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# A Letter from Pastor Chris

Dear Friend,

Christians have the role of helping one another grow to become more like Jesus. As the church, we desire to care for those who are hurting and injured members of the body of Christ.

The primary way that our church accomplishes this task is through Small Groups. Through your small group you will gain biblical counsel, encouragement, and the support you need for continued growth. If you are not currently involved in a small group, please understand that part of your counseling solution will include your involvement in a small group for continued support.

However, there are times within our Christian walk in which we need pastoral counsel. Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling (SFPC) is a co-created effort between the counselee and the pastoral counselor to develop solutions to problem behavior that is based upon the strengths and abilities that the counselee already possesses in working toward a solution. The strategy is in part based upon the focus upon constructing a solution rather than focusing upon the problem. Therefore, the counselee is considered to be the expert on his/her own life, not the counselor. The problem behavior will not be resolved merely as a result of attending the counseling sessions, but instead are resolved when the counselee takes action upon the solution-focused counsel.

Whatever your *hurt, habit, or hang-up*, please know that you are in my prayers as we work together to become more like Jesus through caring for one another!

Celebrating the process of healing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Dortch, B.S., M.Div., and D.Min.  
Lead Pastor of Grace Point Church

# Counselors and Credentials

Pastor Chris Dortch is a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors ( AACC ) and adheres to the Code of Ethics and submits to the Standards and Exemptions for Ordained Pastors and Pastoral Counselors (ES3).<sup>1</sup>

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Dr. Chris Dortch is the founding and Lead Pastor of Grace Point Church. He has been serving in vocational ministry since January of 1993. Pastor Chris graduated Summa Cum Laude ( 4.0 GPA ) from Liberty University with a B.S. in Religion with an emphasis in Theology and Biblical Studies. He earned his Master of Divinity from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary with an emphasis in Pastoral Ministries. He also earned his

Doctor of Ministry from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and was a Graduate with High Distinction ( 4.0 GPA ). His training and experience for biblical and pastoral counseling includes: general, emotional, relational, familial, marital, sexual, abuse, addictions, disorders, and spiritual counseling.

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**Referrals:** Pastor Chris' counseling sessions are limited to four sessions as you will see outlined in this handbook. During those sessions an assessment and plan of action will be made for ongoing support. Part of that ongoing support will be your personal involvement in a small group. If necessary, Pastor Chris will recommend additional counseling through licensed mental health clinicians who believe that faith in Christ is central to our spiritual, physical, and mental well-being. These counselors believe that God's Word is true and relevant to life's issues. They will provide counseling that emphasizes the use and authority of God's Word as well as counseling methods that are complimentary to the teaching of God's Word.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aacc.net/about-us/code-of-ethics/>

# An Understanding of Counseling

## Multitasking

Modern secular counseling often overlooks the spiritual aspects of life. Our emotions are reduced to nothing more than chemical reactions within the brain. However, as Christians, we recognize that we have been created in the image of God. The Christian counselor then gives consideration to your soul, emotions, thinking, feeling, volition, conscience, and body. Temporal systems are considered such as the influence of family, friends, church, society, economy, etc. Supernatural systems are considered such as the work of the Holy Spirit as well as demonic influence. Therefore, Christian counselors develop a comprehensive approach to counseling known as multitasking.

## Solution-Focused

Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling (SFPC) is a co-created effort between the counselee and the pastoral counselor to develop solutions to problem behavior that is based upon the strengths and abilities that the counselee already possesses in working toward a solution. The strategy is in part based upon the focus toward constructing a solution rather than focusing upon the problem. Solution-focused counseling has nine guiding assumptions.

1. God is already active in the counselee.
2. Complex problems do not demand complex solutions.
3. Finding exceptions helps create solutions.
4. The counselee is always changing.
5. The counselee is the expert and defines the goals.
6. Solutions are co-created.
7. The counselee is not the problem; the problem is the problem.
8. The counseling relationship is positional.
9. If it's not broken, don't fix it.

## Brief-Counseling

Pastoral counseling is not a long-term relationship. Generally speaking, pastoral counseling will last from one to four sessions. However, part of your solution will include a plan for your involvement in a small group for continued growth and support. In some circumstances, the pastoral counselor may refer you to a specialized counselor. This will occur when the counseling required is greater than the scope of pastoral counseling (SFPC).

## Pastoral Counseling Goal

The overall goal of pastoral counseling is “to become more like Christ” (cf. Eph. 5:1); this is accomplished through helping the counselee(s) think biblically about their current struggles. A pastoral counselor relies on Scriptures as the sole authority for faith and conduct in providing biblical counsel to those who are hurting and in need.

# **Informed Consent & Confidentiality Covenant**

## **Pastoral Counseling Agreement**

The pastoral staff of Grace Point Church desires to provide you with accurate information concerning the pastoral counseling process. Please read through the following agreement, sign and date. This form as well as the intake form must be completed and returned to the church office prior to the first session. You should keep an additional handbook for your own records.

