

EHS COURSE - CLOSING SUMMARIES
(For the DVD)
Weeks 1 – 8
July 2017

Week 1 - The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality

As we close this session, God's invitation can be summed up in 3 points:

1. Begin the Journey of discipleship with Jesus that integrates an emotionally healthy spirituality

Again we will be looking at 8 themes in this course. Today we began with The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality. Remember: This is about discipleship, becoming deeply changed by Jesus so we can deeply change the world.

2. Slow Down for God

That we have enough of a life with Jesus, being with Jesus to sustain our active life for Him. Saul lacked that as we saw in this powerful story. *God says to him –*

Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices

As much as in obeying the Lord?

To obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed is better than the fat of rams. v.22

Most important is the phrase *To heed* which means *to listen*.

Now pull out your EHS DAY BY DAY. (Show book.)

This coming week, we want to invite you to begin to meet with Jesus 2x a day. We want to ask you to start developing a rhythm to be with Jesus through these Offices in the *Day by Day* book.

--Look at the Table of Contents. You'll notice each chapter corresponds with each of our 8 Sessions.

This is the core of the EHS Course - growing in your personal relationship with Jesus.... 2 min of stillness and silence to receive His love, surrender your will to His will and to open yourself to hear God speak. We have found that this will be, for most of you, the most challenging, difficult part of this EHS Course.

Hang in there. Stay with it. God wants to meet you here.

3. Allow Jesus Access to Your Own Iceberg (with the Iceberg Graphic)

- On the surface Saul looks like he is serving God – praying, listening to prophetic words, going to church, doing some of God's will.
- Underneath, he wants/needs approval (so deep even in repenting v.30 he is concerned that he would be honored/like by the other leaders or elders of his people.)
- Also, Saul is unaware of his own fears (v.24 "I was afraid of the people")
- Jealous. Doesn't want others to be more popular than him.



- Ch.18-20 – filled with details of 6 attempts at murdering David.
- Reality is he is shallow and unaware of his interior life, not really paying attention to God

We live one appearance above surface but another whole reality underneath

- You can't be in touch with God if not in touch with yourself.

Let me summarize this session:

The problem of emotionally unhealthy spirituality –something as common today as it was for Saul.

It is easy to be going to church, religiously active, even serving and giving and **not cultivating our Personal Relationship with God.**

We see this in Saul. For example, we never see Saul writing songs/poetry/music like David He is Unaware. He can't see that he IS NOT LISTENING.

Not asking “How does it apply to me?” “What is God saying to me?”

Saul has a HEAD knowledge of God, just not a HEART, INNER knowledge.

Our prayer is you will slow down the next 8 weeks to deepen your firsthand relationship w/ Jesus.

Another major learning from this session on Saul is that it is easy to be growing in Bible knowledge, and learning things about God but not necessarily growing into becoming a more loving, humble, approachable, teachable person.

Saul also did not recognize that emotional maturity and spiritual maturity are inseparable. That growing into humble, teachable, loving, broken people who love well is the heart of Christian life. We learn that clearly from the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 13 where he says it doesn't matter how gifted, smart, knowledgeable or committed you are – if you are not a loving person, you are immature.

God wants to take the Saul out of us – that tendency to pretend, live shallow lives, skim on our relationship with Jesus, go through religious motions, follow God for ourselves or on our own terms.

God wants to make you a David – a man/woman after God's own heart. (This is next week's theme). He knows himself and is comfortable in his own skin

- David was emotionally very self-aware (suicidal, depressed, angry, joyful, dancing, repentant). He is very much alive emotionally, bringing it all to God. He writes 2/3 of the Psalms.
- David was also passionate for God. He hungers and thirsts for God. Spends time in silence and solitude. Seeks him with all his heart.

Our goal here -that you would be emotionally alive before God and passionate for God like David. God had a destiny, a plan for David's life.

So my prayer for you is that, unlike Saul, you will surrender you will to God's will, and that during this EHS Course, you will increasingly open yourself up to the Holy Spirit to anoint and empower you to become the person that God intends you to become and that you will do what God is asking you to do.



So this coming week, you'll want to read chapter 2 of *The Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Book - Know Yourself that You May Know God* – and then dig into this first week of *The EHS Day by Day* daily office devotional

I'm excited for what God will do in and through you week during the Course.

Blessings upon you and your group on this journey.

Week 2 - Know Yourself that You May Know God

As one of your final questions in this week's study noted, "Many of us are so unaccustomed to distinguishing our true self from our false self that it may seem difficult to know where to begin." For this reason, the life of David is such a gift to us.

