

SESSION 5

WHAT IS YOUR FUTURE?



READ

Numbers 13:26-33

The Israelites were terrified of what their future held. Even though the land God was giving them was overflowing with abundance, their fears outweighed their hopes. It didn't matter that God had generously provided for and protected them in the past; the future loomed in front of them as a fearsome enemy.

What hopes do you have for your future? What anxieties do you have? Does one outweigh the other?

Make a list of some of the aspirations you have for the future. These can be for the near-future or for 10 years from now. Here are some examples: start a family, go back to school, hold your first grandchild, run a race, mentor a student, setup an endowment, etc.

After you've finalized your list, write beside each item: "I am not in control of this." Note how it feels to write it beside some of the items. Which ones are most difficult to surrender control?

Now, write a list of the things in the future that intimidate or worry you. Here are some examples: your children growing up and leaving home, losing loved ones, taking care of parents, financial security, dying, etc. Beside each of these items, write: "God is in control of this."

What was surprising about this exercise? Challenging?

Take a look at how you scored on Principle 7 of the emotional health assessment. Do you spend time slowing down, or are you constantly working to secure your future? Do your hopes or your anxieties propel you to work, work, work? Choose a day this week to practice Sabbath. Spend 24 hours doing the things that fill you with joy and draw you into the presence of God. Put your hopes and anxieties for the future into God's control. If God could rest without fear of what the future would bring, you can rest, too (Genesis 2:2). Use your Sabbath day to center yourself on your need for God to sustain you and care for you.

EHS Personal Assessment



Please answer these questions as honestly as possible.
Use the scoring method as indicated.

PART A: General Formation and Discipleship

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel confident of my adoption as God's son/daughter and rarely, if ever, question his acceptance of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I love to worship God by myself as well as with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I spend regular quality time in the Word of God and in prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I sense the unique ways God has gifted me individually and am actively using my spiritual gifts for his service. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I am a vital participant in a community with other believers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. It is clear that my money, gifts, time, and abilities are completely at God's disposal and not my own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I consistently integrate my faith in the marketplace and the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

PART B: Emotional Components of Discipleship

Principle 1: Look beneath the Surface

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. It's easy for me to identify what I am feeling inside (Luke 19:41 – 44; John 11:33 – 35). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I am willing to explore previously unknown or unacceptable parts of myself, allowing Christ to transform me more fully (Rom. 7:21 – 25; Col. 3:5 – 17). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I enjoy being alone in quiet reflection with God and myself (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I can share freely about my emotions, sexuality, joy, and pain (Ps. 22; Prov. 5:18 – 19; Luke 10:21). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I am able to experience and deal with anger in a way that leads to growth in others and myself (Eph. 4:25 – 32). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I am honest with myself (and a few significant others) about the feelings, beliefs, doubts, pains, and hurts beneath the surface of my life (Ps. 73; 88; Jer. 20:7 – 18). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

Principle 2: Break the Power of the Past

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 7. I resolve conflict in a clear, direct, and respectful way, not what I might have learned growing up in my family, such as painful putdowns, avoidance, escalating tensions, or going to a third party rather than to the person directly (Matt. 18:15 – 18). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. I am intentional at working through the impact of significant "earthquake" events that shaped my present, such as the death of a family member, an unexpected pregnancy, divorce, addiction, or major financial disaster (Gen. 50:20; Ps. 51). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I am able to thank God for all my past life experiences, seeing how he has used them to uniquely shape me into who I am (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28 – 30). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. I can see how certain "generational sins" have been passed down to me through my family history, including character flaws, lies, secrets, ways of coping with pain, and unhealthy tendencies in relating to others (Ex. 20:5; cf. Gen. 20:2; 26:7; 27:19; 37:1 – 33). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I don't need approval from others to feel good about myself (Prov. 29:25; Gal. 1:10). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. I take responsibility and ownership for my past life rather than blame others (John 5:5 – 7). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

