

How  
Healthy  
Is Your  
Spirituality?

A PDF Companion to the Audiobook

Peter Scazzero

*Author of Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*

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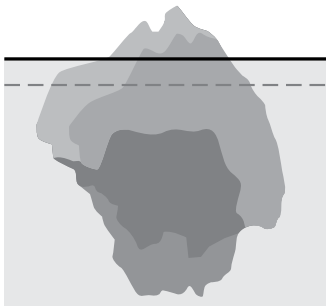
**Peter Scazzero**

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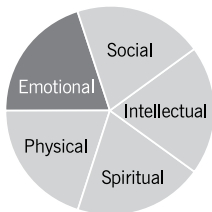
# The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality

## Iceberg Model

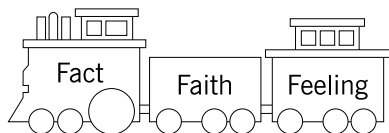
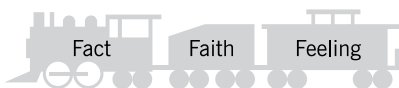
What Lies Beneath the Surface



## Different Parts/Components of Who We Are



# Fact, Faith, and Feeling



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## Assessment

### *How Healthy Is Your Spirituality?*

**H**aving an emotionally unhealthy spirituality is not an all-or-nothing condition; it operates on a continuum that ranges from mild to severe, and may change from one season of life to the next. Use the list of statements that follow to get an idea of where you're at right now. Next to each statement, write down the number that best describes your response. Use the following scale:

- 5 = Always true of me
- 4 = Frequently true of me
- 3 = Occasionally true of me
- 2 = Rarely true of me
- 1 = Never true of me

1. I sometimes greet people who have hurt me with a smile or a hug because I don't want to be thought of as a "bad" Christian who is unloving. \_\_\_\_\_

## Assessment

2. I often find myself being critical and judgmental of others, especially when they behave in ways I believe are wrong in God's eyes. \_\_\_\_\_
3. When I pray, I am more likely to ask God to bless me than I am to ask him what his will is in my life and how he wants to change me. \_\_\_\_\_
4. It can be difficult for me to identify what I am feeling inside. \_\_\_\_\_
5. When I go through a disappointment or a loss, I try to keep busy to avoid reflecting on how I feel. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I find it difficult to be honest about my fears, doubts, and hurts, so I sometimes minimize them or pretend that nothing is wrong. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I feel like I should say yes when someone asks me for help because it seems selfish or unloving to say no. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I know Jesus calls me to die to myself, but sometimes I feel tired, frustrated, and resentful about it. \_\_\_\_\_

### How Healthy Is Your Spirituality?

9. I can feel guilty when I pursue things that are just for my enjoyment—art, recreation, music, beauty, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
10. To deal with conflict, I have used unhealthy patterns I learned growing up in my family, such as avoidance, putdowns, or going to a third party rather than directly to the person. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I have a hard time thanking God for painful life experiences from the past because it's difficult for me to see how he can use them for good. \_\_\_\_\_
12. I have avoided working through difficult events from my past (death of a loved one, unexpected pregnancy, divorce, addiction, financial disaster, etc.). \_\_\_\_\_
13. The busyness of life makes it difficult for me to consistently practice the spiritual disciplines of solitude and silence. \_\_\_\_\_
14. I tend to be aware of God when engaging in Christian practices at church or in quiet time but rarely when I am at work or school. \_\_\_\_\_

## Assessment

15. I consider some activities and areas of my life (worship, prayer, Bible reading, etc.) to be sacred, and others (doing household chores, watching television, playing sports, etc.) to be secular. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I feel more valuable to God when I am doing something for him. \_\_\_\_\_
17. I rarely, if ever, practice Sabbath (setting aside a twenty-four-hour period in which I stop my work and rest). \_\_\_\_\_
18. I tend to prioritize doing things *for* God over spending time *with* God. \_\_\_\_\_
19. I sometimes tell half-truths, or don't say anything at all, in order to avoid conflict or disapproval. \_\_\_\_\_
20. I often say yes when I want to say no to avoid hurting someone's feelings. \_\_\_\_\_
21. I tend to use indirect means to avoid conflict, such as sarcasm, going to a third party, or giving people the silent treatment. \_\_\_\_\_

