

Four Mile Church Pillars

Pillar 8. Make Godly Decisions (wisdom/knowledge/discernment/counselor/advisor)

- a. FMC is committed to taking our next steps towards Christ together by seeking God's counsel for all decisions
- b. FMC has a healthy fear of the Lord, the first step to wisdom & knowledge; it's a call to submit to God in humility
- c. FMC confesses that Jesus is the head of FMC; we endeavor to move at His pace, in His direction, & by His power
- d. FMC seeks a Holy Spirit inspired knowledge of Scripture as a pillar of Bible-based discernment, counseling, & advising
- e. FMC professes that God is the source of our strength, the substance of our work, and the object of our endeavors
- f. FMC promotes confession, contrition, repentance, & fasting as necessary conditions for this talent to manifest itself
- g. FMC interprets the events of the world through the lens of Scripture empowered by the Holy Spirit
- h. FMC cultivates counseling/advising capabilities across all aspects of life: behavioral, parenting, marriage, financial, etc

Relevant Scripture

1. Rom 12: 1-2 (The Message), So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.
2. Acts 2:42-47, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
3. Rom 12:3-8, For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.
4. 1 Cor 12: 27-31, Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.
5. Eph 4: 11-16, And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
6. Prov 1:7, The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
7. Prov 2:6, For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding

8. Rom 11:33, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Reformed Theological Tenets

1. ECO Tenets, The clearest declaration of God's glory is found in His Word, both incarnate and written. The Son eternally proceeds from the Father as His Word, the full expression of the Father's nature, and since in the incarnation the Word became flesh all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are offered to His disciples. The written Word grants us those treasures, proclaims the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, and graciously teaches all that is necessary for faith and life. We glorify God by recognizing and receiving His authoritative self-revelation, both in the infallible Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and also in the incarnation of God the Son. We affirm that the same Holy Spirit who overshadowed the virgin Mary also inspired the writing and preservation of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit testifies to the authority of God's Word and illumines our hearts and minds so that we might receive both the Scriptures and Christ Himself aright.

2. ECO Tenets, Jesus prays that His followers will all be one, and so we both pray and work for the union of the church throughout the world. Even where institutional unity does not seem possible, we are bound to other Christians as our brothers and sisters. In Christ the dividing wall of hostility created by nationality, ethnicity, gender, race, and language differences is brought down. God created people so that the rich variety of His wisdom might be reflected in the rich variety of human beings, and the church must already now begin to reflect the eschatological reality of people from every tribe, and tongue, and nation bringing the treasures of their kingdoms into the new city of God.

3. Westminster Catechism, God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

4. Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 159. How is the Word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto? A. They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season, and out of season, plainly, not in the enticing word of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God; wisely, applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers; zealously, with fervent love to God, and the souls of his people; sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversion, edification, and salvation.

5. ECO Tenets on Confessionals, While this may sound like meagre authority, after all any of us can reject advice or guidance, let us consider it from a biblical point of view. Consider the authority of wisdom in the Bible. The Book of Proverbs is a guidance document (Prov 1:2–6), not a list of guaranteed formulas or rules. Passing on the teaching (*torah*) and instruction (*mitzvah*) of the wise from generation to generation is the way of wisdom (Prov 3:1), as is passing on the law (*torah*) and commandments (*mitzvah*) of God (Deut 6:2). The authority of wisdom sometimes must be questioned, as in Job and Ecclesiastes, as we grow up and find the limits of received wisdom. We encounter new situations, new challenges, and revised ways of thinking. Some wisdom is timeless, but other wisdom only fits for a season. We must consider that our allegiance is to the source of wisdom, Jesus himself, not to the later wise men and women. Indeed, Jesus was himself the great teacher of wisdom, a Rabbi, with wisdom greater than that of Solomon (Lk 11:31). His great commission is that his disciples or students would themselves make disciples and train new followers of Jesus to follow the *torah*, *mitzvah*, and *mishpat* of Jesus (Matt 28:20, see the LXX of Deut 6 for similar Greek vocabulary to the NT). The authority of wisdom is not communicated by the words of wisdom alone, but by the wise one who delivered them. The wisdom of Jesus is dependent upon the character of Jesus, and it is the duty of those who follow Jesus to not only teach wisdom, but also to embody it. In this way, a tree is known by its fruit. The great first Psalm, speaks of the wise person as a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season and prospers. Our *Confessional Standards* are one stream of water that feeds the wise woman or man.

Recommended Books:

1. Crabb, Larry. Effective Biblical Counseling; The Marriage Builder; Understanding People
2. MacArthur, John. Counseling, How to Counsel Biblically
3. Kellemen, Bob, Viars, Steve. Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth.
4. Whitman, Lauren. A Biblical Counseling Process
5. Challies, Tim. The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment

Venues to Implement the Pillar

1. Serve as a consultant to the Session and Staff.
2. Apply Biblical counseling to help families deal with marriage and childrearing issues
3. Apply Biblical counseling to deal with addictions and conflict resolution
4. Develop a rigorous premarital counseling program and administer it
5. Develop a rigorous child-rearing counseling program and administer it

Platforms & Exercises to Develop the Pillar

1. Look up the many ways God describes wisdom in the Bible.
2. Read Ecclesiastes and have a group discussion about Solomon's Wisdom.
3. Study the character of Solomon from Scripture.
4. Locate examples of where God used people in the New Testament to convey Godly Wisdom.
5. Study Elijah and Elisha - what can we learn from the Godly Wisdom that they prophesized.
6. Study Isaiah and Jeremiah - what can we learn from the Godly Wisdom that they prophesized.
7. Receive training on Biblical counseling
8. Read ECO Tenets, The Heidelberg Catechism, and the Westminster Catechism.