “Our focus is on the ethical and relational nature of confidentiality in Biblical counseling and on a counselee’s expectation of confidential communication.”⁹

Legal limits of confidentiality are intended to ensure the safety of the counselor, counselee, and any involved parties. These specific situations can be summarized as follows:

Where it is proven or suspected that children (or any at-risk population including handicapped or the elderly) are physically abused, neglected, or in the past or currently being sexually abused.

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

⁸ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 313.

⁹ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 313.

If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena requiring a counselor to provide testimony in a court of law or its proceedings, then the counselor must provide any information specifically requested in the subpoena.

If a counselor learns that an unreported life-threatening felony has been committed, counselors are required by law to report it to the authorities.

Confidentiality is an important part of the counseling process. While ethical and legal confidentiality will be maintained, counselees should understand that absolute confidentiality is not scriptural. Jay Adams writes, “Confidentiality in Biblical counseling is not absolute. The agreement that a counselee signs when he enters upon counseling should clearly state that you will keep matters as confidential as the Bible requires, but that this does not mean absolute confidentiality.”¹⁰

Scripture provides special circumstances under which facts may be disclosed to select others (Matt 18:15-17). It should be communicated that covenant church members who participate in counseling relationships who are found to be in open rebellion and unrepentant sin will be lovingly and compassionately admonished biblically by church leadership, up to and including the senior Pastor. Deepak Reju states, “Strict confidentiality is not possible for Christians who practice counseling in the context of a local church. If a person is not willing to repent of his sin, the counselor must eventually expose this sinner to the church. If we are going to follow the ethics of the Bible, it is not an option for us to conceal an unrepentant sinners’ sin.”¹¹ The duty to break confidentiality would include

¹⁰ Jay Adams, *Critical Stages of Biblical Counseling* (Stanley, NC: Timeless Texts, 2002), 6.

¹¹ Deepak Reju, “Strict Confidentiality?,” Biblical Counseling Coalition Blog, June 12, 2012, <http://Biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/blogs/2012/06/12/strict-confidentiality/>. Reju’s informed consent reads,

Just like all of our other pastors, I cannot promise strict confidentiality. But you should assume that I am always going to use discretion with the information conveyed to me. Most of the time, I will be able to keep your information private. But, there will be times when I will have to speak to others in order to wisely discern how best to shepherd you as a member of CHBC. Examples of exceptions to confidentiality are when the counselee 1) indicates an intention to harm him or herself or someone else; 2) has recently committed sexual or physical abuse; 3) is engaging in repeated, ongoing serious immorality (e.g. adultery) that might require the involvement of the church; 4) is a minor and I believe it is in the best interest of the child to disclose information to the parent; (5) has done something that violates the law and I am required to report it; (6) is in a situation that might warrant church discipline and requires oversight of other elders, staff, or involvement of the church as a whole; or

instances where church leadership may potentially inquire about the status of a counselee's sessions. It should be understood by the counselee in such instances the counseling ministry would use great discretion in disclosing to church leadership information that is necessary for the church to effectively and biblically fulfill its shepherding responsibility. The intent and goal of disclosure to church staff should always have as its intent a restorative hope for the church member. In such cases, responsible confidentiality insists that disclosure remains within as small a group of individuals as needed to care for the individual.

Protocol for Suicidality

In a biblical counseling ministry, it is not a matter of if, but when, there will be an encounter with a counselee who is or who has contemplated suicide. It is therefore critical to develop a suicide protocol and train counselors on how to follow it. There should also be a mandatory yearly training refresher course on how the counselor is to inquire and work with suicidal counselees. Suicidal counselees can feel overwhelming, but biblical counselors are competent to help. Ray Bruce in the LifeLine series states, "You may not feel prepared, but you have what you need to help. Long before there were professional counselors, people in trouble relied upon family and friends to help them through difficult times."¹²

Suicidality is a choice by a counselee to attempt to end their life. There is no single reason why a counselee might come to a place where no longer living seems like their best option. Counselors must take every threat seriously and follow up with any suspicion that a counselee is suicidal. Proverbs 18:15 states, "An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge." Competent and

(7) if I am ordered by a court of law to release your information, I will have to comply with the law. This is not an exhaustive list of examples.

¹² Ray Bruce, *Help! My Friend Is Suicidal*, LifeLine series (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2014), 12.

compassionate counselors will lean in with their hearts and seek knowledge about the counselee in their time of distress.

Experts have identified several significant warning signs over the years. In particular, there are five distinct suicide danger signs: (1) mental depression, (2) marked changes in personality or behavior, (3) making arrangements as though preparing for a final departure, (4) suicide threats or other statements indicating a desire or intention to die, and (5) a suicide attempt.¹³ This list is not to suggest that these are the only warning signs, but certainly these five should be paid attention to. There are many inquiry models employed but most involve simply asking the counselee if they are thinking about hurting or harming themselves. This is often referred to as intent or ideation. Once ideation is confirmed, most follow-up models suggest inquiring about whether a specific plan has been thought out, and if so, what is the plan. Once a plan has been confirmed, the counselor would need to investigate means. Michael Emlet, counselor and faculty member of the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation, states that “we are assessing this person’s resources, the know-how, and how much groundwork this man has laid to carry out the plan” at this stage of inquiry.¹⁴

Once a determination is made that a counselee is at risk or is contemplating suicide, it becomes necessary to include others in the intervention. It is unwise and not suggested that one ever do this type of intervention in secret or solo. Biblical counselors likely need to notify their supervisor (counseling director) as a minimum.

Certainly, legal responsibilities need to be considered and followed through with. It is great to have a counselee that is willing to follow the counselors lead on seeking out help. At this point, a 911 call can be the best move forward as they are

¹³ Gary Stewart, *Basic Questions on Suicide and Euthanasia: Are They Ever Right?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 58.

¹⁴ Aaron Sironi and Michael R. Emlet, “Evaluating a Person with Suicidal Desires,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 26, no. 2 (2012): 37.

trained to get the counselee medical help. Even if the counselee does not wish to seek help, counselors have a bound duty to ensure the safety of the counselee by making a full report to the authorities as mandated by law.

In conclusion, the following are a few thoughts on what to do and what not to do from June Hunt's *Biblical Counseling Keys on Suicide Prevention*:

Do take your time with the person and tell the person you care and God cares. (Isaiah 41:10; 1 Peter 5:7)

Do remind the individual that God has a purpose for his or her life. (Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 43:18–19)

Do acknowledge the individual's feelings and let this person know he or she is not alone. (Psalm 46:1; Deuteronomy 31:8)

Don't be judgmental or respond in shock about what he or she is expressing. (Proverbs 3:5–8)

Come alongside this individual and guide him or her to the help that is needed. (Matthew 26:38; Philippians 4:13)¹⁵

Building and Room Usage

Decisions concerning where counselors meet with counsees will be determined by several factors, including building space, member or non-member counseling, and the number and length of sessions. Additional considerations include things such as waiting areas with appropriate seating, building safety, confidentiality, and available counseling hours. If available, it is good to dedicate one or more rooms for counseling. If possible, counseling should be conducted at the church since this will foster a connection with the body of Christ as counselors meet with counsees where the church meets

While meeting rooms require minimal furnishings, it is wise to have seating that will accommodate a diversity of counseling situations. Other resources could include Bibles, pens, notepads, devotionals, whiteboards, and sound machines to protect confidentiality. While confidentiality is important, many prefer at least a small window on the door communicating to others that the room is occupied. Considerations should

¹⁵ June Hunt, *Biblical Counseling Keys on Suicide Prevention: Hope When Life Seems Hopeless* (Dallas: Hope For The Heart, 2008), 20.

also be given to lighting—soft lighting will suffice; fluorescents can bring headaches for some.

Door placards or signs that indicate a counseling session is underway are helpful as well. Additional specialized resources such as television, computers, audio-visual equipment, and wi-fi access may be required. Children’s rooms should be equipped with resources for children’s counseling. Considerations for serving handicapped populations (both for counselors and counselees) should be taken into account. Bottles of water are often appreciated and it is always wise to have tissues on hand as it can be awkward to have nothing available in a moment of emotional outburst.

If the church utilizes more counselors than there are rooms available, then there should be a system designed and available to request and reserve rooms for sessions. This schedule will need to be monitored and accessible by each counselor to avoid conflicts. Counselors will need to pay careful attention to session times and cancel room requests when needed.

Number and Length of Sessions

A determination as to the number and length of sessions provided to a counselee will be based in part on the biblical counseling ministries philosophy of counseling. Regardless of the agreed-upon number of sessions, all counseling relationships begin with the end in mind. It is critical to move the counselee toward dependence on God versus dependence on the counselor or the counseling relationship.

One method of counseling is a short-term method of counseling care. This typically limits counselees meeting with their counselor to three to eight that are fifty minutes to one hour in length. There will be times when additional sessions will be approved by the counseling director if needed. The goal is not to make the counselee dependent on the counselor but to lead them to personally understand and apply God’s Word to every area of their life and so they can help others also. As for the length of the sessions, Kellemen states, “Biblical counseling meetings should normally last no more

than 50 to 60 minutes.”¹⁶ Many churches surveyed will use a one-hour session length.¹⁷ Again, this can be adjusted to suit the ministry preference, but it should be communicated up front in the process. Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju writes, “Also, be clear how long each session will last. For instance, if you plan to meet weekly, then keeping meetings to one hour is a good discipline to maintain for the benefit of both pastor and counselee. If meetings are more spread out—like once a month—then you might consider ninety minutes or more.”¹⁸

Care Groups and Group Counseling

An effective biblical counseling ministry is comprehensive. Individual face-to-face discipleship counseling is one piece of an extended system of care provided through a larger ministry context. Another valuable piece to the counseling ministry is care (support) groups. Care Groups provide gospel-centered resources and choices, helping people learn to apply God’s truths to specific struggles in a group setting.

Care groups are typically centered around specific struggles and designed to provide resources of support and Christ-centered instruction targeted to a specific population of persons. They typically meet on a weekly basis for a predetermined schedule of six to twelve weeks and utilize a structured teaching curriculum and trained leaders (counselors) who facilitate the groups. While not always necessary, it is wise to allow the counseling ministries’ trained counselors to facilitate and teach these groups when possible. This allows the counseling ministry to keep its finger on the pulse of the support group ministry.

¹⁶ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 396.

¹⁷ For an analysis of various counseling ministry approaches see appendix 9.

¹⁸ Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 68.

Counselor Qualifications

Documenting qualifications for counselors will help ensure consistent counseling practice. The church has a fundamental duty to guide people to lives of gospel transformation. They are likewise called to care for people by providing biblical discipleship and encouragement as they live out their faith (Eph 4:11-16). The path to maturity is often steep, rough, and at times filled with pain and confusion that requires a listening, prayerful ear, and the wisdom of God's Word. Biblical counselors also trust that the Bible is God's all-sufficient guide for relational living.

A determination will need to be made as to the general and specific qualifications needed to serve as a biblical counselor. First and foremost, biblical counselors must foundationally and theologically affirm 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 Tim 3:16-17). Consequently, biblical counselors are to be committed to providing scriptural counsel guided by the Holy Spirit and according to God's Word, which serves as the final authority in counseling. Beyond this, a responsible church will develop formal qualification and certification standards by which counselors are approved to serve.

These qualifications should be developed, adopted, and followed to protect the integrity of the counseling ministry. The task of the church leadership is to equip biblical counselors to minister to the people of God with grace and truth. The Bible calls elders and pastors to appoint counselors who are believers that will give account for the souls entrusted to their care (1 Pet 5:1-3, Acts 20:20, Col 1:28-29, Heb 13:17). They compassionately care for people struggling with sin and experiencing various struggles in their lives. The biblical counselor is called to disciple counselees to maturity in Christ. The biblical counselor has a distinct call and gifting to the ministry of soul care. Several distinctions help to identify and develop a fully equipped and qualified counselor.

First, the counseling ministry staff must be comprised of covenant members who are familiar with the church's core beliefs and core values. They should know the DNA

of the church and how the systems of the church function. As a bonus, those who are covenant members have already been through a screening process of sorts. They have been through a process of affirming their salvation, baptism experience, doctrinal beliefs, and have signed a covenant that includes an agreement with a basic set of membership distinctives held by the church.

One aspect of a covenant membership agreement may be as simple as the church's statement on cohabitation, as well it may be as complex as where the church stands in terms of the use of certain charismatic gifts. Likewise, since one of the primary tasks of a healthy counseling ministry is to connect people to the work and people of the church, it is beneficial that those who serve as counselors are familiar with the people and ministries of the church. They should know the pastors, small groups leaders, deacons, programs, and processes the church employs. Counselors who are engaged church members can point people to healthy engagement as well.

For counseling to be genuinely effective, counselors must have an authentic relationship with Christ, live in fellowship with Him, and seek God's will through His Word. It is risky at best to have a general call among members to enlist counselors. Churches will likely find that people who are called to do a specific thing are already actively pursuing and practicing it at some level. Kellemen advises on avoiding two extremes in recruiting for the counseling ministry:

During the selection phase, seek to avoid ditches or extremes on either side of the enlisting process. One ditch to avoid is accepting anybody and everybody into your training. . . . The other extreme to avoid is accepting only those people who are 100 percent ready. There's no such person—including you and me. Think about the imperfections of each of the twelve disciples Jesus called. The enlisting process is about selecting people with a maturing level of commitment to Christ, commitment to the body of Christ, and growth in Christ and then scouting out whether their heart passion matches the passion of your ministry.¹⁹

Often, it is best to recruit counselors from among the high capacity, trusted, and proven volunteers serving in the church. Many times, these folks are already involved

¹⁹ Kellemen, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, 162.

in ministries in which encouragement and counseling are part of their ministry. Indeed, qualified counseling candidates can often be discovered among deacons, small group leaders, women's and men's group leaders, support group personnel, children and student ministry leaders, and other high-capacity volunteers.

Biblical counselors are committed to learning and growing in the task of counseling. They are foremost people of the Bible. They desire to know the Word of God and how to help others apply that fully sufficient Word to the struggles they face. They are evangelistically minded and know how to guide a person to trust Christ and come unto salvation. They are theologically knowledgeable to help others understand and apply the truths of Scripture. They are people of prayer, dependent on God and in communion with him. Their lives are marked by praying continually for the daily wisdom to counsel others and for the Holy Spirit to guide both them and their counselee in spirit and truth as they journey together through difficult times.

Biblical counselors are ideally engaged in the small group ministry of the church. They have a practice and habit of gathering with the church in community to give and receive encouragement, to support one another, to sacrificially care for one another, to share meals in fellowship, to give strength to one another as they overcome the struggles of this life. The counselor who is engaged in the group ministry of the local church sends a message to their counselee about the importance of being connected to other Christians. Christians bear one another's burdens as they invest in a nurturing and caring body of believers.

Biblical counselors have a desire to grow in the knowledge of competent biblical counseling and take opportunities afforded to them to seek certifications and certificates designed to further equip them in the work of counseling. They seek to grow through taking courses, working toward degrees, attending seminars, and keeping close relationships with fellow counselors who sharpen them in the task of counseling. It may not be necessary to state the obvious, but biblical counselors love people. They love them

where they are with high hope to help bring them to where God ultimately wants them to be. That love is expressed through kindness, compassion, grace, and empathy. However, that same love is expressed through truth-speaking, admonishing, rebuking, and enacting discipline in love.

Additional qualifying characteristics of selecting counselors may include spiritual maturity, psychological/emotional stability, love for and interest in people, appropriate spiritual gifts such as exhortation or encouragement, adequate life experience, availability, teachability, and previous training or experience in lay counseling or people helping (helpful but not necessary). Initial counselors will need to come from a diversity of ages and seasons of life; they should have adequate age, gender, socioeconomic, and ethnic/cultural diversity relevant to the needs of the church. They should certainly be people who are above reproach in their ability to keep confidentiality (understanding limits of confidentiality concerning child abuse or elder abuse and danger to self or others).

