

WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY...

...the journey we call “Biblical Counseling.” We are confident that the answers to life’s problems and questions lie within the pages of God’s Word, the Bible, and that God will bless and empower you if you choose to follow through on this journey. We believe that the Bible is superior to any other source of counsel. It is our goal, therefore, to skillfully and practically bring God’s answers to shine upon the difficulties you are facing. In today’s complex world, filled with suffering and sin, God’s practical counsel is desperately needed and amazingly relevant. God says that He has provided everything necessary for a person to know Him and then to bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. God promises to help and bless those who obey His instructions in the Bible. Therefore, the one who seeks after and follows God’s answers for life can have great hope, contentment, and direction to handle the pressures of life in this fallen world.¹

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DO WE PROVIDE COUNSELING FOR? We provide individual and couples counseling to help with any issue that you might be facing – marriage, parenting, relationship issues, addictions, mental disorders, issues of the past (including abortion, abuse and childhood sexual assault), fear, anger, grief, depression, anxiety, etc. Men counsel men and women counsel women. Sometimes a male counselor will counsel a couple, if the wife does not have specific women’s issues that must be addressed with a female counselor. Most often, however, couples are counseled by both a male and a female counselor.²

HOW DO I GET THE COUNSELING PROCESS STARTED? In order to initiate the counseling process, simply complete the attached “Personal Data Inventory” as thoroughly and as accurately as possible. Your answers to the questions will help us set goals and develop an agenda for your case. Therefore, the more information you provide, the more effectively we can assess your circumstances. We prefer to have your original signed paper copy over a digital copy, so once you have completed your PDI, notify your counselor(s), who will advise you as to how to forward the forms to them. It will remain confidential.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN I ATTEND MY FIRST SESSION? In the first session, we will want to hear a great deal from you. We will want you to tell us about the problem(s) that brought you to counseling. We will most likely ask you questions to clarify some of your answers on the PDI to ensure our understanding is accurate. We will most likely ask about your past. Because we will design counseling goals around what you tell us, it is very important that you be thorough, honest and transparent with us.

After gathering life data from you that will aid us in developing goals and agenda for your case, we will then teach you a short lesson that we believe can help you discover hope and change quickly.

During the latter part of each session, we will assign “homework.” The homework will consist of your doing some things that you most likely have not yet tried. We design homework to help you in your specific circumstances. We will expect that you will complete your homework before we meet for the next session, because **the following session will be built around your homework from the prior session.** This will continue week after week, until our goals are met. **This makes homework a central component of your counseling.** Because we want to tailor your counseling experience to meet your spiritual and practical needs, we will want to hear feedback on your homework experience.

¹ Adapted from <https://www.canyonhillscommunitychurch.com/counseling/>. In addition, the list of fruit is taken from Galatians 5:22-23.

² Adapted from <https://www.canyonhillscommunitychurch.com/counseling/>.

In our sessions, your questions are always welcomed. We cannot promise that we will always answer your question(s) the same day you ask it. Once we make a plan to help you, it is often important for us to adhere to our plan, otherwise “rabbit trails” may be the result. Therefore, if your question is not urgent and it relates to something that is not related to the plan for the day, or if it is necessary for your counselor to do some research before answering your question(s), the question(s) will often be inserted into a subsequent week’s agenda.

As your brother and/or sister in Christ, we will come alongside you in love to show you relevant biblical principles that bear on your circumstances. We do not want you to view us as “experts.” We, like you, are fallen people, saved by grace. We, too, have needed help from others at various times in our lives. Therefore, you can be confident that we do not look down on you for needing help. It is our hope that the day will come when you can pass along to someone else in need, the biblical truths you learn in your counseling.

HOW LONG WILL COUNSELING CONTINUE? The first two counseling sessions are typically **two hours** in length and subsequent sessions are approximately **one hour** in length. There are many factors that determine how many weeks we will continue to meet. Your counselor(s) will discuss this with you as you proceed through the counseling journey. It is typical to meet weekly for 15-20 weeks (or 3-5 months). However, there are those cases in which the major underlying issue can be identified and addressed very quickly. There are also those cases in which deep-seeded problems have developed and accumulated for years and more time is required to unearth each of the relevant problems in order to bring about change.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING? You will need your **Bible**, a **notebook** designated for counseling and a **pen** at all meetings. Preparing a three-ring binder with separate sections for session notes, homework assignments and handouts from your counselor is an efficient way to organize your counseling notes. **Your counselor(s) will expect that you can quickly locate any item which you have been given in past counseling sessions.** Be sure to bring these materials to each session. In addition, always bring your homework and any materials you’ve been asked to read.

