



SOUL
CARE



*Let us then with confidence **draw near** to the throne of grace,
that we may receive **mercy** and find **grace** to help in time of need.*

HEBREWS 4:16

Overview of the Problem or Conflict

Hickory Grove Baptist Church

Name _____ Telephone # _____ Email _____ Date _____

This brief overview helps you clarify your understanding of your problems or conflicts, and your desires and expectations for counseling. It also helps us gain an initial understanding of you and your situation. Don't be too thorough or precise; you will have time during the session to explain or expand on your below. Your counselor will treat your answers as confidential (per our agreement form); you need not share them with a spouse or others.

1. Briefly state the problem(s) or conflict(s) you face: _____

2. For how long have you faced the problem(s)? _____

3. What have you done so far about the problem(s)? _____

4. How might you like your counselor to try to help you? _____

5. What issues or questions do you want to have resolved or answered? _____

6. What kind of person are you? How might you describe yourself? _____

7. List any other information about you or the problem(s) that might be helpful for us to know: _____

{Page 2 for marriage, family, or relationship counseling, or for conflict dispute resolution}

8. For marriage, family, or relationship counseling: In what specific ways do you think God might want *you* to change (be honest) and might want the other person(s) to change (be tentative; list names)?

<u>Person</u>	<u>Possible Changes Needed:</u>
⇒ <u>You</u>	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____
⇒ _____	1) _____ 2) _____
⇒ _____	1) _____ 2) _____
⇒ _____	1) _____ 2) _____
⇒ _____	1) _____ 2) _____

9. Optional: For dispute resolution concerns: What do you want from the other party? If there are legal matters involved (such as marital separation or divorce), what claim or remedy do you seek?

Personal Information Form (PIF)

Name _____ Gender _____ Age _____ Date _____

Address _____ Email _____
(Street/Box) (City) (State/Zip)

Daytime telephone _____ Evening telephone _____ Referred to us by _____

Section I – Marital Status/History

Status (check all that apply): Single Engaged Married Separated Divorced Widowed

Your Present Marriage (if applicable):

Spouse's name _____ Age _____ Spouse's occupation _____

Date of marriage _____ Place _____ Years married _____

If you and your spouse have ever separated, give dates and circumstances: _____

Rate your marriage (check: 0 terrible, 5 excellent): 0 1 2 3 4 5. What might make it better?

Children from Present Marriage (if applicable):

Name	Son/Daughter	Age	Where Live	Marital Status	Occupation
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Your Previous Marriages (or Relationships that Produced Children) (if applicable):

Name of Spouse/Partner	Dates	Children (Names and Ages)
1. _____	_____ to _____	_____
2. _____	_____ to _____	_____

Has your spouse been previously married? Yes No How many times? _____

Children (Names and Ages) _____

Section II – Occupational Status/History

Education (last level completed) _____ School/Institute _____

Occupation _____ Name of Company _____ City _____

Years there _____ Present income (est.) \$ _____ Work Telephone _____

Does your present work satisfy you? Explain: _____

What other job positions have you held in the past? _____

Section III – Family of Origin History

Parents: Name Age Where Live Marital Status Occupation

Father: _____

Mother: _____

Guardian: _____ Relation to you: _____ Dates: _____

Brothers/Sisters: (List in order from oldest to youngest; include yourself in that order):

Name Bro/Sis/Step Age Where Live Marital Status Occupation

Family “Climate”: Describe your home life during your childhood and teen years: _____

Indicate any problems you experienced as a child or teen:

Family problems School problems Emotional/behavior problems Legal problems
Medical problems Social problems Drug/alcohol problems Other: _____

Psychological Problems: Have you, or any parent or brother or sister, been hospitalized or received professional help for “psychological” problems? Specify person, dates, and problem: _____

Section IV – Religious Status/History

Past Denominational Background _____ Present Denom. Preference _____

Church Presently Attending _____ City _____

Member: Yes No Average # of times per month you attend _____

Pastor _____ Telephone _____ Permission to contact him: Yes No

Do you believe in God? Yes No Unsure

Do you consider yourself “saved?” Yes No Unsure Don’t understand the term

How frequently do you pray? Often Occasionally Rarely Never

How frequently do you read the Bible? Often Occasionally Rarely Never

What is your view of the Bible? _____

Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven? Yes No Unsure

Suppose you were to die and stand before God and he were to say to you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?," what do you think you might say to God? _____

