

Evermind Ministries' Counseling Statements

The following document includes Evermind Ministries' statements on the following topics:

1. Standards of Conduct for Counselors
2. Counseling, the Bible, and Psychology
3. Mental Disorders, Medication, and Counseling
4. Gender, Sexuality, and Counseling

Statement on Standards of Conduct for Counselors

The Preamble

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament exert a controlling authority on both the terms and the content of counseling. Counseling is a relationship where the counselor moves toward troubled people to help with struggles faced in a fallen world. The Holy Scripture possesses an authoritative role in controlling those relationships whether they happen in a formal counseling context or informally through living life together. The same Scriptures also claim to address directly the problems, questions, trouble, and struggles that people confront when they seek counseling help. Evermind Ministries' counselors exist to help the church of Jesus Christ excel in their personal relationship with Him. We are bound by God's Word in the 66 books of the Bible as our standard for counseling practice. We affirm the following commitments as a summary of the terms by which we should order all of our counseling relationships.

I. The Commitment to Scripture

God inspired the Bible to provide authoritative guidance to his people as they honor him in the midst of difficulties in a sinful world. People seek counseling help when life does not seem to be working properly and they need help understanding and addressing what has gone wrong. Biblical counselors believe it is the divine intention of Scripture to describe the perfect standard to which people must conform as they live their lives, the spiritual problems they face in life which challenge that standard, and the process of transformation that God has designed to help them change. Biblical counselors are committed to using the Scriptures in counseling out of the conviction that the topics addressed in the Scriptures are the exact issues addressed in counseling conversations.

- A. Biblical counselors must use the Scriptures in counseling as the authoritative and sufficient source for counseling content. The Scriptures sufficiently address the issues that trouble people and lead them to seek counseling help. This fact encourages biblical counselors that a proper understanding of the counseling problems of people combined with a proper understanding of the contents of Scripture lead to the confidence that the biblical text powerfully and relevantly addresses all counseling problems. This truth requires biblical counselors to work to direct all of our counseling conversations to the truths in God's Word, and to

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encourage our counselees to make much use of the Scriptures in their personal lives.

- B. Biblical counselors must reject any secular counseling intervention that is at odds with Scripture. Secular counseling therapies add nothing essential to the understanding and resolution of counseling problems, though secular institutions can provide assistance to biblical counselors when situations like hospitalization become necessary for extreme and urgent care. Such interventions are only effective when they are consistent with Scripture and ineffective when they are at odds with Scripture. In themselves they are unnecessary and insufficient for the counseling needs that people face. Biblical counselors do not engage in these interventions or make referrals to counselors that do.
- C. Biblical counselors must properly interpret the texts of Scripture that they use in their counseling. The meaning of a text of Scripture is controlled by its genre and by the grammatical and historical context in which it was written and by the intention of the author who penned it. Biblical counselors must seek to understand the genre and original meaning of the text of Scripture. Only with that understanding is it possible to communicate the truth of God's Word to counselees.
- D. Biblical counselors must make a distinction between the clear meaning of a biblical text and their opinions and applications they derive from that text. There is an important distinction to be made between the author's intended, authoritative meaning of the text and our application of that text. Biblical counselors, therefore, must make a clear distinction between the explanation of texts of Scripture and their individual opinions about how to apply that passage to counselees.
Psalm 19; 119:25, 40, 50, 105, 107; Proverbs 6:23; 10:17; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:1-17; 2 Peter 1:3-21

II. The Commitment to Jesus

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who has come in the flesh to redeem fallen humanity from all the effects of the fall through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne at the right hand of the Father. He is the source of eternal joy and serves as the ultimate resolution for every counseling problem. He intends to do away with all counseling difficulties powerfully, though partially in this life, and then fully in the next. All people access these benefits through faith in him as they begin and continue to live the Christian life. It is the privilege of all Christians to use our conversations to direct all peoples to him at all times and in all places. Jesus is the goal of all our conversations, whether informal or formal.

- A. Biblical counselors must point their counselees to the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ unto salvation. Because Jesus Christ serves as the personal solution to all of our counseling difficulties, the primary goal of every counselor should be to introduce counselees to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Faithful counselors will pray for wisdom about the best way to call their counselees to saving faith in Christ, knowing that it is only through a relationship with him that troubled people can know joy now and throughout eternity.