- David had to cut through 3 obstacles to be his authentic self in God in this study. So must we.
 1. His Family (vs. 28-31)
 - a. He is the youngest of 8 boys. Eliab oldest, probably 10-15 yrs. older. So great deal of authority with him. 3 oldest brothers in army.
 - b. No support from father, 7 older brothers (mother absent), unsupportive family. Judges him – conceited, wicked – receiving very intense anger!!! Misunderstood, slandered. He was ignored, disregarded, put down
 - c. The message: "You're a nobody. Evil. Useless. Go home." Our families, even the best of them, often add to these layers of false self that smother our true selves.
 - d. We grow up in families and cultures where certain true parts of ourselves are not "acceptable." They are cut off, surrendered and hidden.
 - e. Some of you were born and nobody noticed. GOD did.
 2. Significant Others w/ Authority and Experience (Saul) vs. 32-33
 - a. Saul had led an army of 330,000 men (1 Sam.11:6-8). Famous. Experienced. He says: "You are not able to do it... you are only a boy."
 - b. I would be overwhelmed. I would say: "*You are right. I can't. What should we do?*"
 - c. Whole army is frightened, in the trenches, not living by faith
 - d. He was expected to wear Saul's armor. That is the way everyone fights war – lives life. Saul tried to give him his armor and weapons (who wouldn't want them). He tries walking around in it. David realizes "*I cannot go in these*"
 - e. Summary - Everyone giving him advice.
 3. Goliath (vv.41-43):
 - a. Curses of Goliath – "You will die." Despised. Threatened with consequences!
 - b. If you try to change –come out, be your authentic self—YOU WILL DIE. DISASTER!!!
 - c. Goliath is utterly sure of himself. God is irrelevant to him

David – as young man!! Knows Himself and God – POWERFUL COMBINATION

- He cuts through the obstacles and is his authentic self in the Living God.

Read vv.39-40 as he takes off Saul's armor, goes out with his 5 stones/slingshot. His guidance comes from inside (not external authority). God's Holy Spirit is inside of our unique person as well.

- The time between taking off Saul's armor – he is pondering. "God didn't make me this way. How am I going to do this that fits me???" *Note: God gave us the gift of common sense. It is common sense not to fight Goliath if David had to use a sword. To go up vs. physical strength would have been fatal! It is an even match because he has sling shot skills. v.45*
- David gets counsel – goes against it. They do not see what David sees –THE LIVING GOD!
- This was not only a SIZE war but a differentiation issue.
- David has strengths that he is bringing to the battle. He knows what they are.
- He is looking at GOD **and** looking at Himself.

PP 1 Sam17:45-47 *David says to Goliath, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head....and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”*

David is true to himself and to God.

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he Result – Whole nation is richly blessed, victorious. GOD IS GLORIFIED

- Be yourself “that the world might know!!”
- YET HAS A MASSIVE RESOURCE BEYOND HIS OWN POWER THAT OPERATES FOR HIM – the powerful living God of Israel
- SO DO WE! YOU! God’s invitation for you today! Because when we are not true to ourselves, we are not true to God.

You are unrepeatable!!! We have only one you. Gift to the world. (David 17-18, Moses 80, Abraham 75, Daniel teenager, Disciples 20’s)

So this coming Week – before your next meeting – Read the next chapter – Chapter 3 in the *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* book called *Going Back to go Forward*. You will see how this builds on what we have done in this Session.

And I want to encourage you to meet with God each day – Daily Office – through the *EHS Day by Day* – Week 2 – that will reinforce this week’s theme.

Week 3 - Going Back to Go Forward

There are at least 3 primary practical applications from this study:

1. PP Recognize the Iceberg in You from Your Family

- a. Easy for us to hate or ignore our past as we get older.
- b. The effect on you from your family is much deeper/more profound than you realize. You/I are coming out of Egypt after 400 years of slavery. Again, as we like to say: Jesus is in our hearts but Grandpa is in our bones.
- c. God gives them The 10 Commandments to learn. They needed the desert for 40 years as it took great deal to get past out of them.
- d. Look at patterns in Joseph's family. Your family has patterns too.
- e. This is not about digging up dirt/trashing our parents (In 99% of the cases they did the best could with what they had) but raising our awareness of negative patterns of our family so we live freely the way God intends. WE CHOOSE.

2. PP Discern the good God intends "in, through and, in spite of," your family and past

How does Joseph get to 50:20-- *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.?*

How does he go forward? The answer very simple is that He sees God—that God intended (planned) it for good.

This is the entire lesson of this story and the book of Genesis.

- a. At one level is the struggle of an individual and family with great problems. But the purposes of God are at work – in hidden and mysterious ways. God is working out His purpose THROUGH and IN SPITE OF Joseph's brothers and the traumas he experiences.
- b. The brothers are unaware and can't see the ways of God. They are in fear and anxiety about their family story. They could not see another plan was hidden and working – God's.
- c. Joseph is a realist – laments, yet He is certain of God! He knows:
PP *"You planned it for evil. God planned it for good."*
PP Jer. 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."*
PP Rom.8:28 *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* God's plan works through everything!!
PP Prov.19:21 *"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."*
- d. The evil plans of humans do not defeat God's story. Instead they unwittingly become ways God's plan is furthered. E.g. Satanic evil at cross is our crucified God – our salvation!
- e. Out of suffering/death – comes life - In so many ways the story of Joseph is the gospel!
- f. God is about bringing good to you!!
- g. God's sovereignty and blessings can be found in what appears to be the most horrific crimes and disastrous circumstances. (Doesn't mean God approves of it. It is simply testimony of His ability to bring good of evil. God did not approve what Joseph's brothers did. They are responsible.)