This project does not intend to specifically prescribe every qualification of a biblical counselor, yet each local ministry of counseling must decide and implement a standard by which counselors are measured and approved to render service. Most of the previously listed qualifications deal generally with the characteristics of a competent counselor. Beyond the foundational requirements, each ministry must determine to what extent a counselor will need to complete specific training and certifications to serve.

A Documented Certification Process

A call to do the work of the ministry is a call to prepare. Counseling ministries should not negate a systematic and responsible approach to discover, develop, and deploy God's called out and gifted counselors to do the work of counseling. The counseling ministry is to develop an initial and ongoing set of basic training requirements expected of the various levels of counseling provided. The training program should contain an ongoing support system for counselors, along with a strong continuing education program to ensure counselors are always growing. Of course, counselor candidates should

complete an initial interview process that includes a conversation to assess basic Bible knowledge concerning the practice of biblical counseling (what is biblical counseling?). Other foundational skills include explaining confidentiality, hearing a salvation story, listening skills, problem determination, providing scriptural encouragement, and assigning homework. Moving forward, a more in-depth training program should contain advanced knowledge of biblical counseling methods and skills.

Counselor candidates also benefit greatly from opportunities to practice counseling through role-playing opportunities during their initial training. Counselors will benefit from a basic understanding of counseling techniques, as well as knowledge of biblical interventions. At a minimum, counselors should have some training to biblically respond to some of the more common presenting issues such as depression, anxiety, life stress, and various spiritual battles. Counselors must have an awareness of ethical boundaries and potential dangers such as complex trauma, suicidality, homicidal threats, and childhood abuse. A procedure for certification includes providing a thorough knowledge of protocols for reporting incidents to supervision, church leadership, and protocols for reporting to law enforcement or child protective services when legal and ethical issues arise. Counselors should also know when to refer for problems outside of the scope of their abilities to more appropriate counselors who may have specialized training in certain areas.

It would be a good practice to develop and maintain a profile for each counselor. Counselors' profiles would include basic demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, email, phone, etc. This profile would likely include more specific data concerning skills, experience, training, and spiritual disciplines. It is a good practice to inventory things such as availability and preference for certain presenting issues or counselee types. Profiles will also help the administrative staff assign counselees to counselors who will likely best meet their needs.

In terms of a gender boundary is it wise under most circumstances for women to meet with women and men to meet with men. If the counseling ministry chooses to employ a gender boundary, then it may be practiced with limited flexibility to accommodate separate sessions. Great care should always be taken to protect the counselor and counselee from risk or appearance of impropriety. Married couples should meet with either a male counselor or a counseling couple where combined and individual sessions may be utilized.

Supervising Counselors

Adequately trained, educated, and otherwise qualified supervisory staff should be available to counselors. In addition, a structured model of supervision is necessary during the early period for a newly practicing counselor. Ongoing requirements for supervisory oversight will evolve, sometimes increasing or decreasing to ensure the counselors' needs are adequately addressed. As a rule, counselors who are less experienced, have a higher caseload, or meet with counsees who present with more severe issues, will typically have a higher level of supervision. Individual and group supervision is recommended.

Group supervision is a great opportunity for counselors to grow in relationship with each other as well as grow through the support of other counselors. During group, it is recommended that a few selected counselors present cases (with confidentiality) as they share their successes and struggles. Other counselors can help provide biblical insights, encouragement, and support to the presenting counselor. This time is invaluable for growth as a counselor and the growth of the overall counseling ministry.

Individual supervisory sessions are one-on-one sessions between counseling staff leadership and the individual counselors. This supervision time is certainly used for individual counselee case consultation, but also provides a time for the leadership to stay connected to each counselor ensuring good self-care. This time also provides a great opportunity to check in on the spiritual health of each counselor. Both the group and

individual supervision should be scheduled and documented as a means of protecting the integrity of the overall counseling ministry.

Conclusion

Articulating a theological foundation and developing governing policies and procedures for counseling will help ensure a consistent and Christ-centered ministry of counseling. By having documented belief statements, policies, and procedures, the counseling ministry states with clarification both the theological and administrative expectations of a biblical counselor. Likewise, a policy and procedures manual gives the counselee a certain level of confidence in receiving biblical counsel. These policies and procedures will likely be refined, improved, corrected, and updated over time, as they are imperfect. Yet, not having them at all certainly runs the risk of having counselors not formally held to an agreed to standard of conduct. Previously church supported, community-based counseling centers have failed to make definitive statements concerning these very important matters of beliefs, policies, and procedures. It then proves to be difficult to enforce what was once expected but never formally documented or communicated. A counseling manual helps guard against that error and protect the ministry of biblical counseling in the local church.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT

This chapter describes the progression of the project and offers a detailed account of the four project goals and their results. It further examines each of the policies and procedures developed for inclusion in the biblical counseling manual. The purpose of this project was to establish a manual to guide the biblical counseling ministry of New Vision Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The project had four goals: (1) to appoint a steering committee to oversee the creation and approval of a biblical counseling ministry manual. (2) to develop an inventory of belief statements, policies, and procedures required to effectively administer the Biblical counseling ministry; (3) to write governing belief statements, policies, and procedures to administer the biblical counseling ministry; and (4) to gain final approval of the Biblical counseling ministry manual by executive church leadership of NVBC. Implementation of the project began with the recruitment and appointment of a steering committee on February 22, 2021, and continued for fifteen weeks through June 7, 2021, when the counseling manual was approved and published.

Summary of Project Goals

Four goals were essential to develop, implement, and assess the project.

Goal 1 Results

The first goal was to appoint a steering committee to oversee the creation and approval of a biblical counseling ministry manual for NVBC. The steering committee was comprised of a chair, and four additional members—a member of the NVBC executive leadership team, the NVBC director of counseling, and two NVBC counselors. This goal was measured by qualifying committee members based on the selection guide that defined

the criteria. Each committee member met a minimum of three of the four criteria. This goal was considered successful once the steering committee was in place and committed to oversee the process. Each committee member signed the agreement to participate that defined expectations.

The selection process for the steering committee began the third week of February 2021, and was conducted according to the predefined criteria laid out in the initial project proposal. Candidates were evaluated and selected based on meeting the qualifications described in the research methodology section of chapter 1 and prospective committee members were required to meet three of the four criteria laid out in the Committee Member Selection Guide.¹

The steering committee participants were (1) the Senior Associate Pastor and Director of the Care Ministry of NVBC; (2) the administrative secretary and intake coordinator for the Care Ministry of NVBC; and (3) both a senior male and female biblical counselor of the NVBC Care Ministry. These individuals and I, as the current Assistant Director and Counseling Pastor of NVBC, comprised the steering committee.

Each person who met the criteria was invited to participate after they agreed to the guidelines outlined in the commitment to serve.² All who were invited to participate agreed to do so. Those who agreed to participate were required to sign and date the Committee Member Agreement to Participate.³ The steering committee was formed and in place by week two which was March 1, 2021. Table 1 shows the four criteria by which

¹ See appendix 1.

² Prospective committee members were asked to agree to the following commitments: (1) To serve on the steering committee for approximately one year or until successful completion of the project. (2) To make every effort to meet on a published schedule with the steering committee, with meetings lasting approximately 60-90 minutes to dialogue over the content of the proposed policies and procedures. (Meetings may be accomplished using virtual meetings through a platform such as Zoom). (3) Commit to confidentiality concerning ongoing dialogue as policies and procedures are developed and approved. (4) Contribute to a climate of honesty, trust, and personal vulnerability in a spirit of mutual upbuilding to support the completion of the project.

³ See appendix 2.

candidates were qualified to serve. Candidates were required to meet three of the four criteria.

Table 1. Qualification criteria

Committee Members	Covenant member of NVBC	ACBC Phase 1 completion (or equivalent)	Minimum two years' service in a biblical counseling setting.	Graduate degree in theological or counseling discipline.
Committee Member 1 (Asst. Director)	X	X	X	X
Committee Member 2 (Director)	X	X	X	X
Committee Member 3 (Admin)	X	X	X	
Committee Member 4 (Counselor)	X	X	X	X
Committee Member 5 (Counselor)	X	X	X	

Goal 2 Results

The second goal was to develop an inventory of policies and procedures required to administer the biblical counseling ministry of NVBC. As chair of the steering committee, I drew upon resources of other established biblical counseling ministries manuals, state and local laws, and current church policies and procedures, to develop potential policies and procedures. This goal was measured by a scoring guide used to determine if the policy or procedure would be further developed for inclusion in the manual. This goal was considered successfully met when there was a list of policies and procedures identified for inclusion in the finished manual.

Policies and procedures were drawn from several sources, including current practice (unapproved procedures), recommendations from counselors based on needed direction, books and publications, examples of best practices of other respected and established Biblical counseling ministries.⁴

⁴ Biblical counseling manuals were obtained from Faith Biblical Counseling Ministry (Rob Green) and RPM Ministries (Bob Kellemen).

The steering committee agreed that the manual produced would be more administrative in nature, to help guide the practice of counseling and contain policies and procedures needed to administer and oversee the program. Therefore, while some policies approached counseling philosophy on topics such as the role of Scripture and the role of medicine, in general policies that addressed specific counseling methods or topics were not included.

The initial list of suggested procedures was distributed to the steering committee for review and discussion. The list was evaluated by committee members and recommendation for additions and deletions were considered. An initial draft of fifteen policies and procedures were recommended. During the approval process, the team determined that a procedure addressing work with children of divorced and separated parents would be beneficial. Past counseling history showed these cases to be among the most problematic, so the team agreed to add a policy to the manual addressing these cases. Once the list was discussed and agreed upon, each member signed the document approval sheet designating the policies and procedures to be developed for the initial release of the biblical counseling manual.⁵

Goal 3 Results

The third goal was to write governing policies and procedures as identified in goal 2. This goal was measured by a timeline for completion and the creation and adoption of each of those agreed upon in goal 2. This goal was considered successfully completed when each of the policies and procedures were written on a policy and procedure template and then approved by steering committee signature.

This goal was by far was the most detailed portion of the project. To begin, a numbering system and template for the policies was established. Each policy was drafted for review by the steering committee and then, based on feedback, the policies and

⁵ See appendix 7.

procedures were refined until all committee members agreed with the policy. Adobe Sign was used to collaborate on suggested edits of the policies since this tool allowed committee members to simultaneously make and respond to team member recommendations.

Following is the purpose statements and a basic description of the general information contained in each of the sixteen policies and procedures discussed by the team and developed for inclusion in the manual. The overall list was not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive, but a starting point for establishing an initial biblical counseling manual. Some policies were as brief as one page, while other comprised many pages to communicate the policy and/or procedure.

NVCM.001 “Requests for Counseling” was written to outline the process and procedure for requesting counseling and how that request is processed to ensure timely follow-up and care of the counselee. This policy attempts to outline the process a counselee will follow to request counseling from the New Vision counseling ministry. Covered in the policy is a description of the electronic request system, which can be accessed primarily from the New Vision care ministry page.

Even when persons call the church to connect to the care ministry, requests for counseling are routed through the web-based request system located at www.newvisionlife.com/care. By using the web-based request system, the counseling ministry can gather the pertinent data needed for connecting the counselee to the appropriate counselor. The request provides information such as limits of confidentiality and how to receive immediate emergency care.

NVCM.002 “Limits of Confidentiality” was written to convey both the legal and internal (biblical) limits of confidentiality, and to present the NVBC informed consent to counselees. Limits of confidentiality, in terms of reporting the knowledge of certain types of actual or intended harm is an important legal matter and each counselor will be trained to understand and communicate this policy. The steering committee found it

necessary as well to communicate to counselees that complete confidentiality in biblical counseling is not scriptural. The committee decided to include in the confidentially disclosure that covenant church members of New Vision who are found to be in open rebellion and unrepentant sin will be lovingly and compassionately counseled in a biblical manner, which may include discussion with church leadership.

It was further noted that if the church leaders inquire about the status of a counselee due to concerns about the counselees fitness to serve in ministry, the biblical counseling director will disclose to them the information necessary to effectively and biblically fulfill their shepherding responsibility. Confidentiality would always remain within the smallest level of church leadership as deemed appropriate. When counseling involves church discipline, then the intent and goal are always restoration of the church member.

NVCM.003 “Protocol for Suicidality” was written to provide a protocol for responding to counselees who present with suicidal ideation and threats to harm self. It includes both legal requirements and internal notification procedures. The counseling ministry considered it responsible and necessary to have a documented protocol for working with suicidal and self-harm counselees.

The policy had three basic considerations. The first reminder was to take every threat seriously and to ask appropriate questions if one suspects self-harm. The second was to ensure counselors offering to get the counselee the appropriate help. Third, it is required that the counselor quickly notify the appropriate Care Ministry staff.

NVCM.004 “Building Safety and Room Usage” was written to provide building use policies and guidelines for reserving and using the designated confidential counseling space. It also covers the procedure for requesting a room. This policy was written to ensure that counselors have adequate reserved and safe space to conduct counseling sessions. The procedure outlined the basic expectations of room usage and included a detailed explanation of how to reserve a room. A databased room reservation system was created

which counselors utilize to request and reserve counseling rooms. The policy further explains what resources are provided and how to obtain additional resources if needed to meet a specific counseling situation.

NVCM.005 “Session Fees and Donations” was written to establish the donation structure for counseling, how to make donations, and the counselee’s right under these policies. This policy covers the procedure for communicating the donation-based counseling service provided by the care ministry. It explains the donation structure and emphasizes that, while donations are encouraged, giving a monetary donation truly is a voluntary decision. This means that counselees are requested to consider a donation; however, counselors further stress that the care of the counselee is of primary importance and the ministry will neither refuse nor stop counseling based on the counselee’s decision to donate. Counselors simply ask counselees to consider a donation prayerfully as a means of investing in their care specifically and the counseling ministry in general.

The policy also covers specialized services and resources where a fee may be required. This includes resources for counseling and programs such as premarital counseling. The policy states that the preferred means of collection of donations and fees is through the electronic payment system which provides necessary accounting such as receipts reports and documentation of the transaction. The procedure covers how to alternatively accept direct payments of cash or checks and how to turn those in to the accounting office.

NVCM.006 “Counselor Compensation” was written to cover the pay structure for counselors and the step increases defined to determine hourly compensation. It covers the process to submit counseling session hours. The care ministry is led by a team of well-trained and qualified biblical counselors who are compensated for their work in counseling. This policy and procedure communicate the approved pay scale for counselor compensation. All session time will be compensated in fifteen-minute increments. While it is understood that counselors will spend additional time in preparation for working with

a counselee, scheduling, note taking, and session planning, only face-to-face time is considered as the billable portion of time for working with a counselee. The care administrative team approved the initial minimum entry level pay which then increases in \$5 per hour increments based on certain accomplishments in training, education, certifications, and length of service.

Payments for counseling hours are paid out monthly and are processed the first week of the new month. For example, March session work is paid out the first week of April. Exceptions may apply for holidays and under other special circumstances. Counselors should track their hours and ensure the paid hours match the hours they provided. Any discrepancies should be brought to the attention of care ministry administrative team for adjustments.

NVCM.007 “Counselor Qualifications and Certification” was written to establish the initial qualifications required to serve as a NVBC biblical counselor. It covers additional training paths for growth and development as a counselor. The steering committee determined that a procedure outlining the general and specific qualifications required to serve as a New Vision Biblical counselor should be documented to ensure counselors meet a predefined set of training qualifications. Several general qualifications were agreed upon for this policy:

1. Counselors were to be covenant members New Vision Baptist Church who are therefore familiar with the church’s core beliefs and core values. As covenant members, counselors have already been through a process of affirming their salvation, baptism experience, doctrinal beliefs, and have signed a covenant that includes agreement with a basic set of membership distinctives held by the church.
2. New Vision Biblical counselors, by personal conviction, subscribe to operate, adhere, and teach in accordance to the beliefs and doctrinal statements laid forth in the NVCM.000 Belief Statement (BF&M 2000).
3. New Vision Biblical counselors subscribe to the sufficiency of Scripture in counseling. They foundationally and theologically affirm that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Biblical counselors are to be committed to providing scriptural counsel guided by the Holy Spirit and according to God’s Word, which serves as the final authority in counseling.

