



Welcome to Grace Counseling,

Thank you for pursuing biblical counseling at Grace Baptist Church. This discipleship ministry aims to engage with your experience through biblically informed wisdom and guidance, while also desiring to skillfully offer a loving and safe context where you can receive care from our church family (Galatians 6:1–3; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).

The goal of our counseling ministry is not merely to help individuals out of difficult circumstances or change behaviors. Rather, the goal is always to come alongside individuals so that you may grow in your maturity as Christ-followers (Ephesians 5:1–2). It is my prayer that this process will be one in which you know and experience the power of Christ in your life for personal growth and holiness.

We ask all those who seek counseling at Grace Baptist Church commit to the prerequisites outlined in this packet. These are not legalistic requirements, but rather an acknowledgment on our part as a church that true biblical change requires the commitment to a complete life restructuring. You will find in these documents the expectations and guidelines for those receiving counseling at Grace Baptist Church, the intake form that will assist your counselor's preparation when meeting with you, and the informed consent form that must be completed in person during your first session of counseling (provided for your consultation below). Please anticipate at least thirty minutes to review and complete these forms adequately.

Please submit this packet by email to: counseling@gracebaptist.org; or drop it off to our church's front desk personnel in a sealed envelope Monday through Thursday from 9 AM – 4 PM. If you have any questions regarding this or the counseling process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Grace and Peace

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Grace Counseling Director

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Agreement & Guidelines

I. Our Goal

Our goal is to offer Christ-centered counseling that cultivates spiritual growth during life's trials, providing practical support in applying biblical truth according to the ministry of the Holy Spirit to people's behaviors and situations. Our counseling practice is in line with our church's mission statement, "to make and multiply Christ-followers who magnify the glory of God." Therefore, we hope that this experience of focused discipleship will promote growth in your understanding of Christ and his sufficiency for your life in the gospel, as well as help you respond with worship and Christ-like obedience to God for his glory and the good of his church (Col 1:28, Gal 4:19).

_____ (initial)

II. Our Commitment

Our team is committed to regularly come along side you to encourage, correct, and help you until you are equipped to comfort others with the same truths God has used to strengthen you through this process. We prioritize your relationship with Christ, and through loving, skillful, and practical application of biblical principles, we will seek to partner with you in becoming a more committed follower of Jesus in every area of your life (Gal 6:13, 1 Thess 5:14, Rom 12:15, 2 Cor 1:4). _____ (initial)

III. Your Commitment to Church Attendance

Change for the believer is developed within the context of biblical church community. We expect you to commit to church attendance during this process and, as appropriate, give other believers the opportunity to grow as they bear your burdens, offer you informal counsel through edifying conversations, and extend a higher level of accountability in the counseling process. By actively participating in Grace Baptist Church, you are choosing to submit to the leadership who are committed to counsel, pray, and teach you, knowing that they will give an account to God for every soul entrusted to their care (Heb 13:17, 1 Thess 5:12-13). _____ (initial)

IV. Your Commitment to Counseling Meetings

We expect you to attend every scheduled session, and a minimum of 5 sessions, bringing a Bible and notebook, taking notes during the session, completing the assigned homework, and to the best of your ability maintaining all the materials received during counseling in an organized and accessible manner. Through this process you will be encouraged, challenged, called to repent, and called to fight sin and temptation as you come to enjoy your relationship with Christ. _____ (initial)

V. Your Commitment to Get the Most out of Your Counseling

1. Be honest

Honesty is both about what you reveal and what you conceal. You may feel you are being honest by sharing in your session something that was true. However what you do not share can be equally or even more important to the counseling process. It is always best to present a complete picture of the situation. We must be honest before God (Psalm 32:1–8), but we must also be honest with those God provides to help us. Lean into honesty and participate in accountability and benefit from the wisdom that can come from trusting your counselor enough to be fully honest.

2. Slow down

It is important to remember that you are not a problem to fix or solve. You, like me and everyone else, are complex individuals. You deserve the attention of careful exploration. Counseling deals with the deepest issues of the heart; it takes time to draw out what is there (Proverbs 20:5). God is not in a hurry. The change you desire is a process, and the process is often where you learn more about yourself and God. It is in the unhurried pace that you create space to see what God is teaching you.