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- B. Biblical counselors must also point their counselees to the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ unto sanctification. Faith in Jesus Christ is essential, not only to enter the Christian life, but also to grow in holiness throughout life. Biblical counselors point their believing counselees to the person and work of Christ as that which makes it possible for them to live the life of faith as they await the fullness of their salvation at the last day.
Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 6:1-4; 10:8-13; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:4-6; Ephesians 4:15

III. The Commitment to Care

The call to engage in counseling conversations is the call to love others well. Biblical counselors demonstrate the love of Christ through the counseling care that they offer to troubled people who seek their help. The counseling relationship is one of loving care, regardless of whether that relationship happens in the context of more formal counseling, or is simply the care we express to others. Biblical counselors seek a posture of loving service in their conversations and avoid bringing harm into the lives of counselees.

- A. Biblical counselors must care for counselees in sacrificing time for them. Scheduled appointments are often one practical way to ensure that counseling conversations occur, but a biblical commitment to care for others well can never be limited to formal counseling meetings. Counselees are our brothers and sisters in Christ; they are our lost friends, neighbors, and family members. Loving them well requires our service to them at times that may be inconvenient. Biblical counselors spend their energies to love and serve troubled people and never seek to limit their involvement in the life of a counselee to a specific meeting, but involve themselves in the lives of their counselees as much as is wise and possible. It may at times be wise to end a formal counseling relationship when counseling has become counterproductive to the counselee. When further meetings are no longer wise or possible, reasonable effort is made to connect a counselee with someone who will continue biblical care.
- B. Biblical counselors must care for counselees by seeking to match their words of counseling wisdom with tangible acts of care. The Bible teaches that it is a sinful demonstration of lifeless faith to limit our counseling care to the words we speak, while avoiding acts of care. Biblical counselors seek to meet the physical and other practical needs of our counselees wherever possible.
- C. Biblical counselors must care for counselees in making decisions about whether and how they charge fees for counseling. The Bible is clear that ministers of the gospel of Jesus are entitled to earn their living from the gospel. This principle can extend to biblical counselors who serve Christ in vocational ministry. At the same time, the Bible is clear that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a precious gift that should be offered without price, and that it may be necessary for ministers of Christ to selflessly serve those in their care. Biblical counselors, therefore, must seek to love their counselees in discerning whether to charge fees and how much to charge. Biblical counselors will communicate with their counselees early and clearly about any fees for counseling, will avoid exorbitant fees, and will do

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everything possible to avoid refusing care to those unable to pay. Biblical counselors will never limit their conversational care only to those who are able to compensate their counselors.

- D. Biblical counselors must care for counselees in protecting the weak from harm. Counselees can be harmed by others and can inflict harm on themselves. Biblical counselors avoid sinful language and behavior that brings harm into the lives of their counselees. Biblical counselors understand that it is impossible to protect the weak from every danger in a fallen world and yet they endeavor to protect counselees from exposure to the harmful treatment of others through false teaching, unbiblical counseling, harsh speech, abusive treatment, and any other manifestation of sinful relationships. And they actively seek to protect counselees from harm through their own persistent sin.

Proverbs 3:27; Matthew 22:34-40; John 15:12-17; 1 Corinthians 9:1-18; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Timothy 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; James 2:14-17; 1 John 2:7-11; 3:11-24

IV. The Commitment to the Church

The church is the body of Jesus Christ, whom he has purchased with his own blood, and has commissioned to advance his kingdom on earth. Because the church is the pillar and buttress of God's truth, it is indispensable in the ministry of counseling that seeks to communicate that truth. Biblical counselors do their work with the conviction that biblical change is ultimately impossible apart from the full ministry of the church.

