



Mt. Zion Baptist Church

The Confessional Statement of the Biblical Soul Care Ministry

This document is adapted from the Biblical Counseling Coalition's Confessional Statement (www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org) with modifications for Mt. Zion Baptist Church's Biblical Soul Care ministry.

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1) Preamble: Speaking the Truth in Love—A Vision for the Church

Mt. Zion Baptist Church joyfully commits to promoting excellence and unity in biblical soul care and biblical counseling for the glory of Christ and the good of His people. We affirm the authority, inerrancy, and sufficiency of God's Word as the foundation for all care and counsel ([2 Timothy 3:16–17](#); [Hebrews 4:12](#)). Our aim is to cultivate Christ-centered relationships and provide practical, Scripture-saturated resources that equip the Body of Christ for lasting transformation through God's changeless truth.

We believe the local church is God's primary context for biblical soul care and counseling ([Ephesians 4:11–16](#); [Romans 15:14](#)). Therefore, we seek to advance this ministry in a spirit of love and wisdom, pursuing the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ([Ephesians 4:3](#)). We organize our thinking around one central question: "What does it mean to care and counsel in the grace and truth of Christ?" All that we do flows from our calling to equip people to love God and others in Christ-centered ways ([Matthew 22:35–40](#)).

Our vision extends beyond formal care and counseling—it is for the entire church to speak the truth in love ([Ephesians 4:11–16](#)). We are committed to developing the theology and practice of the personal ministry of the Word, expressed through biblical soul care, counseling, discipleship, and one-another ministry. We seek to strengthen these ministries within Mt. Zion Baptist Church by ministering to those who offer care, those who seek care, and those who train caregivers.

2) Terminology & Definitions

a. Ministry Focus

The Mt. Zion Baptist Church Biblical Soul Care and Counseling Ministry is devoted to the care of souls through the personal ministry of God's Word. Our focus is on spiritual life, addressing the heart and mind from a biblical perspective rather than a medical or psychological framework. While we may address issues that intersect with various areas of life, our ministry does not provide legal, financial, medical, or other professional advice. Therefore, individuals are encouraged to seek qualified outside professionals when such assistance is needed.

b. Biblical Discipleship

Biblical discipleship is the Christ-centered process of helping believers grow in maturity, obedience, and likeness to Jesus through intentional relationships, teaching, modeling, and accountability rooted in Scripture. It is comprehensive and lifelong, shaping every aspect of the Christian walk. Discipleship involves teaching, encouragement, spiritual formation, and life-on-life relationships. It includes both preventive and proactive elements, helping someone walk faithfully before problems arise.

Discipleship provides the context in which soul care and counseling often occur. While all counseling and soul care are forms of discipleship, not all discipleship involves soul care, counseling or crisis care. Discipleship is the framework within which more focused help—such as soul care or counseling—is offered when needed.

c. Biblical Soul Care

Biblical soul care is the practice of caring for the inner life (soul) of a believer through biblical encouragement, comfort, correction, and spiritual support, particularly during seasons of emotional, spiritual, or relational struggle. Soul care is relational and restorative, focusing on the heart, not just behavior. It often takes place in the context of the church body, as seen in [Galatians 6:1–2](#); [Romans 12:15](#) and 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Soul care includes listening, praying, reminding others of truth, and helping them apply the gospel to specific situations.

Soul care is a form of discipleship—more focused than general discipleship, but not as intensive as formal counseling. It overlaps with biblical counseling, especially in cases where the struggle becomes more complex, entrenched, or crisis driven. In this way, soul care acts as a bridge between regular discipleship and formal counseling.

d. Biblical Counseling

Biblical counseling is the application of Scripture and the gospel to the specific challenges of life—including sin, suffering, and hardship—typically in a more intensive and structured setting, to bring about heart-level transformation and restoration. It deals with specific problems such as anxiety, depression, addiction, conflict, trauma, and more. Counseling is more intentional and focused, often short-term but structured. It involves diagnosing the root heart issues and applying biblical truth and repentance in a directed, goal-oriented way.

