

# Counseling Scenarios

## **1. What if they are not ready to become a covenant member?**

If they are not ready to become a covenant member at this time, ask them if they have unanswered questions or if anything is keeping them from taking this next step. (Do not pressure them.) Allow them to keep attending at their own pace.

- a. Let them know that when they are ready to become a covenant member they will need to contact the church office.
- b. They will receive a follow up email from the staff.
- c. There is no need for them to have their picture taken and they are free to go.
- d. COUNSELOR...write his or her name on the card, write your name on the card, and write a few notes in the counselors box so we'll know how to proceed.

## **2. What if their testimony is solid, they've been baptized by immersion, and they desire to become a covenant member?**

Have them complete the Covenant Membership Card and walk them over to the designated picture area. Afterwards, they are free to leave. They will receive a follow up email from the staff.

## **3. What if their testimony is solid, they want to become a covenant member, and they express a desire to be baptized?**

If baptism is their next step, have them complete the Covenant Membership Card and indicate that in the counselor's box at the bottom of the card. Feel free to ask them why they have never been baptized.

- a. Let them know their membership will become official when they are baptized.
- b. Remind them when the next baptism will take place. (This is covered during the presentation)
- c. Bring them over to the designated picture area.
- d. They are free to leave after their picture is taken.

e. They will receive a follow up email from the staff.

**4. What if they were baptized as an infant, give a solid testimony, display a regenerate life, desire to become a covenant member, but do not believe they need to be baptized by immersion?**

- Review what was taught during the presentation.
- Order of baptism in workbook on pages 12 – 13
- You could say something like the following:

“You have the opportunity to share your testimony that you came to Christ 10 years ago.”

- Don't view baptism as being a new believer. Someone said the following to a counselor in a Starting Point class, “Can I have a private baptism because I do not want people to think I'm a new believer.”
- Jesus did it because it's right in the Father's eyes
- In obedience, you'll increase the faith and zeal of others
- Baptism does not save us. Its going public with your faith.
- Be sensitive without compromising.
- Encourage them to think and pray about being baptized by immersion. Look at what Scripture teaches about it.
- Have them fill out the Covenant Membership Card but indicate they were not baptized by immersion after coming to Christ. COUNSELORS...make a note of it in the counselor notes

Pastoral staff and elders will follow up with individuals who were baptized as infants.

**5. What if the person you are talking with indicates that he/she is in a dating relationship?**

**Discernment:** If the person is in a dating / engaged relationship, ask how he or she is pursuing purity and holiness; ask about their living arrangements; address any indication of sexual impurity whether married or single (premarital sex, pornography); make the following statements:

- Do you want to be new in this area of your life? 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20
- If God is moving in your heart and life you want to pursue holiness

- Baptism won't make sense to you or others if you are not pursuing holiness.
- Baptism symbolizes death to self and being raised in newness of life - Romans 6:4
- You'll enjoy baptism a lot more if you wait and allow us to help you work these issues out. We want to help maximize your joy.
- Your next best step is to wait and continue to meet with me or someone we believe can help you experience freedom in this area of your life.

#### Engaged / dating couples –

- Is living together or being sexually active the most honoring way to pursue marriage?
- Marriage is sacred and points to something permanent – Christ's Church (Ephesians 5:21-33)
- If you are currently living together or “frequently” staying together under the same roof, do you commit that one of you will make arrangements to live in another location? (if engaged until wedding day) **What's the plan to make this happen?** It will seem like an inconvenience, but compared to what Christ went through to save us, it'll be worth it.
- Your next best step is to wait and meet with me or someone we believe can help you experience freedom in this area of your life.
- Jesus said,

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them to obey** everything I have commanded you.” (*not just learn it, but obey it*)

- **Stress this**- you'll enjoy baptism a lot more if you wait and allow us to help you work these issues out. Your joy will be increased and your witness will be stronger.

## Biblical examples for purity and holiness

1. Matthew 5:8 – Jesus said, “Blessed (happy) are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”
  - a. The reward of a pure heart is to see God
  - b. "Pure in heart" refers to spiritual integrity.
  - c. How does purity make us happy? Joy of a cleansed life – we’re released from the fear of judgment and the emotional impact from guilt and shame.
  - d. An unclean heart is ugly to God. The filth of self-centeredness and moral impurity is gross in God’s eyes. Guilt is realizing that we just participated in something that is opposite of everything God is – pure, holy! But nothing pleases God more than to remove our guilt and cleanse us from impurity.
  - e. Confession paves the pathway to purity.
  - f. Unfortunately many try to live at peace with sin while still identifying themselves as Christians.
  - g. What does it mean to see God? You don't see Him with physical eyes but with spiritual ones. You begin to comprehend Him and become aware of His presence. **In Jesus, God makes himself visible.**
  - h. 1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
  - i. James 5:16 - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
  - j. Proverbs 28:13 - Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
  
2. John 4 – Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well.
  - a. 4:16-18 Jesus confronted her about her living arrangements
  - b. 4:28 “left her water jar and went back into the town” – that’s a big deal; her life was changed
  - c. 4:39 “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony.” Her witness was strengthened because she led the entire village to Jesus.

3. 2 Timothy 2:22
  - a. Run from – “Flee youthful passions”
  - b. Run to – “pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.”
  - c. Run with – “along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”
4. Good intentions will never overcome a bad location. “Flee from youthful temptations.” 2 Tim. 2:22
5. If you take care of the way things look, you take care of the way things are. “Avoid even the appearance of evil.” 1 Thess. 5:22
6. Some things are worth the wait. Some things are not worth the guilt. “Stolen bread eaten in secret is sweet, but afterwards it turns to sand in the mouth.” Proverbs 20:17
7. Warnings against premarital sex:
  - a. It creates a false sense of intimacy – sex before marriage convinces a couple they are closer than they really are...you cannot build a Godly relationship based on sin
  - b. It is unkind to a future spouse – don’t assume you’ll marry the person you are currently dating...if you breakup they will one day become someone else’s wife
  - c. It affects marital intimacy through mental scars – many Christians struggle with intimacy in their marriage because of memories or experiences they have previously had.
  - d. It burdens the heart with fear – fear of getting caught, pregnant, disease, girls fear inadequacy...that is not true love
  - e. Opens the door for future immorality – if we grow up saying yes to everything vile, it’ll lead to immoral thoughts, actions...learn to resist now so you will have power when tempted later
8. God’s commands are never given to restrict our joy but rather to maximize it. He restricts our choices to maximize our pleasure.