

What is Biblical Counseling?

Biblical counseling is based on the principles of God's Word. Our goal in life is to honor God and glorify Him in every situation or difficulty we encounter (2 Corinthians 5:9). God's Word provides direction and truth in our lives. This approach differs from popular counseling or secular therapy in that it is based on heavenly wisdom rather than human wisdom.

We desire to be used by God to "speak His truth in love." We know that the path to maturity is often steep and rough and at times filled with pain and confusion. However, there are answers. We believe that the Bible is God's all-sufficient guide for relational living. There is a route to life. Our Lord is that way. Christ is the truth who frees us to love. He is the life who satisfies the deepest thirsts of our soul.

Ministries Offered

As a ministry of First Baptist Church, our counseling services are provided free of charge to our community and church members by our pastor and trained church members. You should expect to pay for books or other materials and an initial scheduling deposit (*refundable*). As a discipleship ministry of a local church, we offer to you:

- Individual counseling regarding spiritual and personal issues
- Pre-marital counseling
- Marital counseling

- Family/parental counseling: with children under the age of thirteen, we work primarily with the parents and/or together with the parents and children
- Adolescent counseling: with parental consent and involvement
- Small group discipleship: see our *Get Connected* brochure on our various groups

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the biblical counseling relationship, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. All communications between you and our Biblical Counseling Ministry offices will be held in strict confidence, unless you (or a parent in the case of a minor) give authorization to release this information. The exceptions are: 1.) if a person expresses intent to harm himself/herself or someone else; 2.) if there is evidence or reasonable suspicion of abuse against a minor child, elder person, or dependent adult; 3.) if a subpoena or other court order is received directing the disclosure of information; 4.) if/when counselors consult with another counselor; 5.) if a person persistently refuses to renounce a particular sin (habitual unrepentant rebellion against the Word of God) and it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of others in the church to encourage repentance, restoration, and reconciliation (see Matthew 18:15-20 and our Church Discipline Policy). If you are not a member of our church, we will refer you to your own pastor. 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.

Appointments

Our biblical counselors work by scheduled appointments. Exceptions are made in emergencies. We need your prompt and consistent participation in your scheduled meetings. Please contact our office 24 hours in advance if you must cancel an appointment.

Prior to scheduling your initial meeting, you will complete and submit a summary form that helps us determine the best counselor for you and a consent form.

You can expect to meet with your counselor on a weekly basis for approximately ten weeks. After reviewing your goals and progress, a final date or follow up plan will be determined.

Our Commitments to You

Biblical counselors are spiritual friends who commit to the historic roles of soul care and spiritual direction through:

- **Sustaining:** Empathizing with your suffering, helping you to understand that "It's normal to hurt."
- **Healing:** Encouraging you to see life from a biblical perspective, helping you to know that "It's possible to hope."
- **Reconciling:** Examining and exposing your current responses to life and suggesting new ways of handling problems, helping you to see

that “It’s horrible to sin, but wonderful to be forgiven.”

- **Guiding:** Exploring how and empowering you to mature through Christ, helping you to grasp that “It’s supernatural to mature.”

Because we care about you, our desire is for you to be drawn closer to Christ and to become more like Christ, which we see as your inner life increasingly reflecting the inner life of Christ:

- **Relational Maturity:** Loving God wholeheartedly and loving others sacrificially.
- **Rational Maturity:** Wisely living according to the truth of Christ’s Gospel of grace.
- **Volitional Maturity:** Courageously choosing to pursue God’s purposes in your life through the Spirit’s power.
- **Emotional Maturity:** Deeply and honestly experiencing life with integrity, fully open to God while managing your moods for God’s glory and with a ministry focus.

Your Commitments to Christ, to Yourself, and to Us

We ask that you commit to:

- Honestly and openly sharing your hurts and struggles.
- Prayerfully evaluating your own emotions, actions, motivations, beliefs, and relationships.
- Actively participating in the growth of renewed emotions, actions, convictions, and affections.
- Coming to each meeting prepared to review your progress throughout the last week

(including the completion of personalized “homework” assignments).

Because the Scriptures teach that growth in Christ requires all the resources of the Body of Christ (not only biblical counseling, but also discipleship, worship, fellowship, and stewardship), we believe that it is essential that those seeking biblical counseling at our church commit themselves to the following:

- Regular church attendance (our church or yours).
- Active participation in Adult Bible Fellowship/Sunday School.

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and fully inspired and is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed, and opinions shall be tried.

First Baptist Church

876 Central Ave. Dunkirk, NY 14048

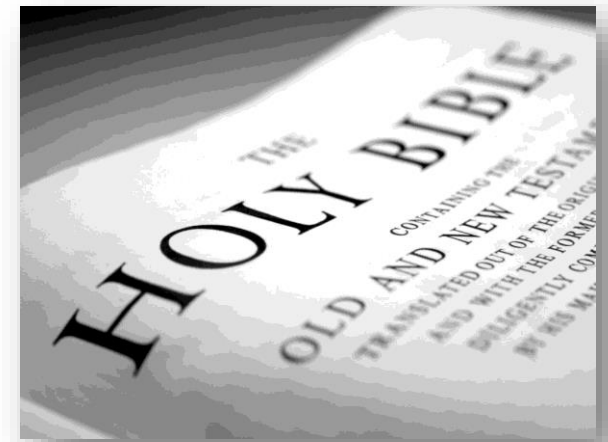
716-366-6634

www.dunkirkbaptist.org

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BIBLICAL COUNSELING Ministry & Policy



Association of Certified
Biblical Counselors