- h. God did not need their betrayal to get His plan done and get Joseph/Jacob's family to Egypt, but in some way God was going get Joseph to a place where he would be a blessing! We can trust God is doing the same thing with you and me.

3. PP Make the Decision to do the Hard Work of Discipleship

- a. This is not easy. Quick. Many, large elements to it.
- b. Joseph is faithful to God as a slave, prisoner, #2 employee – regardless circumstances. Joseph engages his family when God opens door. He did not deny harm done thru them.
- c. He grieves the loss involved and the other themes we will touch in our series (not sweeping it under rug – not denial, suppressing, medicating).
- d. You can choose to not go this route! But God has placed you here for a purpose – to bless you and that you be blessing to others.
- e. I love the phrase: “The invisibility of God in human affairs.” This is your whole life to this point!!
- f. God can create a real newness – a GENESIS. He is for life!!! We are to wonder/awe at this! Can't analyze it!
- g. Joseph (like David) has such an experience of God. Joseph becomes a blessing to the nations. Breaks free!!! Incredible. So can you.

There are treasures in darkness. As Philip Brooks, a 19th century American preacher said: “God will waste nothing.” When we join God, when we abide/stick with/remain with Him, we find that some of our best material is found in the failures, yes, even the sins, of our past.

So let me invite you again this week to dig into the Daily Office.- EHS Day By Day. You'll be in week 3 that will have devotional readings around the Scripture/silence that correspond to this week's study. And you will want to read the next chapter in the *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Book* – Journey through the Wall.

If you have time this week you may want to take

PP THE EHS PERSONAL ASSESSMENT: Are You an Emotional Infant, Child, Teen, or Adult
www.emotionallyhealthy.org

And my prayer for you is that you may be like Joseph – staying with Jesus through the good time and the bad – allowing Him to take all the broken parts of your history that your life might be a gift for all those around you.

Week 4 – Journey Through the Wall

I would like to begin my closing summary by reading 2 paragraphs from this chapter in *The EHS book* under the final section called “Characteristics of Life on the Other Side”.

“It can be difficult to discern precisely when we began the journey through the Wall and when we might be on the other side. I know many people who have been through great sufferings and hit formidable Walls. Yet the Walls did not change them. They only bounced off them. They returned to a similar, but different Wall later. Again they bounced off it, often more bitter and angry than before. Ultimately, God is the One who moves us through the Wall. And with that comes mystery. How and when God takes us through is up to him. We make choices to trust God, to wait on God, to obey God, to stick with God, to remain faithful when everything in us wants to quit and run. But it is his slow, deep work of transformation in us, not ours.”

Abraham journeys well at his Wall. And in doing so, he is a great model for us.

This is not his first wall ---

His first wall -In Gen. 12, we see him at his first wall, leaving all he has known- country, his people, and his father’s household to an unknown place.

His second wall - Gen. 13. Tension with Lot, his nephew, as their herdman are fighting and there is not room for both of them, having to split from him.

His third wall – the infertility of Sarah, his wife (unable to have children) - after God promised He would be a father of nations. This wall goes on for 25 years!

His fourth wall - Marital tension with child born out of wedlock (Gen. 18) and having to send Ishmael away – the son he loves.

Gen. 22 is at least his 5th wall - with the sacrifice of Isaac!

He has been promised by God The Promised Land and children/descendants like stars and to be a universal blessing to the world. Yet Abraham has only 1 son and lives in tent. He is perhaps 110-113 yrs. old!! God seems to be asking him to do something that would cause God’s will not to happen! It doesn’t make sense. I would ask: “HAVEN’T I BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH?”

PP Primary Issue of the Wall – My Will vs. God’s Will

- **Abraham does not argue, delay, or resist! He is not angry, bitter, disappointed, or not shrink back.
- He is asked to let go of something he is clinging to – holding him back from greater intimacy with God – “your son, your only son.”
- God loves you enough to strip you of that which keeps you from Him – Some not bad in themselves. They only they keep us from God!
- What we think is best for us is really the worst. What we think is really the worst is actually the best!
- This chapter introduces us to a powerful biblical truth that was written about so beautifully in a 16th century classic called: *The Dark Night of the Soul* - John of Cross. The main point – Dark Nights (or Walls as I am calling it here in this Session) are the ordinary way we grow in Christ and our wires/affections/DNA reworked

- Preparing you for a higher degree of love for Him, to be able to commune with God more abundantly, so you can walk on your own 2 feet.
- Purging your palate, your taste buds so it may feel/taste love of God
- Stripping making us into new men and women we are really meant to be! e.g. Consider: David, Abraham, Joseph.
- God is not simply correcting/restraining your flesh, but purging you of what is deeply rooted and keeping him from you.

This is not about us only externally changing through sheer force of our wills. This is God pulling out of us deep self-will, need for control and replacing it with the life of Jesus. For this reason it is often called the dark night of loving/purifying fire.

