



***Emotionally Healthy Spirituality:  
Developing Authentic Maturity in Christ,  
in Yourself and Others***  
Pete Scazzero

**How to Use This Tool**

This *Conference Classics* process tool is designed to accompany an audio recording of a Willow Creek Association conference session. You can refer to the tool while listening to the session and use it afterward to dig deeper into the content, or you can use the tool to get the highlights without even listening to the session.

**This tool consists of four parts:**

- The **PREVIEW** section lists the problem that the session addresses and the recommendation that the speaker makes.
- The **KEY CONCEPTS** section breaks the session down into the core ideas most important for you to understand.
- The **NEXT STEPS** section gives step-by-step guidance for implementing the speaker's recommendation.
- The **REFLECT** section includes questions to help you practice, apply, and implement what you've learned. Although the questions are geared primarily to individuals, groups can use them as a discussion guide.

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## Preview

- Problem:** It is not possible for a Christian to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature, but churches rarely focus on emotional health.
- Recommendation:** Incorporate into your daily and weekly routines ancient spiritual practices that will help you grow in emotionally healthy spirituality.

## Key Concepts

### Missing Discipleship Ingredients

- Pete's church was growing and all appeared well on the surface, but people weren't changing deeply, despite all the programs they tried.
- At the same time, Pete was stressed out, feeling like he was winning the world and losing his soul.
- Pete started an inward journey and realized that he was an emotional infant pastoring a church.
- Two ingredients are missing in our contemporary discipleship models:
  - Emotional health
    - Emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable.
    - We mistakenly consider leaders mature because they're gifted.
    - If we're not emotionally mature, we're not spiritually mature.
    - The mark of mature spirituality is *agape* (1 Corinthians 13).
    - As image bearers of God, we are made up of several aspects:
      - ◆ Social
      - ◆ Intellectual
      - ◆ Spiritual
      - ◆ Physical
      - ◆ Emotional
    - When we talk about spiritual formation and discipleship, we have to address all of those components.
    - If a person is undeveloped in any of those areas, it becomes apparent very quickly.
  - Contemplative spirituality
    - Both activity and contemplation are seen in the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42.
    - Martha, who was focused on activity, was distracted, worried, and upset.
    - Our lives need a balance of activity and contemplation (being with God).
    - Often our lives contain too much activity and not enough contemplation.
- When we don't get both emotional health and contemplative spirituality right, we end up like King Saul.

### Empty the Emotional Jug

- Think of your emotional life like a jug.
- At the bottom of the jug, there are feelings like love, desire, and pleasure.
- Then there are emotions like mad, sad, and scared.
- The question is how to process your emotional world well before God.
- When you don't know how to process your inner world, it leaks out through dirty fighting, sarcasm, contempt, ridicule, etc.
- As David says in Psalm 62, pour out your heart (empty your emotional jug) before the Lord.

- Rest
  - Sabbath
  - Simplicity
  - Play and recreation
- Work
  - Service and mission
  - Care for the physical body
- Relationships
  - Emotional health
  - Family
  - Community

### Next Steps

#### 1. Begin the Journey.

- Read *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Pete Scazzero.

#### 2. Engage the Message Personally.

- Wrestle with these issues prayerfully and slowly.
- Rather than trying to change the world, start by changing yourself.

#### 3. Process with Others.

- Consider going through the *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Workbook* with your small group or ministry team or staff.
- Visit [www.emotionallyhealthy.org](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org) for more information.

### Reflect

1. What emotions are filling your emotional jug right now? Practice pouring your heart out before the Lord by taking the next five minutes to reflect on the questions listed below and on the next page, and journal your thoughts in the space provided.

What are you mad about today?

What are you sad about?