HOW MUCH DOES COUNSELING COST? We, as counselors, are ministers of God’s Word. We would never think to charge someone to minister God’s Word to them. However, as in any ministry, we do accept charitable contributions. Because we are not a non-profit organization, there are no tax benefits for donations.

In addition, your counselor will typically use books or other materials relevant to your circumstances throughout the course of your counseling and you will be responsible to pay for these materials, including shipping costs.

We request that you respect your counselor’s time and commitment to you by being prompt for scheduled sessions, by putting forth your best effort in sessions and in the completion of homework and by giving as much notice as possible when you have to cancel or change the time of a session. Please see “Cancellation Policy” on page 11 of this document.

Personal Data Inventory

(Referred to by your counselor as the "PDI")

Name _____ Sex _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Cell _____ Text? Yes _____ No _____
Email _____ Birthdate _____ Age _____
Occupation: _____ How Long? _____
Education (Last year completed) Grade/Degree _____ Other Training: _____

Marital Status: Single _____ Dating _____ Married _____ Separated _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____

Marriage and Family

Name of Spouse _____ Date Married _____
Spouse's Contact Information: Email: _____
Phone _____ Address if different than yours: _____
Spouse's Age _____ Spouse's Occupation _____
Spouse's Education (in years; degrees) _____
Ages when married: Husband _____ Wife _____ Length of Engagement _____
How long did you know your spouse before marriage? _____
Circumstances of meeting and dating your spouse: _____
What did you love about your spouse that resulted in your decision to marry him/her?

What are the strengths of your marriage? _____
What are the weaknesses of your marriage? _____
Is your spouse saved? _____ Is your spouse willing to come to counseling? _____
Spiritual background of spouse: _____
Have you and your spouse ever been separated? _____ If so when? _____
Do you or your spouse have any previous marriages? If so, briefly describe: _____

Children

From another marriage?	Name & Sex	Age	Living?	Education	Marital Status	Saved?

If you have more than 5 children, please list additional information on the reverse or on a separate page

Your Family of Origin

Briefly describe the home in which you grew up: _____

If you were raised by anyone other than your biological parents, briefly explain: _____

Circle any of the following words which describe your childhood:

Abuse Loving Chaos Affluent Poor Deprived Blessed Christ-centered Close family
 Friendless Lonely Fearful Full of opportunities Close friends Moved a lot Well-traveled
 Well-adjusted Anger Content Discontent Peaceful Felt guilty Good communication
 Other _____

Older brothers: _____ Older sisters: _____

Younger brothers: _____ Younger sisters: _____

How would you describe your current relationships with your siblings? _____

If there is any other family information that you think would be helpful for your counselor to know, please explain:

Spiritual Life

What church do you currently attend? _____

Are you a member? _____ Church attendance per month (circle): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8+

Do you serve in your church? _____ Explain: _____

Do you attend a regular small group or life group? _____

Do you believe in God? Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Are you saved? Yes _____ No _____ Not sure what you mean _____ Baptized? _____

Please explain why you answered the above question as you did::

Do you pray to God? _____ If so, when? _____

Do you read your Bible? _____ If so, when? _____

When was the last time you read your Bible? _____ What do you remember about what you read? _____

Are you involved in Bible study? Explain: _____

Church attended in childhood: _____

Do you have regular family devotions? _____ If so, describe: _____

Explain any recent changes in your spiritual life: _____

What would you like to change about your spiritual life? _____

Do you have any questions or confusion that prevents you from moving forward spiritually? _____

Describe God as you understand Him: _____

Who is Jesus Christ? _____

How relevant is the Bible to your daily life? _____

Do you memorize Scripture? Explain: _____

Do you read Christian books? _____ How many books do you typically read in a year? _____
Which Christian books have you read in the past year?

What difference have these books made in your spiritual walk? (please be as honest & specific as possible)

If you commit to counseling, you will be expected to complete all homework. Because the homework is rooted in Scripture, the Holy Spirit uses it to produce change in you. The homework process is most effective when you do some each day, as opposed to the day before your session. The more seriously you take your homework responsibility, the more change you will experience. Please think through your schedule and assess what changes you may need to make in order to have time to spend ½ hour to an hour daily on your homework. You will be asked to commit to this in your first session, if you decide to commit to counseling. (Also, see Counseling Agreement on page 10).

How will you fit daily homework into your schedule?

