



## General Information

Thank you for choosing Daymark Pastoral Counseling to provide counseling resources. It is my desire to provide the best care possible. To orient you to my procedures and policies the following information is provided.

**1. Training and Degrees:** Gordon Bals employs a pastoral/Biblical approach to counseling. If you have any questions about my training or background please bring them to our attention. I hold a Doctor of Education in Pastoral Community Counseling (2004) from The University of Sarasota. The title of my dissertation was “Southern Evangelical Christian Religious Internalization and Posttraumatic Growth.” I hold an M.A. degree in Biblical Counseling (1993) from Colorado Christian University where I studied under Dr. Dan Allender and Dr. Larry Crabb. Finally, I have a B.S. degree in Nautical Science (1986) from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Prior to founding Daymark Pastoral Counseling, Gordon worked as an adolescent and family counselor at a Residential Treatment Center and then as an Assistant Pastor at a local church. I am a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor with the Board of Christian Professional and Pastoral Counselors, and an adjunct professor at Beeson Divinity School. Gordon has been married since 1990 and has three daughters.

**2. Confidentiality:** All information disclosed within a counseling session is confidential and may not be revealed without your written permission, except for the purpose of supervision. If you choose to have Daymark Pastoral Counseling keep any other individual apprised of your progress in counseling, it will be necessary to complete a “Release of Information” form that will be kept on file. If you consent to the release of information to an attorney or law firm, Daymark will only produce your written records to that person or entity. Daymark’s counselors will resist any subpoena compelling them to testify under oath in any legal proceedings about you or your counseling. If subpoenaed to testify in any legal proceedings, Daymark and its counselors reserve the right to object to the subpoena and to assert any applicable legal privileges. Without a properly executed release, everything about your visit will be held in strictest confidence with the exception of the following circumstances:

- When a client intends to take harmful, dangerous, or criminal action against themselves or another individual
- When a client or their family is likely to suffer threats, or the results, or harmful behavior
- Where there is a reasonable suspicion of the abuse of elderly persons or the children under the age of eighteen

**3. Note-Taking and Record Keeping:** Counselees will have a file created in his, her, or their name(s) containing intake forms, signed consents and notes taken from and after sessions. The purpose of a file is to help the counselor remember relevant information and to carry out his/her responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Records will be created, maintained, stored, and disposed of in accordance with the law. All physical records will be kept in locked cabinets with counselor-only access and will be completely shredded 7 years after the last dated appointment.

**4. Forms of Communication:** Although I will do whatever is possible to maintain confidentiality please be advised that email, phone voicemail, fax communication, as well as conversations via Skype, FaceTime, or other internet-based forms of communication are not necessarily secure.

**5 Counseling Orientation:** Daymark Pastoral Counseling is a Christian ministry supporting the work of the local church and is part of the Counselor’s practice of religion. The Counselee is voluntary seeking religious guidance from a counselor trained to provide such guidance. The Counselor’s goals in providing counseling are to help the Counselee know the God of the Bible more fully and vitally and to live life in a God-esteeming way. This includes, but is not limited to, providing Biblical/pastoral counsel to assist in: meeting the challenges of life; increasing in true worship; applying the Gospel and God’s sufficiency daily; moving away from sinful practices and beliefs; learning to develop, cultivate, and live in relationship and reconciliation with God and others. This approach to counseling utilizes prayer, the Bible, Scripture and Christian values and perspectives to help the client (and family if applicable) deal with identified problems. We believe that a relationship with the living God through the salvation Jesus Christ brought to man is the foundation of all movement towards the reconciling of human problems. We believe many problems stem from a breakdown in relationship with God and others. As such, talking about these relationships may open levels of awareness that can cause pain and anxiety and may lead to changes that can produce disruptions or turmoil in your present circumstances. If at any time you have questions or concerns about this process, please address your counselor now or in the future. You are entitled to receive information about the methods of counseling, the techniques used, and the duration of counseling (whenever possible). You may seek a second opinion from another counselor or terminate counseling at any time.

Although the Biblical/pastoral advice the Counselor provides is intended to be practical, it is entirely the Counselee's decision how to (and whether to) implement that advice. The Counselor is not providing legal, tax, financial, medical, or other technical or professional advice, and the Counselor undertakes no duty to recognize or opine when such advice is needed, and the parties further agree that no fiduciary and professional client relationship is being created between the Counselor and Counselee as a result of this relationship.

**6. Appointments:** We will do our best to work with you to find an appointment time that suits your schedule. Please note that the office building doors are locked after 5:30 p.m. Counselors will be out to meet counselees for any appointments scheduled after that time. If you are late for any reason, you will receive the remainder of your scheduled time. This is necessary so we can see following patients at their scheduled time. Our cancellation policy is described separately. Two consecutive missed sessions without prior notice constitutes a termination of the counseling relationship.

**7. Emergencies:** Our office number (205 871-3332) is not an emergency number and Daymark Pastoral Counseling does not offer 24 hour crisis coverage. Therefore, the following procedure is to be followed if you experience a crisis:

- A. Call 911 if you are in immediate danger
- B. Call the local crisis center 205 323-7777 if you need to speak with someone immediately
- C. Call your psychiatrist if you are under psychiatric care.
- D. Leave a message with your Daymark counselor letting him or her know of the emergency and that you have already called placed a call to 911 or the crisis center and to your psychiatrist (if applicable).

**8. Calls to the office after hours:** Phone calls to your counselor in between sessions are generally discouraged. If a need arises outside of your scheduled appointment please email or call the office to check for appointment availability. Phone calls, which last longer than 10 minutes, will be charged at half of your hourly rate.

**9. Counseling Renumeration:** While the Counselee may provide renumeration for the services provided pursuant to this agreement, such renumeration does not change this relationship from a religious to a "professional" or "fiduciary" relationship. Below you will note our sliding scale that shows a suggested contribution for counseling services. If because of extenuating circumstances you are unable to contribute the amount indicated below, please discuss this with your Counselor during your first appointment and we will work with you. Daymark Pastoral Counseling is a non-profit organization (501C3) that receives charitable contributions for the purpose of providing Counselee scholarships and sliding fee scale. When you make a counseling contribution you can do so by cash, credit card or check. If you use a check, please make your check out to Daymark. If you pay by credit/debit in the office, you will be charged a 3.95% processing fee. A receipt will be provided upon request whenever you make a payment.

#### **Sliding Scale for Suggested Contribution**

<b>Family Income:</b>	0 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$85,000	\$85,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 or above
<b>Counseling Fee:</b>	\$85	\$110	\$130	\$150

**Please note:** To keep costs at a minimum we do not have a full-time secretary to make appointments and answer questions. As such, if you call the office, you may get voicemail frequently, but we will return calls as promptly as possible. Each counseling session will be 50 minutes so that each counselor has ample time between sessions.

My signature below acknowledges that I have read and been able to ask questions regarding the above information.

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Signature of Counselee

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Date