



## CONSENT TO COUNSELING

**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 (1 Cor. 10:31) and in a way that will bring you the greatest joy and satisfaction (Jn. 15:11).

**Biblical Basis** – We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, our counseling is based upon scriptural principles. *Our counselors are not trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.*

All counseling will be conducted in accordance with the counselor’s understanding of the Scriptures. However, our counselors do not know all there is to know about biblical teaching and its application to life. Therefore, when necessary, they will seek help, input, or advice from pastors, mentors, or colleagues.

**Not Professional Advice** – If you have significant legal, financial, medical or other technical questions you should seek advice from an independent professional. Our counselors will cooperate with such advisors and help you to consider their counsel in light of scriptural principles. Our counselors do not give professional advice.

**Counseling Observers** – Because we are a training facility, our counselors always “team counsel.” You will meet with a biblical counselor, who will lead the session, and a counseling trainee(s), who will observe as part of his/her certification requirement.

**Confidentiality** – Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. There are situations, however, in which the counselors may believe that it is wise or mandated (biblically or legally) for them to share certain information with others. Some examples would be:

1. When a counselor is uncertain how to address a problem and needs to seek advice from another pastor or counselor.
2. When there is concern that someone may be harmed unless others intervene.
3. When abuse or another crime must be reported to the authorities.
4. When a person refuses to renounce a particular sin and it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of others in the church to encourage repentance and reconciliation or to begin the process of church discipline (Proverbs 15:22, 24:11; Matthew 18:15-20).
5. When observers sit in on counseling sessions to assist the counselor or for training purposes (including audio & video recordings—only with permission).
6. When the counselee’s pastor, staff and/or church leadership is needed to provide pastoral assistance.

*Please be assured that our counselors strongly prefer not to disclose personal information to others, and they will make every effort to help you find ways to resolve a problem as privately as possible.*

**Our Fee** – Though it may be necessary for you to purchase materials for your own use, the actual discipleship counseling is done *free of charge* to members of First Baptist Church Jacksonville; the fee for non-members is \$100 per appointment (financial assistance may be available; please ask our office additional information).

**Resolution of Conflicts (Arbitration)** – On rare occasions a conflict may develop between a counselor and a counselee. In order to make sure that any such conflicts will be resolved in a biblically faithful manner, we require all of our counsees to agree that any dispute that arises with a counselor or with The Grace Center as a result of counseling will be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation; judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction. *It is expressly understood that by agreeing in advance to arbitrate that the counselee is giving up his right to a trial in the civil courts.*

**Conclusion & Signature** – Having clarified the principles and policies of our counseling ministry, 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 and prepares you for usefulness in His body. If you have any questions about these guidelines or conditions, please speak with your counselor or someone at The Grace Center.

Having read the foregoing information and conditions fully and completely, my signature below indicates that I understand all the material presented and fully agree to comply.

**Name (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent/Guardian Name\*:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* only required if counselee is under 18 years of age