

Biblical Counseling
Week 1 Spring 2026

ACBC Theology and Counseling Exam –

24. What role should the church play in the counseling process? (Theology Exam)
10. Describe the role you believe church discipline should play in biblical counseling (Counseling Exam)

Spring Semester Overview (See Handout)

24. What role should the church play in the counseling process?

Romans 15:14 - And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

I. ACBC Doctrine - The Centrality of the Church.

We believe the church is the primary context for soul care, and that we must recover the church's responsibility to provide care for sufferers and sinners. Therefore, we encourage and support the indispensable ministry of biblical counseling as an expression of church life.

II. Why Biblical Counseling in the Church

God's Word equips us to carry out that ministry to which He calls us. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*" Biblical counseling must be part of the overall ministry of the church. Therefore, counseling is part of the "every good work" of the church (Kyle Gangel, ACBC, 2024).

Counseling is about understanding the human condition and problems and helping to resolve these. The church is the way He has designed to minister to people using His Word. Counseling, like preaching and teaching is applying God's Word to people's lives in such a way that it moves them to change to be more like Christ. It must have the support of the church. It must be under



the authority of the church. It must have the goal of people being reached becoming involved in ministry through the church.

“The church—as the Bible defines it—contains an exquisite blending of leadership and mutuality, of specialized roles and general calling, of truth and love, of wisdom for living, and of flexibility to meet the problems that sinners and sufferers face. The people of God, functioning as the people of God, provide the ideal and desirable institution to fix what ails us.” (David Powlison, Speaking Truth in Love [Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2005], 110.)

III. How Did We Get Here?

- The home of soul care is properly located in the church. This has always been God's intent, though the church has often failed to follow it. Too often the church has abdicated its role in shepherding God's children, giving the work to other authorities.

- The failure of the Church - The church drifted away from pastoral counseling with the rising popularity of emerging psychology and psychiatry in the early 20th century.

- Worldly perspectives, theories, and pragmatism allowed to influence how the church defined soul care and the ailments common to mankind. “Whatever defines the problem also sets the parameters for the solution.”

- A breakdown in society - the religion of secular humanism in 20th century.

- The emergence of the Biblical Counseling Movement - Jay Adams: 1970s *Competent to Counsel*.

IV. Reclaim the church as a culture of care.

- Sufficiency of Scripture defines both the problems of mankind and the solutions and is indispensable for soul care.

- A proper ecclesiology is required to understand how soul care is biblically designed to happen. Soul care is not a periodic task of the church but must be woven into everything the church does.



- There may be an occasional need for specialized care, but the church is to embrace that each follower of Christ is called to counsel according to God's Word wherever He has placed them.

- The church must again be the primary place where those who struggle can receive lasting hope and healing.

- Must present the church as the primary haven for answers to deep-seated human problems. God has designed every function of the church to be an integral part of soul care. God has provided the church with the necessary resources for us to care well for one another. Prayer, the Word, the work of the Holy Spirit, and Christian community are God's provisions to lead all of us to Christ even those with the deepest struggles.

- Counselors, ministers, and lay leaders are empowered to have confidence in God's purpose for the church, the power of his Spirit, and the sufficiency of his Word for soul care.
The Church as a Culture of Care by T. Dale Johnson Jr.

V. ACBC Standards of Conduct.

The Commitment to the Church - The church is the body of Jesus Christ, whom he has purchased with his own blood, and has commissioned to advance his kingdom on earth. Because the church is the pillar and buttress of God's truth, it is indispensable in the ministry of counseling that seeks to communicate that truth. Biblical counselors do their work with the conviction that biblical change is ultimately impossible apart from the full ministry of the church.

A. Biblical counselors must be committed to the priority of the church in accomplishing their counseling ministry. Biblical counselors will place themselves under the leadership of a church and pursue the accountability of that leadership as it relates to their life, doctrine, and counseling practices.

