

## COUNSELING GUIDELINES

### OUR PURPOSE

We desire to glorify God by seeking to win nonbelievers to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and by edifying believers to live in obedience to God's Word, the Bible.

We believe the Bible is a complete and final revelation from God in written form, without error in its original manuscripts, and completely sufficient for all matters of life, faith, and practice.

### OUR POLICIES

1. We begin and end each counseling session with prayer. Our dependency is upon the Lord for both the counselor and the person seeking counsel (Proverbs 3:5-6; Ephesians 6:18; 1 John 5:14-15).
2. We desire that men counsel men, and women counsel women as the Bible urges us to do (Titus 2:1-10). We have no desire to develop emotional dependency or create an environment that might lead to moral indiscretion (1 Timothy 5:22) When more than one person is part of the counseling process with the counselor, or when the counseling takes place in public view, exceptions are made.
3. We do not charge a fee for our ministry or counseling.
4. We do not guarantee or make promises of

*The Issues & Answers series articulates key biblical and theological convictions of Bandon Christian Fellowship.*

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success that are not clearly taught in the Bible.

5. We believe that a spiritual gift of counseling (Romans 12:8) has been given to believers in the church, and it is our desire to use them in our counseling ministry, provided they are committed to a godly lifestyle and competent in their knowledge of the Bible and in counseling others (Romans 15:1).

6. We provide and required pre-marital counseling for those desiring to be married in our church.

7. We preserve confidentiality except in cases where criminal law codes or church discipline procedures countermand it.

### OUR PRINCIPLES OF BELIEF

We believe all people are born with a sinful nature and we experience the consequences of choices we have made and for which are accountable (Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:19-20,23; 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

We Do NOT believe other people (such as parents, children, relatives, friends, etc.), cultural backgrounds, social and family pressures, or physical environment are the reason for our bad choices and sinful actions (Ezekiel 18:20; James 1:13-15)

We believe the greatest human need is a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior from sin, death, and hell. We believe people become Christians by personal faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone, not by personal merit, family heritage, or human performance (John 1:12-13; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10)

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We believe prayer, obedience to the teaching of the Bible, and the work of the Holy Spirit are essentials for personal growth, happiness, and deliverance. It is the role of our counselors to lead and encourage all those seeking our help to depend upon God and to trust Him for victory and success (Psalm 119:9,11; Mathew 16:41; Galatians 5:16).

We recognize the influence of demonic activity (evil spirits), but we do NOT believe true believers can be indwelt and controlled by an evil spirit (demon), due to the presence of the Holy Spirit of God (1 Cor 6:19-20; Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 John 4:4; 5:18-19)

We believe heterosexual marriage is the only relationship in which sexual intercourse should take place. We do not condone, or approve pre-marital sex, homosexuality, adultery, incest, or any other sexual immorality condemned by God's Word, the Bible. We treat these matters as sin against God's laws and damaging activities to the physical, spiritual, and emotional health of those involved (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:1-12; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 Peter 2:6-10).

Divorce should be avoided as a solution to marital difficulties.

We believe the Bible allows for divorce on the basis of two situations:

- A. Sexual immorality (Mathew 5:31-31; 19:3-9)
- B. Willing departure of an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:1-15)

We also believe forgiving your marital partner upon confession and repentance is the better

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way of dealing with marital difficulties than seeking a divorce (Luke 17:3-4; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 2:12-14)

We believe remarriage should occur only after one of the following things has taken place:

A. Death of a former spouse (Romans 7:1- 3; 1 Corinthians 7:39)

B. Divorce based on one of the two above stated situations (Mathew 5:31-32; 1 Corinthians 7:15).

C. Remarriage of a former spouse to another person (Dueteronomy 24:1-4).

When divorce or remarriage has occurred without Biblical reason, we urge confession and repentance, believing God's grace, love, and forgiveness, and healing. We do not encourage couples to break up existing marriages in order to correct a previous sinful and selfish action (Proverbs 28:13; Romans 5:20).

Our counseling will focus on WHAT has taken place, rather than on WHY it occurred (Jeremiah 17:9-10; 1 Corinthians 4:5).

We do NOT counsel people to love themselves, but rather to deny themselves. The Bible teaches that we already do love ourselves, and that we need to concentrate on loving and serving God first, and others second (Duet 10:20-21; Joshua 24:14-15; Mathew 22:34-40; Luke 9:23; Ephesians 5:29).

We believe parents are responsible for discipline and instruction of their children in the way of the Lord. We urge children and young people to honor their parents and be obedient to them (Prov 22:6; Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:20-21).

We believe corporal punishment of children should be done as the Bible teaches, in love, not anger, and applied to the children's bottom only. We do not

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condone physical abuse of children (hitting them in other places of the body besides the bottom), and are required to report such cases to the civil authorities if they are brought to our attention with evidence substantiating it (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18,29; 22:15; 23:13-14; 26:3; 29:15,17; Ephesians 6:4).

We do not encourage or insist that an abused adult or child remain in the home where physical abuse occurs. It is our policy to confront the abuser (Mathew 5:25; 18:15-17; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4,12,14).

We do not recommend or condone abortion, suicide, euthanasia, or any method of taking human life. We believe that human life begins at conception and is sacred (Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 51:5; 139:13-16).

We believe the use of pornographic material (films, videos, books, magazines, or pictures) is sinful and should be avoided (Mathew 5:28-29; Mark 4:24; Philippians 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe the physical body of the believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit and we encourage believers to avoid habits which are known to be harmful to the body, such as the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, gluttony, etc (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Corinthians 6:16).

We believe alcohol and drug abuse is condemned in the Bible and causes physical, and emotional damage to the individual who is addicted. We seek in our counsel to warn those involved in such substance abuse of the dangers involved (Prov 20:1; 23:29-35; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Gal 5:16-23' Eph 5:18).

We believe the Bible urges believers to live without financial debt and to pay financial obligations when they are due. We believe people are in debt when their liabilities exceed

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their assets and when their expenditures exceed their income. We also believe that the love of money and the desire to be rich leads to many sorrows, sinful attitudes, and practices. We are urged in the Bible to help fellow believers who are in financial need and not to charge them interest on monies loaned to them to help in their time of need (Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35-38; Luke 18:18-30; Romans 13:7-8; 1 Timothy 5:8; 6:6-10).

We believe a portion of one's income should be given to the Lord as an act of worship and as a desire to support His work in this world (Duet 14:22-29; Psalm 96:8-9; Prov 3:9-10; Malachi 3:8-10; 1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor9:6-15).

We believe a confession of sin and repentance (turning from sin to God and obedience to His Word) are essential in dealing with sinful attitudes and behavior (Prov 28:9,13; Luke 17:3-4; 2 Cor 7:9-11).