Actually to be tested by God is a compliment and a privilege. Abraham is called the father of us all in Romans 4. In other words, his journey of faith is similar to what we will all go thru in following Jesus. There are times we don't know where God is, what He is doing, where He is going and how we are going to get there!

PP Our Work at the Wall -persevere in patience and stick with Jesus when everything inside us wants to quit. Keep still, be quiet and listen for His voice. GOD IS INVADING YOU! EMPTYING YOU TO FILL YOU. Persevere in spiritual exercises when there is no pleasure.

Why? There are rich treasures in the WALL. You will not recognize yourself on the other side. You become the extraordinary human being God intends.

We end up in places we never dreamed of --with people, that we never imagined!

God has an incredible future for you – that you too would be a blessing like Abraham... the way He is going to get you there is transform you through Walls He will send/allow.

There is also revelation of God that can only come through Walls and sufferings. Abraham learns out of this wall that God is *Jehovah Jirah*. v. 14 “*The Lord who provides.*” Maybe he knew it before but now he **really** knows it knows. So there are truths about God's love, faithfulness, goodness that can only be known deeply through dark nights.

Note: John of the Cross notes there are a few people, very few actually, that are entrusted with great suffering, almost violent that if not for the grace of God, they would not survive. He calls it “the dark night of senses.” But to those whom He has entrusted such suffering, he makes the point that God has profound revelation of Himself and a tremendous calling on their lives. I have seen that to be true over the years as well.

So this session is about letting go and trusting God – even when we can't see how it will work out.

Hebrews 11 tells us “Abraham by faith, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice... because he reasoned God could even raise the dead” (v.17). It seemed impossible. It was unheard of at that time. But He knew God was good and God would fulfill His promises for him. So he let go of control of trying to run the future and trusted God. May you and I – by the Holy Spirit's power --do the same

So let me invite you again this week to Stay with Jesus – At least during this course we are asking you to use *EHS Day by Day* (God is forming/shaping you for a life with Him) And read the next chapter that will prepare you for next week – Enlarge your Soul Thru Grief and Loss.

Let's fix our eyes on Jesus that we too might know say like David: “*I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life... Ps. 63*”

Week 5 - Enlarge Your Soul through Grief and Loss

Let me begin by reading the first few paragraphs of this chapter on Grief and Loss:

“There is no greater disaster in the spiritual life than to be immersed in unreality. In fact the true spiritual life is not an escape from reality but an absolute commitment to it. Loss marks the place where self-knowledge and powerful transformation happen—if we have the courage to participate fully in the process. Loss and grief, however, cannot be separated from the issue of our limits as human beings.

Limits are behind all loss. We cannot do or be anything we want. God has placed enormous limits around even the most gifted of us. Why? To keep us grounded, to keep us humble. In fact, the very meaning of the word *humility* has its root in the Latin *humus*, meaning “of the earth.”

Our culture routinely interprets losses as alien invasions that interrupt our “normal” lives. We numb our pain through denial, blaming, rationalizations, addictions, and avoidance. We search for spiritual shortcuts around our wounds. We demand others take away our pain.

Yet we all face many deaths within our lives. The choice is whether these deaths will be terminal (crushing our spirit and life) or open us up to new possibilities and depths of transformation in Christ.”

Losses/grief comes into all our lives – deaths, divorces, breakups, illnesses, crushing disappointments, abuse, dreams dashed, relationships broken never to be restored, failures, our children, our parents, doors/opportunities close, painful memories of decisions we’ve made and people we have hurt.
This is a foundational, critical discipleship.

Issue to grow into spiritual maturity. It leads to a wholeness, a richness, a depth way we never dreamed. In fact, as Henri Nouwen has written -- the degree to which we grieve our losses well is the degree to which we are compassionate people.

- Every family, culture, race has their way of dealing with loss and grief. The challenge – to do so biblically.
- For this reason, two thirds of Psalms are Laments- feelings/expressions of sorrow.
- The 2nd Beatitude is “Blessed are those who mourn,” most of book Job a struggle with grief. And we have a whole book in the Bible called LAMENTATIONS.

We learn a great deal from Jesus as he deals with His grief and loss.

Jesus wanted out.

- The deep horror - Can I fulfill your plan by some other way?
“*If it is possible*” – so much for healthily, wealthy, prosperity, victory, that it is always possible to have bad things removed!

In a very real sense, Jesus does not get His miracle. The Father says ‘no’ (if means getting what we want or look way we think). We don’t always get our miracles either! We are not God.

To enlarge our souls thru loss, we must listen to interruptions that God sends our way, or allows in our lives. In fact, once we begin to look for God in our losses, we actually stop calling them *interruptions*. They become gifts. We begin to see gems, hidden treasures in the trash, the unlovely, in that which sometimes smells bad!

Here are few gifts, or treasures, found in the pain of grief and loss – if we will hang with God and do grief and loss God’s way and not our cultures.

