



Statement of Faith

Ministry of Discipleship / Counseling

Condensed Version with Verse References

The church of Jesus Christ is to be committed solely to the Old and New Testaments as the only written authority for faith and conduct. The biblical discipler/counselor's faith and conduct, which includes discipling/counseling theory and practice, are established and defined only by the standards of Scripture. The following statement of faith and conduct sets forth the central doctrines, precepts, and principles of God's Word which, since the first century, have formed the basis for authentic and effective biblical discipleship/counseling in the Body of Christ.

- I. We affirm the Bible to be the only infallible and authoritative Word of God, given by inspiration of God and devoid of error as originally written (*Psalm 19:7, 119:160; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21*). The Bible can be understood only through the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 2:14*) and is to be interpreted first and foremost by itself, using all relevant passages that relate to a particular subject. Since the Bible supplies all the resources necessary for godly living, it is totally sufficient to guide every individual in what to believe and how to think, speak, and act in every relationship and circumstance (*2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4*). Nothing is to be added to or deleted from its teachings (*Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Revelation 22:18-19*).
 - A. This statement affirms the complete sufficiency of the Bible to provide for each person all the guidance necessary to face, deal with, and endure every test and trial of life (*1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:23*) and, for each believer, provides all the help necessary to live in a way that pleases God and develops maturity as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ (*1 Peter 2:1-5; 2 Peter 1:3-4*).
 1. On any issue where God's Word speaks clearly by command, precept, or judgment, the biblical discipler/counselor uses Scripture alone as a continuing basis of faith, hope, change, and perseverance in doing the Word (*Romans 15:4; Hebrews 4:12, 5:13-14; James 1:22-25*).
 2. The biblical discipler/counselor assembles the full range of biblical commands, precepts, descriptions, and judgments (*Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:15-17*) that contrast man's erroneous thinking, judgment, and ways (*Isaiah 55:8-11*) – which demonstrate a preoccupation with self (*Matthew 7:1-5, 10:38-39; Luke 18:9-14*) – with a commitment to please God and obey His Word regardless of feelings, circumstances, or other people (*Proverbs 3:5-7; Jeremiah 17:5-8; Colossians 1:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 4:1*).
 3. Even on issues where the wisdom of man seems to correspond to the truth of God's Word, the biblical discipler/counselor continues to refer only to Scripture as the ultimate authority for living and disregards any so-called validation of scriptural truths outside the Bible (*Isaiah 55:11; John 17:17; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7*).
 - B. This affirmation also is meant to reject all philosophies that contain any ideas that are in opposition to Scripture as to how God deals with mankind (*Psalm 1:1-3; 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Cor. 1:30; Colossians 2:8*). Specifically, God's Word defines the sinful basis for man's problems as originating in the heart (*Jeremiah 17:9; Matt. 15:18-20; Mark 7:20-23; Luke 6:45*) and leading to an orientation to live for self instead of the Lord (*Luke 9:23-24*). Therefore, the biblical discipler/counselor rejects as superficial, futile, and unbiblical all methodologies that do not deal with issues of the heart but instead focus on other persons or circumstances as the reason for not overcoming difficulties in life (*Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 1:3b-7, 4:7*).
- II. We affirm the one God (*Deuteronomy 6:4*) eternally existent (*Deuteronomy 33:27a; Psalm 90:1-2; Hebrews 1:8-12, 7:24-25, 9:14*) in the triune Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; John 14:16-18; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6*).
- III. We affirm the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Isaiah 9:6-7; John 10:30; Colossians 1:15-17*), His virgin birth (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23*), His sinless life (*Hebrews 4:15*), His miracles (*John 20:30-31*), His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood (*2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7*), His bodily resurrection (*Romans 1:4, 4:25, 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:4*), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (*Romans 8:34; Hebrews 8:1*), and His personal return in power and glory (*Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 9:28*).