B. Biblical counselors must pursue the closest possible connections between church accountability and the counseling centers where they serve. Whether the counseling ministry is formally part of the church or whether church leadership holds the center accountable through board involvement or personal accountability of individual counselors, biblical counselors know that the ultimate faithfulness of a counseling center is connected to its organizational proximity to Christ's body.



C. Biblical counselors must seek to involve their counselees in a faithful church. Counseling ultimately seeks, by divine grace, to aid counselees to conform their life to behavior that glorifies God. Biblical counselors understand Christians best grow in grace when they are actively involved in the church.

D. Biblical counselors must seek out, for themselves, and those they counsel, churches, which will faithfully discharge the command of Christ to show care through corrective church discipline. Such discipline is a central way that God cares for his flock, and protects the purity of the church.

Matthew 16:16-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; Eph. 2:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:15; Titus 1:10; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25

VI. Biblical Counseling In the Local Church – Romans 15:14

Levels of the Ministry of the Word:

- Pulpit Ministry/Public and Proclamation ministry – Preaching ministry of the Word.
- Small group exhortation ministry of the Word.
- Personal ministry of the Word = Biblical counseling and intensive discipleship

VII. Benefits of church-based biblical counseling

Christ-centered, biblical counseling provided for the members and visitors of a local church, done by the trained leaders and members, with the goal of helping those people follow Christ and function as growing members of that congregation.

Thirteen benefits of church-based biblical counseling. A church-based setting provides -

- The direct oversight of God-ordained shepherds.
- Consistency of private counseling and the public preaching/teaching of God's Word.
- God-centered, Christ-exalting worship.
- Christ's ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Formative and restorative/redemptive church discipline.
- The fellowship, encouragement, and example of mature fellow believers.



Existing facilities and office space.
Immediate opportunities to serve others.
Resource people for auxiliary help.
Benevolence assistance, including financial help or physical labor.
Members' homes for counseling, discipleship, and small group life.
Greater legal protection.
All should be offered free of charge!

VIII. Common Grace: ACBC Truth in Love Podcast manuscript (see references):

The Lord is good to all and His mercy is over all that He has made.

Doctrine of common grace - God's mercy, His kindness toward all people. God's non-saving, undeserved kindness that He shows to all people. It's manifested through the delay of His final judgment, the restraint of sin and the bestowal of these external blessings and creation.

Ps 145:9
Gen 3:15
Matthew 5
2 Thess 3
2 Peter 3

Nothing salvific in nature or even a precursor of something that is salvific.

Common grace is displaying the glory of our God, in His mercy and kindness toward all. His delay of final judgment, His restraint of sin, His bestowing of external blessings.

No body of knowledge provided in secular psychology, nor insights, interventions, applications that biblical counselors must harvest in order to care for people holistically

Some claiming to be within the bounds of biblical counseling are wanting to use common grace to say that common grace is now giving the theological justification for this insight, intervention, redemption in secular theories and the justification for doing it is that common grace provided those insights, those resources.



No secular knowledge, insights, interventions, nor applications that biblical counselors must harvest to care for people holistically

Some “biblical counselors” say that common grace gives theological justification for insight, intervention, and redemption in secular theories. Claim that common grace provided those insights and those resources.

Suggestion - the unbeliever knows through enhancement or empowerment or revelation as an operation of the Holy Spirit. Does the Holy Spirit empower unbelievers to discover things that we need to turn to and use in our counseling care of souls?

Noetic effect of sin on the mind - “man can use his mind adequately but not properly,” Man’s rationality is stained by sin. Unbelievers can make observations and understand aspects of creation. But those observations are never neutral, and when they move into interpretation they’re based upon a worldview and presuppositions that are antithetical and inconsistent with a biblical worldview.

Caution necessary about what is theoretical and what is genuinely scientific information. Christians can be enchanted with secular psychology and the proposals of modern psychological theories that are not validated science. Must resist making ourselves available and enchanted with theories still radically debated among seculars themselves (EMDR, attachment theory, etc.).

