Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature

As a leader, if you haven't read, and more importantly, if you haven't interacted personally (and deeply) with the content of

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality:

It's Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature

, consider this your invitation. In this must-read book, author and former pastor Pete Scazzero argues clearly and convincingly that spiritual vitality and emotional maturity are inseparable. Early in its pages, Scazzero makes this stop-you-in-your-tracks statement:

Christian spirituality, without an integration of emotional health, can be deadly—to yourself, your relationship with God, and the people around you

. With ever turn of the page, you will be provided not only with compelling diagnosis, but more importantly with field-tested counsel on what your next steps can be.

For the benefit and blessing of those who look to you for leadership, I urge you to read (and put into play) the life-shaping message of this seminal book. Check out these

Book Notes
to see what lies in store.

Chuck Olson
Founder | Lead With Your Life

Title: Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining

Emotionally Immature

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Book Description:

Peter Scazzero learned the hard way: you can't be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature. Even though he was the pastor of a growing church, he did what most people do–avoid conflict in the name of Christianity; ignore his anger, sadness, and fear; use God to run from God; and live without boundaries.

Eventually God awakened him to a biblical integration of emotional health and the spiritual practice of slowing down and quieting your life for to experience a firsthand relationship with Jesus. It created nothing short of a spiritual revolution in Scazzero, in his church, and now in thousands of other churches.

In this updated edition, Scazzero shares new stories and principles as he outlines his journey and the signs of emotionally unhealthy spirituality. Then he provides seven biblical, reality-tested steps to become emotionally mature:

- Become your authentic self
- Break the power of the past
- Let go of power and control
- Surrender to your limits
- Stop to breathe by practicing rest and Sabbath
- Learn new skills to love well
- Love Christ above all else

Book Quotes:

Christian spirituality, without an integration of emotional health, can be deadly—to yourself, your relationship with God, and the people around you. LOCATION: 232

Very, very few people emerge out of their families of origin emotionally whole or mature. LOCATION: 280

My family is undoubtedly different from yours. But one thing I've learned after thirty years of working closely with families is this: your family, like mine, is also marked by the consequences of the disobedience of our first parents as described in Genesis 3. Shame, secrets, lies, betrayals, relationship breakdowns, disappointments, and unresolved longings for unconditional love lie beneath the veneer of even the most respectable families. LOCATION: 299

When people have authentic spiritual experiences—such as worship, prayer, Bible studies, and fellowship—they mistakenly believe they are doing fine, even if their relational life is fractured and their interior world is disordered. Their apparent "progress" then provides a spiritual reason for not doing the hard work of maturing. LOCATION: 333

In our more honest moments, most of us will admit that, much like an iceberg, we are made up of deep layers that exist well beneath our day-to-day awareness. LOCATION: 338

Contemporary spiritual formation and discipleship models address some of that 90 percent below the surface. The problem is that a large portion (see below the dotted line) remains untouched by Jesus Christ until there is a serious engagement with what I call "emotionally healthy spirituality." LOCATION: 343

Emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable. It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature. LOCATION: 369

Pain has an amazing ability to open us to new truth and to get us moving. LOCATION: 372

God made us as whole people, in his image (Genesis 1:27). That image includes physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and social dimensions. LOCATION: 377

Ignoring any aspect of who we are as men and women made in God's image always results in destructive consequences—in our relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves. LOCATION: 379

When I finally discovered the link between emotional maturity and spiritual maturity, a Copernican revolution began for me and there was no going back. And I don't use the word revolution lightly. The spiritual pathway described in this book is radical. It cuts to the root of everything about our lives, including our entire approach

to following Jesus. LOCATION: 389

In short order, here are the top ten symptoms of emotionally unhealthy spirituality:

- Using God to run from God
- Ignoring anger, sadness, and fear
- Dying to the wrong things
- Denying the impact of the past 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 other people’s spiritual journey LOCATION: 401

In my case, using God to run from God happens when I create a great deal of “God-activity” in order to avoid difficult areas in my life God wants to change. LOCATION: 410