1. Grief and Loss Breaks our Self- Will

PP Although He was a son, he learned obedience from what He suffered Heb. 5:7

- Jesus – fully God and fully human. God in the flesh. His flesh was not imaginary. Jesus submitted to the will of God by conforming His human will to God’s will.
- He struggles in this passage and would like out. Jesus told the Father about his present want/desire. He did not pretend! But He is able to say “But the main thing I want is NOT what I want, but what you want!
- SEE HIM STRUGGLING -- 3x prays the same thing
- He did not just automatically DO obedience. He learned it. We learn from Jesus a very important lesson that -- *A struggled, learned, prayed for obedience is the true obedience.*

2. PP Grief and loss teach us to let go.

THERE IS A LINE WE DO NOT CROSS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE THAT BELONGS TO GOD ALONE. IT IS MYSTERY. We bow before the mystery of suffering, death and loss. GOD IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER. WE DON’T UNDERSTAND IT ALL. You can’t fix or save anyone else. Be present (going thru your Walls/losses will help you be quiet!)

3. PP Grief and loss empty our hearts, creating space for God to fill.

- In emptying, we create a holy vacancy for God, allowing Him to fill our lives in new ways.
- Loss creates space for the love of God to come in. That is why I like the phrase “enlarging our soul”. If we pay attention to God in our losses, something profound happens internally. Junk gets removed that creates space for God to fill with His presence, His treasures, truths, etc.

We are not the same people when it is over.

4. PP Grief and loss teach us about prayer - the very core of the Christian life.

- Jesus shows us– a prayer life is indispensable to grieving well, that life really is about dependence and limits.
- ***JESUS PRAYS -- if He needed to....so much more you! how much more do I need a life of prayer.
- You see Prayer is about abiding, being with God, communion, relationship.

This is the path to the new- to resurrection – to many seeds. MYSTERY

***Remember: There is always resurrection through death.

PP It is true – I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Jn. 12:24

God’s invitation – We are invited to persevere-- like Job, David, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jeremiah, Jesus

- Let your stony heart be broken so the love of Jesus can enter.
- Let God use your pain to teach you so you will become a gift to others.
- Let transformation comes – surrendering to God’s unique way of bringing that to you and me.

So this week, you will want to stick with the Daily Office- regardless of how you are feeling- opening up your will to God’s will, receiving His love, listening to His voice. Again, the devotions will correspond to the theme of this session. And you will want to read the next chapter in the *EHS Book- Discover the Rhythms of the Daily Office and Sabbath.*

So I BLESS YOU ON THIS CHALLENGING JOURNEY OF EMBRACING ENDINGS.. that you may discover the great truth that as we do so, our God always – in His time- has new beginnings that await us.

Week 6 - Discover the Rhythms of the Daily Office and Sabbath

The key word in this session is the word RHYTHM – that God has created us for rhythm in our 24/7 world. You and I were wired for it – in our days and a rhythm in our weeks.

For the entire EHS Course, we have been working on developing a rhythm in our days through stopping 2x each day to be with Jesus so that we might practice His presence/remember him all through the day. Each week we've encouraged you to engage the *EHS Day by Day Daily Office book* to get you started.

We spent most of this session looking at developing a weekly rhythm of Sabbath – i.e.

PP Sabbath: a 24 hour period each week to STOP, REST, DELIGHT, CONTEMPLATE God.

Rather than see it as something burdensome or irrelevant, our goal has been to recapture the gift of Sabbath as Jesus taught: *“The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27)*. In other words- Sabbath is a gift to receive.

The Israelites didn't learn to practice Sabbath overnight. It took them a lot of time as well as trial and error. So it will be for us. And let's face it- the notion of Sabbath rhythm in our culture is very radical and countercultural. This will take time for each of us to figure out. So give yourself lots of grace as you take your first steps around building a 24- hour Sabbath that fits you.

In your workbooks at the end of this session, you will see a number of FAQ's –i.e. frequently asked questions. I imagine that a few of these – and others – emerged in your group.

Why do I need to keep Sabbath for a whole 24-hour period each week? Yes that is biblical. But you may need to start with 12 hours.

How do I go about deciding what specific activities are acceptable and unacceptable on the Sabbath? You'll have to think of activities that create delight and rest for you. That will be different than mine- e.g. I love reading, music, nature, beach, hiking. Working around the house, or Cooking- not on my Delight list –but it may be on yours.

Do you I have to take my Sabbath on a particular day of the week? The important principle is not necessarily to take one specific day as Sabbath. Paul says in Romans 14:5-6 that every day is alike. We're encouraging people to take Sat night to Sun night or all day Sunday because in today's culture. Why? Worship/church is built in as the center. For me- for example, it is Friday nite at 6 pm to Saturday nite at 6 pm since Sunday is a work day for me. Others work in occupations such as law-enforcement, doctors and nurses, etc. that require work on Sundays.

Do I need a day-off and a Sabbath? You will need at least a half –day, or several hours, to prepare for Sabbath. Part of the Sabbath experience is the preparation time.