10. Describe the role you believe church discipline should play in biblical counseling (Counseling Exam)

Matthew 18:12-20

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

2 Corinthians 7:10-13

Galatians 6:1-10

I. Purpose of Church Discipline.

The underlying heart attitude of Church Discipline is that of love and a sincere desire to reconcile a fellow believer to a righteous, God-glorifying manner of living. Church Discipline is concerned primarily with an individual believer, although concern for the church at large is also a significant factor.



Also, Church Discipline is focused on maintaining the unity of the church. The church is Christ's bride, and she is to be perfect and holy (Eph 5:25-27).

"Without peace, learning is impossible. Education depends on order. That is one of the major reasons why in the recent past, and even up to the present, there has been such poor learning in our schools--peace, a chief factor in the learning situation, has been missing. Where there is no peace, there is no learning; where there is no discipline, there is no order; where there is no order there is no peace. Discipline is, at its heart and core, good order."

"Church discipline is not intended to get rid of anybody. At every point in the disciplinary process, the whole concern is to bring about reconciliation."

"The purpose of church discipline is to win others back to the Lord and to bring about reconciled conditions between brothers."

Jay Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline: A Right and Privilege of Every Church Member.*

II. ACBC Standards of Conduct

The Commitment to the Church

C. Biblical counselors must seek to involve their counselees in a faithful church. Counseling ultimately seeks, by divine grace, to aid counselees to conform their life to behavior that glorifies God. Biblical counselors understand Christians best grow in grace when they are actively involved in the church.

D. Biblical counselors must seek out, for themselves, and those they counsel, churches, which will faithfully discharge the command of Christ to show care through corrective church discipline. Such discipline is a central way that God cares for his flock, and protects the purity of the church.

III. SMCC Constitution and By Laws:

D. Restoration – SMCC will remain committed to the principles of biblically-functioning community, which include a commitment to confronting both personal and corporate sin, so that the church of Jesus Christ—His bride—will be prepared for her wedding day and be without



“spot or wrinkle”, “holy and blameless” (Eph 5:27). Its members will be exhorted to confront sin personally through confession, repentance and submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (I Sam 7:1-3, I John 1:9). Children will be exhorted to honor their parents and to submit to the authority and discipline of the same; likewise, parents will be exhorted and expected to shepherd, discipline and restore their children in a biblical manner (Ex 20:12, Eph 6:1-4). Corporately, the principles and process described in the gospel of Matthew (Matt 18:15-20) will be followed for adult members—those age eighteen (18) and older—as described below:

1.. Private Communication

2a. Semi-Private Communication

2b. Leadership Involvement

3. Open Communication - *The reason for church discipline is not necessarily the sin issue that began the process, but rather the sin of unrepentance. If the individual is unwilling to reconcile and repent, it's that sin that necessitates the progression of church discipline. May not be appropriate to tell the whole church the specifics of the initial sin issue – general terms suffice. Announcing the lack of repentance and an unwillingness to reconcile will suffice.* (Adams).

4. Disciplinary Action

Adams “*If all this fails, he is removed from the midst of the church, and Satan and the world are providentially utilized by God to bring about repentance. Thus, in Christ's plan for discipline an ever-increasing number of persons become involved in the helping process.*” *The fundamental goals with this step in the process of church discipline are to:*

(a) allow this individual to indulge his sinful flesh to the point of his own fleshly destruction in the hopes that he will come to his sense and repent of his sinful ways,

(b) to remove this disobedient member from the congregation to maintain the integrity of the church body and promote holiness from within, and

(c) to serve as a warning to the rest of the congregation of where the path of transgressions lead.