Your Personality

Circle any of the following words which describe you now:

Active Ambitious Angry Self-confident Persistent Nervous Hardworking Impatient Impulsive
Calm Moody Often-blue Excitable Imaginative Serious Easy-going Shy Good natured
Introvert Extrovert Likeable Leader Quiet Submissive Lonely Self-conscious Sensitive
Funny Creative Hurt Grieving Fearful Victimized Emotionally-unstable Emotionally-stable
Other: _____

If someone gave you the chance to make 3 wishes, what would they be?

What motivates you to do something you don't feel like doing?

Based on how you spend your time and money, what would your observers say is the top priority in your life?

What things do you find yourself seeking to avoid?

When do you tend to struggle with envy or jealousy?

When do you struggle with regret or the temptation to think "If only..."?

In what types of situations do you struggle with anger?

What do you fear?

When you have the freedom to do anything you want to do with your time, what do you choose to do?

Which one of the 4 options below best describes your relationships? (Circle one)

- a. I have mostly superficial (surface & distant) relationships as opposed to being deep & close.
- b. I have mostly deep and close relationships; they know me well and I can count on them; I invest a lot of time and energy in them.
- c. I'm pretty much a loner. I don't have many relationships.
- d. I have so many relationships, I can't keep up with all of them.

Which one of the 4 options below best describes your relationships? (Circle one)

- a. My relationships start out great but over time they usually become challenging and broken.
- b. My relationships start out great and they continue to improve over time.
- c. My relationships start out as challenging and broken but after time they become stronger, closer & deeper.
- d. My relationships start out challenging. I don't know how to improve them & they become broken and/or distant.

Health Information

Rate your health: Very good__ Good__ Average__ Declining__ Other__

Have you had any significant weight loss or gain recently? _____ If so explain: _____

List significant present or past illnesses, injuries or handicaps: _____

How would you rate your sleep patterns? _____ I sleep very well most nights _____ I rarely sleep well
_____ I often have restless nights _____ Other _____

How many hours do you typically sleep per night on average? _____

If you have insufficient sleep, what do you think is the reason? _____

Have you talked to a doctor about sleep problems? _____ Have you participated in a sleep study? _____

Date of last medical exam: _____ Report: _____

Have you had a severe emotional upset? (explain) _____

Have you recently suffered the loss of someone close to you? (explain) _____

Have you recently suffered loss from serious social, business or other reversals? (explain) _____

Do you take any medications? _____ If so, please list them & tell what they are prescribed for: _____

Do you use alcohol? _____ What kind & how often? _____

Do you view your drinking or medications as a problem? (explain) _____

If you answered yes, when do you find yourself using? What prompts it? _____

Do others view your using as a problem? (explain) _____

Have you used drugs other than for medical purposes? (explain) _____

Do you feel out of control in your use of drugs, alcohol or medications? (explain) _____

Do others think your use is out of control? (explain) _____

Counseling

What do you think counseling is about? _____

What kind of involvement do you think a counselor should have in your life? _____

Have you ever had any counseling before? _____ If so, list counselor or therapist and dates: _____

What was the outcome? _____

Describe why you are seeking help now:

What have you done to deal with the problem?

What changes are you seeking?

What can we do? (What are your expectations in coming to counseling?)

Complete the statements:

Life would be all right if _____

I really wish I had _____

I need _____

On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the most hopeful, how hopeful are you that your counselor(s) can help you find answers to your problems?

Hopeless 1 2 3 4 5 Very hopeful

Did you read the first two pages of this PDI entitled "Welcome to the Journey..."? yes_____ no_____

If not, please go back and read those pages and note any questions or comments you may have. We will discuss this in your first session. If you already read it, note below any questions or comments you had while reading it:

I was referred to Counseling by:_____

Counseling Agreement

The biblical counsel which you are requesting when you submit this Personal Data Inventory (PDI) is provided as an outreach ministry by Scot and/or Nanette Loveless and is provided free of charge, except for materials costs and the cancellation fee (see "Cancellation Policy"). The counsel is pastoral in nature, intended to provide you with sound biblical instruction and application to the issues of life. **The counsel you receive is not intended to be professional mental health care or legal counsel. The counselor(s) you speak with have not received specialized training in medicine, psychology, psychiatry, or law and are not licensed by the state of Iowa or any other state, rather are held to the Word of God and the standards that come from within the Bible.** Biblical counsel is not intended to replace the services of a medical doctor when organic problems are present or medication has been prescribed. Therefore, your signature below indicates that you understand that your counselor is counseling from the Word of God and that no outside resources (specifically psychological input) shall be used during any of the counseling sessions.