4. Since one of the primary tasks of a healthy counseling ministry is to connect people to the work and people of the church, it was determined that those who serve as counselors should be familiar with the people and ministries of the church. They ideally would know the pastors, small groups leaders, deacons, programs, and processes which the church employs.

Next, a formal qualification and certification process was outlined for counseling candidates. This policy defines the initial qualifications and two additional phases of training to be encouraged and supported by the counseling ministry, but completed at the discretion of the counselor. It is also important that counselors are aware of ethical boundaries and potential risks involving counselees who present with complex trauma, suicidality, homicidal threats, and childhood abuse. This procedure includes requiring a thorough knowledge of protocols for reporting incidents to supervision and church leadership when legal and ethical issues arise. Counselors should know when to refer for problems outside of the scope of their abilities to more appropriate counselors who may have specialized training in certain areas.

A skills and training profile for each counselor is maintained to include basic demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, email, phone, etc. These profiles include more specific data concerning skills, experience, training, and spiritual disciplines. Finally, the procedure states the care ministries' gender boundary—men meet with men and women meet with women. This policy is enforced with limited flexibility. Married couples could meet with a counselor of either gender, and at times a limited number of individual sessions would be allowed, but that would be an exception permitted under special circumstances. Great care would be taken to protect the counselor and counselee from risk of (or even appearance of) impropriety.

NVCM.008 "Supervision of Counselors" was written to establish the schedule and expectations for supervision of counselors. This procedure includes guidelines for individual and group supervision (training) initiatives. It was agreed that the counseling administrative team would maintain a program of supervision to provide training, extend encouragement, foster growth, and create a system of accountability to the counselors. Administrative staff who are adequately trained, educated, and otherwise qualified will

conduct oversight and supervision of the counseling staff. Care ministry leaders would make themselves available to the counselors during and after hours in emergencies. Both group and individual supervision would be scheduled and documented as a means of protecting the integrity of the overall counseling ministry.

Individual supervision would consist of one-on-one sessions between counseling staff leadership and individual counselors. Individual supervision time includes counselee case consultation and provides an opportunity for the care ministry leadership team to stay connected to counselors. This time also provides space to check in on the spiritual health of each counselor and ensures good counselor self-care is taking place. Group supervision would provide an ongoing opportunity for counselors to grow in relationship with each other as well as grow through support of other counselors. Group supervision typically would involve a time devoted to training counselors in skills and administrative requirements. The time would also be used to celebrate accomplishment and share encouragement of growth areas and ongoing needs.

NVCM.009 “Number and Length of Sessions” was written to communicate the philosophy of counseling practiced by counselors, who are expected to adhere to a prescribed number and length of sessions. The committee was tasked to evaluate many models that employ varying commitments to the number and length of counseling provided. The decision was made to offer short-term counseling care. Under most circumstances counselees would meet with a counselor between three to eight sessions, which would be one hour in length. Counseling work beyond twelve sessions must be presented to a supervisor for review. Additional session would be approved by the counseling director on a case-by-case basis. At times, a counselee might possibly be asked to speak with the counseling director, assigned additional responsibilities, or possibly assigned a new counselor.

NVCM.010 “Care Groups and Group Counseling” was written to present the ongoing ministry of group counseling (CareGroups) that are maintained both as a

preventive measure and to provide healthy next steps for counselees. Care Groups are effective both as a preventive measure for counseling and as healthy next steps of engagement in a post counseling relationship. New Vision Care Groups provide gospel-centered support groups with resources and choices that help people learn to apply God's truths to certain struggles. Care groups are a vital part of the care ministry and are typically offered in periodic cycles. Classes are free for attendees except for required resources such as workbooks or other learning resources. Care groups bring people together who are going through a similar life struggle as they join with others on a to provide care and support for one another. Group participants are disciplined through supportive, accountable relationships, and learn through gospel-centered lessons designed specifically to minister to the struggles the members hold in common.

New Vision care groups typically meet for six to twelve weeks following a curriculum-based study. While new classes are constantly being evaluated and introduced, offerings such as DivorceCare, GriefShare, Parenting, Premarital, Peacemaking, Financial Stewardship, Caregiving, etc., are ongoing offerings that typically have a spring (January) and fall (August) cycle. The current offering of care groups are available for review at <https://nvbccaregroups.com/>.

Classes are led by trained and qualified instructors. While many of the groups offered are led by biblical counselors, some are led by qualified lay members with expertise and experience in the respective theme of the care group. Biblical counselors are encouraged to lead care groups surrounding presenting issues in which they have interest and expertise. While some counselors choose to lead classes as a personal stewardship, they are offered compensation at their hourly rate of contract counseling for leading a group.

NVCM.011 "The Role of Scripture" was written to outline the role of Scripture in counseling. It conveys a basic definition of biblical counseling as it declares God's Word to be both sufficient and the final authority for the care of God's people.

NVCM.012 “The Role of Medicine” was written to define the counseling ministries’ stance on giving a counselee advice in starting, stopping, or adjusting prescribed psychotropic drugs. Counselees are encouraged to speak only to a medical professional for advice regarding use of their prescription medications. The Bible teaches that God created man in a way that intricately connects physical and spiritual issues. Mental and emotional disorders, though popularly seen as being treatable by drugs, have a spiritual component that ought not to be neglected as at least part of the solution.

Taking all concerns into account, it is the counseling ministries belief and stance that any decision to use psychotropic drugs is between the patient and their doctor. The biblical counselor may routinely recommend a medical exam to help determine if there is a physiological cause, but counselors always refer counselees to medical professionals for advice regarding any use or management of prescription medications.

Furthermore, biblical counselors do not judge a person based on their use of drugs and a counselee should not judge the counselor based on their concern about the use of drugs. The primary interest is to address the spiritual concerns of responsibility for behavior and attitudes concerning God and His Word. Application of God’s Word can accomplish changes in ways that medication cannot. It should be natural for a sincere Christian to seek the help and counsel of other believers for mature, biblical insight and spiritual growth in their emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. The counseling ministries’ passion is to help people live to the glory of God.⁶

Rarely, if ever, does taking medication interfere with the counselor’s ability to counsel. The counseling ministries’ goal in counseling those taking medication is the same as the counselor’s goal for counseling anyone—to help the counselee come to a place where they want to glorify God with their life (2 Cor 5:9). At times, a counselee might ask the counselor directly if they can stop taking their medication. Counselors are

⁶ This policy was heavily influenced by the Summary Statement on Medications written by Faith Bible Church in Sharpsburg, Georgia. The Faith policy is located at <http://faithbiblechurch.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/FBCC-Summary-Statement-on-Medications.pdf>.

instructed to seek to learn their reasons for wanting to stop as it may give further insight in providing spiritual counsel. However, even if the counselor or the counselee has become convinced the counselee has replaced the use of medication with the practice of applying biblical principles, the counselor will encourage the counselee to go back to the physician who started them on medication before making any decision to start, stop, or adjust prescribed medication.

NVCM.013 “Children of Separated/Divorced Parents” was written to communicate what is required for the counselor to work with a child(ren) with separated or divorced parents. The counselor adheres to this policy to ensure that the best interests of the child are addressed in the counseling process. The agreement for counseling children of parents of separated and divorced parents covers caring for the child(ren), communication guidelines, scheduling sessions, and the counseling ministries stance toward legal proceedings.

NVCM.014 “Permission to Record” was written to outline the process to obtain approval for permission to procure an audio or video recording of a counseling session. At times, recordings are used to aid the counseling process and to gain further understanding of important aspects of counseling. Counselors would discuss the procedure to record with the counselee, including the counseling center/church’s policy on confidentiality. Counsees are informed that names and identity would not be associated with any recordings, nor will a facial image be seen, and the recording would not go beyond those directly involved with the case or the review of the case for learning purposes. Permission to record shall be obtained before recording any portion of a counseling session. A refusal to sign the form will not affect the counsees eligibility to receive biblical counseling services.

NVCM.015 “Authorization for Release of Information” outlines the process of obtaining authorization to share or obtain confidential information with other individuals invested in the care and counseling of the counselee. At times, the counselor will be called

upon to release confidential information and the counselee is to be informed that records are protected under the Federal and State Confidentiality Regulations and cannot be released without the counselee's written consent. Counselees are to understand they have full freedom to revoke the consent at any time unless action has already been taken based upon it and that in any event this consent expires automatically as described next.

NVCM.016 "Data Security and Records Retention" was written to set the rules and procedure designed to protect the confidentiality of counselee information. It further defines the procedures for retention, storage, and disposal of records and data. This policy directs New Vision Care Ministry counselors to be responsible for ensuring that records are created, used, maintained, preserved, and destroyed per a written data security policy. Counselors shall be encouraged to keep session records electronically when possible. All other printed notes, documents, and assessments produced concerning confidential counselee information will be stored in locked filing cabinets when not in use.

Goal 4 Results

The fourth goal was to gain approval from the NVBC executive church leadership team for the completed manual. The steering committee distributed a draft manual for the team to review and revise. The steering committee incorporated requested changes until approval was granted. Once the manual was approved, it was published and distributed to pastoral staff, counseling supervisory staff, and biblical counselors. This goal was measured by a timeline for completion. This goal was considered successfully completed when the policies and procedures were approved by the executive leadership team and distributed to relevant personnel.

The manual was distributed on May 20, 2021, to the executive leadership team for review and approval. Executive leadership was asked to review and evaluate the manual for one week and to then provide feedback. In most all cases, the feedback referenced grammatical issues concerning the written procedures rather than changes to the policy matters. The executive team met collaboratively with the chairman to make final

recommendations for the manual and, having no further corrections or additions, each signed off on their approval of the manual, concluding on May 26, 2021. The completed manual was printed and prepared for electronic and hard copy distribution on June 7, 2021.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter assesses the project by evaluating its purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. I then provide recommendations for future changes to maximize potential ministry impact. Finally, I offer theological and personal reflections on my experience with this endeavor.

Evaluation of Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to establish a manual to guide the biblical counseling ministry of New Vision Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The purpose was in part born out of a need to protect the integrity of the newly established biblical counseling program at New Vision. The leadership staff trusted that a biblical counseling manual would guide training of counselors and guide the overall ministry of counseling at New Vision.

Previously, the church developed and supported an integrated counseling center that had little or no documented rules or procedures for guiding the ministry. Over time, the ministry left some of the core biblical and theological convictions with which it had started. This deterioration and drift was due to several reasons, but lack of clearly stated beliefs, policies, and procedures which defined the ministry were certainly void. This project's purpose was also born out of a desire to ensure that the newly chosen path to biblical counseling was centered on the centrality of Scripture, and that would be communicated to current and future counselors who would be serving in the counseling ministry.

Evaluation of Project Goals

The project goals were well-aligned with the project purpose and proved effective in developing a manual designed to administer the biblical counseling ministry at New Vision Baptist Church. The goals were designed to produce a process that intentionally utilized a team of experienced and invested personnel from counseling ministry to propose, draft, and review the policies and procedures to protect the integrity of the counseling ministry. The project was also designed to ensure the relevant church leadership would review and give final approval to the manual before its publication.

Goal 1 Evaluation

The first goal was to appoint a steering committee to oversee the creation and approval of a biblical counseling ministry manual for NVBC. A set of criteria was developed to qualify steering committee members. The process of selecting members went well as the five members of the committee who were asked to participate, agreed to do so. Each prospective member who was asked to participate met a minimum of four of the five criteria. The committee members had all served in the counseling ministry for a minimum of two years. Four of the five members were there from the very start of the biblical counseling ministry. Among the five members, three held advanced degrees in theology and counseling disciplines.

Thankfully, each participant was able to fully participate and see to the completion of the entire project implementation process. Each team member completed the project despite the challenges of COVID-19 that forced much of the collaboration to virtual engagement through video-based meetings and document control software. Upon the selection and signed agreement to participate on the steering committee, the first goal was considered successfully met.

Goal 2 Evaluation

The second goal of the project was to develop an inventory of policies and procedures required to administer the biblical counseling ministry. The committee first

produced and then collaborated on an initial list of policies and procedures to be included in the first manual. The team agreed that the policies and procedure included in the manual would be more directly related to administrative tasks and less focused on counseling philosophy. It was also agreed that outside of safety issues addressing suicidality and medication, the manual would not address specific counseling topics or how to bring counsel concerning those topics. The second goal was considered successfully completed once each member signed the document approval sheet designating the policies and procedures to be developed for the initial release of the biblical counseling manual.

Goal 3 Evaluation

The third goal was to write governing policies and procedures as identified in goal 2. This proved to be the most detailed portion of the project as each policy was drafted for review and then the team collaborated to discuss edits and improvements to the policies and procedures. Once all committee members agreed with the content of a policy or procedure, the team would sign off on the approval. Adobe Sign proved to be an invaluable tool in the process as it allows committee members to mark up and make suggestions in real time while refining the policies and procedures.

At times, policies were approved with little to no revision since some were procedural and simply documented a process as it currently operated. Other procedures were more philosophical and more robust discussion surrounded the development and approval of the policy or procedure. Overall, steering committee members were responsive to suggestions and worked to get an approved procedure in each case. The sixteen identified policies and procedures were completely developed and in approved draft form within the timeframe allotted for development, review, edits, and approval.

Goal 4 Evaluation

The fourth goal was to gain final approval from the executive church leadership team for the completed manual. The executive leadership examined and reviewed the draft

manual for one week, and several provided feedback and made inquiries and suggestions for improvement on the manual. The majority of the feedback referenced grammatical issues that needed correction. Again, the executive leadership teams worked cooperatively despite the challenges imposed due to COVID-19 restrictions about team meetings. This goal was considered successfully completed when the manual was approved by the leadership team and distributed to intended individuals on May 26, 2021.

Evaluation of Project Strengths

The first strength of this project was its collaborative effort with a qualified team of church members who worked together to develop a list, drafted the policies and procedures, and then edited and approved them within the time scheduled to complete the project implementation. Several obstacles were overcome about local church COVID-19 restrictions placed on team meetings. The team used video and digital editing and approval software with great proficiency and went above and beyond in using technology while keeping the team safe. Due to the nature of the edit and approval software, any one team member who did not perform their assigned tasks could have easily delayed the project implementation, but that did not happen, as each team member responded in a fully expedient manner when drafting, developing, and approving the policies and procedures that would become the manual.

The second strength of this project was that, in addition to the steering committee, the church has an active team of eighteen biblical counselors who were cooperative in helping guide the development of the policies and procedures according to actual needs experienced in the counseling setting. Having an active working ministry meant that the steering committee did not have to develop policies and procedures based on theoretical beliefs or simply rely on others. The committee was able to directly collaborate and receive valuable “real life” input into the development of the manual.

The third strength of this project was that counselors began to see the immediate impact of the policies being developed as we started using some of the draft procedures

to conduct training and provide guidance to existing and new counselors. For example, once the draft for “the role of medicine” was completed, we used the information in the draft policy to teach counselors how to approach these sensitive issues with counselees.

Another vital strength of the project was the legitimization of the biblical counseling program as a vital part of the church programs and ministries. To have a counseling pastor who both entered a doctorate in counseling and then took up a project to create a manual that would guide the program gave confidence to staff and members that the counseling ministry was here to stay. During this same time, one of the counselors and steering committee members also completed his Doctor of Education Ministry in Biblical Counseling, completing a project on Christ-centered marriage counseling. Upon inquiry, no staff pastor in twenty-five years had completed a doctoral project with New Vision Church as its focus.