3. Pray

The Bible testifies that prayer is powerful in its effect (James 5:16). Prayer changes things, and one of the most important things it changes is your own heart. Pray before, during, and after your sessions. Pray for your heart to be changed in this season. Pray that you will be sensitive to God and His Word. Pray that God will encourage and strengthen you as you seek to work through the challenges you face. Pray for your counselor to be fully dependent on the Holy Spirit. Pray that they will counsel out of a life that is abiding with Jesus.

4. Follow Through

Remember that most of the fruit of your season of counseling will be seen outside of your sessions, as you seek to apply what you learn from your sessions. Merely hearing the Word does not accomplish much. But practicing the truths of God's Word results in blessing (James 1:22). The real benefits will start to unfold in your life when you take what you have learned in counseling and begin to work it out in your everyday life. You may also consider identifying a trusted friend who will help you process this experience, and, if appropriate, be an advocate and support for you during your sessions.

_____ (initial)

VI. Grace Counseling Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I reach my counselor in an emergency situation?

During office hours, you can contact our office at (661) 296-8737 x162. Grace Counseling offices do not provide 24-hour emergency crisis counseling. If you are unable to reach your counselor in a timely manner, you should contact a physician, a local emergency room, or the local police department as applicable. In case of emergencies, you should call 911. It is your responsibility to seek the appropriate resources in emergency situations.

2. How long are the counseling sessions?

The length of counseling will vary by situation, but the goal of the counseling process is to address your concerns thoroughly and adequately in a timely manner. Normally, after the initial 5 sessions, counselors and counsees can evaluate the option of ongoing counseling in increments of 5 as needed. Regardless, a Grace Counselor may find it necessary to end a counseling relationship in certain situations. These situations include, but are not limited to, a failure to attend scheduled sessions, excessive cancellations, prolonged periods without meeting, incomplete paperwork or other assignments, or a general unwillingness to practice and heed counsel given. Counseling sessions will normally be 45–50 minutes in duration.

3. What is the cancellation policy and how do we reschedule an appointment?

Grace Counseling requests at least 24-hour notice for any appointment cancellation. Additionally, all appointments will be considered cancelled on the occasion where a counselee is more than 10 minutes late. Rescheduling must be requested through the Grace Counseling office by email or phone at least 24-hour in advance.

4. How do email and phone consultations work?

In the interest of confidentiality and to uphold the counselor-counselee relationship, Grace Counseling will never provide counseling via email, text, or any other messaging service (i.e. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp), and you agree that substantive correspondence with your counselor by email or phone should be kept at a minimum and will not address sensitive issues. Informal consultations are at times welcomed when scheduled directly with the Grace Counseling offices, Care and Counseling Director, or Pastoral staff.

5. Do you provide childcare and where do counseling sessions take place?

Grace Counseling does not provide childcare, however other ministries of Grace Baptist make childcare available during scheduled events (i.e. Wednesdays, 6pm–8pm). Children, for their safety, are not allowed to sit unattended in our reception or office areas.

All official sessions of Grace Counseling will take place on the campus of Grace Baptist Church. The Grace Counseling offices house counseling rooms where most sessions are expected to take place (indicated in the map below), unless arranged elsewhere by the Grace Counseling staff.



6. Counselor-Counselee Relationship

Your relationship with your counselor is that of a counselee with an experienced biblical counselor who is a member of Grace Baptist Church. This means that outside of sessions, counselors are expected to relate to their counselee as a fellow church member, and not as a counselee. Therefore, the sensitive matters discussed in-session are expected to stay in-session and be held in confidence in other contexts. Please note that as biblical counselors, Grace Counseling counselors are not professional counselors or professional therapist, and Grace Counseling does not otherwise provide professional clinical counseling or professional mental health services. The counseling relationship is intended to be short-term, and counselors will seek to eventually transition counsees to a healthy, loving, and Christ-centered community post-counseling.

_____ (initial)



Informed Consent Form

If you are interested in participating in the Counseling Ministry at Grace Baptist Church, please read and sign this Agreement.