I know I’m in trouble when I …

- Do God’s work to satisfy me, not him
- Do things in God’s name he never asked me to do
- Pray about God doing my will, not about me surrendering to his will
- Demonstrate “Christian behaviors” so significant people think well of me
- Focus on certain theological points out of concern for my fears and unresolved emotional issues rather than out of concern for God’s truth
- Use biblical truth to judge and devalue others
- Exaggerate my accomplishments for God to subtly compete with others
- Make pronouncements like, “The Lord told me I should do this,” when the truth is, “I think the Lord told me to do this”

• Use Scripture to justify the sinful parts of my family relationships, cultural values, and national policies, instead of evaluating them under God's lordship

• Hide behind God talk, deflecting the spotlight from my inner cracks, and become defensive about my failures

• Apply biblical truths selectively to avoid anything that would require making significant life changes
LOCATION: 412

Like most Christians, I was taught that almost all feelings are unreliable and not to be trusted. They go up and down and are the last thing we should be attending to in our spiritual lives. It is true that some Christians live in the extreme of following their feelings in an unhealthy, unbiblical way. It is more common, however, to encounter Christians who do not believe they have permission to admit their feelings or express them openly. LOCATION: 432

To feel is to be human. To minimize or deny what we feel is a distortion of what it means to be image bearers of 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. LOCATION: 437

God never asks us to annihilate the self. We are not to become "non-persons" when we become Christians. The very opposite is true. God intends our deeper, truer self, which he created, to blossom as we follow him. God has endowed each of us with certain essential qualities that reflect and express him in a unique way. In fact, an essential part of the sanctification process—becoming more like Jesus—is allowing the Holy Spirit to strip away the false constructs we have accumulated so our true selves in Christ can emerge. LOCATION: 465

The work of growing in Christ (what theologians call sanctification) does not mean we don't go back to the past as we press ahead to what God has for us. It actually demands we go back in order to break free from unhealthy and destructive patterns that prevent us from loving ourselves and others as God designed. LOCATION: 488

Ron Sider, in his book The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience, summarizes the level of our compartmentalization: "Whether the issue is marriage and sexuality or money and care for the poor, evangelicals today are living scandalously unbiblical lives. … The data suggest that in many crucial areas evangelicals are not living any differently from their unbelieving neighbors."

LOCATION: 507

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 of and from others, and buying into the wrong ideas of success and the mistaken belief that we can't fail. LOCATION: 526

We cannot give what we do not possess. Doing for God in a way that is proportionate to our being with God is the only pathway to a pure heart and seeing God (Matthew 5:8). LOCATION: 531

But perhaps one of the most destructive myths alive in the Christian community today is the belief that smoothing over disagreements or "sweeping them under the rug" is part of what it means to follow Jesus. For this reason, churches, small groups, ministry teams, denominations, and communities continue to experience the pain of unresolved conflicts. LOCATION: 534

Out of a desire to bring true peace, Jesus disrupted the false peace all around him. He refused to spiritualize conflict avoidance. LOCATION: 548

The pressure to present an image of ourselves as strong and spiritually "together" hovers over most of us. We feel guilty for not measuring up, for not making the grade. We forget that not one of us is perfect and that we are all sinners. LOCATION: 550

As Parker Palmer said, "Self-care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch." LOCATION: 584

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 life differently than we do. LOCATION: 607

The pathway to unleashing the transformative power of Jesus to heal our spiritual lives is found in the joining of emotional health and contemplative spirituality. LOCATION: 613

Awareness of yourself and your relationship with God are intricately related. In fact, the challenge to shed our "old false" self in order to live authentically in our "new true" self strikes at the very core of authentic spirituality. LOCATION: 627

There are hundreds of emotions, each with their variations, blends, and hundreds of particular nuances. Researchers have classified them into eight main families: anger (fury, hostility, irritability, annoyance); sadness (grief, self-pity, despair, dejection, loneliness); fear (anxiety, edginess, nervousness, fright, terror, apprehension); enjoyment (joy, relief, contentment, delight, thrill, euphoria, ecstasy); love (acceptance, trust, devotion, adoration); surprise (shock, amazement, wonder); disgust (contempt, scorn, aversion, distaste, revulsion); shame (guilt, remorse, humiliation, embarrassment, chagrin). LOCATION: 687