- A. Biblical counselors must be committed to the priority of the church in accomplishing their counseling ministry. Biblical counselors will place themselves under the leadership of a church and pursue the accountability of that leadership as it relates to their life, doctrine, and counseling practices.
- B. Biblical counselors must pursue the closest possible connections between church accountability and the counseling centers where they serve. Whether the counseling ministry is formally part of the church or whether church leadership holds the center accountable through board involvement or personal accountability of individual counselors, biblical counselors know that the ultimate faithfulness of a counseling center is connected to its organizational proximity to Christ's body.
- C. Biblical counselors must seek to involve their counselees in a faithful church. Counseling ultimately seeks, by divine grace, to aid counselees to conform their life to behavior that glorifies God. Biblical counselors understand Christians best grow in grace when they are actively involved in the church.
- D. Biblical counselors must seek out, for themselves, and those they counsel, churches, which will faithfully discharge the command of Christ to show care through corrective church discipline. Such discipline is a central way that God cares for his flock, and protects the purity of the church.

Matthew 16:16-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Ephesians 2:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:15; Titus 1:10; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25

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V. The Commitment to Humanity

God made human beings in his very own image as the pinnacle of his creation and they are, therefore, invested with inestimable dignity. Biblical counseling engages these precious image bearers to show care to them according to the standards of God's Word. Biblical counselors work to show honor and care to human beings in every relevant way.

- A. Biblical counselors must counsel in a way that protects life and honors the image of God in human beings. Biblical counselors never condone the taking of innocent life through murder believing acts such as abortion, selective reduction, euthanasia, and assisted suicide are sins that both hurt people and dishonor God. Biblical counselors use their conversations to point people away from such sinful activities and toward a protection of all human life.
- B. Biblical counselors must counsel with an understanding of the importance of the heart. The Bible teaches that human beings are guided by the various motivations and desires of their hearts. The heart is the source of initiation for all activity, and is of crucial importance in the counseling task. Biblical counselors seek to help struggling people change at a level of depth that flows from the inner person to the outer person.
- C. Biblical counselors must do their work understanding the importance of care for the physical body. Human beings are whole persons, and so the physical body and the actions that result from it are of crucial importance in the counseling task. Biblical counselors will work to foster behaviors that are commanded by Scripture and eliminate behaviors that are forbidden. Biblical counselors will also work to emphasize proper care for the physical body including recognizing the importance of professional medical care for medical problems.
- D. Biblical counselors must do their work understanding the importance of sex. God created the human race to exist in two equal sexes of male and female. God has also commanded that those sexes are called to function in different capacities in the contexts of the home, church, and society. The biblical instruction on sex means that, while men and women should disciple one another as they live out their daily Christian lives, women will strive to avoid formally counseling men since this generally requires the task of teaching men with authority which is forbidden by Scripture. Men will likewise be committed to ministry to women, but will strive to avoid ongoing, one-to-one counsel with women because of the biblical admonitions to stay above reproach and to avoid any hint of sin. Biblical counselors embrace the entirety of Scripture's teaching on sex and so work to help troubled people embrace their physical gender revealed at birth, and to function in ways that accurately represent that gender in the world, the church, and in the Christian home.

Genesis 1:26-27; Proverbs 4:23; 20:5; Mark 7:14-23; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 11:2-16; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:4; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:3, 22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; 5:23; Titus 1:6; James 1:19-27; 4:1-2

VI. The Commitment to Purity

God created sex to be enjoyed in the context of the marriage relationship between one man and one woman. All other sexual expressions constitute sexual immorality and are heinous sins, bringing pain into the lives of all who are engaged in them. Counselors have a biblical responsibility to foster sexual purity in their attitudes, actions, and speech.

- A. Biblical counselors must seek sexual purity in every area of their lives. The Bible commands Christians to flee all forms of sexual immorality. Those committed to the ministry of the Word in counseling must avoid immorality in their personal interactions with others. Biblical counselors do not seek any sexual involvement outside the bonds of Christian marriage regardless of whether that involvement is improper sexual speech, acts of impurity that push the line toward sex, or overt sexual acts. Biblical counselors also fight for moral purity in their private moments when no other person is around understanding that all sexual immorality destroys counseling effectiveness by harming themselves and their counsees.
- B. Biblical counselors must seek purity in their intentions with counsees. The Bible teaches that all sinful sexual behavior begins with sinful intentions of the heart. Biblical counselors fight by grace to defeat the lustful intentions of the heart. Counselors should seek accountability especially when grappling with sinful sexual desires.
- C. Biblical counselors must encourage sexual purity in the lives of counsees. The Bible teaches that great pain and consequences come into the lives of those who are guilty of sexual transgression. Because this is true biblical counselors are committed to urging counsees to pursue biblical standards of purity in thought, word, and deed. Biblical counselors discourage any expression of sexuality outside the bonds of marriage including lust, pornography, adultery, fornication, and homosexuality.

