

## *Biblical Counseling Standards*

1. **We believe in the authority of Scripture as the foundation for biblical counseling:** We believe in the inspiration<sup>1</sup> and authority<sup>2</sup> of Scripture (the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments)—the infallible and inerrant<sup>3</sup> foundation of our faith, our practice<sup>4</sup>, and our counseling, giving us a sufficient<sup>5</sup> and necessary<sup>6</sup> revelation for us to know the Triune God,<sup>7</sup> his will for our salvation,<sup>8</sup> and our danger of judgment for disregarding his Word.<sup>9</sup>
2. **We believe man needs fellowship with God:** We believe man's greatest need is to have fellowship with God<sup>10</sup> and be changed into Christ's likeness.<sup>11</sup> Primarily Christ's likeness means loving and glorifying God and serving others in love.<sup>12</sup> Since man is separated from the life of God due to Adam's imputed sin debt and his own sin nature,<sup>13</sup> the way to fellowship with God and Christ-like change is to repent of sins,<sup>14</sup> believe

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<sup>1</sup> **2 Timothy 3:16-7** All Scripture is *God-breathed* and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be *thoroughly equipped* for every good work. **2 Peter 1:20-1** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*.

<sup>2</sup> **Hebrews 2:1-3** *We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*

<sup>3</sup> **Hebrews 6:17-8** Because God wanted to make the *unchanging nature of his purpose* very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he *confirmed it with an oath*. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which *it is impossible for God to lie*, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

<sup>4</sup> **Romans 15:4** For everything that was written in the past *was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope*. See 2 Timothy 3:16-17 above.

<sup>5</sup> See 2 Timothy 3:16-7 above. **Hebrews 4:12** For the *word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

<sup>6</sup> **James 1:22-5** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. *Do what it says*. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and *continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does*. **Matthew 7:24-5** *Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. John 12:47-50* As for the person who *bears my words* but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; *that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day*. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that *his command leads to eternal life*. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. **Romans 10:17** Consequently, *faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. John 6:63* The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. *The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*

<sup>7</sup> NIV **John 17:3** Now this is eternal life: that *they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ*, whom you have sent. NIV **Philippians 3:10** *I want to know Christ* and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. NIV 2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him* who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has *given us his very great and precious promises*, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

<sup>8</sup> NIV **Acts 4:12** *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name [but the name of Jesus] under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*

<sup>9</sup> NIV **Hebrews 2:2** For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and *every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?* This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

<sup>10</sup> NIV **1 John 1:3** We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, *so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.* NIV **Romans 5:1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* NIV **2 Corinthians 5:18** All this is from God, who *reconciled us to himself through Christ* and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. *We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

<sup>11</sup> NIV **Ephesians 4:13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, *attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* NIV **Colossians 1:28** We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may *present everyone perfect in Christ.* NIV **Galatians 4:19** My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth *until Christ is formed in you.*

<sup>12</sup> NIV **John 17:4** *I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.* NIV **1 Corinthians 10:31** So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, *do it all for the glory of God.* NIV **Matthew 22:37** Jesus replied: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: *'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

<sup>13</sup> NIV **Ephesians 4:18** They are darkened in their understanding and *separated from the life of God* because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. NIV **Romans 5:18** Consequently, just as *the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.* 19 For just as *through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners*, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

<sup>14</sup> NIV **Acts 2:38** Peter replied, "*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"

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in Christ's death and resurrection, receive the Holy Spirit, publicly confess that "Jesus is Lord"<sup>15</sup> and hope in Christ's return.<sup>16</sup>

3. **We believe biblical counseling, based on the Gospel, is sufficient to change us into Christ's likeness:** We believe the core themes of the grace of God in the Gospel, (revealing the true knowledge of the Triune God and the true biblical definition of man, and all the commands, promises and resources of God for our salvation<sup>17</sup>) are sufficient to deliver us from non-organically based mental illness and able to recreate us in Christ with a sound mind,<sup>18</sup> thereby equipping us for healthy human relationships in every sphere of human life.<sup>19</sup>
4. **We believe the Bible defines healthy human relationships:** We believe that marriage should be between one man and one woman, and that homosexual practices and homosexual marriage are forbidden in Scripture. We believe that the grace of God in the gospel can change a homosexual, thus enabling him or her to live a holy life of celibate singleness or faithfulness in marriage.<sup>20</sup>
5. **We believe the Spirit works change through the means of grace alone:** We believe God's Spirit has power to change the sinful aspects of human personality into Jesus' likeness, as the Spirit works through the *Word of God* (and the various teaching, preaching, counseling and church discipline ministries), *prayer* (counselor should pray for counselees and teach them to pray), *the sacraments* (the Lord's Supper and baptism) and *Christian fellowship*.<sup>21</sup>
6. **We believe biblical counselors should relate to both Christians and non-Christians through the Gospel:** We believe biblical counselors must use these Gospel-centered resources to help Christians please God and endure every kind of difficulty and suffering.<sup>22</sup> We also believe biblical counselors' primary responsibility to non-Christian counselees will be to evangelize them by attractively presenting God's answers to their problems.<sup>23</sup>
7. **We believe spiritual beings affect the counseling process:** We believe in the existence of elect angels as servants of God's people.<sup>24</sup> We recognize that demons (fallen angels) may influence Christians and non-Christians alike.<sup>25</sup> We reject counseling methods that identify demons associated with lusts of the flesh or that seek to cast those demons out to deal with a sin problem. The biblical method of dealing with personal sin is repentance and faith.<sup>26</sup>
8. **We believe psychology and Bible cannot be integrated as equals:** We will not attempt to integrate the teachings of Scripture with the theories of psychology and psychiatry as two equally valid approaches to truth. We believe we must take every scientific "fact" or research data on human behavior, brain chemistry or motivation and show how it must submit to Christ, in whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> NIV **Romans 3:25** God presented him as *a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood*. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- NIV **Romans 10:9** That if you *confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord,"* and *believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,* you will be saved. (see also Romans 4:24-25)

