



Consent to Counsel

(Please print, sign, and bring to your first counseling appointment.)

OUR GOAL

Our goal in providing biblical counseling at Mission Bible Church East Valley is to help you meet life's challenges in a way that will please and honor the Lord Jesus Christ and allow you to enjoy His plans for your life.

BIBLICAL BASIS

We believe the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling is based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. The biblical counseling ministry is not a professional service. The counselors are not trained as and do not counsel as licensed psychologists, licensed psychiatrists, state-certified therapists, or any other type of professional mental healthcare provider. Consequently, they should not be expected to follow the methods of such specialists, and under Arizona law, no such licensing is required. Their purpose is to minister from the Word of God as peers of the counsees. There will be no attempt to render a psychological evaluation or diagnosis.

THE BIBLICAL COUNSELING TEAM

The biblical counseling ministry of Mission Bible Church East Valley consists of lay counselors and trainees under the direction and authority of the Board of Elders at Mission Bible Church East Valley. The word "counselor" in this document can refer to a pastoral counselor, biblical counselor, or lay person trained in biblical counseling. Counseling trainees may be invited to join the counseling sessions, as required and determined by the Board of Elders, to observe the counsel; however, they are bound to the same requirements of confidentiality as stated below.

NOT PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Some of our counselors may work in professional fields outside the institution. They do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services. If you have significant legal, financial, or medical needs, etc., you should seek advice from an independent professional. Our counselors will help you consider their counsel in the light of scriptural principles.

REQUIREMENT FOR COUNSELEES

1. Counseling services are available to anyone in the community; however, counseling members of Mission Bible Church East Valley takes precedence over counseling non-members. When a counselor is available, non-members may be scheduled for counseling.
2. Counseling wait times can be extended for non-members when Mission Bible Church East Valley members request counseling.
3. Counsees must complete a Personal Data Inventory (PDI) to aid the counselor in seeking biblical answers to the issues the counselee faces.
4. Homework is assigned at each meeting. Homework is an essential part of the learning process and forms the basis of discussion for many sessions. Homework is also designed to facilitate personal time with God during the week, which is a critical part of the counseling process. The counselee commits to completing all assignments before each meeting. Continued incompleteness of homework will lead to termination of counseling.

REASONS FOR TERMINATION

1. The Bible is used as the final authority for biblical counseling. If the counselee is unwilling to use the Bible as such, the counseling will be ineffective, and thus the sessions will be terminated.
2. Your respective counselor will directly contact you to set up your first meeting and then will discuss, at the first meeting, the process for setting up future sessions.
3. If a counselee cannot keep an appointment, they must contact their counselor to cancel in a timely manner. Notification of cancellation is expected 24 hours in advance. Failure to show constitutes a cancellation. We understand emergencies happen, so keep your counselors informed.
4. At any time during counseling, the counselor or counselee can terminate counseling.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is essential to the counseling process, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. However, we do not promise absolute confidentiality. Your counselor reserves the right to consult with other counselors or pastors at Mission Bible Church East Valley to provide the highest level of care. Additionally, there are times when counselors may share counseling information outside the Mission Bible Church East Valley context. Those exceptions would include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Known or suspected child abuse or elder abuse of any kind;
2. The intent to take criminal actions or violence against another person;
3. Active suicidal thoughts or intentions;
4. Other credible intent to harm self or others; and
5. Matters of church discipline (see Matthew 18:15-17).

Counselors reserve the right and discretion to contact all appropriate entities when, as a result of counseling, it is clear that a crime has been committed or is about to be committed or when the safety and welfare of any person (including the counselee) is in jeopardy. The counselor is not required to notify the counselee before any such contact with the appropriate entities.

In the case of marriage or family counseling, there is limited confidentiality, meaning the confidentiality belongs to the relationship and not the individual.

Please be aware that your counselor is not a licensed psychologist, licensed marital or family therapist, or licensed counselor under the authority of any state licensing organization. Consequently, communications between you and your counselor are not considered privileged communications as defined by Arizona law. In other words, a judge may compel disclosure of any statements you make to your counselor in a legal proceeding.

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

On rare occasions, a conflict may develop between a counselor and counselee. To make sure that any such disputes will be resolved in a biblically faithful manner, we require all of our counsees to agree that any dispute that arises with a counselor or with this church as a result of counseling will be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation; judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction.

CHILDCARE

Counselees are responsible for arranging for their childcare. If you cannot make childcare arrangements, counseling should be postponed until the counselee can make arrangements. Children are not permitted to be left unsupervised on the Mission Bible Church East Valley property.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

My signature below indicates my informed consent to the above guidelines. Additionally, by signing this document, I am, of my own free will, knowingly authorizing Mission Bible Church East Valley Counseling to render biblical counseling and/or referral services to me. I declare that I am fully capable of discerning good and bad advice, and release my counselor, Mission Bible Church East Valley, its Elders, staff, employees, or any associated ministry or organization from any legal liability, claim, or litigation arising from my participation in this voluntary ministry. I affirm that no guarantee or assurance of any kind has been made to me with respect to the expected results of counseling. I have been informed of the nature and purposes of biblical counseling and that my consent can be revoked orally or in writing prior to and/or during the counseling session.

Furthermore, I understand that the counselor I am assigned is neither licensed nor required to be licensed as a professional counselor, fee-based counselor, social worker, or therapist. I understand that I will not be given a psychological diagnosis based on the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. I also understand that those who provide care are not trained and do not counsel as licensed psychologists, licensed psychiatrists, state-certified therapists, or any other professional mental health provider. I understand that I will receive biblical guidance based on the teachings and authority of God’s Word.

Counselee Signature

Date

Counselee Printed Name

MISSION BIBLE CHURCH EAST VALLEY COUNSELING

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Title/Position