The final strength of this project was that it brought the church’s executive leadership team to a greater awareness of both the integrity and responsibility of the counseling ministry and the counselors who serve the ministry. The executive team before the transition from integrated to biblical counseling had lost some trust and respect for the counseling ministry. The completion of this project and the policies, procedures, and biblical stances taken help to solidify the ministry as one of true gospel transformation.

Evaluation of Project Weaknesses

There is no doubt a global pandemic COVID-19 presented a major obstacle to the project. There was a real fear present that at any time a committee member would contract COVID and result in their inability to complete the project. Additionally, the team was unable to conduct face-to-face team meetings which tend to be more collaborative. This was a complexity never even considered in project implementation planning. The steering committee did an amazing job overcoming the obstacles and by God’s grace every member remained healthy enough to participate through project completion.

An additional challenge was applying a process that would measure the successful completion of each goal. Since the overall goal was to produce a manual, the measurement was a completed manual. In many ways I struggled to find ways to measure the effectiveness of the project other than to have a finished and approved policy and procedures manual for use in the ministry. Measurement instruments were limited to qualification and criteria rubrics, documentation of steering committee policy and procedures approvals, and documentation of leadership review and approvals.

Proposed Project Changes

One possible change to the to the project would be to administer a pre- and post-survey to the counseling and executive leadership staff with questions about practices and their relevant unwritten policies and procedures. This pre and post survey should indicate the vital nature of having documented policies and procedures as it would likely indicate the uncertain nature and inconsistent understandings of many of the practices within the counseling ministry. The project would have benefited by enlisting the help of trusted colleagues from outside biblical counseling ministries to participate in the steering committee. This was considered initially and then I pulled back from that consideration after COVID concerns increased and put significant demands on a number of trusted ministry partners whom I would have chosen to participate. Having outside guidance and participation is generally helpful in providing an unbiased perspective that is hard to get when using only internal people.

Theological Reflections

It was refreshing to read and study the great advancement that has taken place in the world of biblical counseling in recent decades. So many have paved the path to a greater day for biblical counseling in the life of our church and our communities. There appear to be two primary stigmas in the world of biblical counseling at New Vision and I am sure at other churches as well. One is that we are not “professional counselors.” The

second is that Christians should not need counseling, as “counseling” is for secular individuals. The Bible is clear that biblical counseling is founded on a knowledge of God and the application of His Word, which serves as the all-sufficient means of caring for the non-physical needs of God’s people by God’s people. It is likewise clear that the knowledge of God is central to a philosophy of biblical counseling and 2 Peter 1:1-11 affirms that Christians may share in the divine nature of God so they might live gospel transformed lives. Second Timothy 3:10-17 also proclaims that the Word of God is sufficient for biblical counseling. Finally, the Bible affirms that the people of God are fully equipped to care for the non-physical needs of others. Romans 15:14-16 affirms that Christians are fully competent to counsel one another.

Personal Reflections

The ministry of biblical counseling is where my heart beats in ministry. I am passionate about creating and sustaining a ministry that will stand the test of time. Counseling in recent years has been stripped from its most appropriate place—within the life of the church. I am tremendously blessed to work with a team of counselors who sacrificially and faithfully love and care for God’s people with grace and truth as they minister God’s Word to them in their time of need.

As I entered this process of doctoral education, I am not convinced I knew what a challenge writing a paper would be for me. Writing is not a strength of mine. I have written numerous small papers, book reviews, position paper, etc., throughout my educational pursuits, but a full-blown project paper was new to me. Suffice it to say I do not consider myself a good writer, and even less of a grammarian. What attracted me to the doctoral program were two opportunities that God indeed blessed me with. The first was to study with and under some of the greatest biblical counseling scholars available in the discipline today. I was tremendously blessed to sit in seminars learning and gleaning from biblical counseling veterans whom I have deeply respected and admired for some time.

The second opportunity afforded to me was to work on a project that was not just theoretical or would one day possibly be helpful. My chosen project, while somewhat different than the average project, was practical for me. It was real time, in that producing the manual was born out of actual classroom learnings. It was also taking place in real time in that the church where I serve as the biblical counseling director and was transitioning to a new biblical counseling model. That transition to biblical counseling took place during the three years of my doctoral pursuit.

I am not done; I pray the Lord would give me another fifteen or more years of growing this ministry for His glory. One of my greatest fears was for the biblical counseling ministry to slowly drift away from the solid foundation on which many had labored to establish it. Creating a beliefs, policies, and procedures manual was a way to safeguard the ministry, and likewise helps the counseling ministry to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.

Conclusion

While this project succeeded in its stated purpose of providing a biblical counseling manual where none existed, the sincere hope is that over the years the manual will be continually improved. It is my further prayer that the commitment to develop this manual, through this project, would help protect and sustain a healthy counseling ministry that would outlive me and assist the next generation of biblical counselors at New Vision Church.

APPENDIX 1
COMMITTEE MEMBER SELECTION GUIDE

	Selection Criteria			
Committee Members	Covenant member of NVBC	ACBC Phase 1 completion (or equivalent)	Minimum two years' service in a biblical counseling setting.	Graduate degree in theological or counseling discipline.
Committee Member 1				
Committee Member 2				
Committee Member 3				
Committee Member 4				
Committee Member 5				
Committee Member 6				

APPENDIX 2

COMMITTEE MEMBER AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

Steering Committee
Committee

In order to support the project of establishing a Biblical counseling manual for the Counseling Ministry of New Vision Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, I hereby commit myself to the following agreements:

1. Serve on the steering committee for approximately one year or until successful completion of the project.
2. Make every effort to meet on a published bi-monthly schedule with the steering committee. Meetings will last approximately 60-90 minutes to dialogue over the content of the proposed policies and procedures. (Meetings may be accomplished by means of virtual meetings through a platform such as Zoom).
3. Commit to confidentiality concerning ongoing dialogue as policies and procedures are developed and approved.
4. Contribute to a climate of honesty, trust, and personal vulnerability in a spirit of mutual upbuilding to support the completion of the project.

_____ Date _____
Name of committee member

APPENDIX 3
POLICY AND PROCEDURE SCORING GUIDE

Policy and Procedure Scoring Guide				
	State Local Laws	Biblical commands and Statutes	Best Practices from research	Other Biblical Counseling Ministries
Statements & Policies				
Belief Statement				
Suicidality Protocol				
Counselee Responsibility				
Confidentiality				
The Role of Scripture				
The Role of Medicine				
Qualification of Counselors				
Counseling Fees				
Insurance				
Building Safety				
Advertising of Services				
Policy or Procedure				
Policy or Procedure				

APPENDIX 4

APPROVED LIST OF BELIEFS, POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES

Approved DOCUMENT LIST*	
Statements & Policies	Document Description
Doctrinal belief statement	
Intake forms and procedures	
Session fees/donations	
Counselor compensation	
Limits of confidentiality	
Protocol for suicidality	
Building Safety and Room Use	
Number and length of sessions	
Care groups and group counseling	
Counselor Qualifications & Certification	
Supervision of Counselors	
The Role of Scripture	
The Role of Medicine	
Additional Policies	

* DRAFT ITEMS The items on list will change according to the list designated by process of selection per the steering committee.

APPENDIX 5

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION SCHEDULE

APPROVAL SHEET FOR BELIEFS, POLICIES, And PROCEDURES.				
Steering Team Member	<i>Member 1</i>	<i>Member 2</i>	<i>Member 3</i>	<i>Member 4</i>
Statement or Police Name	Sign off = Initials / Date			
<i>Sample Document</i>	SR 10/21/2019			
<i>Belief Statement One</i>				
<i>Belief Statement Two</i>				
<i>Belief Statement Three</i>				
<i>Policy One</i>				
<i>Policy Two</i>				
<i>Policy Three</i>				
<i>Policy Four</i>				
<i>Policy Five</i>				

APPENDIX 6

POLICY/PROCEDURE TEMPLATE



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: Document Retention Policy
Revised Date: 01/01/2018

Effective Date: 01/01/2018
Approved by: Care Ministry Staff

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To establish the policy and procedures for secured document storage and record retention and destruction.

New Vision Care Ministry counselors and agents are responsible for ensuring that all records are created, used, maintained, preserved, and destroyed in accordance with this Document Retention Policy.

All documents concerning confidential counselee information should be stored in locked filing cabinets when not in use. This ensures they are controlled and protected, preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

Counsees records shall be maintained, submitted, and retained according to the following guidelines.

RECORDS RETENTION, PROTECTION, AND DISPOSAL:

Agreement to Counsel: All counsees are required to fill out a Consent to Counsel form before being seen. The original of this form shall be turned in for retention to the NVBC Care Ministry Office. Counselors may maintain a copy for their personal records if needed.

Personal Information Form (PIF): All counsees are required to fill out a Personal Data Inventory before being seen. The form shall be maintained by the respective counselor who agrees to store it in a locked filing cabinet when not in use to ensure it is controlled and protected, preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

Personal Counseling Notes: Counselors at their discretion may keep personal session notes which shall be maintained by the respective counselor who then agrees to store them in locked filing cabinets when not in use to ensure they are controlled and protected, preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

Completion of Counseling: Upon completion of care, the counselor returns the entire counselee file (with PDI, notes, and any extra resources used) to the NVBC Care

Ministry Office. Records are secured in locked filing cabinets for 3 years preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

3 years after completion of counseling all stored records will be properly disposed of through secure shredding.

APPENDIX 7
DOCUMENT APPROVAL SHEET

Read and Approved by:

Name of Committee

Name of Approval Document

Name of Committee Chairperson

Name of Committee Member

_____ Approval Date _____

Name of Committee Member

_____ Approval Date _____

Name of Committee Member

_____ Approval Date _____

Name of Committee Member

_____ Approval Date _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 8

BIBLICAL COUNSELING MANUAL

New Vision Care Ministry

Policy & Procedures Manual





NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.000 Doctrinal Belief Statement **Revised Date:** 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To provide a doctrinal belief statement that defines the doctrinal stances of NVBC Care ministry.

New Vision Counseling ministry adheres to doctrinal statement laid forth in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is understood that the statement is not exhaustive but rather summarizes the core doctrinal beliefs by which our counselors and the New Vision Counseling ministry affirms. The statement covers the core affirmations regarding the central doctrines of the Christian faith.

Statement Version Date:
Adopted, June 14th, 2000

Statement Electronic Location:
<https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/>

Document attached:
The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message

THE BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities

on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christian's ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and

benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christiandenominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: Doctrinal Statement

Approval Date: 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To provide a doctrinal belief statement that defines the Biblical counseling philosophy and doctrinal stances of NVBC Care ministry.

New Vision Counseling ministry adheres to The Doctrinal Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC). It is understood that the statement is not exhaustive but rather summarizes the core doctrinal beliefs by which our counselors and the New Vision Counseling ministry affirms. The statement covers the core affirmations regarding the central doctrines of the Christian faith.

Statement Version Date:

09/2019 BCC Doctrinal Statement

Statement Electronic Location:

https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/09/BCC_Doctrinal_Statement_Printable.pdf

Document attached:

The Doctrinal Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition

The following statement summarizes the core doctrinal beliefs of the Biblical Counseling Coalition. It is not an exhaustive statement, but a theological framework concerning our core affirmations regarding the central doctrines of the Christian faith.

About the Bible: We believe that God has given the Bible as His inspired, infallible, inerrant, and living revelatory Word. We affirm the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible and are therefore committed to the complete trustworthiness and primacy of Scripture. The Bible is God's relevant, profound, deeply personal communication to us that invites us to intimate fellowship with Him. The Scriptures consist of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. They are the totally sufficient, authoritative, and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine, and are profitable for glorifying God through growth in likeness to Christ which is our life purpose.

The Bible is complete in its revelation of Who God is, His person, character, promises, commandments, and will for the salvation of a people for His own possession. The Bible reveals who we are: created in God's image, accountable to God, fallen into sin against God, judged and justly condemned by God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and transformed by the Holy Spirit. The Bible reveals the meaning of our total life situation in each and all its aspects—all the blessings of this life, the variety of sufferings and hardships, Satan, the influence of other human beings, etc. The Bible also reveals the nature of the Christian life and the ministries of the Church, showing the content, the functions, and the goals that express the image of Christ.

About the Triune God: We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Who know, love, and glorify one another. They are forever equal, attributes, and perfection, yet forever distinct in Their relations to one another and distinct in Their particular relationships both to the creation and to the actions and processes of redemption. They are equally worthy of our worship, love, and obedience. This One true and living God is infinitely perfect both in His love and in His holiness. The Triune God, in affectionate sovereignty, sustains and rules over all things, providentially bringing about His eternal good purpose to redeem a people for Himself—to the praise of the glory of His grace.

About God the Father: We believe that God, as the Father, reigns over His entire universe with providential care, holy justice, and saving mercy, to His own glory. In His holy love, the Father is all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing, and all-wise. He is fatherly in attitude toward all men, but Father, indeed, to those who have been made children of God through salvation in Christ. **About God the Son, Jesus Christ:** We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, Who humbled Himself by taking on the form of a man by means of His virgin birth, becoming forever both fully human without ceasing to be fully God. We affirm that He lived a sinless life of active love and perfect wisdom. He died by crucifixion on the cross, by His shed blood and death making a vicarious, substitutionary atonement for our sins. After three days, He was resurrected bodily from the dead, unto an indestructible life. After appearing to His disciples and instructing them for forty days, He ascended to heaven. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for believers, reigning as King over all creation, and working in and through His Church. He will personally return in power and glory to judge the living and the dead, and to raise to immortality those who eagerly await Him, perfecting them in His image.

About God the Holy Spirit: We believe that God the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ, and to convict and draw sinners to Christ. From the moment of spiritual birth, He indwells believers, individually

and corporately, as their Helper. By the Spirit's agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God's family. He imparts new life to believers, placing them into the Body of Christ, transforming and empowering them for Christlike living, and sealing them until the day of redemption. He is the source of power for all acceptable worship and ministry as He imparts a diversity of enabling gifts that equip God's people for service. He provides the power to understand and apply God's truth in love.

About Humanity—Creation: We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, male and female, and declared them "very good," granting them all the capacities of image bearers. God created them to reflect and to enjoy His glory. They were created material and immaterial, physical body and spiritual soul, these qualities united and inseparably interdependent. They were created with a conscience able to discern good and evil; with the capacity to relate, think, choose, and feel in all the fruitfulness of wisdom. They were designed and commissioned to love God and one another, living in holy and devoted fellowship with God, and in loving, complementary relationship with each other. They were designed and commissioned to care for and govern His creation, working in and ruling over all creation as God's faithful servants and stewards.

About Humanity—Fall: We believe that because of voluntary sin against God, Adam and Eve fell from the actively good, sinless, and innocent state in which they were first created. They became self-willed, perverse, and transgressive against God and each other. Immediately they died spiritually and also began to die physically. Consequently, for them and all their progeny, the image of God was distorted and their nature depraved and corrupted in every aspect of their being (spiritually, socially, mentally, volitionally, and emotionally). While human beings are corrupted in every aspect of their being and functioning, because of God's common grace the image of God has not been totally eradicated, and evil is not given full reign. God preserves and enables many common goods. All people have true dignity, a conscience in which clarity coexists with distortion, and many powers of mind, action, and feeling. All humanity is separated and alienated from God and thus spiritually dead—until God's own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to God; and the only hope of all human beings is to receive the undeserved grace of God in Christ. God alone can rescue us and restore sinners to Himself.

About Salvation—Redemption: We believe that salvation is the gift of God by grace alone and is received through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is wholly conceived, accomplished, and applied by God's sovereign grace. It is not, in whole or in part, conceived or accomplished by human will or works. We believe that salvation refers comprehensively to the entire work of God that redeems His people from the penalty, power, and eventual presence of sin while imputing to His people the righteousness of Jesus Christ and all the benefits of adoption into His family. This salvation overthrows the dominion of darkness and creates a new people who enter Christ's Body of light, truth, and love.

