



Biblical Counseling Ministry

## Welcome Form and Disclosure Statement

Are you interested in Biblical Counseling at Abounding Grace Church (AGC)? If so, then we encourage you to please read the following statement and sign at the designated place at the end of this document.

The counselors at AGC are available to take a limited number of counseling cases (with priority given first to members and then attenders of AGC). Our counselors (by design) are not certified by the state of California, but have had extensive training and experience and continue to be trained and equipped in the field of biblical counseling. All of the primary counselors have been certified or are in the process of being certified by a nationally accredited biblical counseling organization.

If you seek counseling from AGC we want you to know that **all counseling will be conducted in accordance with the counselor's understanding of the Scriptures.** Your counseling will be **biblical** in scope, meaning that the Scriptures will be the authority in all cases. Our counselors are not infallible, nor do they pretend to know all there is to know about biblical teaching and its applications to life, but they are well equipped and competent to help people change. They will make a point to differentiate between God's commands and their suggestions. Counselors will also honestly tell you if they are stymied and will seek help. **Please note that we do not give medical or legal advice.** If you are not sure that you will be interested in biblically-based counseling, you may first attend one or two sessions to discover what biblical counseling is like. If you are unwilling to use the Bible as the final authority and are unwilling to do the homework assigned, AGC has the right to terminate your sessions.

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the biblical counseling relationship, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. All communications between you and our Biblical Counseling Ministry offices will be held in strict confidence unless you (or a parent in the case of a minor) give authorization to release this information. However, absolute confidentiality is not always possible, nor is it scriptural. In certain circumstances, the Bible requires that facts be disclosed to selected others (Matthew 18:15ff). If your church leadership should inquire, we will disclose to them only that information which we believe is necessary for them to effectively and biblically fulfill their responsibility to shepherd you. Other exceptions are: (1) if a person expresses intent to harm himself/herself or someone else; (2) if there is evidence or reasonable suspicion of abuse against a minor child, elder person, or dependent adult; (3) if a subpoena or other court order is received directing the disclosure of information; (4) when your biblical counselor consults with his/her supervisor or (5) if a person persistently refuses to renounce a particular sin, and it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of others in the church to encourage repentance, restoration, and reconciliation. Our counselors strongly prefer not to disclose personal information to others, and they will make every effort to help you find ways to resolve a problem as privately as possible. If you have a problem with this procedure, please discuss your concerns and reasons with your counselor.

At any time during the counseling, for reasons sufficient to himself/herself, the counselor – as well as the counselee – shall have the option of terminating the counseling.

AGC does not charge a specific fee for counseling. However, counselees may want to express their

thanks in a tangible way through a donation. All donations should be made to Abounding Grace Church, not to the counselor. Also, non-members and non-attenders of AGC will be expected to pay for (reimburse) any purchased materials that relate to the weekly counseling sessions or homework assignments.

We will need your prompt and consistent participation in your scheduled meetings. Please contact our office 24 hours in advance if you must cancel an appointment. Of course, in emergencies, exceptions will be made.

If a conflict should arise between the counselee and the counselor, both parties must agree to resolve the dispute outside the secular court system. Conciliation will be sought under submission to and direction of the elders of AGC.

The undersigned counselee, having sought biblical counseling as adhered by AGC hereby acknowledges their understanding of the above stated conditions and thereby releases from liability, Abounding Grace Church and any/all pastors, deacons, or employees from claim or litigation whatsoever arising from the undersigned's participation in the above mentioned biblical counseling ministry. All counsel given is in accordance with the biblical principles and faith and practice of AGC and is not provided in adherence with any local or national psychological or psychiatric association. **The counselee is held fully responsible for how he/she implements the counsel he/she receives.**

I have read the conditions for counseling set forth in these two pages and agree to enter into counseling in full accordance with them.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_