4a. Continuing Authority and Restoration

IV. SMCC Membership Covenant: See handout

V. SMCC Terms of Counseling Agreement: See Handout



SMCC Members

VI. The Ultimate Goal of Church Discipline: RESTORATION

Restoring back to fellowship 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

VII. Resources

1. Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) <https://biblicalcounseling.com/about/>
2. Shades Mountain Community Church (SMCC) <https://smcc.church/our-doctrine>
3. Kyle Gangel, ACBC, 2024, <https://biblicalcounseling.com/resource-library/articles/the-kind-of-church-in-which-biblical-counseling-thrives/?srsltid=AfmBOopc0tqSYCilM4FkEX5O3HePKsB8QPBdqNklCor7RES6FsEyTzF>
4. T. Dale Johnson Jr. *The Church as a Culture of Care* New Growth Press, 2021
5. Dr. Robert Jones - <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2016/02/15/thirteen-benefits-of-church-based-biblical-counseling-part-1/part-2>
6. ACBC, Common Grace, Truth in Love Podcast, https://biblicalcounseling.com/resource-library/podcast-episodes/implications-of-common-grace/?srsltid=AfmBOoriErt1f5NWglAoRlcT3eYml_dSyRlmUT4o-QMB_sgG-xCulf7x
7. Jay Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline*.
8. Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption*





1/14/2026 – Kevin
- Biblical Counseling Class Overview
- Role of the church in the counseling process (continue Question 24 on Theology exam)
10. Describe the role you believe church discipline should play in biblical counseling.
1/21/2026 – Brian
7. Explain the doctrine of the Trinity and provide its biblical basis (Theology exam).
1/28/2026 - Dr, Eyrich
Subject - TBD
2/4/2026 - Butch
1. What issues should be covered in an introductory session with a counselee regardless of the counseling issue? Explain the importance of each issue.
7. List several reasons for concluding a counseling case. For each, describe how you would go about ending the counseling.
2/11/2026 - Kevin
2. Describe at least six biblical strategies to develop a caring relationship with your counselees. Clearly identify each strategy and ground its use in specific passages of Scripture, explaining its practical utility in building a relationship.
2/18/2026 - Brian
11. Describe what you believe to be the role of confidentiality in biblical counseling. What kind of commitment to confidentiality should a biblical counselor make? What biblical and practical considerations limit confidentiality? What is the responsibility of a biblical counselor to report to civil authorities on matters of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and other illegal matters? How should biblical counselors cooperate with the authorities about these things?
2/25/2026 - Kevin
3. Provide a biblical theology of emotions. What role should a counselor allow a counselee's emotions to play in counseling? How can one tell the difference between sinful emotions and righteous emotions? How would you use Scripture to help a counselee change improper emotions?



3/4/2026 – Brian
4. Provide a biblical definition of anger. Describe manifestations of anger in both the inner and outer man. Explain the biblical factors that drive anger. Detail several biblical strategies to respond to anger
3/11/2026 - Butch
5. Provide a biblical definition of depression. Describe manifestations of depression in both the inner and outer man. Explain the biblical factors that drive depression. Detail several biblical strategies to respond to depression.
3/18/2026 – Kevin
6. Provide a biblical definition of anxiety and fear. Describe manifestations of anxiety and worry in both the inner and outer man. Explain the biblical factors that drive anxiety and fear. Detail several biblical strategies to respond to anxiety and fear.
3/25/2026 -
Spring Break – No Class
4/1/2026 – Brian
8. Describe in biblical categories the operations of the devil. Is there a difference between Believers and Unbelievers regarding the activity of the devil? What is a biblical methodology for responding to the demonic in the context of counseling?
4/8/2026 - Butch
9. Define, describe, and provide a biblical evaluation of each of the following: 12 step recovery programs, cognitive-behavioral therapy, the biogenic theory of mood disorders, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy
4/15/2026 – Kevin (Lead), Brian, Butch
Case Study – Tim and Emily
4/22/2026 – Kevin, Brian (Lead), Butch
Case Study – Erik/Erika
4/29/2026 – Kevin, Brian, Butch (Lead)
Case Study - Sarah



SMCC Constitution and By Laws Extract

Article IV, Membership – The members of SMCC will be adult believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who take the Word of God as their final rule of faith and practices. The Council of Elders will oversee all membership processes and activities.