(NOTE to couples/families: Each individual should fill out their own set of forms.)

## **Pastoral Counseling Referral Policy/Disclaimer**

After reviewing the Counseling Intake Form, the counseling pastor will determine whether or not our pastoral staff can provide you with the appropriate services and level of care needed. Counselees will be referred if the circumstances are beyond the scope of pastoral counseling.

## **Arrival Expectations**

Please plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment so the session can begin on time. If you anticipate being late, please call ahead to inform us at 704.360.3992. If you will be significantly late, we may ask you to reschedule the appointment. Regardless of your arrival time, the session will end at the scheduled end time to avoid interfering with the schedule of others.

## **Cancellations**

If you must cancel your appointment, please notify the church offices at least 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment at 704.360.3992. Failure to do so could result in the cessation of future counseling sessions. Exceptions will be made for emergencies and extenuating circumstances.

## **Accountability**

For accountability purposes, the meeting will be scheduled and take place in a public setting.

## Sessions

Pastoral counseling is not a long-term relationship. Generally speaking, pastoral counseling will last from one to four sessions. Please note that counseling sessions will not exceed 1 hour. Here is a typical outline of what to expect.

Session 1: What is the Problem?

Session 2: What is the Preferred Solution?

Session 3: What is the Pace and Motivation Toward Solution?

Session 4: What is the Plan for Continued Support?

## Homework

You will be asked to complete homework assignments between sessions. We ask that you complete your assignments prior to your arrival for each session. Counsees will be asked to commit to prayer and Scripture reading or memorization as part of the counseling process. Failure to complete assignments may result in a forfeit of future sessions.

## Pastoral Counseling Confidentiality

Your counseling sessions are confidential and will not be discussed or released to anyone, except as noted below. The exceptions to this policy are as follows: In general, we discourage the keeping of secrets between family members. It is our view that secrets, such as past sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancies, adulterous affairs, etc. are more problematic when kept secret than when dealt with in an honest and appropriate manner. Please note that we are required by law to inform family members, the police, and others when there is sufficient cause to believe that a life is in danger, or when you appear suicidal. We are also required by law to report child abuse, child sexual abuse, other forms of abuse or intentions to harm others. In addition, in an attempt to gain perspectives and ideas as to how best to help you reach your goals, your pastoral counselor may meet with other pastoral staff or professional ministry staff regarding their counselee(s).

If you have any questions or reservations about the policy in regard to confidentiality, then the policy should be discussed before signing below. By signing below you are accepting the confidentiality policy, its limits and exceptions.

I understand and accept the guidelines stated within the Informed Consent & Confidentiality Covenant.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Counseling Intake Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:

M / F

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of Grace Point Church? Y / N If yes, since when? \_\_\_\_\_

Who referred you to us? \_\_\_\_\_

## Family Information (if married)

Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Years

Married: \_\_\_\_\_

List children and their ages starting with the oldest:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parental Information (if under the age of 18)

Name of Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your father live at home with you? Y / N Mother? Y / N

List your brothers and sisters and their ages starting with the oldest:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_



## Counseling Information

Have you ever sought counseling before? Y/N

Was it for the same challenge for which you are currently seeking counsel? Y/N

What crisis or need led you to seek counseling at this time? (Check all that apply.)

### Spiritual Issues

- Salvation                       Questions/Doubt                       Direction

### Emotional Issues

- Loneliness                       Anxiety/Panic Attacks                       Guilt  
 Anger                       Depression                       Unhealthy Self-Esteem  
 Facing Death Thoughts/Threat                       Bereavement/Grief                       Suicide

### Relational Issues

- Pre-Marital Counseling                       Marital Counseling                       Dating  
 Coping w/ Singleness                       Peer Pressure                       Peer Rejection/Bullying

### Familial Issues (Adults)

- Child Concerns                       Divorce/Separation                       Single Parenting

### Familial Issues (Children/Adolescents)

- Inattentive Parents                       Sibling Rivalry                       Parental Divorce/Separation  
 Dealing w/ Stepparents                       Non-Christian Parents                       Overprotective Parents

### Sexual Issues

- Lust                       Pornography                       Premarital Sex  
 Unplanned Pregnancy                       Abortion                       Homosexuality  
 STDs                       I had an Affair                       My Spouse Had an Affair

### Abuse Issues

- Sexual Abuse                       Rape                       Physical Abuse  
 Verbal Abuse                       Emotional

### Addiction Issues

- Alcohol Abuse                       Drug Abuse                       Gambling

### Disorders Issues

- ADD/ADHD                       Anorexia Nervosa                       Bulimia

### Other Concerns

- Money                       Cancer                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information:

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