



# WHEN YOU NEED AN ATTORNEY

UNDERSTANDING WHEN TO SEEK  
LEGAL COUNSEL

2026



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### **LEGAL DISCLAIMER**

This guide is for ministry education and support only. It is not legal advice. Laws vary by state and situation. Speak directly with a qualified criminal defense attorney about your specific circumstances.

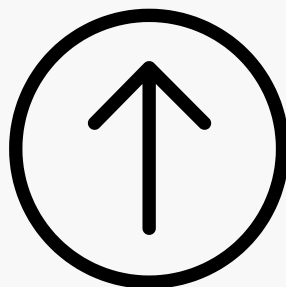
### **MINISTRY CONVERSATIONS ARE NOT LEGALLY PRIVILEGED**

Fellowship leaders, pastors, mentors, and group members are not your attorneys. Do not assume that what you share in ministry is legally protected. Depending on the state, the role of the person receiving the information, and the facts disclosed, ministry leaders may have a legal duty to report suspected abuse, danger to a minor, or ongoing exploitation. If your situation may involve minors, CSAM, exploitation, grooming, contact with minors, or illegal material, speak with a qualified criminal defense attorney before sharing details with anyone else.

### **A PRAYER BEFORE WE BEGIN**

*Father, meet this brother right where he is. Quiet the fear, shame, and confusion that may be pressing heavily on his heart. Give him wisdom that is greater than panic, courage that is rooted in truth, and humility to seek the right counsel before acting on emotion. Lead him away from hiding and toward the light, one careful step at a time. Remind him that even here, he is not beyond Your reach, Your mercy, or Your power to redeem.*

*In Jesus' name, amen.*



**PLEASE DO NOT SKIP THIS PAGE**

# START HERE

Brother, if you are reading this with fear in your chest and a thousand thoughts racing through your mind, slow down. Breathe. Pray. This is not the moment to act out of panic, shame, or desperation. Decisions made under heavy emotion are often the decisions that make things worse. Ask God for wisdom, take the next right step, and do not walk this alone. There is a wise path forward, but you need to move carefully, prayerfully, and with counsel.

**1**

## **PRESERVE EVERYTHING**

Do not delete, move, rename, wipe, or reset anything.

## **STAY SILENT WITHOUT COUNSEL**

Do not talk to law enforcement without an attorney.

**2**

**3**

## **PROTECT SPECIFIC DETAILS**

Do not confess specific illegal conduct to fellowship leaders before legal counsel.

## **CALL A FEDERAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY**

Call a federal criminal defense attorney.

**4**

**5**

## **STAY SPIRITUALLY CONNECTED**

After legal counsel, do not isolate spiritually.



# WHY AN ATTORNEY?

For many men in this fellowship, the word "attorney" carries weight it was never meant to carry. It sounds like exposure. Like the beginning of the end. Like the moment the secret stops being a secret and starts being a case number. That fear is understandable. And it is also one of the enemy's most effective tools. Because the men most afraid to call an attorney are often the men who need one most.

Calling an attorney is not an admission of guilt. It is not surrender. It is the single most intelligent move a man can make when he is carrying legal exposure — and it is protected in ways that nothing else in this guide is. Shame has a way of telling a man, "Just stay quiet. Don't say anything. Maybe this will go away." But fear is a terrible counselor. An attorney is not there to decide whether you are a good man, a bad man, or a lost cause. He is there to help you understand where you actually stand and keep you from making a frightened decision that could make everything worse.

*"An attorney is not someone who comes to judge you. He is the one person in the legal system whose entire job is to protect you."*

## On Privilege

What you say to an attorney in a confidential legal consultation is protected in a way ordinary conversations are not. In most situations, your attorney cannot be forced to testify against you or reveal what you shared about past conduct. That protection is one of the main reasons you should speak to an attorney before speaking to anyone else.

## On Cost

Most criminal defense attorneys offer a free initial consultation. Federal public defenders handle serious cases at no cost for men who qualify financially. Cost is not a reason to wait.

## On Timing

Do not discuss details of possible illegal conduct with fellowship leaders, group members, friends, family, pastors, or online communities *before speaking with an attorney.*

# WHEN YOU NEED AN ATTORNEY **RIGHT NOW**

When legal exposure is possible, fear can make a man freeze, minimize, hide, or try to “fix” things on his own. But those instincts can make the situation worse. This page is not meant to shame you — it is meant to help you recognize when the next right step is immediate legal counsel.

The three scenarios below are the clearest warning signs. In any of these situations, the goal is not panic — it is clarity. You do not need every answer before reaching out for help; you simply need to choose wisdom, protection, and counsel over fear and isolation.

## 1) YOU POSSESS — OR MAY POSSESS — ILLEGAL MATERIAL

If illegal content exists on any device you own or have access to — or if you have deleted files that may have contained illegal content — you have live legal exposure right now, today, regardless of how long ago it happened or whether anyone knows.

Do NOT delete anything. Do NOT move anything. Do NOT factory reset any device. Speak to a criminal defense attorney before any action is taken. Deletion after you become aware of a legal issue can constitute destruction of evidence — a separate criminal charge.

## 2) LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS CONTACTED YOU — IN ANY FORM

If law enforcement has made any contact — regardless of how casual or routine it seemed — stop talking and call an attorney immediately. You have the right to remain silent. Use it.

*“I would like to speak with an attorney before answering any questions.”* That sentence, spoken calmly, is your most important legal tool. Nothing you say to law enforcement before speaking to an attorney can help you. It can only hurt you.