We affirm that salvation is only through Christ, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Christ voluntarily took upon Himself the form of a man, was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, word, or deed. He honored the Divine Law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins. Jesus, having risen bodily from the dead, is now enthroned in Heaven serving as the suitable, compassionate, all-sufficient Savior and the Mediator for His believer-priests.

We believe that all the blessings of salvation are free gifts of God, and that each is a glorious facet of union with Christ. In Christ, persons once justly condemned are now forgiven and justified because Christ died bearing our sins, because He was raised for our

justification, and because God imputes to His people the righteousness of Jesus Christ. In Christ, persons once dead in trespasses and sins are now made spiritually alive in the new birth, receive the Holy Spirit, and receive eternal life. In Christ, persons whose father and master was the devil are now adopted by God the Father into His family, and become citizens and servants in God's kingdom. In Christ, persons who were estranged from God are now reconciled forever. God gives all these gifts, and more, by the Holy Spirit, and we receive all these gifts by faith.

We believe that by His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. On the cross He canceled sin, satisfied by His sacrifice the wrath of God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all who believe. We believe that by His resurrection, Christ Jesus was vindicated by His Father, broke the power of death, defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all His people. We believe that by His ascension, Jesus Christ has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with Him. We believe that at His return, Jesus Christ will wipe away all tears, will remove all sin and suffering, will establish forever His kingdom of love, joy and peace, and will perfect His holy Bride. We believe that all whom God regenerates are made at once children of God, justified in His sight through faith alone in Christ's atoning work, and brought into His family. We believe that believers are kept by the power of God through faith in a state of grace, and are eternally secure apart from any human works. We believe that we who are Christ's Body will see Him face to face, and that we will live with Him and with one another forever.

About Sanctification: We believe that sanctification is the process by which believers, each one and all together—as set apart from sin and united in Christ—are increasingly conformed to the image of Christ. Sanctification has past, present, and future aspects. First, believers are “chosen, holy and beloved” in Christ, set apart for God in union with Christ, and are actually made new by regeneration (positional or definitive sanctification). Second, believers begin to mature in their new life, set apart day-by-day through growth in grace into the likeness of Christ. This process (progressive sanctification) takes place by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, in the communion of the saints, by the continual use of God's appointed means of growth in grace, each member contributing to the growth of the whole unto maturity in Christ. Third, believers will be set apart from the very presence of sin when sanctification is completed (glorification) at the coming of Christ for the Church. Definitive sanctification in the past and glorification in the future provide anchors that sustain hope and bring encouragement amidst the failures and sufferings that make progressive sanctification a long and arduous pilgrimage.

About the Church: We believe that the Church, the Body of Christ, is composed of all persons living and dead who have been joined to Christ and one another by the power of the Holy Spirit. Every true believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ and thus united in Christ to one another in unity and love across social, economic, and ethnic lines. We affirm that the local church is God's primary instrument and context for His work today; that every believer should be an active member in a local assembly; and that the Christian community is the context where believers are mutually encouraged, equipped, and empowered to conform to the image of Christ through worship, fellowship, discipleship, stewardship, and ambassadorship (evangelism). The sanctification of an individual is not a personal self-improvement project, but is the formation of a constructive, fruitful member of the Body of Christ. We believe it is every believer's privilege and obligation to be an instrument in the Redeemer's hands. This requires an intentional involvement in the lives of others: learning to speak and to live the truth in love, learning humility, and learning to forgive and to give, so that we all grow in unity

and maturity into Christ Who is the Head. The true mission of the Church is to bring God glory, as believers (individually and corporately) live consistent with the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus Himself. They are our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of His return and of the consummation of all things.

About the Eternal State and the Restoration of All Things: We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ when His kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of Him Who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal home of righteousness. On that day, the Church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering, and triumph of Christ; all sin will be purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all, His people will be enthralled with Him, and everything will be done to the praise of His glorious grace.

*Promoting Personal Change
Centered on the Person of Christ
Through the Personal Ministry of the Word*



BIBLICAL
COUNSELING
COALITION

<http://biblicalcc.org>



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.001 Requests for Counseling **Revised Date:** 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To provide a reliable, structured, and easy to use system of receiving and processing requests for counseling.

- New Vision Care Ministry provides a reliable system of receiving requests for counseling designed to connect counsees to counselors.
- A user-friendly web-based request system has been developed and implemented. Even when persons call the church to connect to the care ministry, requests for counseling are still routed through the web-based request system located at www.newvisionlife.com/care
- The electronic request gathers pertinent data to be used for connecting the counselee to the appropriate counselor. The request provides information such as limits of confidentiality and how to receive immediate emergency care.
- The request is designed, maintained, and secured in such a way that it assures the confidentiality of the counselee and their data.
- A minimum of demographic data is gathered at the initial request level to ensure proper follow-up and a successful counselor connection. Information includes name, gender, age, marital status, address, church membership, etc. Phone and email contact information is collected for follow up.
- Initially only two questions are asked in relation to the nature of the request: “why are you seeking help?” and, “what do you hope to gain from a counseling relationship?”
- Additional information is provided concerning the counseling ministry follow up procedures (response time), fee or donation structures, and a link to frequently asked questions.

Screen shots of the web-based request are included below.

1. New Vision Care Ministry Request

**** COVID-19 UPDATE **** We are taking every precaution to minimize exposure and provide sanitized meeting space. However, if at this time you are uncomfortable with an in-person counseling session, please know counseling continues to be available through confidential video-based ZOOM sessions.

After completing this form our intake coordinator will match you with a counselor to best address your needs. That counselor will contact you directly to set up your first appointment. Please give 24 - 48 hrs. for contact.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A counseling request is not a means of getting help in case of a life-threatening emergency. If you are in danger, experiencing a threat, or need life-saving help, please dial 911 to access immediate help.

What does counseling cost ?

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.

Your generosity in donating helps to provide quality biblical counseling to as many people as possible. Donations to the New Vision Counseling Ministry can be made easily through the New Vision website on the Care page or by going to NVBCCARE.COM

ALL INFORMATION SUBMITTED IS DEEMED CONFIDENTIAL *see agreement & submission (section 4).

* Required

Email address *

Your email _____

1 Contact Email & Fee Schedule **2** Your Information **3** Why Counseling? **4** Consent & Submit

Next

Page 1 of 4

1. New Vision Care Ministry Request

* Required

2. Your Information

1 Contact Email & Fee Schedule **2** Your Information **3** Why Counseling? **4** Consent & Submit

First Name *

Your answer _____

Last Name *

Your answer _____

Gender *

Male

Female

Birth Date *

Format = MM/DD/YYYY

Your answer _____

Contact Phone Number *

Your answer _____

Address

Your answer _____

City

Your answer _____

State

Your answer _____

Zip

Your answer _____

Marital Status *

Choose ▼

Spouse

Enter Spouse Name If Applicable

Your answer _____

Do you attend New Vision ? *

Yes

No

Are you a member at New Vision ?

Yes

No

How did you hear about our Care Ministry ? *

Your answer _____

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1. New Vision Care Ministry Request

* Required

3. Briefly tell us why you are seeking help ?

1 Contact Email & Fee Schedule **2** Your Information **3** Why Counseling? **4** Consent & Submit

Tell us why you are seeking help ? *

Your answer

What do you hope to gain from the experience ? *

Your answer

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More

4. Agreement & Submission

Care Ministry Agreement to Counsel:

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 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 within 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):

1. Suspicion of child/elder abuse - We reserve the right and/or may be mandated by law to report child abuse or suspicion of child/elder abuse of any type to the proper authorities.
2. Threats to harm self or others - We reserve the right and/or may be mandated by law to disclose to the appropriate person, agency or civil authorities any threats of harm that a person may attempt or desire to do to one's self or to others

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

Our counselors are not certified Custody Evaluators or Expert Witnesses as defined by the legal system, as such we do not make any judgments or recommendations on matters of custody, nor do we participate in any legal proceedings unless subpoenaed by law to appear in court.

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

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.

1 Contact Email & Fee Schedule **2** Your Information **3** Why Counseling? **4** Consent & Submit

Agreement to Counsel ? *

I have read the foregoing information and conditions fully and completely.

Yes

Agreement Signature *

My signature below indicates that I understand all the material presented and fully agree to comply. Please enter your full name.

Your answer _____

A copy of your responses will be emailed to the address you provided.

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[Submit](#)

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NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.002 Limits of Confidentiality **Revised Date:** 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To outline the state, federal, and NVBC limits to confidentiality in biblical counseling.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important part of the counseling process. Confidentiality will be maintained; however, all counsees must understand that absolute confidentiality is not scriptural. Scripture provides special circumstances under which facts may be 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 (Romans 13:1-3).

These situations are as follows:

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.

Care Ministry Agreement To Counsel

4. Agreement & Submission

Care Ministry Agreement to Counsel:

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 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 within 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):

1. Suspicion of child/elder abuse - We reserve the right and/or may be mandated by law to report child abuse or suspicion of child/elder abuse of any type to the proper authorities.
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If an unreported life-threatening felony has been committed, NVBC counselors are required by law to report it to the police.

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.

1 Contact Email & Fee Schedule **2** Your Information **3** Why Counseling? **4** Consent & Submit

Agreement to Counsel ? *

I have read the foregoing information and conditions fully and completely.

Yes

Agreement Signature *

My signature below indicates that I understand all the material presented and fully agree to comply. Please enter your full name.

Your answer _____

A copy of your responses will be emailed to the address you provided.

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Submit

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NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.003 Protocol for Suicidality

Revised Date: 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To outline a protocol for handling suicidal ideation and threats to harm self.

FIRST – Take Every Threat Seriously !

Myth: “People who talk about killing themselves never do.”

Fact: We should take any threat of suicide seriously.—15% of those who are depressed ultimately take their lives... of those who take their own lives, 80% percent have warned someone.

So, If suicide is a concern, ask— “Are you thinking about hurting yourself or ending your life?”

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” Proverbs 18:15

SECOND – Offer To Get Them Some Help !

Encourage them to Call 911

If they are willing, they can or you can dial 911 to access immediate help.

You can also call 911 if you are worried about their safety in order to request a welfare (safety) check.

Encourage them to call a Suicide Hotline

NATIONAL:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
or Use the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741

LOCAL:

Mobile crisis for adults: 615-726-0125
Minors (under 18) Youth Villages: 866-791-9221

Connect them to NVBC counseling

Have them go to NEWVISIONLIFE.COM and select CARE. About midway of the page is a **Request Help Now** link. Once they submit the request help form, within 24-48hrs one of our trained biblical counselors will reach out to connect with them to get them the help they need.

* **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Though we typically expedite these requests - a counseling request is not a means to getting help in case of a life-threatening emergency. If they are in danger, experiencing a threat, or

need lifesaving help, **please encourage them dial 911** to access immediate help.

"Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success." Proverbs 15:22

Call or Text one of our CARE ministry staff

Director of Counseling	-	-	-
Counseling Assistant	-	-	-
Intake Coordinator	-	-	-

Additional Resources and Education on Depression and Suicide

[Nine Guidelines for Counseling Suicidal People](#) – Dr. Robert Jones

[Myths About Suicide](#) - Tennessee Prevention Suicide Network

[Warning Signs](#) - Tennessee Prevention Suicide Network

[Biblical Counseling Key on Suicide Prevention](#) – Hope for the Heart

[Biblical Counseling Key on Depression](#) – Hope for the Heart

"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.004 Building Safety and Room Usage

Revised Date:
05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To provide building use policies and guidelines for reserving and use of confidential counseling space.

Decisions concerning where counselors will meet with counsees is determined by several factors. Building space, member vs. non-member counseling, and also the number and length of sessions. Additional considerations include things such as waiting areas, building safety, confidentiality, available counseling hours.

New Vision Church maintains dedicated and shared space to facilitate the Biblical counseling needs. Whenever possible all counseling sessions are to be conducted at the church. Doing so both creates a measure of physical safety and it likewise fosters a connection with the body of Christ as we meet with counsees where the church meets.

Meeting rooms are to be furnished with minimal furnishings and since rooms are often shared space, they should be kept free of personal counseling resources, counseling records, and other personal belongings.

New Vision Care Ministry is happy to provide a number of resources for each room including Bibles, pens, notepads, devotionals, whiteboards, and sound machines to protect confidentiality. Children's counseling rooms are equipped with additional resources to accommodate children's counseling. Considerations for serving handicap populations including both counselors and counsees will be taken into account and several rooms have increased accessibility. Specific needs and requests about accessibility should be made to the care ministry administrative team.

Counselors will ensure an adequate supply of facial tissues are on hand as it can be very awkward to have nothing available in a moment of emotional outburst (crying). These resources are replaced on an as needed basis and can be obtained by contacting the care ministry administrative team if needed. Additional specialized resources such as television, computers, and audio-visual equipment may also be provided upon request.

While confidentiality is important most room have at least a small window on the door communicating to others that the room is occupied. When meeting with counsees, counselors are asked to use the provided door placards or signs indicating the room is occupied and a counseling session is underway. Provided sound machines should be utilized and will help protect the confidentiality of conversations.

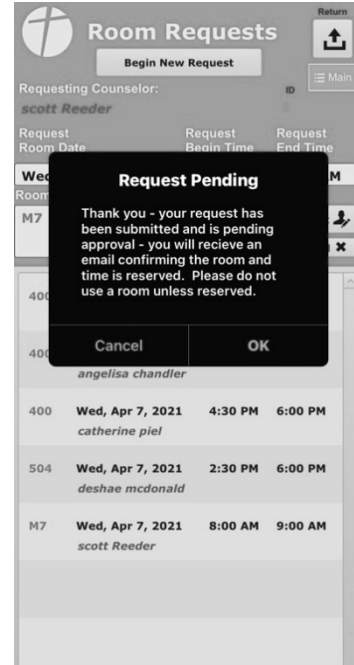
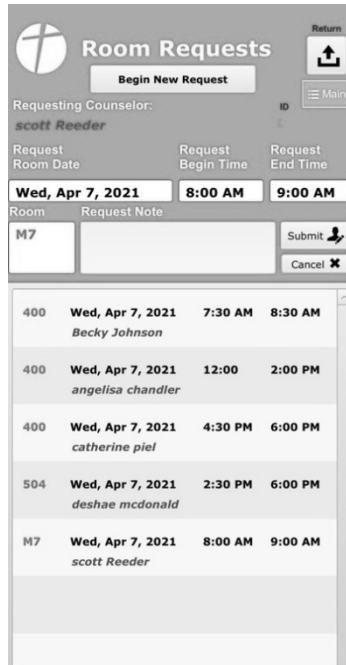
Since the church utilizes more counselors than there are rooms available there is a room scheduling system designed and administered to request and reserve rooms for sessions. This schedule will need to be monitored and accessible by each counselor to avoid conflicts. Counselors will need to pay careful attention to session times and cancel the room requests when a counseling appointment is canceled.

The room reservation system is used to both request space and as a means of communicating with each concerning room reservations and availability. The request system does not contain coding for internal conflict resolution. This means you must

check the schedule to avoid double booking a room. Please contact the care ministry administrative team directly to work out any conflicts that need further attention.

Counselors under normal circumstances should direct counselees to meet them at the main church entrance and should make every effort to meet the counselee at the designated session appointment time. Upon completion of the session counselors should escort the counselee to the appropriate exit.

Sample Screenshots – Mobile Version





NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.005 Session Fees and Donations Revised Date: 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To establish a fee / donation structure for the ongoing support of the New Vision Counseling Ministry.

New Vision is blessed with a well-trained and qualified staff of biblical counselors whom we

compensate to provide counsees with the best of care. While there is no set fee for our counseling services, we do request 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. The Care Ministry uses the language of donation and avoids the use of fee*, since all donations are in fact voluntary.

