

WORKBOOK

EIGHT SESSIONS



Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

UPDATED & REVISED

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE *to be* SPIRITUALLY MATURE,
WHILE REMAINING EMOTIONALLY IMMATURE



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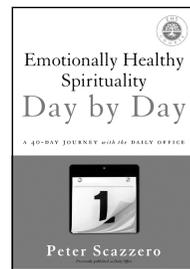
SESSION 1

The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality

Before your first group meeting, read chapter 1 of the *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* book.

Daily Office (10 minutes)

Do one of the Daily Offices from Week 1 of *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day* to begin your session. **(Leaders, please see point number two in the “General Guidelines” on page 124.)**



Introduction (3 minutes)

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).¹ As a result, we run the high risk of remaining stuck as spiritual infants, failing to develop into spiritually/emotionally mature adults in Christ.

Jay, one of our church members, described it best: “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 and over again.”



In order to facilitate a sense of safety at each small group table, please turn to pages 11–12 as the “Suggested Guidelines for the Group” are read aloud.

Growing Connected (10 minutes)

1. Share your name and a few words about what makes you feel fully alive (e.g., nature, music, sports, reading).

VIDEO: The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality (19 minutes)

Watch the video segment for Session 1 and use the space provided to note anything that stands out to you.

NOTES

Group Discussion (45 minutes)

Starters (10 minutes)

2. The following are the top ten symptoms of emotionally *unhealthy* spirituality. As the list that begins below is read aloud, put a check mark next to the one or two symptoms that are most relevant in your life today. Afterward, turn to another person and each share the one symptom that most applies to your spiritual life today.

1. Using God to run from God

(Example: I fill my life with Christian activities to avoid addressing difficult issues in my life.)

2. Ignoring the emotions of anger, sadness, and fear

(Example: I am rarely honest with myself and/or others about the feelings, hurts, and pains beneath the surface of my life.)

3. Dying to the wrong things

(Example: I tend to deny healthy, God-given desires and pleasures of life such as friendships, joy, music, beauty, laughter, and nature. At the same time, I find it difficult to die to my self-protectiveness, defensiveness, lack of vulnerability, and judgmentalism.)

4. Denying the past's impact on the present

(Example: I rarely consider how my family of origin and significant people/events from my past have shaped my present.)

5. Dividing life into “secular” and “sacred” compartments

(Example: I easily compartmentalize God to “Christian activities” while usually forgetting about him when I am working, shopping, studying, or recreating.)

6. Doing for God instead of being with God

(Example: I tend to evaluate my spirituality based on how much I am doing for God.)

7. Spiritualizing away conflict

(Example: I usually miss out on true peace by smoothing over disagreements, burying tensions, and avoiding conflict, rather than disrupting false peace as Jesus did.)

8. Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure

(Example: I have a hard time speaking freely about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes.)

9. Living without limits

(Example: Those close to me would say that I often “try to do it all” or “bite off more than I can chew.”)

10. Judging the spiritual journeys of others

(Example: I often find myself occupied and bothered by the faults of those around me.)

Bible Study: 1 Samuel 15:7–24 (35 minutes)

In this story we meet King Saul, the first king of Israel, and Samuel, God’s prophet who brings God’s word to Saul. King Saul had been instructed by God earlier in verse 3 to “attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them.” (Note: The Amalekites were a wicked, sinful culture known for their destructiveness). Saul, however, gives in to the wishes of his fighting men and does *only part* of God’s will. Read aloud 1 Samuel 15:7–24.

⁷ Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. ⁸ He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

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¹⁰ Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: ¹¹ “I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.

¹² Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”

¹³ When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD’s instructions.”

¹⁴ But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?”

¹⁵ Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.”

¹⁶ “Enough!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night.”

“Tell me,” Saul replied.

¹⁷ Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. ¹⁸ And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.’ ¹⁹ Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?”

²⁰ “But I did obey the LORD,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. ²¹ The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”

²² But Samuel replied:

“Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?”