Why do you desire *Christ-centered, biblical* counseling? _____

Explain any recent changes in your religious life: _____

Section V – Medical Status/History

Rate your health: Very Good Good Average Poor Recent Problems? _____

Date of last medical exam: _____ Report _____

Your Physician _____ City _____

List any prescription medications you take:

Medication	Treatment for	When began	Daily dosage	Prescribing Physician
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List over-the-counter medications you currently take (diet pills, laxatives, birth control pills, cold and allergy medicines, aspirin, etc.): _____

List any surgeries that required anesthesia: _____

Average daily caffeine consumption? (coffee, tea, chocolate, stimulants, caffeinated soft drinks, etc.) _____

How often do you drink alcoholic beverages? Often Occasionally Rarely Never

How often do you struggle with the temptation to use illegal drugs? Often Occasionally Rarely Never

Average # of hours of sleep each night? ____ Is it restful? _____

Describe any recent changes in your sleep patterns: _____

Have you had any of the following physical problems? Please check.

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Heart Problems | Hypoglycemia | Menstrual Irregularities |
| Liver Problems | Lung Problems | Hallucinations |
| Kidney Problems | Allergies | Change in Sexual Drive |
| Head Injury/Concussion | Cancer | Problems Walking |
| Stroke | Incoordination | Unusual Hair Loss |
| Seizures | Anorexia or Bulimia | Rashes |
| Brain Tumor | Visual Problems | Memory Problems |
| Multiple Sclerosis | Sensory Distortions | Episodic Disorientation |
| Parkinson's Disease | Weakness | Personality Change |
| Blackouts | Fatigue | Deja Vu |
| Amnesia | Heat/Cold Sensitivity | Changes in Consciousness |
| Tremors | Bowel/Bladder Problems | Headaches |
| Thyroid Dysfunction | Nausea or Vomiting | Dizziness |
| Diabetes | Recent Weight Change | Stiff Neck |
| High Blood Pressure | Impotence | Physical Changes |
| Constant Hunger | Food Cravings | Fever |
| Pneumonia | Speech Problems | Panic Attacks |

OTHER? _____

Have you or others noticed any changes in your personality (anger, mood swings, withdrawal), your thinking and memory, or your work habits? _____

Section VI – Legal Actions (if applicable, for example, in conflict or separation/divorce cases)

If you have talked with an attorney about your problem, or intend to, please provide the following info:

Attorney _____ Firm _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Date and purpose _____

Has a legal action been filed or is one likely to be filed in this situation? No Yes (If yes, give dates and describe action below.)

Other information that might be helpful for us to know about you (attach separate sheet if needed)

What Is Biblical Counseling? A Brief Overview

written by Robert D. Jones

What is biblical counseling? Let me describe it by unpacking both key terms.

First, biblical counseling is *counseling*. It helps specific individuals, couples, or families in their specific situations to know Christ better and handle life in God-pleasing ways. It is conversational—interactive and person-specific in ways that go beyond public preaching or teaching. In this sense, it is simply *personal* ministry, the ministry by one person to another person. We might also simply call it discipleship, or intensive, remedial, or problem-oriented discipleship. More broadly, it is nothing short of true biblical friendship, or “intentionally helpful conversations” (David Powlison), as pictured in passages like Proverbs 20:5; 27:5-6; Romans 12:15; 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; James 5:19-20; and others.¹

As a process of personal ministry, it shares with secular counseling approaches basic concerns about relational dynamics, interviewing, listening skills, personal warmth and care, empathy, confidentiality, etc. But it does not necessarily share their limitations of clinical detachment, dual relationship avoidance, financial burdens, and other “professionalistic” trappings (even when biblical counseling is done by specially trained professionals). While biblical counseling is the task of pastors, it is also the domain of all of God’s people—wise parents, spouses, roommates, neighbors, and brothers and sisters in your church.

Second, biblical counseling is *biblical*. Its truth source is God’s inerrant, inspired Word, and its focus is on that Bible’s main thrust, namely, Jesus Christ and his life-changing, redeeming work for us and in us. In that sense, biblical counseling is *Christ-centered* or *Christ-driven*.² In true biblical counseling the Bible is more than a grid, filter, control, or standard (all passive images); the Bible actively *drives* both theory and practice. The concepts and methodology are not merely consistent with, controlled by, or “prooftexted” from the Bible; they *emerge from* the Bible itself as one interprets it accurately.³ We build our counseling on a biblical view of such key matters as . . .

