

Informed Consent and Counseling Policy

Please read this two-page counseling policy carefully. It contains the terms and conditions upon which counseling will be provided.

Our Goal: Our goal in providing biblical counseling is to help you meet the challenges of life in a way that will please and honor the Lord Jesus Christ. Our desire is for you to experience His grace and peace as you seek to obey Him with your life. **Bible Based Counseling:** The counsel you will receive, will reflect the counselor's understanding of the Bible and how the principles of Scripture apply to the problems, questions, or issues presented; rather than principles of psychology or psychiatry. A basic principle of biblical counseling is that the Bible is sufficient to understand how to live a God-pleasing life. We are committed to the position that the Scriptures are infallible and authoritative, and contain God's answers to the issues of life, conduct, and relationships.

Our Counselors: All counseling will be provided by pastors, or lay-counselors who have received training through the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors. We counsel according to the biblical standards established by the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors: www.biblicalcounseling.com. Our counselors are accountable to the Orrville Grace Brethren Church Elders. Please note that our counselors do not give medical or legal advice, and are not licensed through the State of Ohio to provide state sanctioned counseling and psychological diagnosis and treatment. If you have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions, you should seek advice from an expert in that field.

No Fee: Orrville Grace Brethren Counseling is supported by the tithes and offerings of faithful members of Orrville Grace Brethren Church in Orrville, Ohio. Each counselor volunteers his or her time and energy for the service of God without any charge or fee to you. However if you have benefited from counseling and wish to contribute to the ongoing needs of our counseling ministry, donations are always appreciated. Please make checks payable to Orrville Grace Brethren Church.

Counseling Expectations:

1. Bring your Bible and a notebook to all sessions.
2. Normally, a counseling session will last about one to one-and-a-half hours. The duration of counseling sessions will vary depending on the problem(s) being addressed. The overall process, once a counselor has been assigned, can range from a couple of sessions to as many as 12.
3. Notes will be taken by the counselor in the counseling sessions.
4. Homework will be given after each session and must be completed before the following session in order to maximize the counseling and to help you become a "doer of the Word" (James 1:22-25). This can shorten the duration of the counseling.
5. Generally, a personal expense will be involved in the purchase of books or other resources that the counselor will recommend to enhance the counseling process.

6. Because the Scriptures teach that spiritual growth requires all the resources offered by a Bible-believing local church, it is essential that those seeking biblical counseling commit themselves to regular church attendance at their church, or Orrville Grace Brethren Church for the duration of counseling.
7. The counselor has the right to terminate counseling if there are missed appointments, repeated cancellations, repeated failures to complete homework assignments, or a general lack of initiative or willingness to make progress.

Confidentiality Statement: Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process and we will carefully guard the information our counsees entrust to us. However, please be informed that we do not offer absolute confidentiality. There are situations in which the counselor believes that it is biblically wise or legally mandated to share certain information with others, including governmental authorities and to other affected persons or entities. Some examples would be: (1) when a counselor is uncertain of how to address a particular problem and needs to seek advice from a pastor or counselor in the church; (2) when a counselee attends another church and it is necessary to talk with someone in leadership at that church; (3) a disclosure of child abuse, spousal abuse, and abuse of an elderly person or dependent adult. (4) a disclosure that you present a serious risk of harm to yourself, or a serious risk of harm to another person; (5) when 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 and reconciliation (see Matthew 18:15-20).

Resolution of Conflict: If a counselee has a complaint or grievance against a counselor and a resolution cannot be achieved between the parties, then the counselee has the following recourse: All complaints and grievances will be heard by Orrville Grace Brethren Church's Elders. If an agreeable resolution cannot be achieved between the aforementioned parties, then the counselee may elect to involve the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker Ministries, Inc. (www.peacemaker.net), at the counselee's expense, for the purpose of mediation and arbitration. These methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement, and the counselee expressly waives any right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against the counselor, the Orrville Grace Brethren Counseling, or Orrville Grace Brethren Church for such disputes, except as necessary to enforce an arbitration decision.

Waiver of Liability: In seeking counseling from Orrville Grace Brethren Counseling, you are acknowledging and agreeing to the aforementioned terms and conditions and further release Orrville Grace Brethren Church, Orrville Grace Brethren Counseling, its pastors, elders, counselors, employees, and all ministry team members, from any legal liability, claim, or litigation arising from your participation in this voluntary program. **Consent to Counsel:** Please indicate your consent and agreement to this counseling policy by completing the Personal Data Inventory (PDI) form and signing the last page. We are unable to provide counseling services until the PDI form is completed, signed, and submitted.