Biblical counseling is a specialized form of soul care & discipleship, often necessary when soul care and general discipleship are not enough. It draws upon the principles of soul care but uses them in a more deliberate, problem-specific context. Counseling ideally transitions back into ongoing discipleship once the crisis or issue has been addressed.

e. Summary: A Nested View

- Biblical **discipleship** is the broadest category—it is the ongoing work of spiritual growth for all believers.
 - Biblical **soul care** fits within discipleship, focused on walking with others through struggles and offering comfort, correction, and encouragement.
 - Biblical **counseling** fits within both—it is the most intensive and specific form of care, often used when deeper or more complex issues arise.

3) Introduction: In Christ Alone

The goal of biblical soul care and counseling is spiritual, relational, and personal maturity as evidenced in desires, thoughts, motives, actions, and emotions that increasingly reflect Jesus ([Ephesians 4:17-5:2](#)). We believe that such personal change must be centered on the person of Christ. We are convinced that personal ministry centered on Christ and anchored in Scripture offers the only lasting hope and loving help to a fallen and broken world. We affirm that true and lasting change is possible only through Jesus Christ, the exclusive Savior and Redeemer, who alone provides forgiveness, transformation, and eternal life ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)).

We humbly acknowledge that we are still growing in grace and truth. We comfort and counsel others only as we continue to receive ongoing comfort and counsel from Christ and the Body of Christ ([2 Corinthians 1:3-11](#)). We admit that we struggle to apply consistently all that we believe. We who care and counsel live in process, just like those we counsel, so we want to learn and grow in the wisdom and mercies of Christ.

All Christian ministry arises from and is anchored in God's revelation—which is both the written Word (Scripture) and the living Word (Christ). This is true for the personal ministry

of the Word (conversational and relational ministry which our church calls “counseling”) and for the various public ministries of the Word. In light of this core conviction about Christ-centered, Word-based ministry, we affirm the following central commitments as biblical soul care providers and counselors.

4) Anchored in Scripture

We believe that God’s Word is authoritative, sufficient, and relevant for every aspect of life ([Isaiah 55:11](#); [Matthew 4:4](#); [Hebrews 4:12-13](#)). The inspired and inerrant Scriptures, rightly interpreted and carefully applied, offer us God’s comprehensive wisdom. We learn to understand who God is, who we are, the problems we face, how people change, and God’s provision for that change in the Gospel ([John 8:31-32](#); [10:10](#); [17:17](#)). No other source of knowledge thoroughly equips us to care and counsel in ways that transform the human heart ([Psalm 19:7-14](#); [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#); [2 Peter 1:3](#)). Other systems of counseling aim for other goals and assume a different dynamic of change. The wisdom given by God in His Word is distinctive and robust. He comprehensively addresses the sin and suffering of all people in all situations.

Wise soul care & counseling is an insightful application of God’s all-embracing truth to our complex lives ([Romans 15:4](#); [1 Corinthians 10:6](#); [Philippians 1:9-11](#)). It does not merely collect proof-texts from the Bible. Wise soul care & counseling requires ongoing practical theological labor in order to understand Scripture, people, and situations ([2 Timothy 2:15](#)). We must continually develop our personal character, case-wise understanding of people, and pastoral skills ([Romans 15:14](#); [Colossians 1:28-29](#)).

When we say that Scripture is comprehensive in wisdom, we mean that the Bible makes sense of all things, not that it contains all the information people could ever know about all topics. God’s common grace brings many good things to human life. However, common grace cannot save us from our struggles with sin or from the troubles that beset us. Common grace cannot sanctify or cure the soul of all that ails the human condition. We affirm that numerous sources (such as scientific research, organized observations about human behavior, those we counsel, reflection on our own life experience, literature, film, and history) can contribute to our knowledge of people, and many sources can contribute some relief for the troubles of life. However, none can constitute a comprehensive system of soul care & biblical counseling principles and practices. When systems of thought and practice claim to prescribe a cure for the human condition, they compete with Christ ([Colossians 2:1-15](#)). Scripture alone teaches a perspective and way of looking at life by which we can think biblically about and critically evaluate information and actions from any source ([Colossians 2:2-10](#); [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), [Romans 12:2](#)), and it uniquely exposes and discerns the hidden motives of the heart through the work of the Holy Spirit ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

5) Centered on Christ and the Gospel

We believe that wise counseling centers on Jesus Christ—His sinless life, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, present reign, redemption, and promised return. Through the Gospel, God reveals the depths of sin, the scope of suffering, and the breadth, length, height, and depth of grace. Wise care & counseling gets to the heart of personal and interpersonal

problems by bringing to bear the truth, mercy, and power of Christ's grace ([John 1:14](#)). There is no true restoration of the soul and there are no truly God-honoring relationships without understanding the desperate condition we are in Without Christ and apart from experiencing the joy of progressive deliverance from that condition through God's mercies.

