

SESSION 1

The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality

**Introduction**

Welcome people to the group, if there are people there that you do not know very well share your name and a few words about what makes you feel fully alive.

**Video** (19 mins)

**Group discussion**

The following are the top 10 symptoms of emotionally unhealthy spirituality. Listen or read through the list and consider which one or two symptoms are the most relevant in your life. After you have considered this turn to another person and share one symptom that most applies to your spiritual life today.

1. Using God to run from God   
   *(using Christian activities to avoid difficult issues)*
2. Ignoring the emotions of anger, sadness and fear   
   *(I am really honest with myself or others about feelings in my life)*
3. Dying to the wrong things  
   *(sacrificing God-given pleasures to defensiveness and judgmentalism)*
4. Denying the past’s impact on the present  
   *(rarely considering how my family of origin shapes my present)*
5. Dividing life into secular and sacred compartments  
   *(I easily compartmentalise God to Christian activities)*
6. Doing for God instead of being with God  
   *(I evaluate my spiritual life on how much I’m doing for God)*
7. Spiritualising away conflict  
   *(I like to smooth over conflict and miss out on true peace)*
8. Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure  
   *(I have a hard time speaking about my weaknesses)*
9. Living without limits  
   *(people close to me would say that I often try to do it all)*
10. Judging the spiritual journey of others  
    *(I’m often bothered by the faults of those around me)*

**Bible study: 1 Samuel 15: 7-24**

1. In verse 11, what do you notice about God and Samuel’s responses to Saul’s failure to fully obey.  
   1. How does this differ from Saul’s response in versus 12 – 13
2. Re-read verses 12 and 24. What might have been going on beneath the surface of Saul’s life (iceberg) that he was unaware of?
3. Re-read verses 22 – 23. Describe in your own words how Samuel explains Saul’s disobedience.
4. Can you think of any examples of how you go through the motions of making “burnt offerings” rather than obeying God’s word? (E.G, acting or speaking from fear of what others think)
5. Know the seriousness of verse 23a. What positive steps could Saul have taken to become aware of his own iceberg and hear God in his situation? What might be one positive step for you?  
   1. In what ways can you relate or not relate to Saul?

**Application**

1. What challenges keep you from slowing down your life to be with God?
2. Consider your spiritual life on a scale of 1 to 100.   
   1 meaning you spend no time being with God and all your time doing for God, and 100 means you spend all your time being with God and none of your time doing for God. At what number on that scale would you say you were on.
3. The remainder of the EHS course will address ways we can make changes in our lives. At this point what might be one or two simple steps you can take toward beginning to slow down your life and balance that scale?

**Throughout the Course:  
  
Daily Office**

Adapt your own quiet time to follow this formula

* Silence and Stillness before God (2 minutes)
* Scripture reading
* Devotional (optional)
* Set prayer/hymn
* Prayer
* Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)