

How to Choose a Christian Counselor

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STEPS TO TAKE

Trust God. Do you believe God cares? Do you trust Him to meet your needs and heal your wounds? Do you really believe the Son of God loves you and died for your sins, was buried and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)? Then remember what you believe when you are in the midst of conflicts, pain, and difficulties in your marriage or family.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

—Galatians 2:20

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

—1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

See also: Hebrews 11:6

Look to the Bible. As you look to God in faith through the Scriptures, you will gain strength and wisdom.

God will not allow us to be tempted or tested beyond what we are able to bear.

—1 Corinthians 10:13

He is our strength and place of refuge whenever we need Him.

—Psalms 46:1-3

See also: Romans 8:28

Pray. Ask God for wisdom to make the right decisions as you seek a Christian counselor. God promises to give you wisdom if you ask for it in faith. Trust God to direct your steps to the right counselor (Psalm 23, Proverbs 16:3 and Philippians 4:6-9).

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting.

—James 1:5-6a

Understand the problem. It is important to realize that every marriage or family problem involves at least two people: you and the other person. How might you have contributed to the problem? How might you need to change? What attitudes and actions need to be addressed? The more you understand the problem, and how to address it, the more you will be able to follow God's blueprint for your marriage and family.

By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established.

—Proverbs 24:3

Seek counsel from your church. It is always important to seek the counsel of your pastor or other church leaders. If you are not active in a Bible-believing, gospel-centered local church, take steps now to find one. Ask church leaders to recommend a Christian counselor who can help you.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

—Hebrews 13:17

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Counseling is an interactive process. It is built, established, and maintained on trust. Open and honest dialogue between you and your counselor, grounded in a biblical faith in Jesus Christ, is the most important component of that trust. If you find a wise counselor who uses the Bible to help you work through your problem, you will be blessed. (If you cannot establish a foundation of trust early on, continue looking for the right counselor.)

*How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding.
—Proverbs 3:13*

Look for a Counselor Who:

Loves people, perseveres through tough times, and is confident that Jesus works in people who need help (2 Timothy 2:24-25, Romans 12:9-12).

Believes that the Bible provides counsel for all of life's issues (2 Timothy 3:16-17, John 5:39-40).

Gives clear evidence of a personal, passionate relationship with Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10).

Your pastor or trusted Christian friend recommends as a counselor who provides wise, biblical advice (Proverbs 11:14, 15:22 and 24:6).

Search for a Christian Counselor near You:

The following lists are provided as sources of information for our constituents. Neither FamilyLife nor "FamilyLife Today" endorse, certify, or verify any of the following counselors, counseling organizations, or training resources. The purpose and objectives of the lists are strictly informative and educational.

National counseling and conflict resolution organizations:

http://www.familylife.com/articles/article_detail.asp?id=861

Local and regional counseling and conflict resolution organizations:

http://www.familylife.com/articles/article_detail.asp?id=539

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Write down the counselor's answer, if possible. Then talk to your pastor, church leader, or a trusted Christian friend about your conversation. Continue asking God for wisdom to make the right decision.

What is your approach to understanding people's problems and helping them grow and change through counseling?
Please describe this process.

What are some books or other resources that you recommend on a regular basis? Which ones have most influenced you in your approach to counseling?

Are you a Christian? How does your faith affect your view and practice of counseling?

Do you bring Christian truth into your counseling practice? How? What role does the Scripture play?

Do you pray with those you counsel?

Do you go to a church? If so, where and how long have you been a member?

What is your educational and professional background? What role does it play?

Are you married? Do you have children? Have you ever been divorced? How does your marriage and family situation affect how you counsel people?