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22. I find it difficult to talk about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes, even with trusted friends. \_\_\_\_\_
23. I often have a hard time admitting when I'm wrong and asking for forgiveness from others. \_\_\_\_\_
24. Those close to me would say I am easily offended or hurt. \_\_\_\_\_
25. Others have commented that I tend to bite off more than I can chew. \_\_\_\_\_
26. Those close to me would say I struggle to balance family, rest, work, and play. \_\_\_\_\_
27. I find it difficult to know when to help carry someone else's burden and when to let go so they can carry their own burden. \_\_\_\_\_
28. I sometimes disapprove of how Christians from other traditions practice or talk about their faith. \_\_\_\_\_
29. It is often easier for me to see how sin has damaged others than it is for me to see how sin has damaged me. \_\_\_\_\_

30. When I see something questionable in someone's life (such as error, wrongdoing, sin), I feel guilty if I don't correct it or offer advice for how to fix it. \_\_\_\_\_

Take a moment to briefly review your responses. How many fives did you write down? Count the number of fives on your assessment and write the total in the space provided on the right below. Note that you are counting the number of times you wrote down five (such as three times, five times, etc.), not adding the fives together. Then do the same for the remaining numbers on your assessment.

**Example**

<u>  4  </u>	5 responses
<u>  11  </u>	4 responses
<u>  7  </u>	3 responses
<u>  5  </u>	2 responses
<u>  3  </u>	1 responses

**My Responses**

_____	5 responses
_____	4 responses
_____	3 responses
_____	2 responses
_____	1 responses

What stands out most to you as you review your responses? Although there is no definitive scoring for the assessment, listed below are some general observations that may help you better understand the condition of your emotional and spiritual health right now.

**If you scored mostly fours and fives**, your condition is more unhealthy than healthy, and you are

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likely functioning emotionally at the level of a child or infant. You look to others to take care of you emotionally and spiritually. You likely feel uncomfortable with silence or being alone, and your prayer life is more of a duty than a delight. If all of that sounds harsh, you can at least take comfort in knowing you are far from alone. This was where I found myself after seventeen years as a Christ-follower, with a seminary degree, and eight years of pastoral experience. Growing up into spiritual and emotional adulthood takes years, even decades, not days or months. So take a deep breath. Relax. You are not alone.

**If you scored mostly threes and fours**, you have begun the journey, but you are likely functioning emotionally at the level of an adolescent. Your Christian life may be primarily about *doing*, not *being*, and you are feeling the effects of that. You have some awareness of how issues from your past and family of origin impact your behaviors and relationships, but more work is probably needed in this area. You tend to make quick judgments and interpretations of people's behavior. When someone hurts you, you tend to withhold forgiveness, avoid them, or cut them off. You may attend church and regularly serve others but enjoy few delights in Christ. You have done some work on developing spiritual practices to sustain you, but God may be inviting you to greater growth and a more robust inner life.

**If you scored mostly ones and twos**, your condition is more healthy than unhealthy, and you are likely functioning emotionally at the level of an adult. You have a healthy sense of how issues from your past and family of origin impact you, and you are able to assert your beliefs and values without being adversarial. You respect and love others without having to change them or becoming judgmental. You protect and prioritize your relationships with your spouse (if applicable), friends, and family, and relate to those around you in healthy ways. You are well on your way to integrating your *doing* for God with a solid base of *being* with him. You have moved beyond simply serving Christ to loving him and enjoying communion with him.



Wherever you find yourself, the good news is that you *can* make progress and learn to become an increasingly healthy emotionally and spiritually. In fact, God has specifically wired our bodies and neurochemistry for transformation and change—even into our nineties! So even if the truth about the current state of your emotional and spiritual health is sobering, don't be discouraged. If someone like me can learn and grow through all the failures and mistakes I've made, it is possible for anyone to make progress and develop an emotionally healthy spirituality!