Upon intake every counselee receiving counseling services regardless of membership status is requested to donate a minimum \$35 per session hour. While we inform and request the counselee to make a donation, the care of the counselee is of primary importance and we will neither refuse nor stop counseling on the basis of the counsees ability to make a donation. We simply ask them to consider this donation prayerfully as a means of investing in their care specifically and the New Vision counseling ministry in general.

According to law any donations received do not qualify as tax-deductible contributions, since monies are received for services provided. There may be times when a contribution could qualify as tax-deductible, such as when a charitable gift is given to the counseling ministry without counseling services rendered. This process of collecting donations for care has been reviewed by the church accounting department and in compliance with state and federal tax laws.

Where possible, the counseling ministry prefers electronic payments through a secure system of payments utilizing church sponsored software, this is a direct pay system which allows the church to accept mobile bank and credit card payments. This payment portal is hosted by Square electronic payment systems which provides necessary accounting such as receipts, reports, and documentation of the transaction. New Vision counselors will alternatively accept direct payments of cash or checks and turn those in to the accounting office at the first available opportunity.

The electronic portal for donations is accessible at www.nvbccare.com

While records are maintained, currently New Vision care ministry does not track specific donations by counsees.

*Premarital Counseling has a set fee of \$150 which covers six one-hour sessions. Couples who complete the premarital counseling program will receive a certificate of completion which meets the qualification for a discount on their Tennessee marriage license.


Biblical Counseling Donation | X +

newvisionbaptistchurch-407177.square.site/product/biblical-counseling-donation/5?cs=true&cst=custom

New Vision Baptist Church

Biblical Counseling Donations Forgiveness In The First ... ItemsThe little book on the ...

Home > Biblical Counseling Donation



Biblical Counseling Donation
\$35.00 - \$100.00

Select an option *

Select one

Quantity *

- 1 +

Add to Cart

Description
Counseling Session Donation for Biblical Counseling Session (Individual Counselor). PLEASE NOTE: This donation is not tax-deductible.

Returns

New Vision Baptist Church Copyright 2021

Home | New Vision Baptist Church X +




www.nvbccare.com

Biblical Counseling Donations

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.

 <p>Biblical Counseling Donation \$35.00 - \$100.00</p>	 <p>Premarital Counseling Fee \$150.00</p>	 <p>Care Group Workbook \$10.00 - \$15.00</p>
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NEW VISION

CARE MINISTRY

NEED HELP? WE'RE HERE!

ENCOURAGEMENT - BIBLICAL COUNSELING - CARE GROUPS - PRAYER

615.895.7167 | NEWVISIONLIFE.COM/CAREMINISTRY

Scan
QR Code
to make a
Counseling
Session
Donation



NVBCCARE.COM



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.006 Counselor Compensation **Revised Date:** 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To outline the pay scale and structure of counselor hourly contract pay and level increases in coordination with education, length of service, and specialized training.

New Vision care ministry is led by a team of well-trained and qualified biblical counselors. In order to honor their work and provide the very best of care, counselors are compensated on a per session basis for the care they provide. Each counselor's hourly compensation is based on a number of factors such as training, education, length of service, and specialized training.

Counselors must enter their session hours into the counseling database. Hours should be entered as soon as practical upon completion of a session. Session time is to be entered in fifteen-minute (.25) increments. Under normal circumstances sessions are limited to a maximum of one hour in length unless approved by a supervisor. It is understood that counseling intakes may take additional time.

While it is understood that counselors will spend additional time in preparation for working with a counselee, scheduling, note taking, and session planning, only face to face time is considered as the billable portion of time for working with a counselee. At times counselors will work as a team, and it is understood that both counselors will submit their time for those sessions.

Payments for counseling hours are paid out a monthly basis and will be processed the first week of the new month. Example: March session work will be paid out the first week of April. Exceptions may apply for holidays and under other special circumstances. Counselors should track their hours and ensure the paid hours match the hours which they provided. Any discrepancies should be brought to the attention of care ministry administrative team for adjustments.

Pay Scale for Biblical Counselors

The current compensation scale is as follows:

Effective Date: January 01, 2021

Hourly Compensation Rate

Encourager Training + Phase 1 completed of ACBC Certification: \$30

Add On:

- Phase 2 ACBC completed + \$5
- 3 plus year's experience: + \$5
- B.S. degree + \$5
- Masters + \$5
- Seminary + \$5
- Biblical Counseling Certification (ACBC, CCEF) + \$5

*Base Rate Minimum \$30 - Maximum \$55



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.007 Counselor Qualifications and Certification

Revised Date:
05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To maintain a list of initial and ongoing characteristics and training qualifications needed to serve as a New Vision Biblical counselor.

General and specific qualifications are needed to serve as a New Vision Biblical counselor. These qualifications are developed, adopted, and adhered to in order to protect the integrity of the counseling ministry. The task of the care ministry administrative team is to equip Biblical counselor's to be qualified to minister to the people of God with grace and truth.

Included In the general qualification and agreements are the following.

- New Vision Biblical counselors are to be covenant members New Vision Baptist Church who are familiar with the churches core beliefs and core values. They likewise know the DNA of the church and how the systems of the church function. As covenant members counselors have already been through a screening process of sorts. They have been through a process of affirming their salvation, baptism experience, doctrinal beliefs, and have signed a covenant that includes agreement with a basic set of membership distinctives held by the church.
- Since one of the primary tasks of a healthy counseling ministry is to connect people to the work and people of the church, it is beneficial that those whom serve as counselors are familiar with the people and ministries of the church. They know the pastors, small groups leaders, deacons, programs and processes which the church employs. Counselors who are engaged church members can point people to healthy engagement as well.
- New Vision Biblical counselors by personal conviction subscribe to operate, adhere, and teach in accordance to the beliefs and doctrinal statements laid forth in the NVCM.000 Belief Statement (BF&M 2000).
- New Vision Biblical counselors subscribe to the sufficiency of Scriptures in counseling. Foundationally and theologically affirm 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, Biblical counselors are to be committed to providing scriptural counsel guided by the Holy Spirit and according to God's Word which serves as the final authority in counseling.
- For a counselor to be genuinely effective, they must have a healthy, authentic relationship with Christ, be living in fellowship with Him, and seeking God's will through His Word.
 - They are first and foremost people of the Bible. They desire to know the Word of God and how to help others apply that fully sufficient word to the struggles they face.

- They are evangelistically minded and know how to guide a person to trust Christ and come grow in their salvation.
 - They are theologically knowledgeable in order to help others understand and apply the truths of Scripture.
 - They are people of prayer dependent on God and in communion with him. Their lives are marked by praying continually for the daily wisdom to counsel others and for the Holy Spirit to guide both them and their counselee in spirit and truth as they journey together through difficult times.
- New Vision Biblical counselors are ideally engaged in the small group ministry of the church. They have a practice and habit of gathering with the church in community in order to give and receive encouragement, to support one another, to sacrificially care for one another, to share meals together in fellowship, to give strength to one another as they overcome the struggles of this life. The counselor who is engaged in the group ministry of the local church sends a message to their counselee about the importance of being connected to other Christians . Small group members bear one another's burdens as they engage and invest in a nurturing and caring body of believers.
 - While examining characteristics of qualifying counselors the care ministry may take into consideration additional issues such as; spiritual maturity, psychological/emotional stability, love for and interest in people, appropriate spiritual gifts such as exhortation and encouragement, adequate life experience, availability, teachability, previous training or experience in lay counseling, biblical counseling, or people helping.
 - Finally, New Vision Biblical counselors are without questions those who are above reproach in their ability to keep confidentiality (understanding limits of confidentiality about child abuse or elder abuse and danger to self or others).

*Note: This policy does not intend to specifically prescribe every qualification of a Biblical counselor, yet it implements a standard by which counselors are measured and approved to render service to a counselee.

Biblical counselors are committed to learning and growing in the task of counseling. The Biblical counselor has a desire to grow in the knowledge of competent Biblical counseling and takes opportunities afforded to them to seek certifications and certificates that are designed to further equip them in the work of counseling.

They will seek to grow through taking courses, working toward certifications and degrees, attending seminars, and keeping close relationships with fellow counselors who sharpen them in the task of counseling.

It may not be necessary to state the obvious, but Biblical counselors love people. They love them where they are with high hope to help bring them to where God ultimately wants them to be. That love is expressed through kindness, compassion, grace, and empathy. But that same love is expressed through truth speaking, admonishing, rebuking, and enacting discipline in love.

Counselor candidates first stage is to complete initial interview process that includes a conversation to assess basic Bible knowledge concerning the practice of Biblical counseling (What is Biblical counseling?). Other foundational skills assessed include the counselor's ability perform some foundational tasks skills such as, explaining confidentiality, hearing a salvation story, general listening skills, problem determination skills, ability to provide scriptural encouragement.

While the previous listed qualifications deal generally with personal characteristics of a competent counselor, counselors meeting the initial qualifications must then complete specific training and certifications in order to serve. This training path contains gaining both fundamental and advanced knowledge of Biblical counseling methods and skills.

Outlined below are the specific training requirements in order to meet the qualifications to begin serving as a New Vision Biblical counselor.

The web portal for this training can be found at <https://encouragerstraining.com/>

LEVEL ONE: ENCOURAGERS LAY COUNSELOR TRAINING

Encouragers is the entry level lay counseling model of New Vision Care Ministry. It is built on a 3-step model of counseling: Story - Truth - Next Steps

Certification Requirements:

1. Initial Interview
2. Encouragers Lay Counselor Training – The Encouragers lay counseling model is built on a three-step meeting process that has the end goal of helping the counselee to determine their next best step, in light of their presenting struggle. Encourager’s training includes 6 videos session and a workbook covering the 3-session model of Encouragers. This training is private access participants must register in order to login.
3. Divine Design (Exchanged Life) Workshop – The Divine Design workshop helps the counselor to go back to the beginning and look at who God is and the beauty of His greatest creation: mankind. Counselors will discover how man thought he could do life better His own way which has resulted in chaos, uncertainty and fatigue. Thankfully, God did not leave us on our own, but by the way of the cross of Christ, He restored us back to Himself. Devine Design takes a look at our new identity in Christ and the destiny God has for us In Christ, on this earth, now; and as children of God, we see how He made it possible to experience Him in abundance. This training can be complete through a live workshop or through the video based Divine Design Training available online. This includes 12 online video sessions and a workbook. Each video lesson is approximately 20-25 min.
4. 300 Pages of Required Reading – 3 books are required reading before serving as a lay counselor.
 - *Lifetime Guarantee* by Bill Gillham speaks of his struggle to live a life of victory in Christ, “After 12 years...I finally crashed and burned. That was the best thing the Lord could have ever let happen to me.”
 - In *At the Crossroads* - Peter Kuiper addresses Five Core False Beliefs which are behind most emotional and relational unhealthiness. If you ever struggle with feelings that you will never be good enough, or that you are unlovable or worthless, the teachings in this book will be eye-opening and life-giving for you.
 - *Descriptions and Prescriptions: A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses and Medications* Michael R. Emlet A balanced, biblically (and scientifically!) informed approach that is neither too warmly embracing nor too coldly dismissive of psychiatric labels and the psychiatric medications that are often prescribed. Biblical counselor and retired physician, Michael R. Emlet, gives readers a helpful way forward on these important issues.

LEVEL TWO: BIBLICAL COUNSELING ENTRY TRACK

Biblical Counselors are called, trained, and equipped to provide in-depth biblical counseling using God's word as the basis of helping people. The entry level of serving as a New Vision Biblical counselor means completing the Level One lay counselor training and then completing phase one of the ACBC certification process. Those steps are outlined below.

Certification Requirements:

1. Follow up Interview
2. Completion of Phase One Encouragers Training
3. 30 hrs. of Biblical Counseling Fundamentals - The training is designed to take place over a 10-week period (3 Sessions per week) and offers the entire ACBC Fundamentals Track. Completion of this material fulfills the Fundamentals requirements for Phase 1 ACBC training.
4. 10 Hours of Counseling Observation – Faith Biblical Counseling has produced a 10 Session Counseling Observation Set which helps counselors to work through a variety of common counseling scenarios. Completion of this material fulfills the Observation requirements for Phase 1 ACBC training.
5. 1000 Pages of Required Reading – Counseling candidates read a total of 1,000 pages (300 or more from Biblical Counseling & Theology texts) from a designated list of books both from the studies of theology and counseling. Counselors can download and track their work in a reading log. Completion of this reading assignment fulfills the Reading requirements for Phase 1 ACBC training.

LEVEL THREE: BIBLICAL COUNSELING INTENSIVES

Biblical counselors are encouraged to take steps leading to certifications and increased qualifications as counselors.

Advanced Tracks:

1. ACBC Exams
 - Completion of In-Depth Theological and Counselor exams.
 - Additional Reading Requirements as Assigned
2. Exchanged Life Workshop
 - Completion of Grace Ministries Exchanged Life Phase Two Training
 - Additional Reading Requirements as Assigned

LEVEL FOUR: BIBLICAL COUNSELING ADVANCED TRACKS

Biblical counselors are encouraged to take steps leading to certifications and increased qualifications as counselors.

1. ACBC Certification
 - Completion of ACBC Certification process
 - 50 sessions of supervised counseling with an ACBC Fellow
 - Additional Reading Requirements as Assigned
2. Exchanged Life Trained Discipleship Counselor
 - Completion of Grace Ministries Advanced Certification Workshop Intensive
 - Additional Reading Requirements as Assigned

Counselor candidates also benefit greatly from opportunities to practice counseling through role playing opportunities during their initial training. Counselors will benefit from a basic understanding of counseling techniques, as well as knowledge of Biblical interventions. As a minimum counselor should have some training to Biblically respond to some of the more common presenting issues such as depression, anxiety, life stress, and various spiritual battles.

It is critical that counselors have an awareness of ethical boundaries and potential dangers such as complex trauma, suicidality, homicidal threats, and childhood abuse. This would include a thorough knowledge of protocols for reporting incidents to supervision and church leadership when legal and ethical issues arise. Counselors should know when to refer for problems outside of the scope of their abilities to more appropriate counselors who may have specialized training in certain areas.

New Vision Care ministry maintains a skills and training profile for each counselor. This profile includes basic demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, email, phone, etc. The profile also includes more specific data concerning skills, experience, training, and spiritual disciplines. In addition to skills and training the care ministry inventories things such as availability and preference for certain presenting issues or counselee types. This profile helps the administrative staff to assign counsees to counselors who will likely best meet their needs.

As a basic fundamental boundary, New Vision Care Ministry employs a gender boundary with limited flexibility. Simply put, women meet with women and men meet with men. Of course, married couples may meet with a counselor of either gender, and at times a limited number of individual sessions may be desired, but that should be the exception and only under special circumstances. Even then great care should be taken to protect the counselor and counselee from risk of (or even appearance of) impropriety.

