



2025-2026

ACBC Theology Exam – Case Question #11

#11. Describe what you believe to be the role of confidentiality in biblical counseling. What kind of commitment to confidentiality should a biblical counselor make? What biblical and practical considerations limit confidentiality? What is the responsibility of a biblical counselor to report to civil authorities on matters of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and other illegal matters? How should biblical counselors cooperate with the authorities about these things?

I have been asked multiple times some variation of these questions, “will our counseling discussions be confidential”, “will our sessions remain private”, or “will what I tell you be just between the two of us?”

Biblical Principles to keep in mind as you counsel:

I must not gossip about this person to others - Proverbs 6:16-19
Proverbs 11:13
Ephesians 4:29

I must not slander this person to others - Proverbs 11:13
Proverbs 30:10
James 4:11

I may need counsel in my counsel - Proverbs 15:22
Proverbs 11:14
Proverbs 24:6

Wisdom in abundance of counselors. The general principle is that there is wisdom in seeking a wide range of advice from others instead of relying solely on one’s own knowledge or intuition. Considering other points of view and drawing on the experience of others is good.

And I would add, it may be really heavy what you are dealing with, or a cumulation of counselees and the cumulative load is really heavy....so....

Proverbs 17:17
Galatians 6:2
1 Thessalonians 5:11
2 Corinthians 1:3-4

If they have sinned against someone they need to confess to the person - Matthew 5:23-24

If they continue in unrepentant sin - Matthew 18:15-20

If it is a sexual sin, sexual abuse or physical abuse - Romans 13:1-5

Alabama is a mandatory reporting state; sexual sin, must report.

If the law is being broken, continuing criminal activity (embezzlement, robbery, etc.) - Romans 13:1-5

If the counselee is at risk of self-harm and especially suicide, or is a risk to harm others:

Exodus 20:13 (*you shall not murder*)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (*body is a temple*)

Item B from the ***ACBC Standards of Conduct***, Section X. "The Commitment to Integrity" gives us crucial context:

Biblical counselors protect the reputation of their counsees by avoiding reckless and unnecessary disclosures of personal information. Biblical counselors must also make clear to their counsees that a commitment to biblical authority requires the disclosure of certain kinds of information to certain parties.

When private matters are shared, affirm they will be kept private within the responsibilities of your role as a biblical counselor.