- The triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—and his character, ways, commands, and promises
- People and their problems, including their beliefs and motives as well as their behavior
- How people change, and God’s provisions for such change in the gospel
- The centrality of the church and God’s equipped leaders and members in the change process

At least four convictions underlie the practice of biblical counseling:

1) *We present the Lord Jesus Christ as the crucified, risen Savior who, through his Word and his Spirit, can help us handle our personal and relational problems.* Jesus alone provides the forgiving mercy (through his saving death and resurrection), the practical wisdom (in the Bible), and the enabling power (through his Spirit) we need to know and please God in our daily living. Biblical counseling is eminently Christ-centered and Christ-driven, exalting the Christ of the Bible.

2) *We use the Bible as our God-given tool to diagnose, explain, and solve our problems.* As God’s Word, the Bible alone provides true, thorough, authoritative, and sufficient wisdom and direction for every

¹ Prov. 20:5, *The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.* 27:5-6, *Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.* Rom. 12:15, *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.* 15:14, *I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.* Gal. 6:1-2, *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.* Col. 3:16, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.* Jas. 5:19-20, *My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*

² Unfortunately, in our day the adjective “Christian” is sometimes used by some to denote counseling approaches that are not truly Christian (thus, not biblical) in their understanding of Christ and his person, work, teaching, etc.

³ As in footnote 2 above, some who call their counseling “biblical” do not handle the Bible in exegetically-sound ways.

life situation we face, and it is richly superior to all human wisdom and the competing counsel of secular and Christian integrationist psychologies.

3) *We reflect the love, concern, and compassion of Jesus our Shepherd and Counselor.* Biblical counseling is a caring process of Christlike love for struggling sheep. Qualities like compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience mark our ministry of God's Word.

4) *We address both the inward and outward aspects of our problems to bring thorough and lasting godly change.* Biblical counseling is not shallow, superficial, or simplistic. Scripture alone uncovers and solves our heart (beliefs and motives) and behavior (words and actions) struggles.

In one sense, biblical counseling is simply the intentional, consistent, application of historic evangelical Christian truth—the gospel—to the realm of personal ministry and human problems.

In our day we are witnessing a growing literature of books, journals, and pamphlets that reflect the theory and practice of biblical counseling. A useful starter volume is *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views* (IVP, 2010), in which David Powlison presents the Biblical Counseling position in contrast to competing views. Powlison also edits the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (www.ccef.org) and has assembled two collections of his essays in *Seeing With New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition Through the Lens of Scripture* and *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community*. On a popular level, books by Paul David Tripp,⁴ Ed Welch,⁵ and others⁶ show how the Bible speaks profoundly to the complexity of human problems.

Institutionally, we see an increasing number of churches of all sizes biblically counseling their members and reaching their communities this way. We can look at biblical counseling seminaries like mine (Southeastern, www.sebts.edu), plus networking, training, and certifying organizations like the Biblical Counseling Coalition (www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org), the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (www.ccef.org) and the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (www.biblicalcounseling.com). Related organizations like Peacemaker Ministries (www.peacemaker.net) use biblical counseling methods to assist and equip Christians and their churches to handle conflict biblically.

It is an exciting day for those committed to biblical counseling. As other evangelical Christians come to see the bankruptcy of integrating the pure wisdom of God's life-changing Word with human notions of secular psychologies, we are finding a new openness among God's people to the power of Scripture to speak richly and robustly to our human struggle.

⁴ *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide for Parenting Teenagers; War of Words: Getting to the Heart of Your Communication Struggles; Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change; Lost in the Middle: Midlife and the Grace of God; How People Change* (with Timothy Lane); and *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making* (with Timothy Lane).

⁵ *Blame It on the Brain? Distinguishing Chemical Imbalances, Brain Disorders, and Disobedience; When People Are Big and God Is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man; Addictions – A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel; and Depression: A Stubborn Darkness.*

⁶ I have sought to do the same in my *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem* and *Pursuing Peace in All Your Relationships* and my other published booklets and articles. See the below Biblical Counseling Coalition, CCEF, NANC, and Peacemaker Ministries websites for other recommended books, conferences, training, etc. Besides the above authors, consider also books by Mike Emlet, Tedd Tripp, Elyse Fitzpatrick, Steve Viars, and others.