Exodus 20:17; Proverbs 5; Matthew 5:27-32; Romans 13:13-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4; James 1:14-15

VII. The Commitment to Competency

The calling to be a biblical counselor involves more than a commitment to the sufficiency of Christ and his Word in helping people with their problems in living. It also involves a commitment to growing in the kind of wisdom and skill that produces counseling excellence. No counselor of the Word has arrived at a place of perfection, but biblical counselors work to achieve growing competency as they help struggling people.

- A. Biblical counselors must pursue the necessary education, training, and experience required to do their work. The best biblical counselors have received quality instruction from wise teachers about how to counsel well, have been trained to develop excellent counseling skills, and have been supervised by mentors who know how to counsel with excellence. Those who want to pursue the highest standards of excellence will pursue as much of this equipping as possible whether through formal or informal means.

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- B. Biblical counselors must be committed to ongoing education and training to remain effective. New counselees always arrive with fresh problems, and counselors are in constant need to grow in wisdom and skill. Biblical counselors, therefore, never quit learning, but always seek to grow their base of knowledge concerning the truths of Scripture, information about the problems that people face, and the wisdom that comes through counseling. When a counseling problem falls outside their area of competency counselors are honest with counselees about their limitations and seek help from others with greater competency.
- C. Biblical counselors must maintain a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ in order to maintain the spiritual vitality necessary for the work of counseling. The Bible is clear that people always speak out of the overflow of resources stored in their heart. This reality means that biblical counselors can only offer truly biblical care as they are walking in close relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and storing his words in their heart. It is a close relationship with Jesus, more than anything else, that ensures our competency as counselors. Biblical counselors fight for a dynamic relationship with Jesus through, among other means of grace, Bible-reading, prayer, corporate worship, and close personal accountability as a part of the body of Christ.
- D. Biblical counselors must seek to gain as much information about the nature of the problems faced by their counselee in order to provide effective care. It is impossible to help troubled persons without extensive knowledge of the problem they are confronting. Biblical counselors are committed to learning as much about counselees and their problems in order to be able to offer the best possible care. Biblical counselors avoid the assumption that they understand the nature of a counseling problem before they have carefully investigated the matter.
Proverbs 18:13, 17; John 15:1-11; Matthew 12:33-37; Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:11; Colossians 1:9; 3:16; 1 Timothy 4:15; 2 Timothy 2:2, 15; James 1:19;

VIII. The Commitment to Methodology

Wise counseling requires a commitment to understanding and following the change process as it is revealed in Scripture. Counseling is about offering help to people as they make Spirit-initiated changes in their lives that honor him, and so biblical counselors must know that biblical process and be committed to following it if they are to succeed in their work of counseling. The Bible is a sufficient resource, which explains the processes necessary in the counseling relationship.

- A. Biblical counselors must be committed to the truth that the fundamental key to the process of biblical counseling is the person and work of Jesus Christ. We point counselees to the person and work of Jesus Christ, and then teach them how to grow in his grace. Biblical counselors work to point all persons to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ to find forgiveness for their sin and comfort in their pain.
- B. Biblical counselors must seek to help counselees change their sinful desires and behavior through a biblical process of putting off sinful attitudes and actions and putting on ones of righteousness. Change requires more than merely stopping sinful desires and behaviors, it also requires beginning new desires and behaviors

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which honor God. Biblical counselors work to help their counselees experience change in this practical way as informed by biblical texts.

- C. Biblical counselors must seek to help counselees change at a level of depth through a biblical process of heart renewal. Because the desires of the inner man precede the behavior of the outer man the Bible requires that a person must take their thoughts captive in order to achieve the kind of change that honors God. Biblical counselors help counselees discover how their sinful desires, thoughts, and feelings lead to sinful actions and then work to assist them in forming new patterns of biblical thought and action through the grace of God.
- D. Biblical counselors must help their counselees change by meeting with God in prayer. The Bible teaches the way we draw near to God in our sin and suffering is through consistent prayer. God hears the prayers of those who draw near to him in Christ, who desires to help them in time of need. Biblical counselors encourage their counselees to express their dependence on God through both public and private prayer.