- A. **Qualifications** – Every candidate for membership will be at least sixteen (16) years of age. He or she will be expected to profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and demonstrate evidence of regeneration and wholehearted belief in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.
- B. **Admission** – Each candidate for membership—including children reaching age sixteen (16) who desire to become members of SMCC, former members who desire to re-establish membership, and inactive members of SMCC who desire to restore their membership to active status—must:
 1. Attend a membership information meeting.
 2. Meet with an Elder and give positive testimony to faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord as well as a confidence that God has directed them to SMCC for the purpose of biblical community.
 3. Sign and acknowledge to an Elder their agreement with the Membership Covenant contained herein.
 4. Be presented to the congregation by the Council of Elders for membership.
- C. **Privileges** – Every member may attend regular meetings of SMCC and any SMCC entity defined herein, vote in any matter put before the membership for decision by voting, meet with the Council of Elders or any staff member to discuss issues of concern, make nominations for Elder or Deacon, enjoy the shelter and fellowship of the body of Christ as represented by SMCC, worship, grow in faith, and serve in ministry.
- D. **Restoration** – SMCC will remain committed to the principles of biblically-functioning community, which include a commitment to confronting both personal and corporate sin, so that the church of Jesus Christ—His bride—will be prepared for her wedding day and be without “spot or wrinkle”, “holy and blameless” (Eph 5:27). Its members will be exhorted to confront sin personally through confession, repentance and submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (I Sam 7:1-3, I John 1:9). Children will be exhorted to honor their parents and to submit to the authority and discipline of the same; likewise, parents will be exhorted and expected to shepherd, discipline and restore their children in a biblical manner (Ex 20:12, Eph 6:1-4). Corporately, the principles and process described in the gospel of Matthew (Matt 18:15-20) will be followed for adult members—those age eighteen (18) and older—as described below:
 1. **Private Communication** – Should a caring member become aware that another adult member has fallen into sin, then he is instructed to confront that member privately for the purpose of exposing the sin and calling said member to address it in a biblical manner. This should always be preceded by prayer and a careful personal examination of one’s self (Matt 7:1-5). The confrontation is to be performed with a meek and humble attitude (Gal 6:1) and with the goal of restoration. While the caring member may seek biblical counsel or coaching from



an Elder or Deacon, he will be encouraged not to reveal names or specifics so that the opportunity for repentance and restoration can remain private.

2. **Semi-Private Communication** – Should the confronted member refuse to repent of his sin, the caring member is instructed to again confront the member in question but this time accompanied by one or two other members who are familiar with the situation. The purposes of this second step will be to more clearly establish and confirm the facts of the matter, to verify that a second call to repentance has, in fact, occurred, and to expand the weight of accountability and influence toward the confronted member.
3. **Leadership Involvement** – If the confronted member again refuses to repent, then the caring member along with the witnesses who participated in the second confrontation as described in Paragraph IV.D.2 will bring the issue to the Council of Elders for their consideration. It is the responsibility of the Council of Elders to evaluate the situation, to ensure that the first two steps of the process have been biblically carried out, and to make sure that the member in question is aware that the restoration process will continue to the steps of Open Communication and, if necessary, Disciplinary Action unless he repents appropriately of his sin.
4. **Open Communication** – Should the confronted member refuse to address his sin in a manner that reflects biblical repentance even after the clear establishment of the facts by the Elders, then Matthew 18 instructs that the church, i.e. the membership of SMCC, is to be informed of the issue in a group setting (I Cor 5:4) and empowered to participate in the restoration process by praying for the confronted member and admonishing him toward repentance (2 Thes 3:15). This step of the restoration process, given that it is more corporate in nature, will be led by and performed under the authority and leadership of the Council of Elders.
5. **Disciplinary Action** – If the confronted member still refuses to address his sin in a manner that reflects biblical repentance despite the collective influence of the entire SMCC membership, then the Council of Elders will terminate his membership in SMCC. The former member, now living under the discipline of the church, will not be allowed to participate in services and will not be invited to enjoy fellowship with active members of SMCC. The congregation will be instructed to communicate only for the purposes of expressing love and an admonition toward repentance (2 Thes 3:15). The Council of Elders may, at its discretion, bar the former member from being present on SMCC property.
6. **Continuing Authority and Restoration** – The duty and authority of SMCC to exercise church discipline may not be affected by a withdrawal from membership by a member whose actions occurred while an active member. Furthermore, the Council of Elders is authorized to communicate the disciplinary matter to other churches whenever the person being disciplined has not repented, has not been restored, and is thought to be participating in another church without disclosure of the disciplinary matter. These aspects of continuing restoration will be set out explicitly in the Membership Covenant executed by members.