When we deny our pain, losses, and feelings year after year, we become less and less human. We transform slowly into empty shells with smiley faces painted on them. Sad to say, that is the fruit of much of our discipleship in our churches. But when I began to allow myself to feel a wider range of emotions, including sadness, depression, fear, and anger, a revolution in my spirituality was unleashed. I soon realized that a failure to appreciate the biblical place of feelings within our larger Christian lives has done extensive damage, keeping free people in Christ in slavery. LOCATION: 700

The journey of genuine transformation to emotionally healthy spirituality begins with a commitment to allow yourself to feel. It is an essential part of our humanity and unique personhood as men and women made in God's image. LOCATION: 704

At the very least, the call of discipleship includes experiencing our feelings, reflecting on our feelings, and then thoughtfully responding to our feelings under the lordship of Jesus. LOCATION: 720

The problem is that when we neglect our most intense emotions, we are false to ourselves and close off an open door through which to know God. LOCATION: 740

One of our greatest obstacles in knowing God is our own lack of self-knowledge. So we end up wearing a mask—before God, ourselves, and other people. And we can't become self-aware if we cut off our humanity out of fear of our feelings. This fear leads to unwillingness to know ourselves as we truly are and stunts our growth in Christ. LOCATION: 757

Allow yourself to experience the full weight of your feelings. Allow them without censoring them. Then you can reflect and thoughtfully decide what to do with them. Trust God to come to you through them. This is the first step in the hard work of discipleship. LOCATION: 767

Living and swimming in the river of God's deep love for us in Christ is at the very heart of true spirituality. Soaking in this love enables us to surrender to God's will, especially when it seems so contrary to what we can see, feel, or figure out ourselves. This experiential knowing of God's love and acceptance provides the only sure foundation for loving and accepting our true selves. Only the love of God in Christ is capable of bearing the weight of our true identity. LOCATION: 780

Temptation One: I Am What I Do (Performance)…The devil said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread" (Matthew 4:3). LOCATION: 787

Temptation Two: I Am What I Have (Possessions)…Jesus was taken to see all the magnificence and power of

the earth. The devil basically said to him, “Look around you at what everyone else has. You don’t have anything. How can you think you are somebody? How will you survive? You’re a nobody.” The devil played on profound issues of fear and the source of his security. LOCATION: 802

Temptation Three: I Am What Others Think (Popularity)…Some of us are addicted to what others think. Satan invited Jesus to throw himself down from the highest spot of the temple that people might believe in him. At this point people did not think anything of Jesus. He was, in effect, invisible. How could he think he had worth and value? LOCATION: 818

We remain trapped in living a pretend life out of an unhealthy concern for what other people think. LOCATION: 833

One very helpful way to clarify this process of growing in our faithfulness to our true selves in a new way is through the use of a new term: differentiation. Developed by Murray Bowen, the founder of modern family systems theory, it refers to a person’s capacity to “define his or her own life’s goals and values apart from the pressures of those around them.” The key emphasis of differentiation is on the ability to think clearly and carefully as another means, besides our feelings, of knowing ourselves. LOCATION: 897

I may not agree with you or you with me. Yet I can remain in relationship with you. I don’t have to detach from you, reject you, avoid you, or criticize you to validate myself. I can be myself apart from you. LOCATION: 906

The following are four practical truths that can help us begin the radical transition of living faithful to our true self in Christ.

1. Pay Attention to Your Interior in Silence and Solitude

My journey into emotionally healthy spirituality began very simply. Each day, as part of my devotions with God, I would allow myself to feel emotion before God. Then I would journal. Over time I began to discern patterns and God’s movements in a new way in my life.

2. Find Trusted Companions

The possibility of self-deception is so great that without mature companions we can easily fall into the trap of living in illusions.

3. Move Out of Your Comfort Zone

I truly believe the greatest gift we can give the world is our true self living in loving union with God. In fact, how can we affirm other people's unique identities when we don't affirm our own? Can we really love our neighbors well without loving ourselves?

