

**Redeemer Baptist Church Counseling Ministry**  
**How to Get the Most Out of Your Counseling**  
(Please read carefully)

The counseling you will receive is Biblical counseling. RBC counselors are Christians who are specially trained in the Scriptures and their life application. What they say to you will not be based on the systems of men or their ideas. Their goal is to help you apply Biblical principles to the particular problems with which you are struggling. This kind of counseling will help you grow and will leave you with Biblical guidelines for problem-solving for the rest of your life.

Most of the problems that people have involve relationships. A person's relationship with God is the most important one. Unless that relationship is right, nothing else in life can be altogether correct. Suppose you are uncertain about your relationship with Jesus Christ. In that case, your counselor will be glad to speak to you about it. The other problems that counselees usually have concern people. The Scriptures tell us how God can enable us to relate correctly to Himself and others. During the session, you and your counselor will talk about your relationship with God and to others. A third relationship that often needs to be addressed is one's relationship with himself. Are you weighed down with guilt or struggling with depression or worry? Scripture not only shows us how to relate to God and others but also ourselves.

Because it is foundational to all that is being done in the counseling session, we suggest that you take time every day to read a portion of the Bible. We also urge you to do your homework regularly. Continuation of counseling is contingent upon you doing your homework. Prayerfully ask God to give you the strength to do what you have been asked to do. Counseling is not magic that takes place during a one-hour conversation, one day a week. It is during the rest of the week that changes must take place. We believe that God the Holy Spirit works through His Word to change lives. Within six weeks or so, your counselor will look for a definite change. If there is no real change, he will want to evaluate the situation to discover the reason.

If difficulties arise during the week:

1. Do **not** panic
2. Write about the problem, precisely but briefly
  - a. Write about what the problem is
  - b. Write what you have done about it
  - c. Write what the outcome was and what led to that outcome
3. Bring this information to the next counseling appointment

Counselors usually do not counsel on the telephone between sessions. Advising over the phone can be misleading without full consideration of all the circumstances. You need to sit down at a session to discuss the subject thoroughly to help you reach Biblical decisions. **If you ever find yourself in an emergency, please call your pastor, doctor, or the police.** Each session will be approximately one hour in length. At the end of each session, your counselor will schedule your next appointment. If you need to change or cancel an appointment, please call as soon as possible to rearrange the counselor's schedule. We encourage you to attempt to come to every session until finished. May God bless you as you strive—by His power—to follow His written Word.

## **Redeemer Baptist Church Consent to Counseling**

***Our Goal:*** The purpose of Biblical counseling is to help you meet the challenges of life in a manner that pleases and honors the Lord Jesus Christ. Our counseling is offered free of charge as a ministry of Redeemer Baptist Church (RBC), Rincon, Georgia. Counselees are welcome to donate to the ministry; however, this is not an expected or required condition for counseling. You have no obligation, expressed or implied, to pay fees for the counseling you receive through RBC.

### ***Biblical Basis: Counseling received through RBC is strictly religious in nature and is conducted under the authority and leadership of the elders of Redeemer Baptist***

**Church.** We believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life (cf. II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3-4). Our counseling is based solely on the principles of Scripture. It does not employ the teachings or methods of modern psychology or psychiatry. RBC counselors are not trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals; they do not follow such persons' practices.

**Counselee Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Other Professional Advice:*** If you have significant medical, legal, financial, or other technical questions, you should seek a competent, independent professional. Our counselors will cooperate with such advisors and will help you consider their counsel in the light of Biblical principles.

We urge our counselees to care for their physical bodies properly and seek medical treatment for all physiological problems. Our counselors will assist you in responding to such issues in a godly manner. Still, our counsel is not intended to replace a qualified physician's services in treating organic problems.

**Counselee Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Confidentiality:*** Confidentiality is an essential aspect of the counseling process. We will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. As RBC differs in some respects from standard guidelines regarding confidentiality, we have developed a policy that specifically addresses this issue. Said policy is attached to, incorporated in, and subject to the other provisions of this Consent to Counseling Agreement.

***Conflict Resolution – Arbitration:*** A conflict may develop between a counselor and a counselee on rare occasions. The Bible commands that Christians make every effort to live in peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (cf. Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6:1-8), without the involvement of the secular courts. Therefore, to ensure faithfulness to this Biblical principle, we require all counselees to agree that any claim or dispute arising under, out of, in connection with, or relating to, the counseling received at RBC or any dispute with a counselor thereof, or with Redeemer Baptist Church, shall be settled by Biblically-based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration per Peacemaker Ministries. It is expressly understood that, by consenting in advance to arbitration, the counselee waives his or her right to trial in the civil courts.

**Counselee Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

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 speak with your counselor. Your signature below indicates your informed consent to these guidelines.

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Confidentiality Policy for RBC**

The pastors, elders, and counselors of Redeemer Baptist Church (RBC), Rincon, Georgia, understand that confidentiality is an essential and vital aspect of the counseling relationship. To that end, RBC and its representatives agree to carefully guard the information entrusted to them by counselees to the fullest extent possible.

Under certain circumstances, however, it may be necessary to reveal information obtained in the counseling process to uphold the principles of Scripture, the standards of Redeemer Baptist Church, and the laws of the State of Georgia. *RBC does not hold to the legal concepts of the priest/penitent, doctor/patient, psychotherapist/patient, or counselor/counselee privileges.*

Situations wherein it may become necessary to reveal otherwise confidential information include, but are not limited to;

1. Where a counselee, although encouraged to renounce a particular sin, refuses to do so, it may become necessary to seek others' assistance in the church to promote repentance and reconciliation in accordance with the Scriptures (cf. Proverbs 15:22; 24:11; Matthew 18:15-20). In said cases, the counselor will reveal only such information as is necessary to deal with that particular sin. Further, said information would only be disclosed to those Biblically required to be involved. To that end, it may become necessary to contact the pastor and elders of a counselee's home church.
2. Counselors, uncertain about how to address a particular issue, may reveal necessary information to and seek assistance from another counselor or pastor.
3. If a counselee threatens to harm himself or herself or another person, it may become necessary to notify the proper legal authorities, family members, pastor, intended victim, or all of the above. If the counselee makes such threats in the context of a counseling session, the counselor will, immediately upon receiving the information, consult with the elders of RBC, who will work with them to assess the situation and assist in making the appropriate notifications if necessary.
4. If a Counselor is privy to evidence that abuse or some other crime has been or is about to be committed, it may be necessary to reveal such to the legal authorities.
5. The Counselors of RBC recognize that in the course of the loving discipline of their children, Christian parents may employ corporal punishment, following the teachings of Scripture and, in conformity with those Scriptures, the Counselors of RBC support a parent's right to do so. However, if, in the course of counseling, the counselor suspects that a minor child has been physically or sexually abused, the counselor will immediately consult with the elders of RBC, who will assist in the assessment of the situation, and *the legal authorities may be contacted. Suppose elders are unavailable and a child is in imminent danger of being abused. In that case, the counselor will immediately reach the appropriate legal authorities without employing the above consultation process.*
6. Observers may sit in on counseling sessions to assist in the counseling process or for training purposes. *All observers and counselors agree to be bound by this confidentiality agreement. Should they be found to violate this agreement, they face expulsion from the RBC counseling ministry program by the pastor or elders of RBC.*

**Counselee Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_