E. Termination and Review of Membership

1. Membership in SMCC will be terminated as a result of the member's death, a written request from the member, a requested recommendation in the form of a letter to another church of his choice, or as a result of church discipline....



SMCC Membership Covenant Extract

Obligation of SMCC to its Members

- We covenant that to the best of our knowledge your Elders and Deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4).
- We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-5).
- We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (Jas 5:14).
- We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17-18).
- We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
- We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5; Gal 6:1).
- We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12).

My Obligation to SMCC as a Member

- I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps 119; 2 Tim 3:16-17).
- I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, communion, SMCC community, service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Ps 105:1-2; 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb 10:23-25; 2 Pet 1:3).
- I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Prov 3:9-10; Rom 12:1-2; Gal 5:22-26; Eph 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom 12:1-8; 2 Cor 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Pet 4:10-11).
- I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (Heb 13:17).
- I covenant to submit to discipline by God through the Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Ps 141:5; Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:1-5; 2 Cor 2:5-8; Gal 6:1-5 8; 1 Tim 5:20; 2 Tim 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb 12:5-11; Rev 2:5-7, 14-25). I understand and agree that the duty and authority of SMCC to exercise church discipline for actions that occur while I am an active member of SMCC will not be affected by my withdrawal from membership and, further, that the Council of Elders is authorized to communicate the specifics of a



disciplinary matter related to me to the leaders of other churches as necessary to fulfill SMCC's discipline and restoration responsibilities toward me and the body of Christ as determined in the sole discretion of the Council of Elders.

- I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (2 Cor 5:17); I will practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography, and fornication (Job 31:1; Prov 5; Rom 13:12-14; 1 Cor 6:9-7:16; Heb 13:4); I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible, my Elders, and my conscience dictate (1 Cor 8:7; Gal 5:19-21). Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to the Lord and to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10).

My Commitment to the Mission of SMCC

- As prescribed by the Holy Scripture, the chief duty of the church—the body and bride of Christ—is to honor and glorify God by worship and by committed, obedient love. The chief pursuits by which the church brings this glory to God are the edifying of itself (Eph 4:11-16), the purifying of itself (Eph 5:26-27), the educating and equipping of its members (Matt 28:19; Eph 4:11-12), the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world (Matt 28:19; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8), acting as a restraining and enlightening force in the world (Matt 5:13-16; 2 Thes 2:6-7; Phil 2:16), and by promoting all that is good (Gal 6:10). I commit to this duty and these pursuits as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus.
- I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of SMCC and is an acknowledgment of my submission to the Elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify SMCC leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding SMCC.



SMCC Counseling Ministry

Terms of Counseling Agreement

(Must be read & signed by the counselee(s) & counselor BEFORE the first counseling session)

Pastoral & Lay Biblical Counseling Ministry

The Biblical Counseling Ministry at Shades Mountain Community Church is a non-profit, faith based ministry emphasizing Biblical hope & solutions for life's challenges, obstacles, suffering and sin. SMCC offers Biblical counseling to troubled individuals, families and marriages, and premarital counseling. SMCC's Biblical counselors are ordained ministers, volunteer seminary-trained counselors, and volunteer lay counselors with biblical and counseling training, experience and supervision. Counselors apply the principles of "other person-centered" Biblical Counseling doctrine (Phil. 2:1-5) that emphasizes humility, peace, mutual respect and acceptance of others in the Christian family and broader community to the glory of God. Counseling is based on Scripture and biblical doctrine.