- IV. We affirm that mankind was created in the image of God (*Genesis 1:27*) but fell into sin by being disobedient to God's will (*Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7*). As a result, all individuals are sinful by nature (*Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3*) and are unable to save themselves (*Psalms 49:7; Proverbs 20:9; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5*), live righteously (*Psalms 143:2; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:9-12*), or understand the things of God (*Proverbs 14:12; Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Corinthians 2:14*). Therefore, no one has any inherent justification as he appears before a holy and righteous God, since every person is subject to death (*Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 3:23, 6:23a*) and God's judgment (*Romans 1:18; 5:16, 18; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Peter 3:7*).
- A. This affirmation emphasizes that the foremost problem faced by natural man is separation from God and not merely an inability to face, deal with, and endure problems of life (*Ephesians 2:1-4*).
 - B. This affirmation indicates the futility of trying to discipline/counsel individuals with a view to Christlike change apart from dealing with their basic sinfulness (*John 3:18, 8:34; Romans 6:17-18, 8:5-8*).
 - C. This affirmation also concludes that it is impossible to please God in one's thoughts, words, or actions apart from conversion through Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:5-9*).
- V. We affirm that God, by His gracious and merciful love, gave His one and only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as the only answer for mankind's helpless spiritual condition (*Isaiah 53:2-12; John 3:16, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:6; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 John 4:10*). Jesus voluntarily accepted the punishment for sin and died on the cross to pay the full price of redemption (*John 10:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 10:10-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 3:18*).
- VI. We affirm that each member of the Triune Godhead is jointly involved in the plan of redemption for lost and sinful mankind (*Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:1-2*) and that this redemption is provided to those who receive a spiritual new birth (*John 3:5-8; Romans 5:17*) by God's grace and mercy (*Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7*). This spiritual transformation (*Romans 6:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17*) is initiated and maintained by God (*Philippians 1:6*) and enables a believer to be an overwhelming conqueror through Christ Jesus (*Romans 8:31-39; 1 John 4:4*).
- A. This affirmation highlights the necessity of salvation in Jesus Christ as a prerequisite for enablement to face, deal with, and endure problems in a biblical manner (*John 15:5; Romans 6:16-19*). Thus, a biblical discipler/counselor is to present the Good News of Jesus Christ to an unbeliever (*2 Corinthians 5:18-20*), which must be appropriated before any further biblical discipling/counseling is effective (*1 Corinthians 2:14*).
 - B. This affirmation emphasizes that the divine resources of God are available and completely sufficient for a believer in Christ to endure in a Christlike manner any trial or test, including those involving painful emotional distress, agonizing physical discomfort, or physical care by medical personnel (*1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; Philippians 4:13; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 1:2-4; 2 Peter 1:2-4*).
 - C. This affirmation is meant to convey that a biblical relationship with God through Jesus Christ provides the only way for one to experience lasting peace and joy in the midst of the adversities of life (*John 14:27, 15:11, 16:33, 17:13*).
- VII. We affirm the present work of the Holy Spirit as convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (*John 16:8*). The Holy Spirit indwells a believer (*John 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16*) to help him understand the things of God (*John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 1 John 2:18-27*) and to empower him for godly living (*Acts 1:8; Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18*) that results in further Christlikeness (*2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-23*).
- A. This affirmation is meant to convey that interpreting or coming to a full understanding of one's past is not necessary for biblical change (*1 Corinthians 3:19-20; Philippians 3:13-14*).
 - B. This affirmation also emphasizes the need for a biblical discipler/counselor to reject any reliance on self-adequacy when dealing in the life of another. Instead, he is to rely on God's Spirit totally apart from man-made techniques or practices that supposedly help one discipline/counsel others (*Zechariah 4:6; 2 Corinthians 3:5-6*).
- VIII. We affirm the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, they that are saved to the resurrection of life and they that are lost to the resurrection of damnation (*Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29, 6:40; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Revelation 20:11-15*). Each shall be responsible to give an account of deeds done in the body (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Matthew 12:35-37, 16:27; Romans 2:4-6, 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:12-13*).

- A. This affirmation emphasizes the importance of being a doer of the Word to please the Lord, not only for the blessings of the Lord in this life (*John 15:10-11; James 1:22-25; 1 John 3:22*) but also for God's rewards in the life to come (*Matthew 16:27; Colossians 1:9-12, 3:23-24*).
- IX. We affirm the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (*John 17:22-23; Ephesians 4:3-6, 11-13*). We believe that all professing Christians should be baptized (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38*), be in ministry in conjunction with other believers (*Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:14-16; 1 Peter 4:10*), be in biblical submission to one another (*Ephesians 5:21*), be subject to and participate in the care and restorative discipline of the church (*Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-5*), and be in submission to godly leadership that God has ordained in a church (*1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17*).
- X. We affirm the responsibility of church leaders to train believers to carry out the work of ministry including that of counseling based on God's Word as an integral part of discipleship/counseling training (*Ephesians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 2:2*). Each church family, in fulfilling the biblical responsibilities of teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (*Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16*) will equip its members toward Christlike maturity (*2 Timothy 3:17; 2 Peter 1:2-4*) and the ministry of discipleship/counseling (*Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2*). Fulfilling this normal responsibility of discipleship in a church enables the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus – making disciples in all nations (*Matthew 28:19-20*).
- A. This affirmation points out that the ministry of counseling/discipleship is not relegated to a select group of counseling professionals but, instead, is to be a normal function of every believer who is growing in Christlikeness (*Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*).
- B. This affirmation further proclaims that God has provided all that is necessary for His people to face and deal with any problem of life by using the divinely ordained resources already given to His Church (*Psalms 19:7-11; Romans 8:9, 11, 26-27, 34; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-4; 1 John 2:1*).

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