Acts 26:17; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 10:5; Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-17; Hebrews 4:16

IX. The Commitment to Authority

The Bible is clear that God's world is one where structures of authority must be recognized and respected. The Bible teaches that authority exists between the Trinitarian relationships of the Godhead and affects each of our human relationships as well. Biblical counselors work to honor all biblically-instituted authorities and assist their counselees to do the same.

- A. Biblical counselors must submit to the authority of God above every other authority source, and must help their counselees do the same. God is the supreme authority in the world, and is himself the source of every human authority. God mediates his authority to us perfectly in the pages of his Word, the Bible. Every source of authority is ultimately held accountable to God's Word as the perfect standard. Biblical counselors help their counselees to live their lives in submission to God's authority even when his authority conflicts with human authorities. Such conflicts of human authority with divine authority can create very serious challenges to counselees suffering under the weight of an oppressive and unbiblical authority. Biblical counselors seek to help counselees work with other, more faithful sources of authority, to resolve oppression and abuse of authority.
- B. Biblical counselors must help their counselees submit to legitimate authority in the context of the home. God has called husbands and fathers to exercise spiritual authority in the home, seeking the welfare of those in his care. God has also called wives to be submissive to their husbands and children to be submissive to the authority of their parents. These authority structures are an incredible blessing when discharged faithfully. Biblical counselors will help family members honor these sources of authority appropriately throughout the various stages of life.
- C. Biblical counselors must help their counselees to submit to the authority of their church. God has gifted his church with ministers to shepherd the souls of his people. These shepherds have real spiritual authority that must be followed when

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it is discharged biblically. Biblical counselors see this authority as a blessing from God given for the good of his people, and therefore endeavor to help their counselees embrace it.

- D. Biblical counselors must help their counselees submit to the authority of the state as it is discharged righteously. God has provided government as a blessing for all people in order to preserve order and righteousness. When this authority is discharged righteously and in keeping with God's law all people benefit from it. Wherever possible, biblical counselors work to obey the laws of the legal jurisdictions in which they serve, and urge their counselees to do the same. *Matthew 20:25-28; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-25*

X. The Commitment to Integrity

The Bible emphasizes the importance of honesty in all of our relationships. God never lies, and he commands this kind of integrity for his creatures as well. Honesty, therefore, is to be a hallmark of any human relationship including formal and informal counseling. The kind of trust necessitated in counseling relationship requires honesty on the part of counselors. Deceit sinfully undermines this relationship and must be avoided.

- A. Biblical counselors must be straightforward about the kind of counseling they do. Counselees are served when biblical counselors clearly communicate their intention to use the Bible as their authority for all counseling matters. Biblical counselors should therefore seek to communicate this commitment in any context whether public or private, formal or informal.
- B. Biblical counselors must maintain and communicate the biblical standards for confidentiality. Trust grows in relationships where all parties have clear expectations regarding the confidential nature of private information. Biblical counselors seek to maintain trust and integrity by keeping personal information as private as possible. Biblical counselors protect the reputation of their counselees by avoiding reckless and unnecessary disclosures of personal information. Biblical counselors must also make clear to their counselees that a commitment to biblical authority requires the disclosure of certain kinds of information to certain parties. A biblical commitment to protect counselees from harm as well as commitments to the authority of the home, church, and or state may require disclosure of information that counselees would otherwise prefer to remain private.
- C. Biblical counselors must accurately represent their qualifications. It demonstrates a lack of integrity for counselors to misrepresent their training, experience, and areas of expertise in communicating their counseling qualifications. Biblical counselors work to represent humbly and accurately their credentials, qualifications, and skill-level.
- D. Biblical counselors must exercise care in receiving gifts from those they counsel. Such gifts may be gladly received when given as a token of love and gratitude for the help and care offered in counseling. Biblical counselors must be wary of gifts that are perceived as an exercise in manipulation or as an effort to control certain

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counseling outcomes. Biblical counselors never compromise their faithfulness to the Word of God because of a gift received or promised, monetary or otherwise. *Exodus 20:16; 23:1; Leviticus 19:11; Deuteronomy 16:19; Proverbs 19:5; 24:28; 25:18; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:37; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9*

XI. The Commitment to Reconciliation

God is concerned to pursue peace with his creation. He possesses righteous anger regarding sin but offers to put that anger away through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He calls his followers to this same attitude of peace. The calling to be a biblical counselor is, therefore, the calling to be a peacemaker.