Supervision

To meet our objective of providing the highest level of care possible, an ordained and seminary trained Elder as the Director of Biblical Counseling supervises all counselors. Counselors may discuss your case with the Director and/or consult with a staff Pastor as necessary. Counselors may review cases together for prayer and advice in general terms (no names or specific descriptions of details) while maintaining biblical confidentiality. All attempts to maintain confidentiality will be followed during any consultations and the counselee will be informed of consultations. Counselor notes may be reviewed periodically by the Director to ensure accountability of all counselors and the counseling process. Counselees in an immediate and/or life-threatening or harming condition such as a suicidal or psychotic condition, may be referred to professional medical services outside the ministry of SMCC trained to provide appropriate treatment and protection, or to 911 EMS.

Confidentiality & Ethics

Your confidentiality is guarded at all times. Counseling may be protected as a privilege communication under certain circumstances. Certain laws require that counselors warn the appropriate individuals or agencies if a counselee intends to take harmful, dangerous or criminal action against themselves or others. Counselors will report any incident of suspected or reported child abuse, and may report suspected and/or known instances of domestic violence, destructive or injurious actions or threats, or legal subpoenas to the Director to be reported to appropriate authorities as required by law.

Financial Information

No fees are charged for counseling services provided by the Biblical Counseling Ministry of SMCC. However, you may be asked to cover the costs of any books, tests or evaluations deemed necessary to provide you with the maximum benefit from counseling. You will, of course, always be notified of the expense involved prior to services being rendered.

SMCC Members

In addition, this counseling ministry seeks to serve the members of SMCC especially, in a competent, compassionate, and confidential manner. Counselors are trained to view their role as supportive of the overall mission and vision of the congregation in Worship, Evangelism, Love, and Learning. There is a "shepherding" responsibility that counselors owe to those who come here for counseling. Members of SMCC who reveal behavior contrary to the Constitution and By-Laws of SMCC and who persist in their resistance to constructive counsel are subject to referral to the Elder Council for the Church Discipline Process by way of the Director of Counseling, in which case certain information shared in counseling may be revealed to the council of elders. Members of SMCC have the prerogative of including a church pastor/elder, or another third party at their choosing in the counseling process; this may limit the value of any privileged communication. Counselors will only provide information gained in counseling regarding the pertinent sin issue to the Church Discipline Committee as provided in the confidentiality terms of this COUNSELING AGREEMENT FORM.

Waiver of Liability

The undersigned, having sought biblical counseling from SMCC, hereby acknowledges his/her understanding of the following conditions and further releases Shades Mountain Community Church, its elders, agents, affiliates, counselors, and employees from any liability or claim arising from the undersigned's participation in the Biblical Counseling Ministry:

1. It is understood by the participant counselee(s) that all biblical counseling will be provided by ordained ministers, seminary-trained biblical counselors, or trained lay counselors – not licensed therapists or counselors; and
2. That all counseling in the biblical counseling ministry is provided in accordance with the biblical principles adhered to by SMCC and are not provided in adherence to any local or national psychological or psychiatric association; and
3. That no representation has been made, either expressly or implied, that biblical counseling, as conducted by SMCC counselors, is accepted as psychological and/or psychiatric therapy within the definitional terms utilized by those professions.
4. That any dispute with a counselor or with SMCC arising from or related to counseling will be settled by mediation, and if necessary, legally binding arbitration IAW Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, of Peacemaker Ministries.
5. By signing this consent, I agree that I will not attempt to subpoena or require any counselor to appear in any legal proceeding related to any matters discussed during counseling; nor will I attempt to subpoena any notes or records related to this counseling.

Counselee Signature

Date

Counselor Signature

Date