<sup>16</sup> NIV **1 Peter 1:13** Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; *set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed*. NIV **Romans 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may *overflow with hope* by the power of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>17</sup> **Ephesians 1-2.**

<sup>18</sup> NIV **Romans 8:6** The mind of sinful man is death, but the *mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace*; NIV **Romans 12:2** Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV **1 Corinthians 2:16** "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But *we have the mind of Christ*.

<sup>19</sup> **Ephesians 5:22-6:20**

<sup>20</sup> NIV **Ephesians 5:31** "For this reason *a man* will leave his father and mother and be united to *his wife*, and *the two* will become *one flesh*." NIV **1 Corinthians 6:9** Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the *sexually immoral* nor idolaters nor *adulterers* nor *male prostitutes* nor *homosexual offenders* nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. See also Romans 1:18-26 for specific reference to homosexuality as a sin.

<sup>21</sup> NIV **Acts 2:41** Those who accepted his message were *baptized*, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

42 They devoted themselves to the *apostles' teaching* and to the *fellowship*, to the *breaking of bread* and to *prayer*.

<sup>22</sup> NIV **1 Timothy 4:14** Do not neglect *your gift*, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. 15 *Be diligent* in these matters; *give yourself wholly to them*, so that everyone may see your progress. 16 *Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them*, because if you do, *you will save both yourself and your hearers*.

<sup>23</sup> **John 4; John 8:1-12**

<sup>24</sup> NIV **Hebrews 1:14** Are not all *angels* ministering spirits *sent to serve those who will inherit salvation*?

<sup>25</sup> NIV **1 Peter 5:8** Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy *the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour*.

<sup>26</sup> NIV **Acts 17:30** In the past God overlooked such ignorance [of idol worship], but now *he commands all people everywhere to repent*. NIV **Acts 26:20** First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, *I preached that they should repent and turn to God* and prove their repentance by their deeds. NIV **Revelation 2:21** I have given her time to *repent of her immorality*, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who *commit adultery* with her suffer intensely, *unless they repent of her ways*.

<sup>27</sup> **2 Corinthians 10:5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and *we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*. NIV **Colossians 2:2** My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may

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9. **We believe biblical language is adequate to bring about human change:** We believe that biblical terms, language and categories are adequate to *define* and *change* any sinful human motivation, thought, behavior or word, *live* in a way that pleases God and *interpret* reality and experience.<sup>28</sup> We also believe that adopting secular psychological terms, language and categories of thought (for example, self-image, self-love, non-physical mental illness, and most **DSM IV** categories) will mislead counselor's perceptions of a counselee's problems and hinder the process of a counselee's change into the image of Christ. (*see note #27 for proof texts*)
10. **We believe membership in this biblical counseling organization requires unity in essentials, acceptance of differences in non-essentials:** We believe our mutual commitment to the authority of Scripture is the foundation of our unity in the truth<sup>29</sup> and the basis for our cooperation as a biblical counseling organization in Taiwan. Membership in this biblical counseling organization requires this mutual commitment. We will agree to accept each other's differences in matters not directly hindering the integrity and sufficiency of the biblical Gospel message applied to counseling, our individual growth into the image of Christ or our corporate efforts to promote biblical counseling in Taiwan.<sup>30</sup>
11. **We believe biblical counselors should be spiritually gifted and church affiliated:** We believe that biblical counselors should have adequate training in theology, Bible and Bible application.<sup>31</sup> They should be approved by a church body as having gifts necessary for counseling,<sup>32</sup> and are best able to counsel believers within the context of church membership and under the authorities of pastors and elders committed to biblical church discipline.<sup>33</sup> Confidentiality between counselor and counselee should be maintained unless a situation requires church discipline or legal intervention.<sup>34</sup>

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have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, *Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* 4 *I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.* **Colossians 2:8** *See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.* **Jude 1:3** Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to *contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*

<sup>28</sup> NIV **Psalm 119:11** *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.* NIV **Psalm 119:133** *Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.* NIV **Proverbs 30:5** *Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.* NIV **Isaiah 8:20** *To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.*

<sup>29</sup> **John 17:17-23** *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.* As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for *those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.* May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. *May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.* **Ephesians 4:3-6** *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* **Ephesians 4:13** *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

<sup>30</sup> **1 Timothy 1:3-5** *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith.* The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. **1 Timothy 4:7** *Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.* NIV **Romans 14:1** *Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.* 2 One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. NIV **Romans 15:7** *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.* NIV **Acts 15:8** *God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.*

<sup>31</sup> NIV **2 Timothy 2:15** *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

<sup>32</sup> NIV **Galatians 6:1** *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.* But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. NIV **2 Timothy 2:24** *And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.* 25 Those who oppose him he must *gently instruct*, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

<sup>33</sup> NIV **Matthew 18:15** *If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.* 16 *But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'* 17 *If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.* NIV **Acts 20:27** *For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.* 28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.* 29 *I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.*

<sup>34</sup> NIV **Romans 13:1** *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.*