

10 TOP SYMPTOMS OF EMOTIONALLY UNHEALTHY SPIRITUALITY

- 1. Using God to run from God**—I create a great deal of "God-activity" and ignore difficult areas in my life God wants to change:
 - When I do God's work to satisfy me, not Him
 - When I do things in His name He never asked me to do
 - When my prayers are really about God doing my will, not my surrendering to His

- 2. Ignoring the ungodly emotions of anger, sadness and fear**
 - Most Christians believe that anger, sadness, and fear are sins to be avoided. The problem is it is not biblical.
 - We end up as ½ human beings, suppressing our God-given humanity as men and women made in the image of God.

- 3. Dying to the wrong things**
 - We are to die to the sinful parts of who we are (e.g. defensiveness, detachment from others, arrogance, stubbornness, judgmentalism, etc.)
 - But not to the "good" parts of who we are—healthy desires and pleasures of life (e.g. friendships, joy, art, music, beauty, recreation, laughter and nature).
 - God plants desires in our hearts so we will nurture and water them—these are very often invitations and gifts from Him.

- 4. Denying the past's impact on the present**
 - Growing or maturing in Christ (what theologians call sanctification) actually demands we go back in order to break free from unhealthy and destructive patterns that prevent us from going forward to what God has for us!
 - The goal is to go forward, but we must get rid of the baggage we carry first.

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

- It's easy to compartmentalize God to "Christian activities" (praying, reading the Bible, attending a small group) and not to think about God when spending money, working, studying for exams, playing sports.
- According to Gallup polls and sociologists, "many Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered and sexually immoral as the world in general."

6. Doing for God instead of being with God

- Being productive and getting things done are high priorities in our Western culture. Our identity is in our DOING.
- The problem is that our identity as Christians is in His love for us, not our doing.
- Our activity for God can only properly flow from a life with God.

7. Spiritualizing away conflict

- Conflict is everywhere
- But we want to smooth them over, pray they go away.
- Yet Jesus was in regular conflict with the religious leaders, the crowds, the disciples — even His own family.
- Out of a desire to bring true peace, Jesus disrupted the false peace all around Him. He refused to "spiritualize away" conflict. Instead He actually engaged it a way that brought life and His kingdom.

8. Covering over brokenness, weakness and failure

- 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.
- Yet the Bible does not spin the flaws and weaknesses of its heroes. (e.g. Abraham lied; Hosea's wife was a prostitute; Peter rebuked God!; Noah got drunk; etc.)
- All these people send the same message: that every human being on earth, regardless of their gifts and strengths, is weak, vulnerable and dependent on God and others.

9. Living without limits

- We cannot serve everyone in need.
- When we cross over limits given to us by God, we end up in trouble.
- Jesus modeled limits for us as a human being — fully God yet fully human. He did not heal every sick person in Palestine. He did not raise every dead person. He did not feed all the hungry beggars.
- A life without limits forgets that God is God. We are not.

10. Judging other people's spiritual journey

- I was taught it was my responsibility to correct people in error or in sin and to always counsel people who were mixed up spiritually or weren't in a place with God that I thought they should be in.
- Most of us have no trouble at all dispensing advice or pointing out wrongdoing.
- Like Jesus said, unless I first take the log out of my own eye, knowing that I have huge blind spots, I am dangerous.