As an on-going and multiplying ministry, we are continually training others to be effective biblical counselors. Part of the training includes the opportunity to observe another counselor in actual counseling sessions. Because of this ministry model, we ask that you agree to allow a person or couple who is in training to sit in on your counseling sessions for the purpose of prayer, training and observations. Your observer(s) will have signed confidentiality paperwork prior to beginning. Your signature below indicates you are agreeable to this option.

Your signature below indicates that you agree that any dispute arising out of the care relationship between you and your counselor(s) and/or the church in which your sessions are held and/or any employee, agent, trainee or volunteer, shall be the exclusive mediation and conciliation, and if necessary, arbitration services of a mutually agreed upon Christian mediator/arbitrator. Any resulting arbitration is mutually agreed to be binding on all parties. By signing this form, you are waiving your right to a trial in the civil courts, including trial by jury. This will be according to the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, available at Peacemaker Ministries' website (www.peacemaker.net). Cost of Conciliation/Arbitration services will be payable by the party requesting the services.

I understand that my counselor will be opposed to any outside counseling that I might be involved in. I will stop counseling with anyone else and allow my counselor to be the only one to counsel me. I understand that if I have more counselors than one, that I am putting myself at risk for confusion, which will only add to my problems. Additionally, your counselor will not make referrals to those who practice what is generally referred to as "psychotherapy."

I understand that throughout the course of my counseling, **I will be required to go to church once a weekend at the church** where I am being counseled. This is to allow for further training from the Word of God and to promote obedience to God's Word (Hebrews 10:25). If I fail to go to church on a weekend, counseling will be suspended for that week and that week only. I understand that if I am too busy to worship God on Sunday morning, then I am too busy to spend my time in counseling with my counselor.

I will be on time for all counseling appointments. I understand that my counselor will only wait for ten minutes after my scheduled counseling appointment before he/she leaves. I will honor and respect my counselor's time and call or email my counselor as soon as possible to inform him/her if I am going to be late or if I need to reschedule. I will not come to him/her with counseling issues apart from the time that I have scheduled with him/her. I am aware that if I miss two appointments without having called to inform him/her of my situation that he/she will discontinue his/her counseling services with me.

I will be given homework each and every week of counseling and **I agree to complete all of the homework given to me before I come to the counseling session.** I realize that only through the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit combined with my own personal involvement can I change into the person who can glorify God. If I fail to do the homework assigned to me without a valid reason for why I was not able to complete the homework, counseling will not continue until homework is complete. Valid reasons would include such instances as illness requiring medical attention or family crisis. If I go three weeks without doing my homework, my counselor will understand that I do not want to change and he/she will discontinue counseling until the point in time that I am willing to change.

I have read, understood and agree to be bound by the above stated policies. I agree to counseling under these terms.

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Cancellation Policy

If you fail to attend a session without 24 hours notice, you will be required to pay a \$25 fee before resuming counseling. If you wake up sick on the morning of your scheduled appointment and have demonstrated faithfulness in past attendance and consistent effort to complete homework, we will take into account extenuating circumstances. Since your counselor volunteers his/her time to counsel you, this fee is for the purpose of compensating the counselor for the inconvenience of disrupting the schedule without advance notice.

In addition, if the counselor notes a pattern of absences, unfinished homework and/or tardiness, the counselor will draw the conclusion that you are not serious about your counseling and will talk to you about surrendering your counseling time to someone who wants to get serious about their own change. You will be given two (2) weeks to make changes and to demonstrate those changes. If the counselor does not see sufficient change, your counseling will be cancelled, and you will be required to pay a \$25 fee before counseling will resume. If another counselee has been given your time slot in the meantime, your name will be added to the waitlist.

Please understand that we are not about the business of collecting \$25 from you. However, there is a growing number of counseling needs and an inadequate supply of biblical counselors so we must be wise stewards of our counseling time.

I have read and agree to these terms:

Signature _____ date: _____

Confidentiality Waiver

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt. 7:12). The Bible also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 26:20), invites confession (Prov. 11:13), and thus encourages people to seek needed counseling. Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of the local church, all members and attenders are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, counselors will carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when counselors believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- when a counselor is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other leaders in our church or, if the person attends another church, from the leaders of that church (Prov. 11:14);
- when the person who disclosed the information, or any other person, is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Prov. 24:11–12);
- when a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to promote repentance through accountability and redemptive church discipline (Matt. 18:15–20); or,
- when leaders are required by law to report suspected abuse (Rom. 13:1).

Confidentiality is an important aspect of counseling, and your counselor(s) 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 pastors or other counselors, 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 or conciliation 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.

Signature _____ Date: _____