

# united church of cohes

## EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY SPIRITUALITY WEEK 2: THE PROBLEM OF THE FALSE SELF JULY 17, 2022

### 10 Symptoms of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality

As we look at the Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality, we need to unpack the principle that –  
**THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE ARE WILLING TO GIVE JESUS ACCESS TO WHAT IS DEEPLY BENEATH THE SURFACE IN OUR LIVES IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE WILL EXPERIENCE FREEDOM IN HIM.**

#### 1. Using God to run from God

Few killer viruses are more difficult to discern than this one. In my case, using God to run from God is when I create a great deal of "God-activity" and ignore difficult areas in my life God wants to change. Some examples might be:

- I use God to run from God when I do God's work to satisfy me, not Him.
- I use God to run from God when I do things in His name that He never asked me to do.
- I use God to run from God 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, that something is wrong with our spiritual life. This applies especially to the more "difficult" feelings of fear, sadness, anger, hurt and pain. The problem with this is it is not biblical and the practical implications of such a view is enormous. We end up as ½ human beings, suppressing our God-given humanity as men and women made in the image of God. We end up missing the many ways God is actually speaking to us.

#### 3. Dying to the wrong things:

True, Jesus did say: "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). The question, however, is what does this mean. Yes, we are to die to the sinful parts of who we are —such as defensiveness, detachment from others, arrogance, stubbornness, hypocrisy, judgmentalism, running our own lives — as well as the more obvious sins described for us in Scripture. But we are not called by God to die to the "good" parts of who we are. God never asked us to die to the healthy desires and the pleasures of life — to friendships, joy, art, music, beauty, recreation, laughter and nature. God plants desires in our hearts so we will nurture and water them. These desires and passions are, very often, invitations and gifts from Him.

#### 4. Denying the past's impact on the present:

When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, whether as a child, teenager or adult, we are, in the dramatic language of the Bible, born again (see John 3:3). The apostle Paul describes this way: "The old has gone, the new has come!" That is our new status in Christ. Yet the work of 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.