4. Pray for Courage LOCATION: 951-1030

Emotionally healthy spirituality is about reality, not denial or illusion. LOCATION: 1079

True spirituality frees us to live joyfully in the present. It requires, however, going back in order to go forward. This takes us to the very heart of spirituality and discipleship in the family of God—breaking free from the destructive sinful patterns of our pasts to live the life of love God intends. LOCATION: 1083

Why are so many of us living lives with deeply entrenched parts of us apparently untouched by the power and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ? This entire book, I hope, begins to offer an answer to this challenge. One critical ingredient, however, relates to our need to go back in order to go forward. This can be summed up in two essential biblical truths: The blessings and sins of our families going back two to three generations profoundly impact who we are today. Discipleship requires putting off the sinful patterns of our family of origin and relearning how to do life God's way in God's family. LOCATION: 1104

A common, deadly commandment that prevails inside and outside the church is, "You must achieve to be loved." In other words, we must be competent in the context of competition—in school, sports, recreation, work, neighborhood, church—to feel of worth and value. As a result, many people struggle with an "achievement addiction." It never seems like enough. We consistently feel inferior. Many of us know the experience of being approved for what we do. Few of us know the experience of being loved for being just who we are. LOCATION: 1195

Our history has shaped our current lives profoundly. The cost of ignoring the impact of our past on our present life is costly. LOCATION: 1199

God's desire for us to leave our families is similar to the desire he had for the Israelites to leave Egypt. Although the Israelites did physically leave the land of Egypt, a great deal of Egyptian culture and thinking remained in them. In the same way, we may choose to become Christ followers, but in reality we continue to follow, probably unconsciously, the commandments and rules we internalized in our families of origin. LOCATION: 1200

Looking to the past illumines the present. But make no mistake about it; it is painful. LOCATION: 1216

Because so few people do the hard work of going back in order to go forward, the symptoms of a disconnected spirituality are everywhere. The compartmentalization of our spirituality from the rest of our lives becomes necessary because there is so little integration. LOCATION: 1217

The great news of Christianity is that your family of origin does not determine your future. God does! What has gone before you is not your destiny! The most significant language in the New Testament for becoming a Christian is "adoption into the family of God." It is a radical new beginning. When we place our faith in Christ, we are spiritually reborn by the Holy Spirit into the family of Jesus. We are transferred out of darkness into the kingdom of light. LOCATION: 1242

In God's family, success is defined as being faithful to God's purpose and plan for your life. LOCATION: 1262

Our fear of bringing secrets and sin into the light, however, drives many people to prefer the illusion that if they don't think about it, it somehow goes away. It doesn't. Unhealed wounds open us up to habitual sin against God and others. LOCATION: 1334

God never loses any of our past for his future when we surrender ourselves to him. Every mistake, sin, and detour we take in the journey of life is taken by God and becomes his gift for a future of blessing. LOCATION: 1391

The gravitational pull back to the sinful, destructive patterns of our family of origin and culture is enormous. A few of us live as if we were simply paying for the mistakes of our past. For this reason God has called us to make this journey with companions in the faith. Going back in order to go forward is something we must do in the context of community—with mature friends, a mentor, spiritual director, counselor, or therapist. We need trusted people in our lives of whom we can ask, "How do you experience me? Tell me the feelings and thoughts you have when you are with me. Please be honest with me." Prayerfully listening to their answers will go a long way toward healing and getting a perspective on areas of our lives that need to be addressed. Needless to say, this takes a lot of courage. LOCATION: 1421

Every follower of Jesus at some point will confront the Wall—or, as the ancients called it, "the dark night of the soul." LOCATION: 1440

The image of the Christian life as a journey captures our experience of following Christ like few others. Journeys involve movement, action, stops and starts, detours, delays, and trips into the unknown. LOCATION:

1444

What most don't understand is that growth into maturity in Christ requires going through the Wall. LOCATION: 1457

For most of us the Wall appears through a crisis that turns our world upside down. LOCATION: 1492

Some of us hide behind our faith to flee the pain of our lives rather than trust God to transform us through it. LOCATION: 1515

The problem is that emotionally healthy faith admits the following: I am bewildered. I don't know what God is doing right now. I am hurt. I am angry. Yes, this is mystery. I am very sad right now. O God, why have you forsaken me? LOCATION: 1519