We point people to a person, Jesus our Redeemer, and not to a program, theory, or experience. We place our trust in the transforming power of the Redeemer as the only hope to change people's hearts, not in any human system of change. People need a personal and dynamic relationship with Jesus, not a system of self-salvation, self-management, or self-actualization ([John 14:6](#)). Wise counselors seek to lead struggling, hurting, sinning, and confused people to the hope, resources, strength, and life that are available only in Christ. Because Christ is our compassionate High Priest who fully understands our weakness, we confidently draw near to Him to receive mercy and find grace for help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15–16).

6) Grounded in Sound Theology

We believe that biblical soul care and counseling are fundamentally a practical theological discipline because every aspect of life is related to God. God intends that we care for one another in ways that relate human struggles to His person, purposes, promises, and will. Wise counseling arises from a theological way of looking at life—a mindset, a worldview—that informs how we understand people, problems, and solutions. The best biblical counselors are wise, balanced, caring, experienced practical theologians ([Philippians 1:9-11](#)).

Biblical soul care givers and counselors relate the Scriptures relevantly to people's lives ([Hebrews 3:12-19](#)). All wise care and counseling understands Bible passages and a person's unique life experience within the context of the Bible's larger storyline: God's creation, our fall into sin, His redemptive plan, and the consummation of all things. Thus, we engage in person-specific conversations that flow naturally out of a comprehensive biblical theology of life.

7) Dependent upon the Holy Spirit and Prayer

We believe that both genuine change of heart and transformation of lifestyle depend upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit ([John 14:15-16:16](#); [2 Corinthians 3:17-18](#)). Biblical counselors know that it is impossible to speak wisely and lovingly to bring about true and lasting change apart from the decisive, compassionate, and convicting work of the Spirit in the counselor and the counselee. We acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the One who illuminates our understanding of the Word and empowers its application in everyday life.

Wise counselors serve in the truth that God reveals and by the strength that God supplies. By the Spirit's work, God receives glory in all the good that takes place in people's lives. Biblical counselors affirm the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to guide and empower the counselor, the counselee, and the counseling relationship. Dependent prayer is essential to the work of biblical counseling ([Ephesians 6:18-20](#)). Wise counselors humbly request God's intervention and direction, praise God for His work in

people's lives, and intercede for people that they would experience genuine life change to the glory of God ([Philippians 4:6](#)).

8) Directed toward Sanctification

We believe that wise counseling should be transformative, change-oriented, and grounded in the doctrine of sanctification ([2 Corinthians 3:16-18](#); [Philippians 2:12-13](#)). The lifelong change process begins at salvation (justification, regeneration, redemption, reconciliation) and continues until we see Jesus face-to-face ([1 John 3:1-3](#)). The aim of wise counseling is intentional and intensive discipleship. The fruit of wise counseling is spiritually mature people who increasingly reflect Christ (relationally, rationally, volitionally, and emotionally) by enjoying and exalting God and by loving others well and wisely ([Galatians 5:22-6:10](#)).

Wise counseling seeks to embrace the Bible's teaching regarding God's role and human responsibility in spiritual growth. God's strength and mercy call for our response of faith and obedience. A comprehensive theology of the spiritual life provides the basis for applying relevant biblical methods of spiritual growth. Biblical soul care and counseling helps believers to understand what it means to be in Christ ([Romans 6:3-14](#)). It equips them to apply the principles of progressive sanctification through renewing their minds and actions based on Scripture with a motive of love for God and others ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).

