

# Emotional Health

## Men's Workshop

- I. Review your check-up (this is what we will do at the beginning of each session).
- II. Introduction and Testimony – Mike Lindsey
- III. DVD – “When the Going Gets Tough” from Marathon, Volume I (Promise Keepers).
- IV. Large group discussion of the video content – What “lessons” did this man learn? Are there other ways in which men can learn these lessons? Like what? How about you?
- V. Brief review of the book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, by Peter Scazzero.
  - Why do so many Christians feel like their faith is not making much difference in their everyday lives?
  - How much are the ‘fruits of the spirit’ evidenced in my own life? (i.e. – at home, work, church, etc.)
  - Emotional Health + Contemplative Spirituality = Full Life in Christ
- VI. Small group discussion (below).
  - On your own, read through *The Top Ten Symptoms* listed on the back of this sheet.
  - How would you rate yourself on your level of personal emotional maturity? Discuss with your group.

<b><i>Signs of Emotional Health (Scazzero)</i></b>	<b><i>Examples in Your Life and in Others' Lives</i></b>	<b><i>Is this something you plan to work on? If so, how?</i></b>
<b>Close Relationships</b> Initiating and maintaining close relationships with others		
<b>Realize Impact of Past Experience</b> Being aware of how our past impacts our present		
<b>Conflict Resolution</b> Learning the capacity to resolve conflict maturely and negotiate solutions that consider the perspective of others.		
<b>Acceptance of Others</b> Respecting and loving others without having to change them.		
<b>Self-Assessment</b> Accurately self-assessing our strengths, limits and weaknesses and freely sharing them with others.		

**Resource:** *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero (2006 - Integrity Press)

## **Top 10 Symptoms of Emotionally Un-healthy Spirituality** (excerpted from *E.H.S.* by Scazzero)

### **1. Using God to run from God:**

- When my prayers are really about God doing my will, not my surrendering to his.
- When I focus on certain theological points that are more about my own fears and unresolved issues than concern for God's truth.
- Hiding behind God talk, deflecting any spotlight on my inner cracks and becoming defensive about my failures

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

- Most Christians are taught that almost all feelings are unreliable and not to be trusted.
- To minimize or deny what we feel is a distortion of what it means to be image bearers of our personal God.
- To the degree that we are unable to express our emotions, we remain impaired in our ability to love God, others, and ourselves well.

### **3. Dying to the wrong things**

- Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)
- Often we take this to mean, "The more miserable you are, the more God will love you."
- But God never asked us to die to the healthy desires and pleasures of life. Often these desires and passions are invitations from God.

### **4. Denying the past's impact on the present**

- The New Testament clearly teaches that for Christians, "the old has gone, the new has come."
- But this doesn't mean that what our past lives were won't continue to influence us in different ways today.
- When we are adopted into God's family, we need to identify and do away with the unhealthy patterns we inherited from our families of origin, and learn the new, healthy patterns of life in God's family.

### **5. Dividing our lives into "secular" and "sacred" compartments**

- Statistics show that in most areas of lifestyles, evangelical Christians are no different from unbelievers.
- The consequences of this on our witness to Jesus Christ are incalculable, both for ourselves and the world around us. How? In what ways?

### **6. Doing for God instead of being with God**

- We tend to think, "Doing lots of work for God is a sure sign of a growing spirituality."
- But work *for* God that is not nourished by a deep interior life *with* God will eventually be contaminated by other things, such as ego, power, needing approval from others, and buying into the wrong ideas of success.

### **7. Spiritualizing away conflict**

- Many of us grew up with a picture of Jesus that resembled Mr. Rogers, thinking messages like "Christians always keep the peace," or "It's sinful and non-Christian to get into conflict, especially with another believer."
- However, if we look to Jesus as our model, we see that he was constantly involved in conflict. He never "swept it under the rug", but faced it head-on in a healthy way, motivated from love. What about you?

### **8. Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure**

- Churchgoers constantly feel the pressure to present an image of ourselves (and our families) as strong and spiritually "together". We feel guilty for not measuring up, so we try to hide our failures.
- Yet if we read our Bibles, we will notice that God never tries to cover up the weaknesses of the very people he used to accomplish his purposes, the people we consider "the heroes of the Bible".
- Why do we feel the need to be perfect? Of all people, Christians should be the ones who are humble enough to admit our failures, at the very least with each other!

### **9. Living without limits**

- Paul said, "I *can* do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)
- We often read that and think that we ought to be doing *all things!* Paul's point was that he had the strength to be content in the midst of whatever circumstances God had him in.
- Why don't we take appropriate care of ourselves? Why are so many Christians just as frantic, exhausted, overloaded, and hurried as our unbelieving neighbors? Setting boundaries is good stewardship of ourselves.

### **10. Judging other people's spiritual journey**

- On the other end of the conflict scale, sometimes we feel we need to correct anyone and everyone who does things differently than we do.
- However, by failing to let others be themselves before God and move at their own pace, we inevitably project onto them our own discomfort with their choice to live differently than we do.