

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR BIBLICAL DISCIPLERS/COUNSELORS

ARTICLE I - STANDARDS FOR DISCIPLESHIP/COUNSELING BIBLICALLY

The biblical discipler/counselor performs his service as part of the ministry of the Christian church, embracing thereby the values of historic Christianity. He upholds and supports the common bond of fellowship, faith and unity as prescribed in the Scriptures and seeks to establish a relationship between the disciple/counselee and a loving God within the framework of the church. Certification of biblical disciplers/counselors by their pastors is contingent upon continued good standing in a church subscribing to the

STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR THE MINISTRY OF COUNSELING/DISCIPLESHIP

(See the Grace Fellowship International Statement of Faith
for the Certification in Spirituotherapy)

One so certified will always seek approval, recognition, and oversight by the spiritual leadership of his church.

The biblical discipler/counselor, in serving God, will seek the best interest of the disciple/counselee, the church, and the general public by teaching, exhorting, admonishing, encouraging, and helping others on the basis and authority of Scripture. He does not base this ministry on his own concepts of behavior, but seeks only to marshal the full range of biblical truth into focus on the disciple/counselee's need.

The biblical discipler/counselor, in the practice of the discipleship/counseling ministry, holds to the essential truths of biblical faith and conduct without theological emphasis on any practice not specifically advocated in the Scriptures.

The biblical discipler/counselor is committed to maintain the standards and principles as described in this document and to seek to enhance the total ministry of the church and the public good.

1. The biblical discipler/counselor does not represent himself as having qualifications, affiliations, or experience that he does not possess. He does not use his knowledge, experience, or position for personal recognition, benefit or gain, nor does he allow or use his ministry for unethical and unbiblical purposes.
2. The biblical discipler/counselor provides his service as a ministry of the Christian church or a faith group.

- A. He does not make exploitative representation of his services in any type of unseemly listing or advertising. He does not make claims orally, or in writing, that are inaccurate or unbecoming.
 - B. He does not practice privately apart from the church or other recognized ecclesiastical service or educational organization which bears the endorsement of his church. He acts within the scope of the church in the performance of his regular or specialized ministerial duties.
 - C. Because of his personal concern, he provides his time, resources, and energy as a ministering service to the church or faith group as well as to the individual or family in need.
 - D. He encourages the disciple/counselee to maintain a strong church involvement and will emphasize the need for continued authoritative biblical faith, instruction, and conduct.
3. The biblical discipler/counselor recognizes the total health needs of the disciple/counselee.
- A. He accepts that the general practice of medicine and nutrition is an essential ministry to the physical body based on a systematic and scientifically developed body of knowledge. The ministry to the body, soul, and spirit is based on the immutable and completely sufficient Word of God.
 - B. He recognizes the need in some instances for early medical evaluations to determine whether the disciple/counselee's behavior may result partially from organic dysfunction.
 - C. He recognizes that there are occasional circumstances, such as extreme pain or physical safety, where medication (which may alter behavior) is required, but will not advocate taking substances that lead to dependency. He will not make medical recommendations regarding the use or non-use of medications
4. The biblical discipler/counselor may make a referral to other biblical disciplers/counselors, pastors, or teachers who are grounded and trained in biblical thought, perspective, methodology, and conduct. Referrals should be acknowledged and significant information obtained, and/or made available, that may assist in the process of biblical change.
5. The biblical discipler/counselor will maintain, as a trustworthy steward, all notes, records and information pertaining to the disciple/counselee. Records will be confidential and securely maintained, but it is recognized that confidentiality does not irrevocably prohibit the discipler/counselor from providing information in the utilization of church and/or state resources where necessary.

ARTICLE II - RELATIONSHIP OF THE BIBLICAL DISCIPLER/COUNSELOR TO THE DISCIPLE/COUNSELEE

The biblical discipler/counselor has no preconceptions concerning the needs of a disciple/counselee other than those already stated. The integrity of the disciple/counselee, and statements by the disciple/counselee, are accepted at face value as a truthful description of the problem. Confidentiality is respected where possible, information is safeguarded, and the best interest and well-being of the disciple/counselee is preserved.

1. It is a commitment on the part of the biblical discipler/counselor to maintain his conduct and relationship with the disciple/counselee above reproach and in accord with the highest standards of biblical ministry.
2. It is Scriptural to offer hope. However, the biblical discipler/counselor does not offer a quick panacea, but maintains a reasonable reservation as to biblical application until the full needs of the disciple/counselee have been identified and studied.
3. The biblical discipler/counselor stresses those requirements clearly stated in the Scriptures. His responsibility as a biblical discipler/counselor corresponds to the following principles:
 - A. In order to face and deal with his problem victoriously, the disciple/counselee must first be regenerated through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - B. Psychological insights may be useful in diagnosing the life context of the client's presenting problem and unique flesh patterns, but not as a therapeutic resource.
 - C. The Holy Spirit will be respected as the Ultimate Counselor, convicting the unsaved person of sin and convicting the struggling believer of his flesh and related issues. He illumines the counselee to the resources available through a vital relationship with Christ.
 - D. The biblical discipler/counselor functions as a personal spiritual director and coach in the process of assisting the disciple/counselee in the process of sanctification. Through surrender to God, identification with Christ, and practical abiding in Him, the disciple/counselee will be encouraged to depend on God, instead of the discipler/counselor.
 - E. The discipler/counselor will emphasize Christ-centered mentoring: "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (Colossians 1:27-29).
4. The biblical discipler/counselor will protect the identity of a disciple/counselee in any spoken or written communication or publication.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH OR FAITH GROUP RELATIONSHIP

The biblical discipler/counselor shall have continuing fellowship with a church or faith group, and shall place himself under the authority and oversight of its ruling body.

ARTICLE IV - CONTINUING STUDY

The biblical discipler/counselor is committed to continuing study of the Scriptures with a view to greater illumination of God's grace and truth in Christ, applying wisdom and righteousness to all phases of spiritual growth, personal living, conduct, behavior, and interpersonal relationships.

ARTICLE V - COMMUNICATIONS AND REPRESENTATION

The biblical discipler/counselor exercises care in public utterances and writing to distinguish his ministry as a biblical discipler/counselor from his private views and denominational theological positions.

1. The biblical discipler/counselor will value the training of believers to practice biblical discipleship/counseling in support of the local church and parachurch ministry.

Biblical disciplers/counselors shall seek in every area of life to exemplify and otherwise promote the principles and practices of biblical faith and behavior with loving concern, and assist others to do the same.

3. The biblical discipler/counselor will demonstrate trustworthiness in spoken or written communications to avoid gossip. His evaluations or conclusions relating to individual cases or the general biblical discipleship/counseling ministry will build up others in a manner that is above reproach.
4. Biblical disciplers/counselors shall encourage churches and faith groups to institute training in the use of the Scriptures to help one another in overcoming the problems of personal, interpersonal, and family life, thus equipping God's people to more effectively fulfill the Great Commission.

Adapted from The Standards of Conduct, Biblical Counseling Foundation