

Explore Certification through First Counseling

What is involved in the ACBC certification process?

Phase 1 Training

- 30+ hours of video training (provided by First Counseling and approved by ACBC)
- 10 hours of counseling observation (if you cannot observe an ACBC counselor, we recommend the IBCD observation videos, <https://ibcd.org/subscriptions/>)
 - Log provided on your ACBC certification dashboard.
- 1,000 pages of reading from ACBC's approved reading list (provided by ACBC)
 - *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, by Paul Tripp, and *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* by Heath Lambert (required by First Counseling as part of your 1,000 pages of required reading).
 - Log provided on your ACBC certification dashboard.
- **Personal Growth Project*** (required by First Counseling; instructions shared below)

Phase 2 Exams (First Counseling provides helpful resources but is not involved in this phase.)

- 24 Theology questions (essay-style answers)
- 20 Counseling questions (essay-style answers)

Phase 3 Supervised Counseling (First Counseling is not involved in this phase.)

- Counseling (50 sessions done under an ACBC Fellow and provided by ACBC)

What is the time commitment?

- 2 years is the average completion time.
 - ACBC allows 4 years to complete Phases 1 and 2
 - ACBC allows 1 year to complete Phase 3
- First Counseling allows 2 years to complete Phase 1 (from the date of registering)

What is the average cost? \$1400 (see ACBC's website for details)

Personal Growth Project Instructions (a First Counseling requirement; also explained in video 1)

- Step 1: Answer the 14 Heart questions from Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart worksheet and email the sheet to counselingministry@fbcjax.com within 30 days of beginning of registering with us.
 - A counselor will be assigned to review your answers and follow up with observations/ comments (this may be done via email, a phone call, or virtual meeting).
- Step 2: After talking with your counselor, you will write out a Plan for Change and submit it to him or her.
 - Once approved, you will implement your Plan for Change for 8 weeks.
- Step 3: At the end of the 8 weeks, you will send the counselor a summary (3-5 sentence paragraph minimum) of how your Plan for Change went (Was it successful? What has the Lord taught you? How is He using what you have learned in your life?).
- See pages 3 and 4 for the Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart worksheet and Plan for Change worksheet.

Ready to begin?

1. First, register with ACBC (<https://biblicalcounseling.com/training/certification/>)
 - Upon registering with ACBC, you will receive your certification dashboard ID #/
2. Next, register with First Counseling via the church's website
<https://firstcounseling.com/training-registration/>

Drawing out the Purposes of the Heart

*"The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters,
but a man of understanding draws them out." Prov. 20:5*

Instructions: The Scriptures give us many windows into the heart and what functionally rules it. Here are a few examples. These questions are meant to help you examine personal heart themes of thought, motive, and desire so that you can begin to understand the true treasures of your heart. They will also help you to begin to see how these desires have shaped the way you have responded to God, others, and the situations of life.

Please answer the questions as thoroughly as possible. A paragraph on each question would be ideal. Throw in some illustrations of how this is true in your life. We will be looking for themes and patterns that define your heart tendencies. You will find it to be a liberating experience as the Lord helps you understand your heart and helps you to grow.

1. When do you tend to experience fear, worry, or anxiety (Matthew 6:19-34)?
2. Where have you struggled with disappointment (Proverbs 13:12, 19)?
3. In what situations do you struggle with anger (James 4:1, 2; Proverbs 11:23)?
4. Where do you encounter problems in relationships (James 4:1-10)?
5. What are the situations of life that you find particularly difficult (1 Corinthians 10:13-14)?
6. What things do you find yourself seeking to avoid?
7. Where have you experienced regular problems in your relationship to the Lord?
8. In what situations do you tend to doubt the truths of Scripture?
9. What is a good relationship? What do you expect of others?
10. In what type of situations do you struggle with bitterness?
11. Where have you struggled with regret, being tempted to say, "If only..."?
12. In what experiences from the past do you have a hard time of letting go?
13. Where do you tend to struggle with envy? What do you find yourself wanting that others have and you don't?
14. Whose opinion really matters to you?

Fill in the blanks:

1. Life would be all right if _____?
2. I really wish I had _____?
3. I need _____?

A PLAN FOR CHANGE

1. Describe the problem—be specific. How does the problem show up in your behavior, words, thoughts, attitudes, emotions? When, where and with whom does it appear? How often is it a problem? How intense? How long-standing? What was the starting point? What has helped in the past? What has hindered change? Answering this will help us know how to give practical advice.
2. This behavior or attitude comes from what heart idolatry? Please be specific. For example, “I desire and live to keep things under control.”
3. Have you asked the Lord’s forgiveness? When will you? Have you asked the forgiveness of anyone who has been impacted by this? If not, when will you?
4. In what ways do you need to die to this idolatry? What behavior or attitude needs to be “put off”? What do you need to “put on”? Think of daily specific ways to work on this.
5. How could you grow in your love, trust or awe of the Lord related to this/these areas? What day-to-day practical ideas would help you do this?
6. Who will you ask to hold you accountable, and how will they do it? Ask this person to pray for you and give him or her 1 or 2 specific questions to ask you regularly that would help hold you accountable to your plan.
7. What verses do you need to memorize, meditate on or study related to your area? (Ex.: Control—Isaiah 40 through 48 have many wonderful verses; Comfort loving—2 Corinthians 1 :3-11 and Psalm 18:1-3 or verses in Proverbs on laziness; People pleasing—Proverbs 29:25; Galatians 1:10)
8. Summarize your plan into things to work on daily or weekly and write reminders on 3x5 cards and tape them in places to remind you to work on your project.