How do we know we are in "the dark night"? Our good feelings of God's presence evaporate. We feel the door of heaven has been shut as we pray. Darkness, helplessness, weariness, a sense of failure or defeat, barrenness, emptiness, dryness descend upon us. The Christian disciplines that have served us up to this time "no longer work." We can't see what God is doing and we see little visible fruit in our lives. LOCATION: 1526

Ultimately God chooses the length and level of intensity. He has a unique purpose for each of us, knowing how much there is to cleanse out of our inner being, and how much he wants to infuse of himself into us for his greater, long-term purposes. LOCATION: 1576

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. LOCATION: 1592

So how do we know we are making progress or if we are, perhaps, even on the other side? The following are at least four dynamics to consider:

1. A Greater Level of Brokenness

Another helpful way to measure your level of brokenness is to consider how "offendable" you are.

Contrast that image with a broken person who is so secure in the love of God that she is unable to be insulted. When criticized, judged, or insulted, she thinks to herself, It is far worse than you think!

2. A Greater Appreciation for Holy Unknowing (Mystery)

God doesn't appreciate being demoted to the rank of our personal secretary or assistant. Remember who we are dealing with here: God is immanent (so close) and yet transcendent (so utterly above and far from us). God is knowable, yet he is unknowable. God is inside us and beside us, yet he is wholly different from us.

3. A Deeper Ability to Wait for God

An outgrowth of greater brokenness and holy unknowing is a greater capacity to wait upon the Lord. Going through the Wall breaks something deep within us—that driving, grasping, fearful self-will that must produce, that must make something happen, that must get it done for God (just in case he doesn't).

4. A Greater Detachment

We are to be marked by eternity, free from the dominating power of things.

Detachment is the great secret of interior peace. LOCATION: 1595-1694

The Wall, more than anything else, cuts off our attachments to who we think we ought to be, or who we falsely think we are. Layers of our counterfeit self are shed. Something truer, that is Christ in and through us, slowly emerges. LOCATION: 1699

We joyfully detach from certain behaviors and activities for the purpose of a more intimate, loving attachment to God. We are to enjoy the world, for God's creation is good. We are to appreciate nature, people, and all God's gifts, along with his presence in creation—without being ensnared by them. It has rightly been said that those who are the most detached on the journey are best able to taste the purest joy in the beauty of created things. LOCATION: 1708

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. LOCATION: 1727

We lose our illusions about this new family of Jesus, the church. It is not the perfect family with perfect people as we expected. In fact, people disappoint us. At times, we are bewildered and shocked by their lack of awareness and sin (evil). Every person who lives in community with other believers, sooner or later, experiences this disillusionment and the grief that accompanies it. LOCATION: 1752

Turning toward our pain is counterintuitive. But in fact, the heart of Christianity is that the way to life is through death, the pathway to resurrection is through crucifixion. Of course, it preaches easier than it lives. LOCATION: 1812

Unconsciously, however, we carry many defensive maneuvers into adulthood to protect ourselves from pain. And in adulthood, they block us from growing up spiritually and emotionally. LOCATION: 1824

When we do not process before God the very feelings that make us human, such as fear or sadness or anger, we leak. Our churches are filled with "leaking" Christians who have not treated their emotions as a discipleship issue. LOCATION: 1861

I have wondered if the greatest loss we must grieve is our limits. It drives us to humility before God and others like little else. LOCATION: 1914

The central message of Christ is that suffering and death bring resurrection and transformation. Jesus himself said, "Very truly I tell you, 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" (John 12:24). LOCATION: 1989

God is offering us a rope to keep us from getting lost. This rope consistently leads us back home to him, to a place that is centered and rooted. This rope can be found in two ancient disciplines going back thousands of years—the Daily Office and Sabbath. When placed inside present-day Christianity, the Daily Office and Sabbath are groundbreaking, countercultural acts against Western culture. They are powerful declarations about God, ourselves, our relationships, our beliefs, and our values. LOCATION: 2033

Stopping for the Daily Office and Sabbath is not meant to add another to-do to our already busy schedules. It is the resetting of our entire lives toward a new destination—God. It is an entirely new way of being in the world. LOCATION: 2037