Biblical Counseling Agreement

Soul Care

Thank you for your interest in church-based, Christ-centered, biblical counseling and for giving us an opportunity to serve you. We look forward to helping you find God's help and hope for the personal or relational problems you are facing. The following information will help you further understand our ministry and will serve as an agreement between us.

I. General Comments:

Your counselor is a member of Hickory Grove Baptist Church and is ministering under the authority and direction of the church's pastor. He or she is a church-trained biblical counselor, not a licensed psychologist, therapist, or psychiatrist, and offers Christ-centered, biblically-based counseling, not psychological counseling. If you have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions, you should seek advice from an independent professional. Your counselor will seek to help you apply God's Word to your life, based on your counselor's understanding of God's Word.

Your counselor may have one or more church members or leaders present in the sessions to assist him or her, observe him or her for ministry training purposes, or to serve you as mentors. These individuals will observe the same standards of care and confidentiality as your counselor.

You or your counselor may choose to discontinue counseling at any time, without explanation.

II. Making the Process Most Effective:

To increase the effectiveness of the ministry process, your counselor asks the following of you:

1. *Be committed to biblical counseling* as described on this sheet and any other accompanying materials your counselor gives. Come to each session with a humble spirit, seeking to learn how God wants you to handle your problems based on his Word.
2. *Attend each scheduled session.* Allow 50-60 minutes for a typical session.
3. *Be as open and honest as you can.* At the same time, your counselor realizes that talking about your problems may be very difficult for you and that your trust in him or her may take time to develop.
4. *Be patient*—your problems did not develop in a day. It may take your counselor several sessions to obtain a good understanding of your situation. It is vital for him or her to carefully listen and gather needed information and to build understanding and trust with you.
5. *Complete any growth assignments given, and review and pray over the matters discussed during previous sessions.* Your counselor will give you assignments that fit our counseling aims and will help you make progress between sessions. Failure to complete them may indicate lack of commitment to the process, and may result in discontinuation of the process.
6. *Attend our Sunday worship service each week.* Regular participation in a Christ-centered, biblical church like ours provides you with vital complements to our counseling: God-centered worship, solid Bible teaching with practical life application, pastoral care, and meaningful friendships with other people needing—and learning—God's grace together.

III. Confidentiality and Legal Concerns:

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling, and your counselor will carefully guard the information you entrust to him or her. We desire as much as possible to protect your privacy.

At the same time, you must realize that this confidentiality is only within the limits of biblical and civil law. Your counselor cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality in every situation. For example, to ensure that you are receiving consistent counsel and support, your counselor might need to discuss your

situation with appropriate leaders of Hickory Grove Baptist Church, or, in some cases, with your attorney, if you have one. Furthermore, he or she might need to divulge information to appropriate civil authorities if there is indication that you or someone else might otherwise be harmed. In counseling minor children, your counselor might need to divulge information to parents or legal guardians.

Your counselor also asks you to agree not to discuss our communications with people who do not have a necessary interest in the counseling process. In addition, where your situation might involve legal issues, you must agree to treat all dealings with him or her in regard to this counseling as settlement negotiations, which means they will be inadmissible in a court of law or for legal discovery. Furthermore, you must agree that you will not try to force your counselor to divulge any information acquired during the counseling process or to testify in any legal proceeding related to the process.

In the unlikely event of a conflict between you and your counselor, all parties must seek to resolve it in a biblical manner, through discussion, and, if necessary, through mediation and arbitration, according to the *Rules of Procedure* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, available at Peacemaker Ministries' website (www.peacemaker.net). For further information about confidentiality, see the *Guidelines for Christian Conciliation* at the same website.

* * * * *

Agreement by Counselee(s): If you have any questions about the above matters, please talk with your counselor or our church leaders. If you agree to these terms, please sign below and return this sheet to your counselor before or at the beginning of your first meeting.

I have read and understand the above guidelines and find them acceptable.

Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____
Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____
Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____

Agreement by Others Present in the Session:

I have read and understand the above guidelines and I will observe them in the counseling process.

Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____
Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____
Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve Jesus by helping you find and apply his answers to your problems. May God encourage, bless, and empower you in these coming days!