

# Welcome to Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center

**PLEASE INITIAL AT THE BOTTOM OF EACH PAGE WHERE INDICATED**

Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center is a ministry of Spotswood Baptist Church. We humbly thank you for giving us the privilege to journey with you during your time of need. We recognize our responsibility to God, to you, and to the Church as we come alongside you to learn and grow together in God's grace. Please take the time to read this short but important document that explains what you should know and expect from us as you receive Biblical counseling from Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center.

## **What is Biblical Counseling?**

Biblical counseling is a way of caring for you as we seek to understand your struggles. We will see how Christ and His gospel truths apply in deeply personal and specific ways to the realities of your life so that you can live out the gospel by faith in community made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. At Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center, we believe the gospel powerfully transforms our individual lives, our relationships, and the world. Many of us have negative, preconceived notions of care done by the Church. Please read what Biblical counseling is NOT:

1. Biblical counseling is not just quoting or prescribing Bible verses and asking you for more faith and effort.
2. Biblical counseling is not following a fixed paradigm of method and sequence expecting the same "results" for each person.
3. Biblical counseling is not merely teaching biblical principles in general while ignoring the specific details of each person's story.

## **What to Expect from Biblical Counseling versus Traditional Counseling**

### Traditional Counseling

In traditional counseling, the term "counseling" has come to imply a one-on-one "professional relationship" between a psychiatrist and a "patient" or "client." Traditional "therapists" are typically licensed by a local or national accrediting body and are subject to the restrictions set by their licensing boards.

Therapists usually meet with a "client" in an office setting, provide some form of psychological assessment using secular tools and DSM-5 criteria, set restrictions on personal interactions outside the office, keep a written record, and charge a fee.

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## Biblical Counseling

On staff at Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center, we have a lead Pastoral Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselors, Residents in Counseling, Biblical Counselors, and Lay Biblical Counselors. Our Licensed Professional Counselors and our Residents in Counseling will follow ethical guidelines per the Virginia Board of Counseling.

### **Some things to expect from Biblical counseling include:**

1. In most situations, notes are taken so that we can better care for you through the details of your life.
2. We do not conduct psychological assessments based on secular theory.
3. We do not provide medical care or prescribe medications.
4. We do not function as a crisis center. Should a suicidal or homicidal risk emerge, the client will take necessary measures to ensure safety. This may include notifying the family, calling 911, going to the emergency room for a psychological assessment, or calling RASCB at 540-373-6876. Options may be discussed with counselor in session.
5. We are not able to represent you in courts of law. If this is or becomes your intent, we will immediately refer you to other counseling options. Should one of our counselors receive a subpoena to appear in court, we will comply with Virginia law, but we will terminate our counseling relationship immediately and refer you to another service.
6. We do not charge a fee for counseling. We do accept donations and suggest a \$30 donation per session for those who can afford to support the center through their giving.

### **Biblical Counseling and Psychiatric Medication**

God designed our body and soul to function in an integrated manner. Given the pervasive effects of living in a fallen world, we recognize there are times in which the body/brain does not function as God designed. In such cases, medical treatment and/or psychiatric medication may be necessary. We recognize that counseling approaches that discourage the use of psychiatric medications may prevent people from seeking treatments that are at times appropriate and necessary. Therefore, we are careful not to advise against the use of medications to those receiving counseling because Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center's counselors are not trained medical personnel.

### **Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center relationship with the Mental Health System and Other Providers**

We recognize our clients can exercise gospel freedom by choosing to seek care and counseling outside of Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center. Therefore, we do not discourage or keep those requesting care from seeking help elsewhere. Those seeking care are welcome to work with outside agencies even while receiving care from us.

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## **Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center and Counselor's Limits of Confidentiality**

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt. 7:12). It also encourages people to seek needed care. Since these goals are essential to the ministry of Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center, all staff and counselors are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. Those involved in counseling cases will carefully protect all information that they receive through the sessions and case management. All counselors are mandated reporters per Virginia law, and as such, are required to disclose confidential information in accordance to the following guidelines:

1. When we believe that the one receiving care could be in danger of harming themselves or others (Prov. 24:11-12)
2. When we believe that there is ongoing abuse taking place – i.e. sexual, physical, domestic, child abuse, etc. (Rom. 13:1)
3. When a minor (defined as anyone under 18 years old) shares information that we believe is in the best interest of the child to disclose information to the parents and/or authorities (e.g., neglect, abuse, drug usage, sex, physical harm).
4. When a Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center counselor is ordered by a court of law to release the client's information.
5. In the event a client discloses or is involved in activities that are detrimental to the ministry of Spotswood Baptist Church, our counselors are directed to disclose such information to the Senior Pastor for his review and guidance.
6. It is understood that the counselors are supervised by a lead Pastoral Counselor and a Resident in Counseling is supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor.

*Please be assured that we strongly prefer to keep personal information confidential and will make every effort to resolve issues as privately as possible. I hereby release Spotswood Baptist Church and its biblical counselors from any and all liability resulting from any disclosure herein.*

### **Cancelling Appointments**

Please contact Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center when canceling appointments. We ask that you give a 24-hour notice, but we also know there are times when this is not possible.

In the event that you have scheduled an appointment but have not notified us of your need to cancel, we reserve the right to not reschedule you for any future appointments.

### **Wellness Policy**

If you or someone in your household is experiencing symptoms of illness (fever, cold, cough, etc.) or has been exposed to Covid-19, please let us know and we will switch to telehealth or reschedule.

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**Legal Release**

Your signature below serves as acknowledgement that you have read and understand the information contained in this document.

As one receiving care or requesting care for a minor, I understand the following:

1. I agree to receive Biblical counseling, knowing what it is and is not.
2. I understand I have the ability to choose other forms of counseling offered outside of Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center.
3. Subject to the provisions of this Informed Consent form (including confidentiality), I am free to end my counseling sessions at any time.
4. The assigned counselor is free to terminate the counseling sessions at any time and/or refer the client to another facility.
5. To ensure my health and wellness, the assigned counselor at Spotswood Biblical Counseling Center may refer me to another ministry leader, psychologist, or psychiatrist.

**Authorization and Consent**

I acknowledge and understand that I take full responsibility for decisions made by me after this Biblical counseling session.

I acknowledge and understand that I will not be under the care or custody of the Biblical counselor(s) or the church by obtaining Biblical counseling or by attending Biblical counseling sessions.

<b>Printed Name (Client)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Printed Name (Client)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Printed Name (Parent/Guardian)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Printed Name (Parent/Guardian)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**Contact Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_