The Concept of Grace Counseling

In the context of gospel-centered relationships, Grace Baptist Church's counselors regularly engage in both formal and informal conversations to admonish, encourage, and give hope to those struggling with sin and suffering in our church (1 Thess 5:14, Col 1:28). Our belief in the Bible's inerrancy gives us confidence in its sufficiency to guide and instruct through every experience in life. Grace Counseling is a ministry in which the Bible is used to disciple, counsel, and mentor others to become disciples of Jesus Christ. This ministry is neither a business, nor a profit-driven activity.

At times, it is our practice to invite another counselor or the counselee's selected case advocate to sit in and observe counseling sessions for training purposes, support or accountability. If you have any reservation with this practice, and would prefer to opt out, please check below. I would like to opt out of having a third-party observer or advocate _____ (initial)

Outreach Ministry

The Church offers this ministry free of charge to both members and nonmembers of the Church.

Not Professional Advice

Grace Counseling is strictly a religious ministry based on Scriptural principles, and is conducted under the authority and leadership of the Church. Because of this biblical foundation, and underlying expectation that our counseling reflects biblical principles, all of our counselors serve under the authority of Grace Baptist Church, and should not be viewed as mental health professionals (Psychiatry and Psychology Services Billing and Coding Guidelines 90785-90899). Therefore, the counselors cannot recommend using, not using, or discontinuing legally prescribed medications. While some of our lay counselors may be specialists in other professions, our counselors are not advising in their respective professional capacity(ies) during the counseling process at Grace Baptist Church. No lay counselor or church staff member is authorized to provide anything other than biblical counseling, even when that counselor is a licensed professional in another field. Therefore, the ministry of Grace Counseling does not provide clinical counseling or professional mental health services.

The counseling services at Grace Baptist Church are non-custodial (i.e. those receiving counseling services are not subject to control, custody or institutionalization in any way). Those receiving counseling services seek these services voluntarily, and are not under Court order, or direct referral of a physician. Pursuant to California law, church leadership cannot and will not be held liable for advice provided during counseling sessions (see, *Nally v. Grace Community Church of the Valley* (1988) 763 P.2d 948, cert. denied, 490 U.S. 1007 (1989)).

As a condition for receiving Grace Counseling, you understand and agree that counselors at the Church are not trained or licensed as mental health professionals, that Grace Counseling is not designed to be the provision of licensed professional mental health services, and that it does not qualify as any type of court-ordered counseling.

Termination of Grace Counseling

At any time, either the counselor or you may terminate further Grace Counseling.

Confidentiality

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them (Proverbs 11:13). Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matthew 7:12). We will carefully guard the information you entrust to us to the fullest extent possible. There are times, however, where it may be biblically or legally necessary to share certain information with others.

As a condition for receiving Grace Counseling, you understand and agree that your disclosure of information of a highly personal nature may not be covered by any clergy-penitent privilege. Moreover, you understand and agree that your counselor is required to participate in regular supervision with a member of the Church's pastoral staff or another person designated by the pastoral staff for that purpose. As a result, you understand and agree that your counselor may disclose some aspects of your Grace Counseling sessions, including information of a confidential nature, as part of the supervision process, which is under the leadership of the Elder Board of the Church. Finally, you understand and agree that your counselor, his or her supervisor or the Church, and any applicable outside consultants, in their sole discretion and as they deem necessary, may disclose information to others for reasons including, but not necessarily limited to the following situations:

1. Upon a disclosure by a person receiving Grace Counseling of, or reasonable determination by the counselor of child abuse, elder or dependent adult abuse, or as otherwise required by law (Mark 9:36–37, 42; Matthew 18:1–14).
2. Where a person receiving Grace Counseling threatens imminent harm to his or herself or another person, it may be necessary to intervene in order to prevent harm (Proverbs 24:11–12).
3. Where a disclosure by a person receiving Grace Counseling, in the opinion of the counselor or supervisor, requires action to protect the Grace Counseling Ministry of the Church or any other interest of the Church.