Do I spend the Sabbath alone or with other people? What do I do about my tendency to perfectionism? How do I cease from the work of parenting? (No change the diaper!) What do I do about my children who aren't interested in Sabbath? The important thing to remember is that this is not a day of don't do!. Sabbath is to be a delight. Rather than simply taking things away, think about things you can add (e.g. special desserts, a movie, a creative family activity – depending on the ages of your children).

-- There are many other practical questions: **Do I have to do Sabbath with my spouse?** NO. We do most of the time. **Can I delight in earthly things?** Yes. That is the point. But to see God as the creator and gift giver to you. The list goes on.

Let me close with a biblical insight that might help you, as it has helped me, why this issue of practicing Sabbath is both so powerful and so difficult to do. It has to do with that fact that, as

theologian Walter Brueggeman has written, we practice Sabbath, we resist principalities and powers (Eph. 6:12). When Moses gives the Sabbath command in

PP Deut. 5:12-15 *Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. . . . Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.*

The key phrase in this command is: *Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there.* As slaves in Egypt for over 400 years, the Israelites worked seven days a week, 365 days a year. Their parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and great-great grandparents existed for only one reason — to work. They never stopped. They never rested. They never delighted.

In ancient times, Pharaoh was considered a god and worshiped as such. Behind his demonic rule were principalities and powers that enslaved God’s people, defining their very existence as nonpersons whose only purpose was to work and produce. When Pharaoh’s oppression over God’s people had been broken, they were given a new identity. Their worth and value is no longer based on what *they do*; it is based on *who they are* — sons and daughters upon whom the living God has set his love and grace.

Sadly, many of us remain under a harsh taskmaster, a “Pharaoh” who now lives inside our heads, telling us we can’t stop or rest. The culture tells us our only value is in what we achieve or produce, that we are losers unless we accomplish more — whatever it may cost us. We are doing well only if we are being productive. We compare ourselves to others who seem to produce more bricks more quickly, and we wonder, *What’s my problem?*

In offering us the gift of Sabbath, God invites us to resist the principalities and powers and side with him. Through this weekly practice, we defy every influence that defines us either by our role, or our work. We publicly proclaim to the world that we are not slaves, but free men and women purchased by the blood of Jesus.

To this day, the Jewish people consider Sabbath keeping a central feature of their identity as God’s chosen people. And it’s remarkable to see how Sabbath still functions as a form of resistance. I especially love the example of B&H Photo.

Located on 9th Avenue in New York City, B&H Photo is the largest non-chain photo and video equipment store in the United States and the second largest in the world. The owners, along with many of their employees, are Hasidic Jews who dress just as their eighteenth-century ancestors did in Eastern Europe. On any given day, 8,000 to 9,000 people pass through the front door. Yet 70 percent of their business is online, serviced by a 200,000-square-foot warehouse located nearby in Brooklyn.

Even in a competitive marketplace, B&H won’t conduct business on the Sabbath. They close their doors at 1 p.m. on Fridays and keep them closed all day Saturday, the biggest shopping day of the week. During Sabbath, customers can peruse the B&H website, but they can’t make an online order.

When a newspaper asked the B&H director of communications how they could close not just the retail store but also the website on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving and the busiest shopping day of the year. The director simply replied, “We respond to a higher authority.”¹⁷

Sabbath observance can be rich and beautiful, but we have to be willing to create the protective container — the boundaries — that make it possible. In order to enter into it, we have to develop some concrete guidelines that distinguish Sabbath from business as usual the other six days of the week. So use the principles of **PP STOP, REST, DELIGHT, CONTEMPLATE** (see invisible God in visible creation). For some, this may include turning off all social media, phones, and computers. For others, it may be a zero tolerance for any talk about work. Perhaps the Sabbath might start and end with a meal, the lighting of a candle, or a prayer. The key is to take the four principles of Sabbath and build a protective container that fits your temperament, personality, life situation.



Jesus is our Sabbath rest and we are headed for an eternal Sabbath with Him in heaven. In that day, we will STOP all our earthly work, REST from all that work, DELIGHT in His glory and CONTEMPLATE Him fully when we see Him face to face. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said it best: *Unless one learns how to relish the taste of Sabbath while still in this world, unless one is initiated in the appreciation of eternal life, one will be unable to enjoy the taste of eternity in the world to come.* ⁴

May you taste heaven and you embark on this wonderful, liberating journey of discovering the rhythm of practicing Sabbath

Week 7 - Grow into an Emotionally Mature Adult

Let me begin our wrap up with a contrast. The religious leaders of Jesus' day, the church leaders of his time, were diligent, zealous and totally committed to God. They memorized whole books of the Bible. They gave more than 10% of their income. They prayed 5x a day. They evangelized. Yet they were emotionally immature. Unlike Jesus, they did not delight in people. They weren't approachable, safe, warm, kind and loving. They didn't link growing in their ability to love God with growing in their ability to love people. Is it any wonder they criticized Jesus repeatedly for being "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Matt. 11:19). He delighted in people and life too much.

How do I follow the example of the Good Samaritan who showed such beautiful compassion on the beaten man on the side of the road and at the same time set limits so I am a loving person for the long haul? That takes skills and learning.