To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to [listen] is better than the fat of rams.

²³ For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king.”

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the LORD’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them.”

3. 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?

4. Reread verses 12 and 24. What might have been going on beneath the surface of Saul’s life (iceberg) that he was unaware of?

Application (15 minutes)

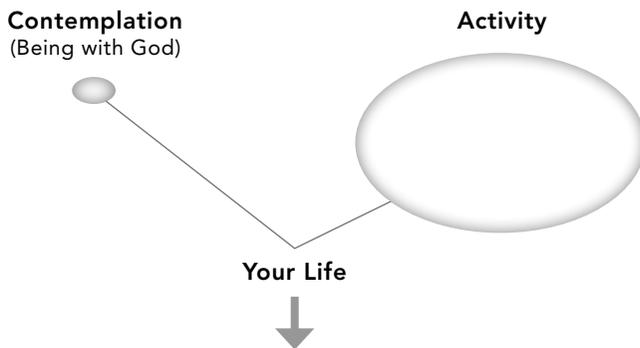
After the following paragraphs and questions 8 and 9 are read aloud, take 5 minutes to journal your response to those questions in the space provided. Then share your response to question 10 in groups of two or three.

Not only was Saul unaware of what was going on inside of him, he also did not cultivate a contemplative life with God. His “doing” for God did not flow from his “being” with God.

In the same way, our “doing” for Jesus must flow from our “being” with him. Far too often, we live vicariously off other people’s spirituality and relate to God while busily “on the run.”

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

9. The diagram below provides an illustration of a spiritual life where our activity (i.e., our doing) is out of balance with our contemplative life (i.e., our inner life with Jesus).



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Now, using two circles like the ones in the diagram, draw your own diagram to illustrate how your activities (your doing) balance with your contemplative life (your being with God).²

10. The remaining sessions of *The EH Spirituality Course* will address ways we can make changes in our lives. At this point, what might be one or two simple steps you can take toward beginning to slow down your life and balance your two circles?

VIDEO: Closing Summary (6 minutes)

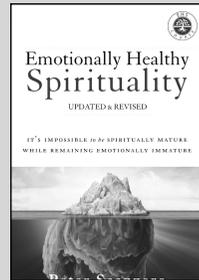
Watch the closing video summary for Session 1 and use the space provided to note anything that stands out to you.

NOTES

Between-Sessions Personal Study

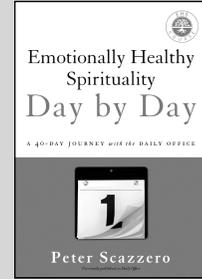
SESSION 1

Read chapter 2 of the book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, “Know Yourself That You May Know God.” Use the space provided to note any insights or questions you might want to bring to the next group session.



The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality Personal Study

Prayerfully read Week 1 of the devotional *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day*, “The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality.” Use the space provided to answer the Questions to Consider and/or to journal your thoughts each day.



Day 1 Questions to Consider:

How would you describe “what is secondary” in your life, the thing that might be “blocking the way” to experiencing God?

How could you make more room in your life for silence in order to listen to God?

Day 2 Questions to Consider:

What internal or external storm might God be sending into your life as a sign that something is not right spiritually?

How do you hear the words of the apostle John today: “Do not love the world or anything in the world” (1 John 2:15)?

Day 3 Questions to Consider:

In what way(s) has God put your life or plans “out of joint” so that you might depend on him?

What might be one way your “busyness” blocks you from listening and communing with the living God?

Day 4 Questions to Consider:

What things are “worrying” and “upsetting” you as you begin this day?

What are you angry about today? Sad about? Afraid of? Pour out your responses before God, trusting in him as David did.

Day 5 Questions to Consider:

What is one step you can take today to slow down and live more attentively to the voice of Jesus?

How might brokenness or weakness in your life today present an opportunity for God's power to be demonstrated?