LEVEL ONE: ENCOURAGERS LAY COUNSELOR TRAINING


ENCOURAGERS TRAINING

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">ENCOURAGERS TRAINING</p>  <p>The Encouragers lay counseling model is built on a three-step meeting process which has the end goal of helping the counselee to determine their next best step, in light of their presenting struggle.</p> <p>Encouragers training includes 6 videos session and a workbook covering the 3 session model of Encouragers. <i>STORY - TRUTH - NEXT STEPS</i></p> <p>This training is private access participants must register in order to login.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">ENCOURAGER VIDEO SESSIONS</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">DIVINE DESIGN TRAINING</p>  <p>Divine Design Training includes 12 video sessions and a workbook. Each video lesson is approximately 20-25 min.</p> <p><i>"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."</i> Galatians 2:20</p> <p><i>"And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."</i> Colossians 1:29</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">REQUIRED READING</p>  <p>In <i>Lifetime Guarantee</i> Bill Gillham writes of his struggle to live a life of victory in Christ, "After 12 years...I finally crashed and burned. That was the best thing the Lord could have ever let happen to me."</p> <p>Five Core False Beliefs are behind most emotional and relational unhealthiness. If you ever struggle with feelings that you will never be good enough, or that you are unlovable or worthless, the teachings in this book will be eye-opening and life-giving for you." At the Crossroads - Peter Kuiper</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">REQUEST COPIES OF THESE BOOKS</p>
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LEVEL TWO: BIBLICAL COUNSELING ENTRY TRACK

BIBLICAL COUNSELOR TRAINING

30 Hour ACBC Fundamentals




Phase One
30 HRS
Fundamentals
Training

The training is designed to take place over a 10 week period (3 Sessions per week) and offers the entire ACBC Fundamentals Track. Completion of this material fulfills the Fundamentals requirements for Phase 1 ACBC training.

30 HOURS FUNDAMENTALS

Counseling Observation Videos




faith
BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Follow along counselors work through a variety of common counseling scenarios in this 10 Session Observation Set. Completion of this material fulfills the Observation requirements for Phase 1 ACBC training.

FAITH OBSERVATION VIDEOS

1K Pages of Approved Reading



You must read a total of 1,000 pages, with 300 or more from Biblical Counseling & Theology texts. Download and track your work in the reading log. Completion of this material fulfills the reading requirements for Phase 1 ACBC training.

ACBC READING & OBSERVATION LOG

LEVEL THREE: BIBLICAL COUNSELING INTENSIVES

AND

LEVEL FOUR: BIBLICAL COUNSELING ADVANCED TRACKS

ADVANCED CERTIFICATION PATHS

ACBC CERTIFICATION



ACBC - Certification Benefits
from ACBC

Association of Certified
Biblical Counselors

ACBC process is made up of three phases: learning, exams and application, and supervision. Visit each category for a detailed account of what the process looks like.

ACBC CERTIFICATION PATH

DEVINE DESIGN PHASE 2 WORKSHOP EXPRESS



grace ministries
INTERNATIONAL

Devine Design Phase 2 Workshop is an in-depth training workshop designed to further your skills as an experienced counselor while increasing your knowledge and ability to understand and utilize the Exchanged Life principles of counseling.

REGISTER FOR A DD2 WORKSHOP



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.008 Supervision of Counselors **Revised Date:** 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: To provide a close and structured model of supervision in order to provide counselor support, ongoing training, and general oversight of counselor caseloads.

The New Vision Counseling administrative team maintains a program of supervision in order to provide training, extend encouragement, foster growth, and create a system of accountability to our counselors. Both the group and individual supervision are scheduled and documented as a means of protecting the integrity of the overall counseling ministry.

Individual supervision consists of one-on-one sessions between counseling staff leadership and individual counselors. This supervision time is used for individual counselee case consultation. Individual supervision also provides an opportunity for the care ministry leadership team to stay connected to counselors. This time also provides space to check in on the spiritual health of each counselor and ensures good counselor self-care is taking place.

A more frequent and structured model of supervision is often employed during the early stage of a newly practicing counselor. As a rule, counselors who are less experienced, have a higher case load, or meet with counsees who present with more complicated presenting issues, typically have a higher level of supervision. After the initial phase of new counselor supervision, counselors then typically meet minimally with an assigned supervisor on a quarterly basis. The ongoing requirements for individual supervisory oversight can fluctuate over time, increasing or decreasing in order to ensure the counselors needs are being adequately addressed.

Group supervision provides an ongoing opportunity for counselors to grow in relationship with each other as well as grow through support of other counselors. Group supervision typically involves a time devoted to training counselors in skills and administrative requirements. Administrative issues concerning the overall care ministry are shared. This time is also used to celebrate accomplishment and share encouragement of growth areas and ongoing needs.

At times selected counselors present cases (with confidentiality) sharing both successes and struggles. Other counselors then provide biblical insights, encouragement, and support to the presenting counselor. This time is invaluable for growth as a counselor and for the growth of the overall counseling ministry.

Administrative staff that are adequately trained, educated, and otherwise qualified conduct oversight and supervision of the counseling staff. Care ministry leaders make themselves available to the counselors during and after hours in emergencies. New Vision care ministry keeps an open-door policy (respective of biblical confidentiality) for counselors to share concerns of providing responsible care to their counsees.



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.009 Number and Length of Sessions

Revised Date:
05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: Provide a philosophy of counseling that sets forth the general number of sessions and length of counseling guidelines.

The New Vision Counseling Ministry focuses on short term counseling care. Typically, counsees meet with a counselor between 3 to 8 sessions which are one hour in length.

Biblical Counseling work beyond 12 sessions must be presented to a supervisor for review. Additional session must be approved by the New Vision Care Ministry counseling pastor. Approvals are on a case-by-case basis. Counsees may be asked to speak with the counseling pastor, assigned additional responsibilities, or possibly assigned to a new counselor.

Ultimately, we do not want the counselee to become overly dependent on the counselor, but be led to personally understand and apply God's Word to every area of their life so they can possibly one day help others who are struggling.

There is great diversity in each counselee request and the depth of the presenting problems. While we do not intend to dictate counseling work on a session-by-session basis, we do have a basic framework of what is expected in the overall process of counselee care.

General overview of the progression of sessions:

1. We join with the counselee to assess and define the presenting issues. Some of this can be accomplished through early homework, assessments, and through the initial PIF. This should be accomplished within the first 1-3 sessions.
2. After the presenting issue is determined, set gospel centered goals with the counselee, while developing a gospel driven plan for counseling no later than sessions 3-5.
3. After a tentative plan and goals are established, assist the counselee in meeting those agreed upon goals. This is done through scriptural application, providing resources, assigning homework, connecting to support structures (people and programs), and most importantly helping them to apply Biblical solutions to the issues they have sought counseling for. While specific interventions and approaches will be slightly different with counsees, the foundational counseling path is the same. The whole of the counseling work should normally be completed between the 6-8th session.
4. We then carefully space final sessions to work toward completion (graduation) of the counseling. During this time, we check in and monitor progress. This should be between 9-12 sessions at most.

A successful counseling plan begins with the end in mind.

The counselor begins to prepare the counselee for graduation from the beginning of counseling. We never reach a destination if we don't have one. If we don't get our counselee to define what they hope to accomplish through counseling – it is certain we will never know when we are done.

During intake we communicate to the counselee up front that you will likely meet for 6-8 one-hour sessions and it is helpful to give a general overview of the counseling the process...

First, let the counselee know that you both will spend some time getting to know each other. (Possibly 2-3 sessions). During this time, they should know that the counselor will be asking a lot of questions (some as we meet – others through questionnaires and assessments). The counselee should also understand you will take time to listen to them carefully and seek to understand their beliefs, thinking, feelings, and the issues behind what has led them to seek counseling.

Next, inform the counselee that together you will work to discover what God's word has to say concerning their circumstances, the accompanying feelings, and the problem(s) they are presenting with. Ensure them that together you will develop a plan to overcome, accept, and even thrive as they move forward trusting Christ in this matter. Communicate to them that you will work to assist them in putting into practice and reinforcing what the Lord is teaching them. You will seek to work together teaching them to abide in Christ and trust him with their struggle.

Finally, tell the counselee you will be expecting and helping them to find connections with God's people through worship, friendships, small groups, support groups. Those connections will ensure they can be disciplined, encouraged, strengthened, and even held accountable.

A successful counseling plan will address the heart, head, and hands.

- Start with the heart (identity and beliefs) – this informs the head (thinking and feelings) – which drives the hands (actions). Godly Biblical change always begins with a change in the heart. God says purify our hearts not just our hands, he says mend our hearts... not just our garments.
- Develop a counseling plan with specific goals to achieve specific changes concerning the heart, head, and hands. Start with heart and then examine the beliefs springing out of it (Iceberg model). Ask the question, "What will need to change in attitudes and actions for this issue to get better?"
- The answers to what must change must be centered on self and can never be simply "do more – do better". The answers must address the counselee trusting in Christ to empower them to walk in a new way. A way defined by walking, trusting, abiding, and ultimately living in Christ.
- Remember the Apostle Paul always precedes the imperatives (Ephesians & Romans) with indicatives. He understood that in order for people to make lasting change they must be aware of who they are in Christ and that knowledge gives them the power to obey God in thoughts and actions.
-

A successful counseling plan will be developed with goals that are driven by the Scriptures and gospel centered resources.

- We are after all "Biblical counselors". Whether it's individuals, couples, men or women, adults, students, or children. Biblical counseling is rooted in Scripture.
- There are many tools in the counseling toolbox – but the toolbox is the Scripture.
- It can be fears, traumas, conflict, besetting sins, grief, anger or depression. The solutions to combating these problems are Holy Spirit driven and the Spirit has authored the Scriptures, God said... "All Scripture is inspired

by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right." 2 Timothy 3:16.

- Scripture memory and application is essential. Not just memory verses either. The question is not simply what does _____ say. How does this Scripture apply to what you are going through? How are you actively applying this Scripture to the issue you came to counseling for?

A successful counseling plan will be marked by an observable commitment, active engagement, and homework completion that is moving the counselee toward change.

- Responsibility - The counselee will need to acknowledge responsibility for thoughts and actions concerning the issue they sought counsel for.
- Commitment - The counselee must commit to accepting God's perspective on the issue as you help them to examine it from a Biblical point of view.
- Engagement - The counselee must be engaged, making effort, exerting energy toward the goal and wholly committed to the end "endurance" is key. One or two weeks of heart and hand change is not, "mission accomplished".
- Homework – assign homework that addresses the heart and hand issues. If you fail to assign homework and do not hold the counselee accountable to completion of the homework you will find yourself working harder than the counselee.

A successful counseling plan is pre-committed to releasing the counselee to a regular community of care.

- We carefully space final sessions to work toward completion (graduation) of the counseling. During this time, we check in and monitor progress in 2-3 sessions at most,
- We simply cannot set ourselves up as counselors to serve the role of providing extended discipleship or accountability to the counselee. They likely will need that, and we do our best to provide opportunities for those connections.
- To become the counselee discipler or accountability partner is not the scope of our counseling ministry. (I have 4 new men that I disciple for a year, for the last 3 years now. That is not my counseling work).
- Ultimately, we equip counselees Biblically and point them to the resources they will need to continue to follow Christ without our direct help.

Reasons to end a counseling relationship.

At times we conclude a case because the work is complete and there has been much growth. Biblical Counseling can be distinguished between what is counsel and what is discipleship. Counsel is a brief perhaps just one meeting session where we provide Biblical counsel to overcome a very specific problem. Discipleship is an ongoing relationship where we increase our knowledge of the spiritual disciplines while walking with others as we grow in Christlikeness.

Counseling deals with a specific presenting issue but does begin with the end in mind. We set goals for growth and move the counselee toward a maturing faith . We help give them Biblical solutions for the problems they are facing. God's word when applied is sufficient to bring about the needed changes in both attitudes and actions. I would end by reviewing what actions and attitudes were established or reestablished according to God's

word. I would encourage the counselee to apply those same principles when facing other similar struggles.

At other times we terminate for a lack of growth. For a number of reasons, you recognize the counselee is not seeing much growth. This can be at times identified by a lack of commitment to the do the (home)work, or to even showing up for scheduled appointments. If after having been taught the truth of God's word concerning their presenting issue and there is still little to no motivation to obey the clear commands and principles set forth Biblically, then a good stewardship of the counselor's and the counselee's time is to be considered.

At times a counselee will simply refuse to trust God's word as wholly sufficient. So, there are ongoing efforts to synergize the secular with the Biblical. In these instances, many times synergizing the two only serves to compromise a healthy Biblical solution. If the counselee hangs on to psychological understandings, labels, and solutions then it is likely there will be a lack of effective Biblical counseling to truly overcome the issues they are facing. This is seen as the counselee being unwilling to make the needed changes, since they are more focused on secular answers to what are ultimately spiritual problems.

A final reason could be a lack of trust or connection between the counselee and counselor. Though not always understood there are times when two people simply do not click. This is not a first consideration, but it should not be ignored since research has shown that a healthy trusting therapeutic relationship is key to counsel being successful to some measure.



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.010 Care Groups and Group Counseling

Revised Date:
05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: Define the ongoing ministry of group counseling (Care Groups) that are maintained both as a preventive measure and to provide healthy next steps for member and counsees.

New Vision Care Groups provide gospel-centered support groups with resources and choices that help people learn to apply God's truths to certain struggles.

Care groups are a vital part of the New Vision Care Ministry, and are typically offered in periodic cycles. Care groups bring together people who are going through a similar life struggle as they join with others on a to provide care and support for one another. They are disciplined through supportive, accountable relationships and learn through gospel centered lessons designed specifically to minister to the struggles which the members hold in common.

Care groups typically meet for 6-12 weeks following a curriculum-based study which is facilitated by a trained and qualified instructor. Occasionally, care groups have an ongoing scope and meet on an ongoing basis with limited breaks for predetermined breaks and holidays.

Although many of the Care Groups offered are led by New Vision Biblical Counselors and Pastoral Staff, some are led by qualified lay members with expertise and experience in the respective theme of the care group.

While new classes are constantly being evaluated and introduced, offerings such as DivorceCare, GriefShare, Parenting, Premarital, Peacemaking, Identity, Financial Stewardship, Caregiving, etc., are ongoing offerings which typically have a spring (January) and fall (August) cycle.

Care Groups are effective both as a preventive measure for counseling and are likewise healthy next steps of engagement in a post counseling relationship. Classes are free for the attendees with the exception of required resources such as workbooks or other learning resources.

Biblical Counselors are encouraged to lead care groups surrounding presenting issues which they have interest and expertise in. While some Biblical Counselors choose to lead classes as a personal stewardship, those who lead Care Groups are offered compensation at their hourly rate of contract counseling.

The current offering of Care Groups can be found at <https://nvbccaregroups.com/>



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.011 The Role of Scripture

Revised Date: 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: This policy outlines the role of Scripture in counseling. It conveys a basic definition of Biblical counseling as it declares God's word to be both sufficient and the final authority for the care of God's people.

Biblical counseling is helping people apply the truth of God's word to the difficult issues of life they face. Scripture is inspired, inerrant, authoritative and therefore fully sufficient about the ministry of counseling. Scripture contains all that is needed to both understand and to treat mental, emotional, and spiritual problems of man. The doctrine of sufficiency proclaims that the bible is able to give wise council concerning whatever problems people face.

Dr. Wayne Grudem defines the sufficiency of Scripture in this way, "The idea that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly." God's word is sufficient to provide to us all that we need in order to both know him and live as he intends us to. Scripture is indeed sufficient to answer all the questions about life that that man would need to know. This is not to say, that the Scripture will answer every question we have, rather it sufficiently answers the questions which God has predetermined we ultimately need answers to. This includes questions about faithful living, salvation, truth, and for living in obedience to His will.

The Psalmist gives six attributes of God's sufficient word. It is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true. In poetic parallelism the psalmist declares that Scriptures bring revival to our souls, wisdom to misunderstandings, rejoicing in our hearts, clarity to our minds, and it is understood to be lasting and righteous (Psalm 19:7-8). The Apostle Paul makes it clear that God in Scripture has given us that which is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, as well he declares it sufficient to save our very souls (2 Timothy 3:15).

Biblical Counselors have a necessary duty to point our counselees to the Scripture and to share the gospel with our counselees. The counselees come to us with problems that need real solutions, and ultimately these problems are not fully satisfied, void of the solution to the greatest problem facing mankind – salvation in Christ. More than anything we have a duty to call our counselees to apply the counsel of God to their struggles.