4. Observers may sit in on Grace Counseling sessions, either to assist in the process or for training purposes.
5. When a person receiving Grace Counseling refuses to renounce a particular sin, it may be necessary to seek the assistance of others in the Church to encourage repentance and reconciliation (Proverbs 15:22, 24:11; Matthew 18:15–20).

Conflict Resolution

On rare occasions, a conflict may develop between a counselor and a person receiving Grace Counseling. Scripture advises Christians about bringing lawsuits against one another in secular courts of law (1 Corinthians 6:1–8). The Church is committed to resolving all disputes in a biblical manner. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another (see Matthew 5:9; John 17:20–23; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:1–3) and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Holy Scriptures (see Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 5:23–25; 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 6:1–8; Galatians 6:1).

If a conflict should arise between you and the counselor, and/or the Church, its officers and employees, you agree to resolve the dispute outside the secular court system. Christian Conciliation will be sought under submission to, and the direction of, the Church Elder Board, based upon the following three step procedure:

Step One: Presentation of the dispute, grievance or complaint to the Church Elders. If the issue remains unresolved:

Step Two: Mediation of the dispute, grievance or complaint utilizing a mutually acceptable mediator. If unresolved or unconcluded:

Step Three: The parties will move to legally binding arbitration, choosing an arbitrator mutually acceptable to both parties, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker Ministries (complete text of the Rules are available at www.Peacemaker.net). Judgment upon arbitration award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction.

If a dispute, grievance or complaint involves an alleged injury or damage to which the Church's insurance applies, and if the Church's insurance company refuses to submit to Christian conciliation of mediation and/or arbitration, either the Church or you may declare that the above described conflict resolution process is no longer binding with regard to that part of the dispute or claim for which the church's insurance applies. The parties understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

Informed Consent

We welcome the opportunity to minister to you in the name of Christ, and to be used by Him as He helps you to grow in spiritual maturity to His glory. Your signature below indicates your informed consent to the principles, policies and conditions of our Grace Counseling Ministry that you agree to in order to participate in the Grace Counseling Ministry.

PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE TERMS OF THIS SPIRITUAL CARE INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT BEFORE SIGNING. If you have any questions about any of the terms, please talk with an overseeing Care Pastor or another pastor of the Church.

I have read and understand the principles, policies and conditions for receiving Grace Counseling as set forth in this Grace Counseling Informed Consent Agreement and I agree to receive Grace Counseling in accordance with such principles, policies and conditions.

_____	_____
Date	Signature

	Print Name
_____	_____
Date	Witness Signature

	Print Name



Intake Form

General Information

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____

Email: _____

Primary Method of Communication: Phone Call Email

Employer: _____ Position: _____

Marital Status:

Single Dating Married Separated Divorced Widowed

Last Education Completed:

GED High School Some College Undergrad Degree Graduate Work

Day/Time Availability During the Week to Meet With a Counselor:

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday
 ○ AM ○ AM ○ AM ○ AM
 ○ PM ○ PM ○ PM ○ PM

Emergency Contact _____

Phone (____) _____ Relationship to you _____

Form continues on page 2

Marriage & Family Information

Spouse: _____ Birth Date: _____

Anniversary: _____ Ages When Married: Husband _____ Wife _____

Spouse's Occupation: _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____ Business Phone: (_____) _____

Have either you or your spouse been divorced/separated If so, please briefly explain.

Children (Indicate names, ages, marital status, and if they are step-children or adopted):

Spiritual Background

Are you a member of Grace Baptist Church? Yes No

Do you attend another church? Yes No If so, where? _____

Church attendance Sunday morning per month (select one) 0 1 2 3 4

Are you part of an Adult Bible Fellowship, Grace Group, or another small group?

Yes No

If yes, please also indicate who is your group leader.

Where else are you involved in the church?