- A. Biblical counselors must be committed to helping counselees pursue peace with God through faith and repentance. When biblical counselors are aware of areas in the lives of counselees where they are separated from God by their sin they will always seek, with wisdom and grace, to help them repent of that sin, confessing it to the Lord and forsaking it for the pursuit of new desires and behaviors that honor him.
- B. Biblical counselors must be committed to helping counselees pursue peace in their relationships with other people through confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Biblical counselors take every available opportunity to help counselees achieve reconciliation in any relationship where this is possible, whether in marriage, family, friendships, or church fellowship. Though life in a fallen world often means that conflicts cannot be resolved, biblical counselors never allow a conflict to remain unresolved when another wise option remains available.
- C. Biblical counselors must pursue peace in relationships with all their counselees. When a conflict arises biblical counselors will lead in reconciliation as each party confesses sin and grants forgiveness. Biblical counselors are also eager to bring in another party to help facilitate reconciliation if this should be necessary. *Psalm 32:1-5; Proverbs 28:13; Matthew 5:9; 23-24; 6:14; 7:1-5; 18:15-35; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-13; James 3:18; 1 John 1:8-9*

XII. Violation of Standards

Members of the Evermind Ministries' counseling team are required to observe these standards of conduct.

Statement on Counseling, the Bible, and Psychology

Evermind Ministries Family seeks to keep God's Word at the center of the human experience by teaching it, reminding of it, and applying it to life. In counseling we desire to advance the glory of Jesus Christ by pursuing excellence in biblical counseling. Our ministry identification is located within the classic Christian tradition. Our sources of authority are the 66 books of Scripture in the Old and New Testaments and the Doctrinal Statement and Counseling Statement of Evermind Ministries.

Evermind Ministries is a private, non-profit, Christian ministry confessing that the Bible is the only authoritative rule for faith and practice. As such, we are not bound by the counseling standards of any other organization, state, or licensing agency. We are, furthermore, not required to adjust our conceptions for and practice of biblical counseling in light of any current cultural practice.

The Evermind Ministries' counseling staff affirms the value and usefulness of the entirety of God's revelation, including general and special revelation. General revelation is a display of the goodness and power of God in the things he has made. The divine self-disclosure in general revelation leads to condemnation, rather than salvation (Romans 1:18-32).

Special revelation is recorded exclusively and completely in the Scriptures. It is an inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient rule for all of life and faith. Because counseling concerns matters of life and faith before God, Scripture is an inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient rule for the presuppositions, principles, and practices of counseling (II Peter 1:3-21).

We deny that the findings of secular psychology make any essential contribution to biblical counseling.

God's goodness allows that secular psychology may provide accurate research and make observations that are helpful in understanding counseling issues. Because unbelievers suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness, the efforts of secular psychology at interpreting these observations lead to misunderstanding. Because their observations are distorted by a secular apprehension of life their efforts at counseling ministry will be in competition with biblical counseling. They cannot be integrated with the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

The psychological resources we utilize help to provide information about the individuals we counsel, but do not provide answers for the individuals we counsel.

Statement on Mental Disorders, Medication, and Counseling

I. Mental Disorders and Biblical Counseling

We live in a broken world full of people suffering with profound trouble and intense pain. One manifestation of that brokenness is the problem that our culture recognizes as mental disorder. Increasing numbers of people are diagnosed with these complex difficulties, which require wisdom and multi-faceted care. We confess that, too often, the church of Jesus Christ has not been recognized as a source for profound hope and meaningful help for such difficult problems. We further acknowledge that many Christians have contributed to a negative stigma attached to such diagnoses through simplistic understandings of these problems, and have offered solutions grounded in ignorance.