It is ultimately the word of God and through it saving faith, that brings both effective answers to the temporal non-physical problems of mankind, and more importantly to the eternal problem of mankind, which is eternal separation from God. To be saved from our problems, means to be saved from our sin, and to be saved from our sin we trust the sufficiency of holy Scriptures which are able to give us wisdom of the saving knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.012 The Role of Medicine

Revised Date: 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: This policy defines our stance on giving a counselee advice in starting, stopping, or adjusting prescribed psychotropic drugs.

Biblical counselors should never encourage a counselee to reduce or discontinue a medication without the permission of their doctor. We encourage counselees to speak only to a medical professional for advice regarding use of prescription medications.

We believe the Bible teaches that God created man in a way that intricately connects physical and spiritual issues. Mental and emotional disorders, though popularly seen as being treatable by drugs, have a spiritual component that ought not to be neglected as at least part of the solution. Some disorders are clearly physiologically testable and treatable. Many other disorders and syndromes have no clear clinical proof; further, the mechanisms, effectiveness, and long-term side effects of drug therapy is unclear, even to the medical profession.

However, taking these concerns into account, we believe the decision to use psychotropic drugs is between the patient and their doctor. The biblical counselor may routinely recommend a medical exam to help determine if there is a physiological cause. New Vision Church and New Vision Counseling Ministry refers counselees to medical professionals for advice regarding any use or management of prescription medications.

A biblical counselor does not judge a person based on their use of drugs and a counselee should not judge the counselor based on their concern about the use of drugs. Our primary interest is to address the spiritual concerns of responsibility for behavior and attitudes in relation to God and His Word. Application of God's Word can accomplish changes in ways that medication cannot. It should be natural for a sincere Christian to seek the help and counsel of other believers for mature, biblical insight and spiritual growth in their emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Our passion is to help people live to the glory of God.

Rarely, if ever, will taking medication interfere with your ability to counsel. Our goal in counseling those who are taking medication is the same as your goal for counseling anyone. It is to help them come to a place where they want to glorify God with their life (2 Cor 5:9).

At times a counselee will ask the counselor directly if they can stop taking their medication. Counselors may seek to learn their reasons for wanting to stop as it may give you further insight in providing spiritual counsel. However even if you or they have become convinced they have replaced the use of medication with the practice of applying biblical principles, we still encourage them to go back to the doctor who started them on medication before they make any decision to start, stop, or adjust any prescribed medication.



Policy Description: NVCM.013 Children of Separated/Divorced Parents

Revised Date:
05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: This policy defines what is required for the counselor to work with a child(ren) with separated or divorced parents. The counselor adheres to this policy to ensure that the best interests of the child are addressed in the counseling process.

Agreement for Parents of Separated/Divorced Parents

Biblical Counseling can be a very helpful resource for children of separation and divorce.

Biblical Counseling can:

- Facilitate open and appropriate expression of strong feelings commonly experienced by children in family transitions, including guilt, grief, sadness, and anger.
- Provide a neutral environment where a child can explore their feelings
- Provide resources for caregivers to help focus on specific emotional, developmental and spiritual needs of the child/children.
- Help caregivers communicate with their children plans for transitions, changes, etc.

Caring for your child

As your child's counselor, it is our primary responsibility to respond to your child's emotional and spiritual needs. This includes, but is not limited to, contact with your child and each of his/her caregivers, and gathering information relevant to understanding your child's welfare and circumstances as perceived by important others.

We ask that all caregivers remain in frequent communication regarding their child/children's welfare and emotional wellbeing. Open communication about his/her emotional state and behavior is critical. In this regard, we invite each of you to initiate frequent and open exchange with us.

We ask that all parties recognize and, as necessary, reaffirm to the child, that we are the child's helper and not allied with any disputing party.

We strongly recommend that all caregivers choose to participate in support groups such as *DivorceCare* in which separating and divorced parents learn basic strategies for working through a divorce in a way that is in the best interest of the child.

Communication

We will not be responsible for routine communication outside of the session with any parent who chooses not to attend scheduled briefings about the child's care. For example, we cannot and will not contact the non-attending parent via phone or email after each session. It is simply not realistic to expect that the counselor will provide a summary letter, email or phone call to parents who choose not to come to sessions or pre and post care briefings. If this is something that is required of your situation, then scheduling arrangements must be made in advance to account for this time.

The expectation is that parents will communicate with each other regarding the child's treatment and recommendations. In most cases, for the counselor to arrange for additional communication outside of the session would only be encouraging an unhealthy co-parenting relationship.

We are not secret keepers. Any matter brought to our attention by either parent regarding the child may be revealed to the other parent in matters where it is relevant to the child's wellbeing. Any information irrelevant to the child's wellbeing are best used by being brought to the attention of an attorney, a physician, or your personal counselor.

We will not accept phone calls, voice mails, emails or other communications directed at pitting the counselor against the other parent. If/when these communications are received, the other parent will be notified. Permitted communications include, but are not limited to:

- Text messages/printed text message transcripts
- Emails
- Facebook messages, posts
- Video and/or tape recordings
- Voice mails
- Other communication aimed at proving the other parent's wrong doing and encouraging the counselor to pick a side

We have a duty to understand the history of the child and their family and what has contributed to the reason for counseling. This should not be misconstrued to mean that we should be required to read or listen to any information that the parent(s) deem appropriate to share. As your child's counselor we reserve the right to dictate what information is appropriate and inappropriate for the counseling relationship and to refuse to accept information that isn't appropriate for the counseling relationship.

As an advocate for your child, we also reserve the right to ignore and/or not respond to any communication that is not appropriate for the counseling relationship, including but not limited to:

- Emails used for the purpose of counseling

- Requests for reviewing court documents
- Journals/written records of behaviors
- Phone calls of inappropriate content
- Text messages between parent/parents and others
- Email correspondence between the parent/parents and others
- Facebook messages, posts
- Video, pictures and/or tape recordings of the other parent
- Voice mails

Scheduling

We expect parents to communicate regarding scheduled appointments. We further expect that the parent scheduling the session will show respect to the needs of the child to spend time with both parents and will refrain from specifically scheduling appointments as a way to take time away from the other parent. If one parent will bring the child while another parent will pick them up this must be communicated in advance of the session time.

Legal Proceedings

In some cases, one or both parents may decide to take legal action regarding custody of the child. Counseling and legal testimony are very different services and the counselor's goal first and foremost is to create a supportive, safe relationship with the child for the purpose of achieving counseling goals. Therefore, we will not make any recommendations or judgments about custody of your child. We recommend that parties who are disputing custody strongly consider participation in alternative forms of negotiation and conflict resolution, including mediation and custody evaluation, rather than settle a dispute in court.

We will communicate with legal professionals as required by law, but all professionals and parents should know that our responsibility is for confidentiality and protection of the counseling relationship, not to assist one parent in "winning" their case.

We cannot speak to one parent's attorney without the consent of the other parent. In most cases, this is not a productive idea and we recommend that there not be any communication between the counselor and attorney(s).

We are legally obligated to bring any concern regarding the child's health and safety to the attention of relevant authorities. When required by law, we shall communicate with legal professionals. When possible, should this necessity arise, we will advise all parties regarding our concerns.

If for any reason we are asked or required to participate in court proceedings, a fee of \$150/hour is required at the time of court involvement and for any preparation needed for the court proceedings.

By signing below, you agree to the following:

- I have read the statements above and agree to comply with the policies listed in this document.
- I understand that if I break any of the rules listed in this document, I may be asked to discontinue the counseling relationship.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Counselor Signature Date



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.014 Permission to Record

Revised Date: 05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: This policy and form outline the process to obtain approval in order to obtain permission for an audio/video recording of a biblical counseling session.

CONSENT TO RECORD COUNSELING SESSIONS

I, _____, hereby give consent to my assigned (client's name) counselor, _____, a **New Vision Biblical Counseling Ministry** _____ to: videotape _____ (initial if Yes) audiotape _____ (initial if Yes) our counseling sessions.

These recordings will be used to aid the counseling process and to gain further understanding of important aspects of counseling. I have discussed this procedure with the counselor, including the counseling center/church's policy on confidentiality. I understand that my full name will not be associated with this recording, nor my facial image be seen, and the recording will not go beyond those directly involved with the case or the review of my case for learning purposes. I understand that when my counseling is over, I may request that my recording be destroyed.

I understand that refusal to sign this form will not affect my eligibility for receiving biblical counseling services.

Signed _____ Date ____/____/____

Counselor _____ Date ____/____/____



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.015 Authorization for Release of Information

Revised Date:
05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: This policy and form outline the process of obtaining authorization to share or obtain confidential information with other individuals who are invested in the care and counseling of the counselee.

CONSENT FOR THE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

I, _____ authorize: _____
(Name of Client or Parent of Child) (Name of person releasing information)

To discuss with:

(person or agency to whom information is to be released)

(Address of person or agency to which information is to be released)

the following information: _____
(Extent or nature of information released)

For the following purpose(s): _____

I understand that my records are protected under the Federal and State Confidentiality Regulations and cannot be released without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations. I also understand that I may revoke this consent at any time unless action has already been taken based upon it and that in any event this consent expires automatically as described below.

This consent expires: (Specify date, event or condition)

I further acknowledge that the information to be released was fully explained to me and this consent is given of my own free will.

Date of release: _____
Signature of Client: _____
Signature of Client: _____
Signature of Witness/Counselor: _____



NEW VISION CARE MINISTRY

Policy Description: NVCM.016 Data Security and Records Retention

Revised Date:
05/28/2021

Applies To: NVBC Biblical Counselors

PURPOSE: This policy defines the rules and procedure designed to protect the confidentiality of counselee information. It further defines the procedures for retention, storage, and disposal of records and data.

New Vision Care Ministry counselors are responsible for ensuring that records are created, used, maintained, preserved, and destroyed in accordance with this data security policy.

Counselors are encouraged to keep session records electronically when possible. All other notes, documents, assessments produced concerning confidential counselee information shall be stored in locked filing cabinets when not in use. This ensures they are controlled and protected, preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

Counsees records shall be maintained according to the following guidelines.

RECORDS RETENTION, PROTECTION, AND DISPOSAL:

Consent to Counsel Form: All counsees are required to fill out an electronic consent to counsel form (counseling request) before being seen. This request and consent requires a digital signature agreeing to the guidelines of biblical counseling contained within. Counsees may obtain a copy of this electronic consent form upon request.

Personal Information Form (PIF): At times counsees are required to fill out an electronic Personal Information Form (PIF). A PIF is received initially by the care ministry intake coordinator and is then made available only to the assigned counselor. When a hard copy is produced the counselor agrees to store it in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. This ensures they are controlled and protected, preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

Personal Counseling Notes: Counselors at their discretion may keep personal session notes beyond those required by the database system. These hard copy documents shall be maintained by the respective counselor who agrees to store them in locked filing cabinets when not in use. This ensures they are controlled and protected, preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

Completion of Counseling: Personal counseling records are to be maintained, protected, and secured in locked filing cabinets for at least 3 years preventing any unauthorized access and maintaining counselee confidentiality.

APPENDIX 9

BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY SURVEY

Table A1 presents counseling practice data from a phone survey of ten biblical counseling ministries. This survey was performed to examine the data for representative biblical counseling ministries and their practices in terms of whom they serve (members versus nonmembers), request system and data collection, the fee or donation structure for counseling services, the compensation system for counselors, and the general data related to number and length of sessions provided to counselees.

Table A1. Biblical counseling ministry survey data

	1. Faith Bible Church	2. Life Pointe Church	3. Cross Pointe Church	4. Cornerstone Community Church	5. Bellevue Baptist Church	6. Capitol Hill Baptist	7. Bethel Church	8. New Vision Church	9. Providence	10. Bethany Community Church
Who We See	Member & Non Member	Member & Non Member	Member & Non Member	Member & Non Member	Member & Non Member	Member Only	Member & Non Member	Member & Non Member	Member & Non Member	Member & Non Member
Counseling Request (Forms)	Web Based PDI	Web Based PDI	Web Based PDI	Brief Inquiry Web Based PDI	Web Based PIF	Internal Request Only	Web Based PDI	Brief Inquiry Web Based PIF	Brief Inquiry Web Based PDI	Web Based PDI
Counseling Fees & Donations	Member or Non-Member Free	Fee Based Sliding Scale	Member or Non-Member Free	Member or Non-Member Donation Requested	Member or Non-Member Free	Members Free	Members Free Attenders \$25 Non-Affiliated \$50	Member or Non-Member Donation Requested	Members Free Non-Member Fee Based Sliding Scale	Member or Non-Member Free
Counselor Pay	BC = Vol BC Staff = Paid	BC = Paid BC Staff = Paid	BC Staff = Paid	Lay = Vol BC Staff = Paid	Lay = Vol BC = Paid BC Staff = Paid	Intern = Vol BC Staff = Paid	BC = Paid BC Staff = Paid	Lay = Vol BC = Paid \$35-\$55 BC Staff = Paid	BC = Paid %65 Fee BC Staff = Paid	Intern = Vol BC Staff = Paid
Number of Sessions	Not limited Varies	Approx. 8-10	Approx. 8-12	Not limited Approx. 6-12	Approx. 8-10	Not limited Approx. 6-8	Approx. 8-12	Approx. 8-12	Approx. 8-12	Approx. 10-15
Length of Sessions	50-60 min	50-60 min	50-60 min	50-60 min	50-60 min	50-60 min	50-60 min	50-60 min	60-90 min	60-120 min
Info Obtained	Counseling Admin	Counseling Director	Counseling Admin	Counseling Director	Counseling Director	Counseling Intern	Counseling Reception	Counseling Director	Counseling Director	Counseling Admin

1. Faith Lafayette—Lafayette, IN—<https://www.faithlafayette.org/counseling>—(765) 448-1555
2. LifePointe Church—Smyrna, TN—<https://lifepointchurch.org/care>—(615) 459-3311
3. CrossPointe Church – Cambridge, MN - <https://cp-church.org/need-counseling> - (763) 689-2667
4. Cornerstone Community—Mayfield Heights, OH—<https://cornerstonemayfield.org/ministry/Biblical-counseling>—(440) 442-6470
5. Bellevue Baptist Church—Memphis, TN—<https://www.bellevue.org/Biblical-counseling>—(901) 347-5830
6. Capitol Hill Baptist—Washington, DC—<https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/ministries/care-counseling>—(202) 543-6111
7. Bethel Church—Houston, TX—<https://bethelofhouston.com/ministries/counseling>—713.782.8948
8. New Vision Church—Murfreesboro, TN—<https://newvisionlife.com/care>—(615) 895-7167
9. Providence Biblical Counseling—Cape Coral, FL—<https://providenceBiblicalcounseling.org/>—(239) 549-0465
10. Bethany Community Church—Washington, IL—<https://www.bethanycommunitychurch.org/ministries/home.asp?id=548>—(309) 508-1755

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ABSTRACT

CREATING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY MANUAL FOR NEW VISION BAPTIST CHURCH IN MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

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This ministry project was designed to establish a manual to guide the biblical counseling ministry of New Vision Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Chapter 1 explains the context, rationale, purpose, goals, and methodology of the project. Chapter 2 explores the biblical and theological basis for the practice of biblical counseling. It further examines 2 Peter 1:1-11, proving that the knowledge of God is central to a philosophy of biblical counseling. It further examines 2 Timothy 3:10-17, affirming that the Word of God is sufficient for biblical counseling. Finally, it looks to Romans 15:14-16 to show that the people of God are fully equipped to care for the non-physical needs of others. Chapter 3 supports that developing a biblical counseling manual helps to ensure consistent practice within the counseling ministry. Chapter 4 details the steering committee formation, creation of policies and procedures for inclusion, drafting, editing, and approval of the policies and procedures, and final approval of the executive leadership team for the biblical counseling manual. Chapter 5 evaluates the purpose and goals of the project, examines the strengths and weaknesses, and offers suggestions for future implementation. Chapter 5 also offers a theological and personal reflection on the project.

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