Let me close our time with 2 applications for us:

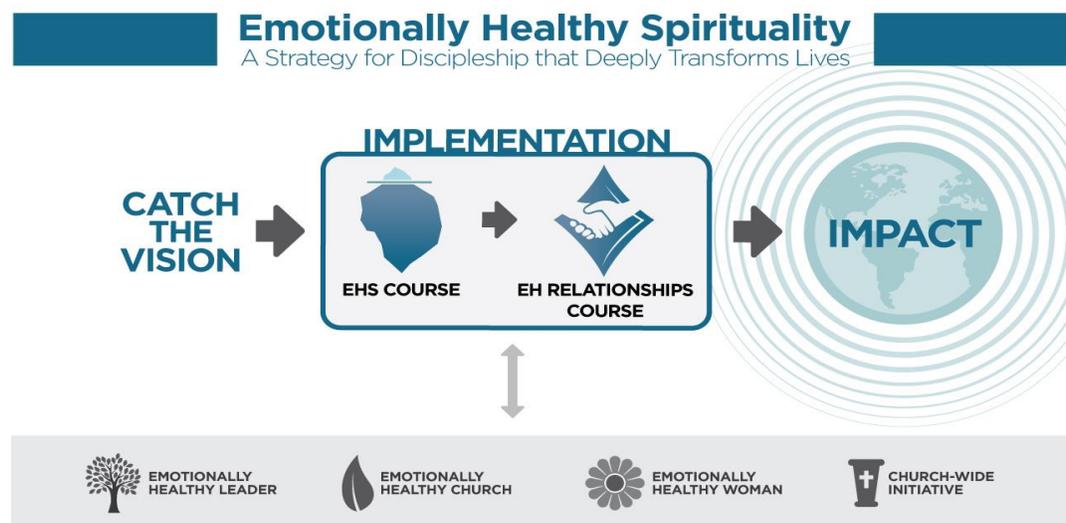
1. PP Become Aware of How Your Family of Origin did Emotional Connection.

- Did you learn to trust?
- Did you learn to respect others?
- Did you learn to wait and to take turns?
- Did you learn to speak clearly, respectfully honestly and in a timely way?
- Were your feelings allowed?
- Did you learn to listen well?
- What did you learn about processing your anger?
- What did you learn about clean fighting and negotiating differences?

Becoming a Christian does not automatically make us into an emotionally mature adult who loves well. Is this important? Paul reminds in 1 Cor. 13 – if we don't have love, we don't have anything.

We must go back to go forward. Thankfully, because of Jesus inside of us, we have enormous power by the Holy Spirit to change! We can learn to do things different than the imprints on us from our family of origins and our pasts. But this is an issue of getting equipped.

PP 2. Take Practical Steps of Discipleship to Grow into an Emotionally Mature Adult



There are 2 foundational courses in emotionally healthy spirituality introduce people to a serious, transformative discipleship with Jesus. The first Course – The EHS Course, which is what you are in now, emphasizes the interior life and developing our 1st hand relationship with Jesus. The 2nd course is called *The Emotionally Healthy Relationships Course*. This deals with 8 skills – developed over a 18 year period- that teach us how to love well in the new family of Jesus. We did one of those skills today called “Clarify Expectations.”

NOTE: I would consider if you could keep the graphic up while I am speaking up to this point.

We saw how easily we can make assumptions about what someone should do without checking it out. And as we said, for an expectation to be valid, it must be conscious, realistic, spoken, and agreed upon. The Emotionally Healthy Relationships Course teaches 8 tools or skills to grown into emotionally mature adults who love well in the new family of Jesus. They are:

PP (list the 8 1 by 1)

- The Community Temperature Reading
- Stop Mind Reading
- Clarify Expectations
- Genogram Your Family
- Explore the Iceberg
- Incarnational Listening
- Climb the Ladder of Integrity
- Clean Fighting

Don't underestimate what is involved in doing these skills. You are breaking generations of unhealthy ways of relating that go back in your family and culture -- perhaps 100's of years! That is no small thing. These skills don't just become part of you overnight. Give yourself time and grace. Remember, Israel coming out of Egypt took 400 years. (This is the same principle we learned last week of how challenging it is to slow down and develop rhythms for Sabbath).

Always remember that even though you change, it doesn't mean those around you have. So I like to remind myself of a famous story about a Hasidic rabbi on his deathbed who said the following: *When I was young, I set out to change the world. When I grew a little older I perceived this was too ambitious so I set out to change my state. This too I realized was too ambitious so I set out to change my town. When I realized I could not even do this, I tried to change my family. Now as an old man I know that I should have started by changing myself. If I had started with myself, maybe then I would have succeeded in changing my family, the town, or even the state – and who knows maybe even the world.*

So let me pray for you as we close – that God will strengthen you, give you grace. Before I do, however, let me encourage you to continue seeking to develop a daily rhythm with *The EHS Day by Day* devotional. You'll want to use Week 7 that reinforces today's theme of *Growing Into an Emotionally Mature Adult*. And read the final chapter in the EHS book as we prepare for our final session together.

