

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

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Review

Peter states on the cover of his book, "It is impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature."

1. What is emotional intelligence?
2. Do you agree or disagree with Pete of its necessity for someone to be spiritually mature? Why?
3. If you agree with Pete why, in your opinion, has emotional intelligence been overlooked until now?
4. In his book Pete points out that many of us suffer from multiple symptoms of emotional unhealthy spirituality. With which symptom(s) do you identify?
 - A. Using God to run from God
 - a. When I do God's work to satisfy me, not him
 - b. When I do things in his name he never asked me to do
 - B. Ignoring the emotions of anger, sadness, and fear
 - a. We see anger, sadness, and fear as sins to be avoided
 - b. We see feelings as being unreliable and untrustworthy
 - C. Dying to the wrong things
 - a. We are to die from the sinful parts of who we are (e.g. defensiveness, detachment from others, arrogance, hypocrisy)
 - b. God does not call us to die to the good parts of who we are (e.g. friendship, joy, art, music beauty, recreation, laughter, etc.).
 - c. We need to receive and nurture the good gifts and dreams God has given us and not reject them "to serve Jesus."
 - D. Denying the past's impact on the present
 - a. When we receive Christ and are transformed, our past does not disappear. Instead it will continue to influence us, but in different ways.
 - b. Instead, we need to go back and break free from unhealthy and destructive patterns.
 - E. Dividing our lives into "secular" and "sacred" components
 - a. Christians lived divided lives, keeping that which is sacred and secular a part
 - b. It appears evangelicals are not living much different from non-believers
 - F. Doing for God instead of being with God
 - a. Doing lots of work for God means you are very spiritual
 - b. We are central to the success of God's work
 - G. Spiritualizing away conflict
 - a. It is better to appear harmonious than to reveal a conflict
 - b. Make promises we never intent to fulfill
 - H. Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure
 - a. All the "great" characters in the Bible exposed their flaws
 - b. We are all sinners who live in a sin-broken world
 - I. Living without limits
 - a. We tend to believe we should never say "no"
 - b. We always feel we need to do more
 - J. Judging other people's spiritual journey
 - a. We feel guilty if we fail to correct a brother/sister-in-Christ
 - b. We often turn our differences into moral superiority of virtues

5. Pete declares (p70) that our journey of genuine transformation to emotionally healthy spirituality begins with a commitment to allow ourselves to feel. Do you live out such a commitment in your life?
6. Pete also tells us we need to walk through a wall. In which stage are you in the following chart?
 - A. Stage One: Life-changing awareness of God
 - B. Stage Two: Discipleship (Learning)
 - C. Stage Three: The Active Life (Serving)
 - D. The Wall (not daily trials...walls = David fleeing Saul for 13 yrs, Abraham waiting 25 yrs for Isaac, Job losing children, health & possessions in one day)
 - E. Stage Four: Journey Inward
 - F. Stage Five: Journey Outward (from my inner life)
 - G. Stage Six: Transformed into Love

Today's discussion will focus on how we, as leaders, can commit ourselves and the sheep under our authority, to becoming healthier emotionally.

A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON SELF-AWARENESS

Pete's two components for emotionally healthy spirituality: (1) The Daily Office and (2) Sabbath-Keeping.

Central Elements of the Daily Office (note: each person's office is unique)

1. Stopping
 - a. Three, four, five times day (can skip a session)
 - b. What is more important than the number of offices each is that our time be unhurried
2. Centering
 - a. Be still
 - b. Focus on God
3. Silence and Solitude
 - a. Quieting every inner and outer voice to attend to God
 - b. These are the most challenging and least practiced disciplines
4. Scripture
 - a. The Psalms are the foundation of any Daily Office
 - b. If it helps, do it. If not, don't...including Daily Office

Sabbath-Keeping involves four principles

1. Stopping/Ceasing from "everything"
 - a. Most of us have difficulty stopping in the middle of something
 - b. We need to embrace our limits
2. Rest
 - a. On that day, do what you enjoy
 - b. Another day needs to be set aside to do our weekly chores and life necessities
3. Delight
 - a. Slow down and delight in what is around you
 - b. Enjoy people
4. Contemplate
 - a. Contemplate God
 - b. Ponder the love of God