## 3) YOU ARE ACTIVELY VIEWING ILLEGAL CONTENT

If you are currently active and seeking help, the path forward runs through legal counsel first. An attorney can help you understand your actual exposure, advise you on the safest course of action, and potentially facilitate a voluntary surrender with representation — which places you in a fundamentally better position than being caught.

An attorney can advise whether any form of voluntary disclosure or surrender is appropriate in your situation. Do not attempt to manage that decision alone.

# WHAT ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE ACTUALLY MEANS



## How it Works

In a confidential attorney-client conversation about past conduct, your attorney is generally prohibited from sharing what you tell him or being forced to testify against you.

## What it does NOT cover

Privilege does not protect plans to commit future crimes or harm others in the same way it protects confidential discussions of past conduct. If there is ongoing danger, future harm, or planned criminal conduct, different legal and ethical rules may apply.

## What it Covers

Communications with an attorney for the purpose of seeking legal advice are generally protected when kept confidential. That protection is far stronger than ordinary conversations, but it has legal limits and exceptions. Ask the attorney directly how privilege applies in your situation.

## How to Invoke It

When law enforcement contacts you, say only this: "I would like to speak with an attorney before answering any questions." Then stop talking. Completely.

# FIND A LAWYER

Finding the right attorney can feel overwhelming, especially when you are already carrying fear, shame, or uncertainty. But you do not have to start from scratch. The resources below are trusted attorney search tools that can help you look for criminal defense lawyers near you.



01

## [NACDL.ORG/FIND-DEFENSE-ATTORNEYS](https://www.nacdl.org/find-defense-attorneys)

The gold standard. Filter by state and “Sex Offenses” + “Federal.” These are vetted members of the nation’s premier criminal defense organization. Start here.

02

## [AVVO – AVVO.COM](https://www.avvo.com)

Search by practice area (“federal crimes,” “child pornography”) and zip code. Includes peer ratings, client reviews, disciplinary history, and free consult flags.

03

## [MARTINDALE.COM](https://www.martindale.com)

Over 150 years old – the oldest attorney directory in existence. AV Preeminent is the highest peer rating. Heavily used by attorneys for referrals.

04

## [FINDLAW.COM/LAWYER](https://www.findlaw.com/lawyer)

Owned by Thomson Reuters. Strong coverage of smaller cities and rural areas. Good for finding attorneys where other directories have thinner listings.

05

## [FD.ORG](https://www.fd.org)

For men who cannot afford private counsel. Every federal district has a Federal Public Defender’s office. These attorneys handle federal CSAM cases regularly.

# WHAT TO SAY

**SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT:** When you reach out to an attorney here is a starting point, and some important questions to ask.

*"I am looking for a criminal defense attorney who handles federal child pornography or CSAM cases. Is [attorney name / someone at your firm] still practicing and accepting new clients? I would like to schedule an initial consultation."*

**1**

Is the attorney still actively practicing criminal defense? A firm's website may not reflect recent retirements or practice changes.

**2**

Does he or she specifically handle federal CSAM or child exploitation cases? General criminal defense is not the same as federal sex crimes defense. Ask directly.

**3**

Is the attorney licensed and in good standing in your state? Verify the attorney's license and disciplinary status through the official state bar or state attorney licensing authority for your state.

**4**

Is the attorney currently accepting new clients? Some attorneys have full caseloads. Ask upfront so you do not wait.

**5**

Is a free initial consultation available? Many criminal defense attorneys offer this. It costs you nothing to ask

**Do not feel guilty for contacting an attorney before speaking to Law Enforcement. This is your constitutional right. Exercise it.**



# WHY LEGAL COUNSEL MATTERS

There are some things a man can bring into this fellowship that he may have never been able to say anywhere else. Here, confession is met with prayer, grace, brotherhood, and spiritual accountability. We can walk beside you, remind you who you are in Christ, and help you stop carrying the weight alone.

But fellowship and legal counsel do not serve the same role. We can offer brotherhood, but we cannot offer attorney-client privilege. We can encourage wise next steps, but we cannot advise you on evidence, devices, law enforcement, or court. That is why both matter: the fellowship helps you walk in the light spiritually, while an attorney protects you legally. We also cannot promise confidentiality where the law requires reporting.

## FELLOWSHIP VS ATTORNEY

	Our Fellowship	Your Attorney
Confess without judgment	✓	✓
Grace and brotherhood	✓	✗
Spiritual accountability	✓	✗
Legally protected conversation	✗	✓
Advice on what to do with devices	✗	✓
Protection from testimony	✗	✓
Representation in court	✗	✓

Both are essential — and neither replaces the other. This fellowship walks with you spiritually. Your attorney protects you legally. You need both.

### \*\*\* IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER \*\*\*

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# WHAT'S NEXT?

If pornography has taken you to dark places you never thought you would go, you might want to read our other guide: *Legal Exposure & CSAM*. The information it contains will help you understand the legal landscape ahead.



**Legal Exposure & CSAM** is a clear, compassionate guide for men who are afraid, confused, and unsure what to do next. This resource explains the difference between moral failure and federal legal exposure, warns against dangerous panic-driven decisions, and helps men understand why speaking with a qualified attorney must come before confession, disclosure, or attempting to “fix” things alone. Written from a ministry perspective, this guide offers truth, wisdom, and a sober next step for men who need help walking out of darkness and into the light.

## BUNK47.COM/RESOURCES

*If this guide has helped you, or if you believe in the work God is doing through this ministry, we invite you to prayerfully consider giving through the QR code. Your donation helps us continue creating practical resources, offering encouragement, and walking alongside men who feel trapped in secrecy, shame, and darkness. Every gift helps us point hurting brothers back to the hope, grace, and freedom found in Jesus Christ.*