Spiritual Disciplines Assessment

1. Do you read the Bible? Never Occasionally Often
2. Do you pray to God? Never Occasionally Often
3. Do you share the gospel? Never Occasionally Often
4. Do you support the church through financial offerings? Never Occasionally Often
5. Do you pray with your spouse? Never Occasionally Often N/A
6. Do you pray with your children? Never Occasionally Often N/A
7. Do you have family devotions? Never Occasionally Often N/A

Theological Assessment

1. All truth can be found if I just look within myself. Yes No
2. God can bring peace amid life's struggles. Yes No
3. I am a Christian as long as I go to church, pray, and read my Bible. Yes No
4. People naturally tend to do bad things. Yes No
5. I should trust my moral compass. Yes No
6. God is in control, even when bad things happen. Yes No
7. God loves me more when I do good things. Yes No
8. I should do what is right, even if it doesn't feel good. Yes No
9. If God were totally good, He would never let anything bad happen. Yes No
10. Our emotions and senses can often fool us. Yes No
11. Suffering has no meaning and should be avoided whenever possible. Yes No
12. Good things happen to good people, bad things to bad people. Yes No

Form continues on page 4

Would you describe yourself as a Christian? Please explain what that means to you.

How would you explain the gospel and the way it has changed your life to someone?

Please explain any recent changes in your spiritual life.

Form continues on page 5

Prior Counseling & Health Information

Have you received counseling at Grace Baptist Church before? Yes No

If so, when? _____

Who was your counselor? _____

Are you currently seeing, or have you ever seen, a psychiatrist, psychologist, mental health practitioner or pastoral counseling elsewhere? Yes No

If so, please indicate the following:

Counselor/Psychologist/ Psychiatrist/Pastor	Duration	Medication Prescribed?	Diagnosis or Outcome	Was it Helpful?

Please review the following statements, and rate the issues that are most relevant to you (0 – 5)
0 = no concerns 3 = some concerns 5 = serious concerns:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel depressed | <input type="checkbox"/> I have obsessive thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> I view pornography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel anxious | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle with compulsive behaviors | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle sexually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel insecure | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle with worry | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle with my sexuality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel inferior | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle with doubt | <input type="checkbox"/> My spouse has committed adultery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel hopeless | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle with bitterness | <input type="checkbox"/> My spouse is a poor communicator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel fearful | <input type="checkbox"/> I feel worthless | <input type="checkbox"/> I am a poor communicator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel angry | <input type="checkbox"/> I am having marital problems | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not attend church regularly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle with anger | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle with my in-laws | <input type="checkbox"/> I strongly fear rejection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel sad | <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle as a parent | <input type="checkbox"/> I have been sexually abused |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I abuse alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> I use illegal drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> I have been sexually abusive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I think of suicide | <input type="checkbox"/> I use prescription drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> I have been verbally and/or physically abused |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel inadequate | <input type="checkbox"/> I abuse prescription drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> I have been verbally and/or physically abusive |

Medical Assessment

Health: Very Good Good Average Declining

Hearing: Very Good Good Average Declining

Sight: Very Good Good Average Declining

Appetite: Very Good Good Average Declining

Energy: Very Good Good Average Declining

Primary Physician: _____ Date of last medical exam: _____

Result of last medical exam: _____

Current medications and dosages: _____

List significant illnesses or injuries: _____

Is there anything that would be helpful for your counselor to know regarding your health?

Have you ever used drugs for other than medical purposes? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Do you drink alcoholic beverages? Yes No How often? _____

Do you use tobacco or tobacco-related products? Yes No How often? _____

Recent weight change? Yes No If so, what was the weight change? _____

Average number of hours sleep per night? _____

Describe any changes in your sleep patterns: _____

Average number of hours per week watching TV: _____

Average hours per week online/social media (recreational): _____

Please select all the social media sites you regularly use:

Facebook Instagram Twitter YouTube TikTok Snapchat

Pinterest Reddit Dating Sites Online Chatrooms/Forums Other: _____

Pre-Counseling Journal

Briefly answer the following questions. Please be as specific as possible

1. What is the main problem or issue that has brought you to counseling? Please include when it began and any other significant events that occurred around the same time.

2. What have you done about the problem or issue? What has worked or not worked?

3. What are your expectations or goals in seeking counseling? What do you desire to happen in this situation, and what do you fear may happen?

4. As you see yourself, what kind of person are you? How would you describe yourself?
How has this current situation affected the thoughts that come to your mind?

5. Is there any additional information we should know?