



## PVBC Biblical Counseling Informed Consent and Counseling Policy

**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 and allow you to enjoy fully His love for you and His plans for your life.

We're glad that you're taking this important step to seek godly counsel. Jesus promises us, "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). **No matter what your situation, this is a time in your life that the God of all creation knows and understands completely and therefore, there is great hope!** This form is helpful for us to start getting to know you and your situation, as well as to communicate these first important points which explain some of our perspectives and convictions which we believe are honoring to God and the best way we can truly be of help to you.

**Biblical Basis-** Biblical Counseling is the process where the Bible, God's Word, is related individually to a person or persons who are struggling under the weight of personal sin and/or the difficulties with suffering, so that he or she might genuinely change in the inner person to be pleasing to God. Therefore, our counseling is based solely on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry.

**Not Professional Advice-** Our pastoral and lay counselors are not licensed counselors, therapists, psychiatrists or psychologists. Our counselors are biblical counselors. Therefore, our counsel is based solely on God's Word, which is sufficient to handle any issue of life (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). By signing this "Consent to Biblical Counseling" you agree to hold Pleasant View Bible Church harmless in any and all matters associated with the biblical advice you have received.

**Lasting change takes place in community-** Christians were never meant to live in isolation. In fact, God intended the community of believers to assist one another in making lasting change for the glory of God (Romans 15:1-2, Ephesians 4: 11-16, Philippians 2:1-4). Because we believe that transformational change happens in the community of believers, we strongly encourage all counselees to regularly participate in any two of the following three activities: attend our Sunday morning worship services, attend our Sunday morning adult bible electives, attend a weekly small group. These are vital components to your growth in the Lord, and we would be glad to help you find a group that is most suitable to you.

**Homework-** Counselees must also be willing to complete any assigned homework prior to the counseling appointment (assignments may include reading materials, listening to CDs, worksheets, and Scripture memory and meditation). The counselor reserves the right to discontinue any counseling if the counselee consistently refuses to complete homework assignments.

**Confidentiality-** Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process. However, in order to train future counselors, we may request that you permit a counselor-in-training to sit in on your sessions. There may be a time when we would desire to record a session(s) with your consent. Also, there are five other situations when it may be necessary for us to share certain information with others: (1) When a counselor is uncertain of how to address a particular problem and needs to seek advice from another pastor or elder in this church; (2) when a counselee attends another church and it is necessary to talk with his or her pastor or elders; (3) when there is a clear indication that someone may be harmed unless we otherwise intervene; (4) when a person persistently refuses to renounce a particular sin and it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of others in the church to encourage repentance and reconciliation (see Proverbs 15:22; 24:11; Matthew 18:15-20); (5) when required by law or conscience to do so. 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.

**Resolution of Conflicts-** On rare occasions a conflict may arise between counselor and counselee. In order to make sure that any such conflicts will be resolved in a biblically faithful manner, we require all of our counselees to agree that any dispute that arises with the counselor or with this church as a result of counseling will be settled with mediation within the church according to the principles of scripture and the authority of this local church. 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, please talk with a pastor or elder. If these guidelines are acceptable to you, please sign below.