The Daily Office and Sabbath are ropes that lead us back to God in the blizzards of life. They are anchors for living in the hurricane of demands. When done as a "want to" rather than a "have to," they offer us a rhythm for our lives that binds us to the living God. LOCATION: 2038

There are many great spiritual disciplines—the prayer of examen, retreats, spiritual direction, service, fellowship in small groups, worship, giving, Bible study, devotional reading, centering prayer, fasting, Scripture memorization, lectio divina, confession, journaling, intercession, to name a few. They are each wonderful tools and gifts to help us follow Jesus. Many are essential threads in a strong rope to keep us centered and lead us home in the midst of blizzards. LOCATION: 2052

The root of the Daily Office is not so much a turning to God to get something but to be with Someone. LOCATION: 2075

You choose the length of time for your Offices. The key, remember, is regular remembrance of God, not length. Your pausing to be with God can last anywhere from two minutes to twenty minutes to forty-five minutes. It is up to you. LOCATION: 2121

Yet four elements, I believe, need to be found in any Office, regardless of what approach you ultimately choose.

1. Stopping.

2. Centering. Scripture commands us: “Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him” (Psalm 37:7) and “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

3. Silence. Dallas Willard called silence and solitude the two most radical disciplines of the Christian life. Solitude is the practice of being absent from people and things to attend to God. Silence is the practice of quieting every inner and outer voice to attend to God. Henri Nouwen said that “without solitude it is almost impossible to live a spiritual life.”

4. Scripture. The psalms are the foundation of almost any Daily Office book you will find available today. LOCATION: 2128-2156

Make no mistake about it: keeping the command to Sabbath is both radical and extremely difficult in our everyday lives. It cuts to the core of our spirituality, the core of our convictions, the core of our faith, the core of our lifestyles. LOCATION: 2180

Keeping the Sabbath in Scripture is a commandment—right next to refraining from lying, murdering, and

committing adultery. Sabbath is a gift from God we are invited to receive. LOCATION: 2187

The Sabbath calls us to build the doing of nothing into our schedules each week. Nothing measurable is accomplished. By the world's standards it is inefficient, unproductive, and useless. As one theologian stated, "To fail to see the value of simply being with God and 'doing nothing' is to miss the heart of Christianity." LOCATION: 2209

The key is to set a regular rhythm of keeping the Sabbath every seven days for a twenty-four-hour block of time…What is important is to select a time period and protect it! LOCATION: 2226-2229

The following are four foundational qualities of biblical Sabbaths that have served me well in distinguishing a "day off" from a biblical Sabbath.

1. Stop.

Sabbath is first and foremost a day of "stopping."…On Sabbath I embrace my limits. God is God. He is indispensable. I am his creature. The world continues working fine when I stop…We stop on Sabbaths because God is on the throne, assuring us the world will not fall apart if we cease our activities. Life on this side of heaven is an unfinished symphony. We accomplish one goal and then immediately are confronted with new opportunities and challenges. But ultimately we will die with countless unfinished projects and goals. That's okay. God is at work taking care of the universe. He manages quite well without us having to run things.

2. Rest.

Once we stop, the Sabbath calls us to rest. God rested after his work. We are to do the same—every seventh day (Genesis 2:1–4). What do we do to replace all we are now stopping during our Sabbath time? The answer is simple: whatever delights and replenishes you.

3. Delight.

A third component to biblical Sabbath revolves around delighting in what we have been given. God, after finishing his work of creation, proclaimed that "it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). God delighted over his creation.

4. Contemplate.

The final quality of a biblical Sabbath is, of course, the contemplation of God. The Sabbath is always “holy to the LORD” (Exodus 31:15). Pondering the love of God remains the central focus of our Sabbaths. LOCATION: 2229-2296

Part of growing into an emotionally mature Christian is learning how to apply practically and effectively the truths we believe. For example: How can I be quick to hear and slow to speak? How can I be angry and not sin? How can I watch my heart above all else (since that is the place from which life flows)? How can I speak the truth in love? How can I be a true peacemaker? How can I mourn? How can I not bear false witness against my neighbor? How can I get rid of all bitterness, rage, and envy? LOCATION: 2395

Many people may be, chronologically, forty-five years old but remain an emotional infant, child, or adolescent. The question then is: How do I distinguish between them? The following is a brief summary of each:

- EMOTIONAL INFANTS. Look for others to take care of them. Have great difficulty entering into the world of others. Are driven by need for instant gratification. Use others as objects to meet their needs.

