

Consent to Discipleship Counseling

Adapted from: Consent to Discipleship Counseling © Stuart W. Scott, 2009

Our Goal - Our goal in providing discipleship 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 (John 15:11).

Biblical Basis - We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3ff). 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 discipleship will be conducted in accordance with the discipleship counselor's understanding of the Scriptures. However, our discipleship 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 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 discipleship counselors will cooperate with such advisors and help you to consider their counsel in light of scriptural principles. Our discipleship counselors do not give professional advice.

Termination - At any time during the discipleship, for reason(s) sufficient to him or her, the discipleship counselor or counselee has the option of terminating the discipleship counseling.

Confidentiality - Confidentiality is an important aspect of the discipleship counseling process and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. There are situations, however, in which the discipleship counselor 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 discipleship 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 discipleship counseling sessions to assist the discipleship counselor or for training purposes (including audio & video recordings with permission to record).
6. When the discipleship counselee's pastor, staff and/or church leadership is needed to provide pastoral assistance (when the discipleship counselee is not a member of the discipleship counselor's church).

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

Fees - Our mission is to engage in discipleship practice through biblical teaching providing hope, help and guidance to persons whose goal is Christlikeness. This ministering of the gospel is free. Yet, Image Bearers does have expenses and so we do appreciate donations. We can suggest that a very reasonable per session value would be \$80 for individuals and \$120 for couples. We will not withhold counseling from any person who is consistently engaging the process and completing the homework whether they make contributions to the ministry at other levels or no contributions at all.

Resolution of Conflicts (Arbitration) - On rare occasions a conflict may develop between a discipleship counselor and a discipleship counselee. In order to make sure that any such conflicts will be resolved in a Biblically faithful manner, we require all of our discipleship counselees to agree that any dispute that arises with a discipleship counselor or with the church as a result of discipleship 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 discipleship 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 discipleship counselor. 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: _____

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