

Relate Breakout Session: Emotionally Healthy Leadership

Moving Beyond Performance and Approval-Driven Ministry Toward Healthy Leadership Patterns

Key Text:

[Mat 16:24-26 NKJV] 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Key Points:

Any ministry efforts rooted in performance and the drive for approval are unhealthy and motivated in the desire to preserve our false selves.

- *"All sin starts from the assumption that my false self . . . is the fundamental reality of life to which everything else in the universe is ordered. Thus, I use up my life in the desire for pleasure and the thirst for experiences, for power, honor, knowledge and love, to clothe this false self and construct its nothingness into something objectively real." -Thomas Merton*

Emotionally healthy leaders are emotionally honest leaders, who lay down false self patterns to embrace healthy leadership patterns.

Emotionally Healthy Leaders, are Emotionally Honest Leaders

- Emotional honesty means that we are willing to sit open with God under the deep gaze of the Holy Spirit and learn the truth about longings and motivations as Christ views them.
- This is the primary difference between what Paul calls a spiritual person and a natural person.

[1Co 2:12-16 ESV] 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

- Emotionally Honest Leaders move from asking "What Would Jesus Do?" to "How Would Jesus View?"
- How would Jesus view my motive in that moment? How would Jesus view my heart posture toward that person? How would Jesus view my double life?
- A great place to begin when beginning this journey into emotional honesty, is emotional

awareness.

- Tuning into our intense emotions can pull the curtain back on spaces we are living and leading in false self patterns.

"In neglecting our intense emotions, we are false to ourselves and lose a wonderful opportunity to know God. We forget that change comes through brutal honesty and vulnerability before God."— **Peter Scazzero**

- Before we can do great work for God, we must allow God to do great work in us.

Emotionally Healthy Leaders, Lay Down False Self Patterns

- The 19th Century Scottish author and theologian George MacDonald in his wrestle with what we are to make of our selfness in light of God, had this to say:

"The self is given to us that we may sacrifice it; it is ours that we like Christ may have something to offer... The Self is to be no longer the ruler of our action". - George MacDonald

- The Apostle Paul similarly exhorts us to view our selfness as Christ viewed His:

[Phl 2:5-8 NLT] 5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. 6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, 8 he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

- Once we identify our false self patterns, our invitation is to relinquish them to Christ, lifting them only so high as His beaten and bleeding shoulder rested against the splintering wood of the cross, and, like Simon of Cyrene, journey with Him to Calvary and then the tomb, witnessing their death and burial with Him.

Emotionally Healthy Leaders, Embrace Healthy Leadership Patterns

- In Christ, death and burial lead us to what? Resurrection!
- After resurrection, the focus is no longer on what was put to death, but on what has been raised to life.

[Col 3:1-3 NKJV] 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

"I was told, each time I drew my sword, I should consider not what I killed, but what I allowed to live." (D'Artagnan, in The Man in the Iron Mask)

- Sounds great! How do we do this?
- The answer is, resurrection life. Life by the Spirit of God, sourced from the Spirit of God.

[1Co 2:12 ESV] 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

[Gal 5:16-25 ESV] 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- I believe that embracing healthy leadership patterns is found in the last words in the passage, “let us keep in step with the Spirit.”
- “Keep in step with” is also translated as “walk”, but the Greek word used here (*stoicheō*) has an inferred intentionality that is very telling. It is walking with intention, like marching with an army. This is our pattern of life and leadership.
- How we walk in leadership is how we will measure the health of our leadership.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is setting the cadence, rhythms, and patterns of your life in leadership?
2. What does this reveal to you about who is setting the cadence, rhythms, and patterns?
3. What false self leadership patterns is the Holy Spirit calling me to lay down? What healthy leadership patterns does Christ's resurrection allow to live in their place?

Additional Resources:

-Visit: relatenetwork.com

-Contact Facilitator: kimberly.baltzley@mybayside.church

-Recommended Reading:

- Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Peter Scazzero
- Emotionally Healthy Leadership, Peter Scazzero
- Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, Ruth Haley Barton
- The Deeper Journey, M. Robert Mulholland
- The Gift of Being Yourself, David G. Benner