

Strong Tower Bible Church

Biblical Counseling Agreement

INTRODUCTION

In order to be fully informed about the staff and pastoral biblical counseling you will be receiving, please read through this following agreement, sign and date it at the bottom. This form must be signed and an intake form must be completed and returned to the church office before the first session.

(Note to couples: Each individual should fill out their own set of forms.)

DESCRIPTION OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

The goal of biblical counseling is to help an individual think biblically about their current struggles in the context of a confidential, caring environment. A biblical counselor relies on Scripture as the sole authority for faith and conduct and recognizes that lasting change is the result of the power of God, the grace of Christ and the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Guided by biblical principles, the biblical counselor's role is to utilize guided questioning, empathetic support, problem definition, reflection/reading assignments, encouragement, and prayer to provide wise, biblical and faithful counsel to those who are hurting and in need.

REFERRAL POLICY/DISCLAIMER

After reviewing the intake form, we will determine whether or not we feel we can provide you with the appropriate services and level of care needed. Clients will be referred outside of STBC's Biblical Counseling Ministry when the treatment required is beyond the scope of care available here.

BIBLICAL COUNSELING FEES AND TIMELINES

STBC does not normally charge for services, though it may ask for contributions to offset the out-of-pocket cost for materials or third-party services provided in the course of your sessions. In these cases, payment is due at the end of each session and accounts must be kept current in order to continue biblical counseling. Cash or checks are accepted forms of payment (checks made payable to "Strong Tower Bible Church") Scholarships may be available if qualifications are met. Please note that we are unable to accept insurance for any materials or third-party services. Each session is 50 minutes. Sessions will take place in one of the STBC offices. Please check in at the front desk.

CLIENT EXPECTATIONS

Please plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to your appointment so the session can begin on time. You may be asked to complete homework assignments or purchase a book to be read in conjunction with your biblical counseling.

Prayer, Scripture reading and memorization all may be utilized as part of the biblical counseling process. Your commitment to this process will greatly determine the outcome of your experience.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A CLIENT

1. You are entitled to information about any procedures, methods of biblical counseling, techniques and possible duration of services provided.
2. You have the right to end the session at any time without any moral, legal or financial obligations other than those already accrued.
3. You have the right to expect confidentiality within the limits described.
4. You have the right to authorize in writing your biblical counselor to consult with another professional about your services.

CANCELLATION POLICY

We request that you notify your biblical counselor at least 24 hours before your scheduled appointment if you need to cancel a session. Exceptions are for sudden illnesses and emergencies only. If you are more than 15 minutes late to the scheduled appointment, the session may be cancelled at the discretion of the STBC biblical counselor.

CONTACTING THE BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY

To schedule an appointment, please email Tanya Franklin at tfranklin@stbch.org. If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please email Tanya or call the church office at (615) 791-7050. For emergencies after-hours, please call 911 or go to your local emergency room.

OUR PROCESS

In every biblical counseling session, four elements are stressed:

1. Understanding the Problem

It is important for those involved in solving problems biblically to gain God's perspective on any difficulty (Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 55:8-9). You must begin to look honestly at yourself in light of God's Word (Matthew 7:1-5; I Corinthians 11:31). Understanding a problem requires that biblical inquiry be made and truthful answers given (Ephesians 4:15, 25) in order for the total spectrum of the problem to be revealed by the Holy Spirit (Mark 7:20; James 1:22).

2. Hope

God has promised in His Word that he will not let you be tried, tempted, or to face any problem beyond your endurance; instead He will provide the solution in every circumstance or situation (I Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 4:15, 16).

3. Change

You must learn how to lay aside or put off the old self-centered habits and destructive anxieties, bitterness, and resentment; and learn to forgive and put on biblical habits of thought and behavior (Romans 6:6-7, 12, 13).

4. Practice

You must take action to put God's solutions into practice in your everyday life. If you bear the Word and do not put it into practice, you deceive yourself and your problems become worse. But if you become a doer of the Word, God has promised that you will be blessed and experience His peace and joy in spite of all that is around you (Psalm 85:8-10; Isaiah 32:17; John 15:10-12, 16:33; Hebrews 5:14; I Peter 3:8-12).

OUR PRINCIPLES

We understand that God has given us everything we need in His Word to live life in a manner that pleases Him (II Peter 1:3, 4). We must not integrate man's wisdom with biblical truth in order to solve our problems and live a victorious life. Scripture promises that when we degrade God's Word by placing it on a level with man's thinking, serious consequences occur (Proverbs 1:22-32; 14:12).

Biblical counseling is based upon the biblical teaching that we will each give an account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:12) and that each one will bear the consequences for his own sin (Colossians 3:25). Counselees are shown that they are responsible before God solely for their own behavior and not for changing anyone else's.

In learning to assume responsibility for their own behavior, counselees need to understand the conflict between their old self and their new nature (Romans 6; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:16). Counselees must determine, by an act of the will, to lay aside their old way of life with its lusts and deception and to begin to believe and act in a way which reflects the new nature God has given them (II Corinthians 5:17). Counselees must learn to develop godly thought patterns (II Corinthians 10:5), to take every thought captive, to transform their mind (Romans 12:2), and to be successful in living a life that corresponds to the new nature which is created in Christ Jesus.

Any changes that a counselee makes must be made in order to please God and not to please self, parents, spouses, or anyone else (II Corinthians 5:9,15). This requires a commitment to obey God's Word and not to depend on or be ruled by feelings, regardless of how strong or persuasive they may be (Galatians 5:16-17).

YOUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By signing below, you acknowledge the following:

- The counseling provided by Strong Tower Bible Church is biblical, not professional.
- Pastors and others involved in this Biblical Counseling Ministry are not engaged in providing professional services such as psychological counseling, psychiatric therapy, or marriage and family counseling or therapy, and they are not licensed by the state as counselors, social workers or therapists.
- You agree not to sue the church for any expenses or damages that result from any of the Biblical Counseling Ministry services provided by Strong Tower Bible Church.
- You agree that otherwise confidential communications may be disclosed to appropriate state law enforcement authorities where required by law. These circumstances may include situations where there is evidence of imminent danger of harm to yourself or others, where there is evidence of abuse of a child or elder, or where the church is required to disclose information because of a court order.
- STBC may refer you to a professional medical or psychiatric counselor with specialized training.
- That pastors and other biblical counselors, volunteers, and administrators of the Biblical Counseling Ministry are here to help you assume your responsibilities in finding freedom in Christ. This means the Ministry may choose to provide a maximum of six weeks of biblical counseling to any individual, couple or family. This not only ensures biblical counselors reserve sufficient time for other duties, but helps provide structure to the allotted time.
- You agree to attend all biblical counseling sessions faithfully and to do the things that are assigned between sessions.
- You understand that you are free to leave at any time and that you are here voluntarily.

Your name signed

Your name printed

Date