May the Lord bless you and keep you as you embark on this new journey. May the Lord make His face shine upon you.... May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you that old destructive patterns deeply embedded inside you be broken up and may God rebuild you and set you free – so that you don't only practice the presence of God but practice the presence of people. In Jesus' name! AMEN.

Week 8 - Go the Next Step to Develop a Rule of Life

[Catherine the Great](#) (1729-1796), Russia's great empress, had a Field Marshall named Grigori Potemkin who organized a tour of southern Russia for her. The tour was planned over 4 years and covered a distance of 1,000 miles. To impress the Empress, Potemkin created fake villages where "happy" peasants were transported back and forth. All along the way Catherine gazed out on seemingly happy subjects lining the streets. Thus, the term **PP Potemkin village** entered our vocabulary to refer to "an impressive facade, or show, created to hide an undesirable fact or condition."

In the same way, it is easy and tempting to have a spirituality that looks good on the outside without very much beneath or behind it. We can believe, attend church, even read our Bibles, sing in worship, and live respectable lives. And then we become so caught up in the culture and the busyness around us, that we end up like a Potemkin Village. We don't have the time to open up our interior lives to Jesus so He can change us, nor to develop our own 1st hand relationship with Jesus.

The EHS Course was developed over many years to address the crisis of discipleship in the church today. Our intention has been to introduce you to a deep, beneath the surface spirituality that hopefully will serve as a framework for the rest of your discipleship journey. In this 8 Session course, our goal has been to introduce you to 8 critical themes in discipleship that we often ignore in our churches. We began with:

PP (all 8)

- The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality - Saul
- -Know Yourself to Know God- David
- -Going Back to Go Forward - Joseph
- -Journey through the Wall - Abraham
- -Enlarge Your Soul through Grief and Loss - Jesus
- -Discover the Rhythms of the Daily Office and Sabbath - Daniel
- -Grow into an Emotionally Mature Adult – Good Samaritan
- -Go the Next Step to Develop a Rule of Life – Acts 2

In this final session, you hopefully identified one or two practical steps that God is inviting you to take as our Course concludes. However, it is important that we keep perspective on how slowly we learn and change.

Benjamin Bloom, a great educational psychologist, along with a team of thinkers, developed a brilliant way of looking at how people learn. This has been adapted and revised many times over the last 60 years, and it continues to be a standard in many educational systems around the world.³ Bloom distinguishes five levels of knowing, or "getting," a value. We tend to think in one of two ways: I know something or I don't know something. For example, I value caring for the poor or I don't value caring for the poor. What we don't always understand is it takes a long time — and many small incremental steps — to really "get" a new value or truth. In fact, it requires moving through five distinct levels.⁴

Let me illustrate this with my own journey of coming to value slowing down my life to spend more time with Jesus.

PP This graphic "Getting EHS" comes from *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* book page 44

1. **Awareness:** "*Slowing down is an interesting idea.*" I first thought about this in a serious way in 1994 when I was experiencing pain in both my personal life and in my leadership.
2. **Ponder:** "*Help me understand more about slowing down.*" When I started the emotionally



healthy journey in 1996, I read books, listened to messages on slowing down, and preached about it in sermons.

3. **Value:** *“I really believe it is important for everybody to slow down.”* I dabbled in a few new behaviors like Sabbath, solitude, and one-day retreats with God, but my actions and behaviors didn’t fundamentally change --for years.
4. **Prioritize:** *“I am shifting my entire life around as I slow down to be with Jesus.”* When I took my second sabbatical in 2003 – 2004, I reprioritized my time, energy, and schedule in order to integrate this new value for a four-month period. It helped me to kick-start a new way of leading and living out this value. It was life changing.
5. **Own:** *“All my decisions and actions are based on this new value.”* Moving from *prioritizing* to *owning* took me another six to eight years. I had a lot of work to do to integrate this value with the demands and challenges of pastoring New Life. While I still fail at times, slowing down to be with Jesus now informs all I do. My entire body feels it when I, or others around me, violate this value.

You’ll notice that the chart highlights the large gap between levels three and four — *value* and *prioritize*. Why? Because that is the point that requires a radical, often difficult shift. Many people love the ideas and principles of emotionally healthy spirituality. However, moving from *valuing* to *prioritizing* is a very big challenge.

So let me encourage you. The changes you seek – from what you learned in the EHS Course -won’t happen overnight, but they will happen if you persevere in them over time. So take for example, the topic of going back to go forward and how our past impacts our following of Christ. After 20 years, my understanding of this continues to deepen and mature. The same goes for The Wall (Session 4) and how indispensable biblical grief and loss are for becoming mature followers of Christ (Session 5).

Take your time. Entrust yourself to God’s care and ask him to lead you into the next step in your process. Tens of thousands of people around the world are on this journey with you and are experiencing powerful transformation in both their personal lives and their churches.

Stay with it, taking one step at a time. It is an exciting journey. And I promise you - neither you, nor those around you, will ever be the same