- EMOTIONAL CHILDREN. Are content and happy as long as they receive what they want. Unravel quickly from stress, disappointments, trials. Interpret disagreements as personal offenses. Are easily hurt. Complain, withdraw, manipulate, take revenge, become sarcastic when they don’t get their way. Have great difficulty calmly discussing their needs and wants in a mature, loving way.

- EMOTIONAL ADOLESCENTS. Tend to often be defensive. Are threatened and alarmed by criticism. Keep score of what they give so they can ask for something later in return. Deal with conflict poorly, often blaming, appeasing, going to a third party, pouting, or ignoring the issue entirely. Become preoccupied with themselves. Have great difficulty truly listening to another person’s pain, disappointments, or needs. Are critical and judgmental.

- EMOTIONAL ADULTS. Are able to ask for what they need, want, or prefer—clearly, directly, honestly. Recognize, manage, and take responsibility for their own thoughts and feelings. Can, when under stress, state their own beliefs and values without becoming adversarial. Respect others without having to change the. Give people room to make mistakes and not be perfect. Appreciate people for who they are—the good, bad, and ugly—not for what they give back. Accurately assess their own limits, strengths, and weaknesses and are able to freely discuss them with others

LOCATION: 2411

As emotionally mature Christian adults, we recognize that loving well is the essence of true spirituality. This requires that we experience connection with God, with ourselves, and with other people. LOCATION: 2432

For this reason, M. Scott Peck argues that we are all born narcissists and that learning to grow out of our narcissism is at the heart of the spiritual journey. LOCATION: 2455

Recognizing the uniqueness and separateness of every other person on earth is so pivotal to emotional maturity. We so easily demand that people view the world the way we do. We believe our way is the right way. Augustine defined sin as the state of being "caved in on oneself." LOCATION: 2483

You can't have the true peace of Christ's kingdom with lies and pretense. They must be exposed to the light and replaced with the truth. This is the mature, loving thing to do. LOCATION: 2530

Speaking and listening is the essence of having an I-Thou relationship with another person. Everyone knows that communication is essential to all relationships.

AS THE SPEAKER Talk about your own thoughts, your own feelings (speak in the "I"). Be brief. Use short sentences or phrases. Correct the other person if you believe he or she has missed something. Continue speaking until you feel you've been understood. When you don't have anything else to say, say, "That's all for now."

AS THE LISTENER Put your own agenda on hold. Be quiet and still as you would before God. Allow the other person to speak until he or she completes a thought. Reflect accurately the other person's words back to him or her. You have two options: paraphrase in a way the other person agrees is accurate or use his or her own words. When it appears the speaker is done, ask, "Is there more?" When they are done ask them: "Of everything you have shared, what is the most important thing you want me to remember?" LOCATION: 2550-2561

Every time I make an assumption about someone who has hurt or disappointed me without confirming it, I believe a lie about this person in my head. This assumption is a misrepresentation of reality. Because I have not checked it out with the other person, it is very possible I am believing something untrue. It is also likely I will pass that false assumption around to others. LOCATION: 2590

Unmet and unclear expectations create havoc in our places of employment, classrooms, friendships, dating relationships, marriages, sports teams, families, and churches. LOCATION: 2603

The problem with most expectations is that they are: unconscious—we have expectations we're not even aware of until someone disappoints us; unrealistic—we may have illusions about others. For example, we think a spouse, a friend, or a pastor will be available at all times to meet our needs; unspoken—we may have never told our spouse, friend, or employee what we expect, yet we are angry when our expectations are not met; and un-agreed upon—we may have had our own thoughts about what was expected, but it was never agreed upon by the other person. LOCATION: 2611