As an organization committed to pursuing excellence in biblical counseling Evermind Ministries calls upon faithful Christians to grow in the twin tasks of understanding complex problems and learning skills to address them in the context of counseling. As an organization committed to the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling we believe that the Bible provides profound wisdom to guide us in caring for people diagnosed with mental disorders.

One example of this wisdom is the biblical teaching on dichotomy. The Bible is clear that God created human beings to consist of both a body and spirit. These two parts together form the soul. To be a human being is to exist in these two constituent parts, which are separable only at death. Even after death, Christians confess that the bodies and spirits of human beings will be restored at the Last Day. This biblical truth points to the high honor and regard that God gives to both the physical and spiritual realities of humanity. [1]

A theological reality like this one requires Christians to honor both body and spirit as crucial to human existence. Christians, therefore, should respect medical interventions as a fully legitimate form of care for those struggling in this fallen world. Examinations by medical professionals are crucial adjuncts to a biblical counseling ministry as they discover and treat, or rule out physical problems, which lead many to seek counseling help.

Another example of this biblical wisdom is the teaching in Scripture on the dynamic nature of problems that we experience in a fallen world. Human beings have difficulties, which always carry physical and spiritual implications. Both aspects need to be addressed in an appropriate fashion. Human beings experience problems with spiritual implications for which they are morally culpable and must repent. Human beings experience other physical and spiritual problems, which are not a consequence of their sins, are not their fault, but which are painful realities that attend life in a fallen world.[2]

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This theological reality requires Christians to approach problems in a complex way, rather than a simplistic one. Christians understand that some spiritual realities will require a rebuke, but others will require encouragement in the midst of pain. Still others will require help in the midst of weakness.

II. Mental Disorders in Contemporary Culture

Christians today live in a secular and therapeutic culture, which lacks the sophistication of the Scriptures in understanding these matters. This culture attributes physical causation to many problems ignoring their spiritual roots and implications. This practice is confusing and unhelpful since the Bible teaches that not all serious problems are biological/medical problems. The Bible's teaching on humanity leads us to conclude that many problems are physical in nature, many others are spiritual in nature, and each of these affects the other. God's Revelation in the Scriptures about the complexity of humanity forbids the secular reductionism that makes all problems merely physical.

The contemporary language of mental illness is one example of this reductionism. The compendium for mental illnesses that our culture recognizes as authoritative is *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (DSM). This manual makes many accurate observations about the manifold problems that afflict people. For biblical counselors, however, the DSM paints an inadequate and misleading picture. It fails to express, recognize, or understand the spiritual aspect of problems that afflict people.

Because of that failing it cannot offer clear help and hope for people diagnosed with its labels. While some of the disorders listed in DSM are medical in nature, many others are not. Even when the problems in DSM have a physical component the spiritual and Godward elements of humanity are not addressed by the DSM, which biblical counseling must take into account. Christians must be committed to a way of understanding and speaking about complex problems that is more likely to lead to real and lasting change than that recorded in the various editions of DSM.

III. Counseling Practice

In light of these realities, Evermind Ministries endorses the following standards of belief and practice for its counselors and counseling centers that would care for people diagnosed with the complicated problems identified as mental disorders.

1. Biblical Counselors must acknowledge that human beings struggle with physical and spiritual problems.
2. Biblical counselors shall encourage the use of physical examinations and testing by physicians for diagnosis of medical problems, the treatment of these problems, and the relief of symptoms, which might cause, contribute to, or complicate counseling issues.

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3. Biblical counselors shall help their counselees respond biblically to physical problems, but deny that spiritual interventions are the only proper response to

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problems with a medical element. They reject any teaching, which excludes the importance of the body and the goodness of God, which leads to the blessing of medical care.