9) Rooted in the Life of the Church

We believe that we best reflect the Trinity as we live and grow in community ([John 17](#); [Ephesians 4](#)). Sanctification is not a self-improvement project, but a process of learning to love and serve God and others. Wise soul care and counseling embed personal change within God's community—the church—with all God's rich resources of corporate and interpersonal means of grace ([1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)). We believe that the church should be both the center and the sender of Gospel-centered soul care and counseling ([Romans 15:14](#)).

By example and exhortation, the New Testament commends the personal, face-to-face, one-another ministry of the Word—whether in one-to-one or small group relationships ([Hebrews 3:12-19](#); [10:19-25](#)). God calls the church to mutual wise counseling just as He calls the church to public ministries of the Word in preaching, teaching, worship, and observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. God desires His people to love and serve each other by speaking His truth in love to one another ([Ephesians 4:15-16](#)). The primary and fullest expression of counseling ministry is meant to occur in local church communities where pastors effectively shepherd souls while equipping and overseeing diverse forms of every-member ministry ([Ephesians 4:11-14](#)). Other likeminded counseling institutions and organizations are beneficial when they serve alongside the local church and encourage Christians to practice soul care and counseling biblically. With their ultimate purpose should be to impact the world for Christ.

10) Founded in Love

We believe that Christ's incarnation is not just the basis for care, but also the model for how we care ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#); [John 13:34-35](#)). We seek to enter into a person's story, listening well, expressing thoughtful love, and engaging the person with compassion ([1 Thessalonians 2:8](#)). The wise and loving personal ministry of the Word takes many appropriate forms, from caring comfort to loving rebuke, from careful listening to relevant scriptural exploration, all while building trusting, authentic relationships ([1 Thessalonians 5:14-15](#); [1 John 4:7-21](#)).

Wise soul care and counseling take into account all that people experience (desires, thoughts, goals, actions, words, emotions, struggles, situational pressure, physical suffering, abuse, injustice, etc.) All human experience is the context for understanding how God's Word relates to life. Such awareness not only shapes the content of soul care, but also shapes the way care givers and counselors interact so that everything said is constructive, according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to the hearer ([Ephesians 4:29](#)).

11) Attentive to Heart Issues

We believe that human behavior is tied to thoughts, intentions, and affections of the heart. All our actions arise from hearts that are worshipping either God or something else, therefore we emphasize the importance of the heart and address the inner person. God fully understands and rightly weighs who we are, what we do, and why we do it. While we cannot completely understand a person's heart (even our own), God's Word reveals and penetrates the heart's core beliefs and intentions ([Hebrews 4:12-13](#)).

Wise counseling seeks to address both the inward and outward aspects of human life to bring thorough and lasting change into the image of Christ. The Bible is clear that human behavior is not mechanical, but grows out of a heart that desires, longs, thinks, chooses, and feels in ways that are oriented either toward or against Christ. Wise counsel appropriately focuses on the vertical and the horizontal dimensions, on the inner and the outer person, on observable behavior and underlying issues of the heart ([Matthew 23:23-28](#)). Biblical counselors work to help struggling people to learn wisdom; to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength; to love one's neighbor as oneself; and to endure suffering in hope (Romans 5:3-5).

12) Comprehensive in Understanding

We believe that biblical soul care and counseling should focus on the full range of human nature created in the image of God ([Genesis 1:26-28](#)). A comprehensive biblical understanding sees human beings as relational (spiritual and social), rational, volitional, emotional, and physical. Wise soul care takes the whole person seriously in his or her whole life context. It helps people to embrace all of life with Christ so they become more like Christ in their relationships, thoughts, motivations, behaviors, and emotions.

We recognize the complexity of the relationship between the body and soul ([Genesis 2:7](#)). Because of this, we seek to remain sensitive to physical factors and organic issues that affect people's lives. In our desire to help people comprehensively, we seek to apply God's

Word to people's lives amid bodily strengths and weaknesses. We encourage thorough assessment and sound treatment for any suspected physical problems.

We recognize the complexity of the connection between people and their social environment. Thus, we seek to remain sensitive to the impact of suffering and of the great variety of significant social-cultural factors ([1 Peter 3:8-22](#)). In our desire to help people comprehensively, we seek to apply God's Word to people's lives amid both positive and negative social experiences. We encourage people to seek appropriate practical aid in addition to soul care & biblical counseling when their problems have a component that involves education, work life, finances, medical, legal matters, criminality (either as a victim or a perpetrator), and other social matters.