In order for expectations to be established, they must first be: conscious (I have to become aware of the expectations I have for the other person); realistic (I have to ask myself if my expectations regarding the other person are realistic); spoken (I have to speak my expectations clearly, directly, and respectfully to the other person); and agreed upon (in order for my expectations to be valid, the other person must be aware of and agree to them; otherwise it is simply a hope). LOCATION: 2617

Remember, Jesus formed a community with a small group from Galilee, a backward province in the ancient world. They were neither spiritually nor emotionally mature. Peter, the point leader, had a big problem with his mouth and was a bundle of contradictions. Andrew, his brother, was quiet and behind the scenes. James and John were given the name "sons of thunder" because they were aggressive, hotheaded, ambitious, and intolerant. Philip was skeptical and negative. He had limited vision. "We can't do that," summed up his faith when confronted by the problem of feeding the five thousand. Nathanael Bartholemew was prejudiced and opinionated. Matthew was the most hated person in Capernaum, working in a profession that abused innocent people. Thomas was melancholy, mildly depressive, and pessimistic. James, son of Alphaeus, and Judas, son of James, were nobodies. The Bible says nothing about them. Simon the Zealot was a freedom fighter and terrorist in his day. Judas, the treasurer, was a thief and a loner. He pretended to be loyal to Jesus before finally betraying him. Most of them, however, did have one great quality: they were willing. That is all God asks of us. LOCATION: 2647

Please don't be intimidated by the word rule. The word comes from the Greek for "trellis." A trellis is a tool that enables a grapevine to get off the ground and grow upward, becoming more fruitful and productive. In the same way, a Rule of Life is a trellis that helps us abide in Christ and become more fruitful spiritually. LOCATION: 2679

A Rule of Life, very simply, is an intentional, conscious plan to keep God at the center of everything we do. It provides guidelines to help us continually remember God as the Source of our lives. LOCATION: 2682

The great, buried gift in a Rule of Life is its goal of regulating our entire lives in such a way that we truly prefer the love of Christ above all things. LOCATION: 2722

God has made each of us unique and different. Our goal is the same: union with God in Christ, transformation into his image, and the freeing of our hearts from anything that stands in the way of Christ living in and through us. How we get there will vary, depending on our personality, gift mix, temperament, geographic location, and particular calling from God. In addition, God will have different practices and emphases at different seasons and phases of our lives. LOCATION: 2724

For example, I've used Phyllis Tickle's Divine Hours to provide a skeletal structure for morning, midday, evening prayer, and compline, as well as the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer. I love praying the psalms as the central part of my Daily Office. LOCATION: 2777

Emotional health is concerned with such things as: naming, recognizing, and managing our own feelings; identifying with and having active compassion for others; initiating and maintaining close and meaningful relationships; breaking free from self-destructive patterns; being aware of how our past impacts our present; developing the capacity to express our thoughts and feelings clearly; respecting and loving others without having to change them; asking for what we need, want, or prefer clearly, directly, and respectfully; accurately self-assessing our strengths, limits, and weaknesses and freely sharing them with others; learning the capacity to resolve conflict maturely and negotiate solutions that consider the perspectives of others; integrating our spirituality with our sexuality in a healthy way; grieving well. LOCATION: 2976

Contemplative spirituality, on the other hand, is concerned with slowing down to be with God, focusing on such practices as: awakening and surrendering to God's love in any and every situation; positioning ourselves to hear God and remember his presence in all we do; communing with God, allowing him to fully indwell the depth of our being; practicing silence, solitude, and a life of unceasing prayer; resting attentively in the presence of God; understanding our earthly life as a journey of transformation toward ever-increasing union with God; finding the true essence of who we are in God; loving others out of a life of love for God; developing a balanced, harmonious rhythm of life that enables us to be aware of the sacred in all of life; adapting historic practices of spirituality that are applicable today; allowing our Christian lives to be shaped by the rhythms of the Christian calendar rather than the culture; and living in committed community that passionately loves Jesus above all else. The combination of emotional health and contemplative spirituality addresses what I believe to be the missing piece in much of contemporary Christianity. When practiced together, they unleash the Holy Spirit inside us in order that we might know experientially the power of an authentic life in Christ. LOCATION: 2983

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.