4. Biblical counselors reject the notion that medical interventions solve spiritual problems. They embrace the use of medicine for cure and symptom relief, but deny that medical care is sufficient for spiritual problems, which require Christ and his gospel for ultimate relief and lasting change.
5. Biblical counselors shall be committed to counseling those with medical problems, but should not attempt to practice medicine without the formal qualifications and licensing to do so. When they have questions or concerns of a medical nature they should refer their counselee to a competent medical professional for diagnosis and treatment.
6. Biblical counselors shall nurture a spirit of humility, understanding many issues at the nexus of body and soul defy simplicity. They recognize that many problems are combinations of physical and spiritual issues. Others are problems, which are not easily identified as one, the other, or both.
7. Biblical counselors do not reject the true observations found in *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, but do reject that DSM is an authoritative guide for understanding the cause and treatment of complex problems of human behavior, thinking, and emotions. They affirm that God's Word in Scripture serves as this authoritative guide. Biblical counselors move toward using biblical language to refer to the counseling problems that people face. They are committed to applying the Bible to an understanding of the causes of and treatments for these problems.
8. Biblical counselors are committed to biblical discernment in understanding the nature of spiritual issues, and to dealing with sin through gentle, Christ-centered correction.
9. Biblical counselors are committed to biblical discernment in understanding the nature of spiritual issues, and to dealing with suffering through Christ-centered encouragement.
10. Biblical counselors are committed to biblical discernment in understanding the nature of spiritual issues, and to dealing with weakness through loving care in the context of the body of Christ.

[1]Genesis 2:7; Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 7:34; 2 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Timothy 4:8

[2]Matthew 5:8; 26:38; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Statement on Gender, Sexuality, and Counseling

I. Introduction: Source of Authority

The cultural context of the Twenty First Century makes it popular, and politically expedient, to adjust traditional views of gender, sexuality, and counseling. Many fashionable views abound. In particular, numerous voices in our culture embrace, as normal and proper, same-sex desires and behavior, same-sex marriage, transgender identification, and malign—as evidence of ignorance and cruelty—efforts to counsel people away from such behaviors.

As a ministry bound by the authority of Scripture, and our own guiding documents which grow out of these Scriptures, Evermind Ministries rejects any demand that we conform to cultural pressure to embrace any of these unbiblical views of gender, sexuality, and counseling. We desire, instead, to reaffirm the following theological and practical commitments.

II. Theological Commitments

1. God created every person in His own image as male or female. This sexual distinction and complementarity establishes a normative connection between biological sex and gender. (Genesis 1:26-27)
2. The fall of mankind corrupts this created good in both physical and spiritual realities creating confusion and pain in the lives of each person who struggles with the difficulty of physical brokenness regarding gender, and the torment of sinful desires regarding sexuality. (Genesis 3:1- 7; Romand 3:9-18; 5:12-17)
3. In the midst of a broken and fallen world, God's Word continues to affirm the sanctity of one's biological sex. Because of this reality, the Bible affirms that marriage is exclusively between one man and one woman for life. Marriage is thus the only proper context for sexual desire and behavior. (Mark 10:1-8)
4. The Bible regularly and consistently condemns same-sex attraction and behavior as sinful, requiring repentant faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness. (Romans 1:18-27; I John 1:8- 9)
5. Though we reject any triumphalism that insinuates easy, quick fixes, Evermind Ministries wholeheartedly affirms the biblical truth that the powerful grace of Jesus Christ is able to change and purify the desires of those struggling with same-sex attractions and behaviors. (I Corinthians 6:9-11; II Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:1-17)

III. Counseling Practice

Evermind Ministries and all counselors and counseling centers believe that homosexual desires and behavior are at odds with human joy and flourishing. Based on that reality we believe that it is an act Christian love to call to repentance those struggling with homosexual sin. We further believe that it is unkind and unloving to fail to point human

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beings to the goodness of God's commands concerning gender, sexuality, and counseling. We do not participate with or cooperate in any efforts to prepare for or perpetuate same-sex relationships. In that light we believe that a uniquely Christian form of counseling faithfulness regarding this issue requires:

1. An affirmation of God's goodness in creating mankind as male and female.
2. A rejection that a human being could possess a gender other than the one indicated by biological sex.
3. A rejection that homosexual desires, behavior, or marriage is an acceptable or moral lifestyle.
4. An affirmation that the Christian process of change is often lengthy and is ultimately incomplete in this life.
5. An affirmation that the powerful grace of Jesus Christ ultimately and certainly sanctifies the most engrained sinful desires, including homosexuality. A Christian can know meaningful change in this life and will know the fullness of change in the life to come.