

THE PROBLEM OF EMOTIONALLY UNHEALTHY SPIRITUALITY

BRIEF SUMMARY

Emotional Health and spiritual maturity cannot be separated. It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.

When we ignore the emotional component of our lives, we move through the motions of Christian disciplines, activities, and behaviors, but deeply rooted behavioral patterns from our pasts continue to hinder us from an authentic life of maturity in Christ.

We often neglect to reflect on what is going on inside us and around us (emotional health) and are too busy to slow down to be with God (contemplative spirituality). As a result, we run the high risk of remaining stuck as spiritual infants, failing to develop into spiritually/emotionally mature adults in Christ.

One person described it this way, "I was a Christian for twenty-two years. But instead of being a twenty-two-year-old Christian, I was a one-year-old Christian twenty-two times! I just kept doing the same things over and over again."



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FURTHER REFLECTION: BIBLE STUDY OF 1 SAMUEL 15:7-24

1. In verse 11, what do you notice about God and Samuel's responses to Saul's failure to fully obey? How does this differ from Saul's response in verses 12-13?
2. Reread verses 22-23. Describe in your own words how Samuel explains Saul's disobedience.
3. List one or two examples of how you go through the motions of making "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices" rather than obeying the word of the Lord (i.e. acting or speaking from fear of what others think, or being one person at church and another person at work or home, or not having a place in your life to be still and listen to the Lord)?
4. As you note the serious tone of verse 23, what positive step(s) could Saul have taken to become aware of his own iceberg and hear God in his situation?
5. In what ways can you relate, or not relate, to Saul?



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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What stood out to you most from this week's teaching on the Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality?

2. Here are 10 symptoms of emotionally unhealthy spirituality:

- Using God to run from God
- Ignoring the emotions of anger, sadness, and fear
- Dying to the wrong things
- Denying the past's impact on the present
- Dividing life into "secular" and "sacred" compartments
- Doing for God instead of being with God
- Spiritualizing away conflict
- Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure
- Living without limits
- Judging the spiritual journey of others

Which of these symptoms are the most relevant in your life today?

3. What challenges keep you from slowing down your life to be with God?

4. At this point, what might be one or two simple steps you can take toward beginning to slow down your life and balance your being with God and your doing for God?