13) Thorough in Care

We believe that God's Word is profitable for dealing thoroughly with the evils we suffer as well as with the sins we commit. Since struggling people usually experience some combination of besetting sin and personal suffering, wise soul care givers and counselors seek to discern the differences and connections between sin and suffering, and to minister appropriately to both ([1 Thessalonians 5:14](#)).

Biblical soul care and counseling addresses suffering and engages sufferers in many compassionate ways. It offers God's encouragement, comfort, and hope for the hurting ([Romans 8:17-18](#); [2 Corinthians 1:3-8](#)). It encourages mercy ministry ([Acts 6:1-7](#)) and seeks to promote justice.

Biblical soul care and counseling addresses sin and engages sinners in numerous caring ways. It offers God's confrontation of sins, encourages repentance of sins, presents God's gracious forgiveness in Christ, and shares God's powerful path for progressive victory over sin ([1 John 1:8-2:2](#); [2 Corinthians 2:5-11](#); [Colossians 3:1-17](#); [2 Timothy 2:24-26](#)).

14) Practical and Relevant

We believe that a commitment to the sufficiency of God's Word results in soul care that demonstrates the relevancy of God's Word. Biblical soul care and counseling offers a practical approach to daily life that is uniquely effective in the real world where people live and relate ([1 John 3:11-24](#)). By instruction and example, the Bible teaches foundational methodological principles for wise interaction and intervention ([Acts 20:26-37](#); [Galatians 6:1-5](#); [Colossians 1:24-2:1](#)).

Within the Bible's overall guidelines for the personal ministry of the Word, there is room for a variety of practical methods of change, all anchored in applying scriptural truth to people's lives and relationships. The Bible calls us to use wise methods that minister in Christ-centered ways to the unique life situations of specific people ([Proverbs 15:23](#); [25:11](#)). We are to speak about what is helpful for building others up according to the need of the moment, that it may benefit those who listen ([Ephesians 4:29](#)).

15) Oriented toward Outreach

We believe that Christianity is missionary-minded by its very nature. Biblical soul care and counseling should be a powerful evangelistic and apologetic force in our world. We want to bring the good news of Jesus and His Word to the world that only God can redeem. We seek to speak in relevant ways to Christians and non-Christians, to draw them to the Savior and the distinctive wisdom that comes only from His Word ([Titus 2:10-15](#)).

We want to present the claims, mercies, hope, and relevance of Christ in a positive, loving, Christ-like spirit ([1 Peter 3:15](#)). We seek to engage the broad spectrum of soul care and counseling models and approaches. We want to affirm what is biblical and wise. Where we believe models and methods fall short of Christ's call, we want to critique clearly and charitably. When interacting with people with whom we differ, we want to communicate in ways that are respectful, firm, gracious, fair-minded, and clear. When we perceive errors, we want to humbly point people forward toward the way of truth so that we all become truer, wiser, more loving soul care givers and counselors. We want to listen well to those who disagree with us and learn from their critiques. Our mission to spread the truth and fame of Jesus Christ includes a desire that all soul care givers and counselors appreciate and embrace the beauty of a Christ-centered and Word-based approach to people, problems, and solutions.

16) Conclusion: Unity in Truth and Love

We are committed to generating a unified effort among God's people to glorify Christ and multiply disciples through the personal ministry of the Word ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)). We trust in Jesus Christ in whom grace and truth are perfectly joined ([John 1:14](#)). We cling to His Word, in which truth and love live in perfect union ([Ephesians 4:15](#); [Philippians 1:9](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:8](#)). We love His Church—living and speaking the truth in love, growing up in Him who is the Head, and building itself up in love as each part does its work ([Ephesians 4:15-16](#)).

We desire to encourage this unity in truth and love through a fresh vision for biblical soul care and counseling. When people ask, "What makes biblical soul care and counseling truly biblical?" we unite to affirm:

Biblical soul care and counseling occurs whenever and wherever God's people engage in conversations that are anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.

We warmly invite you to join us in this mission of promoting excellence and unity in biblical soul care and counseling. Together, let us equip one another for Christ-centered transformation through the personal ministry of God's Word.