Principle 3: Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 13. I often admit when I'm wrong, readily asking forgiveness from others (Matt. 5:23 – 24). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I am able to speak freely about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes (2 Cor. 12:7 – 12). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Others would easily describe me as approachable, gentle, open, and transparent (Gal. 5:22 – 23; 1 Cor. 13:1 – 6). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. Those close to me would say that I am not easily offended or hurt (Matt. 5:39 – 42, 1 Cor. 13:5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I am consistently open to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me (Prov. 10:17; 17:10; 25:12). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I am rarely judgmental or critical of others (Matt. 7:1 – 5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. Others would say that I am slow to speak, quick to listen, and good at seeing things from their perspective (James 1:19 – 20). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

Principle 4: Receive the Gift of Limits

- 20. I've never been accused of "trying to do it all" or of biting off more than I could chew (Matt. 4:1 – 11). 1 2 3 4
 - 21. I am regularly able to say "no" to requests and opportunities rather than risk overextending myself (Mark 6:30 – 32). 1 2 3 4
 - 22. I recognize the different situations where my unique, God-given personality can be either a help or hindrance in responding appropriately (Ps. 139; Rom. 12:3; 1 Peter 4:10). 1 2 3 4
 - 23. It's easy for me to distinguish the difference between when to help carry someone else's burden (Gal 6:2) and when to let it go so they can carry their own burden (Gal. 6:5). 1 2 3 4
 - 24. I have a good sense of my emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual capacities, intentionally pulling back to rest and fill my "gas tank" again (Mark 1:21 – 39). 1 2 3 4
 - 25. Those close to me would say that I am good at balancing family, rest, work, and play in a biblical way (Ex. 20:8). 1 2 3 4
- TOTAL** _____

Principle 5: Embrace Grieving and Loss

- 26. I openly admit my losses and disappointments (Ps. 3; 5). 1 2 3 4
 - 27. When I go through a disappointment or a loss, I reflect on how I'm feeling rather than pretend that nothing is wrong (2 Sam. 1:4, 17 – 27; Ps. 51:1 – 17). 1 2 3 4
 - 28. I take time to grieve my losses as David (Ps. 69) and Jesus did (Matt. 26:39; John 11:35; 12:27). 1 2 3 4
 - 29. People who are in great pain and sorrow tend to seek me out because it's clear to them that I am in touch with the losses and sorrows in my own life (2 Cor 1:3 – 7). 1 2 3 4
 - 30. I am able to cry and experience depression or sadness, explore the reasons behind it, and allow God to work in me through it (Ps. 42; Matt. 26:36 – 46). 1 2 3 4
- TOTAL** _____

Principle 6: Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well

- 31. I am regularly able to enter into other people's world and feelings, connecting deeply with them and taking time to imagine what it feels like to live in their shoes (John 1:1 – 14; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:3 – 5). 1 2 3 4
 - 32. People close to me would describe me as a responsive listener (Prov. 10:19; 29:11; James 1:19). 1 2 3 4
 - 33. When I confront someone who has hurt or wronged me, I speak more in the first person ("I" and "me") about how I am feeling rather than speak in blaming tones ("you" or "they") about what was done (Prov. 25:11; Eph. 4:29 – 32). 1 2 3 4
 - 34. I have little interest in judging other people or quickly giving opinions about them (Matt. 7:1 – 5). 1 2 3 4
 - 35. People would describe me as someone who makes "loving well" my number one aim (John 13:34 – 35; 1 Cor. 13). 1 2 3 4
- TOTAL** _____

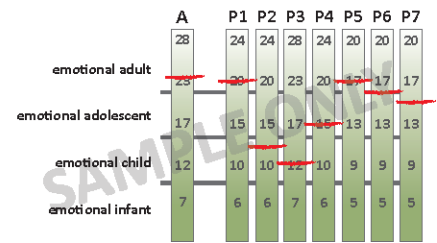
Principle 7: Slow Down to Lead with Integrity

- 36. I spend sufficient time alone with God to sustain my work for God. 1 2 3 4
 - 37. I regularly take a 24-hour period each week for Sabbath-keeping — to stop, to rest, to delight, and to contemplate God. 1 2 3 4
 - 38. Those closest to me would say that my marriage and children take priority over church ministry and others. 1 2 3 4
 - 39. I am not afraid to ask difficult, uncomfortable questions, to myself or to others, when needed. 1 2 3 4
 - 40. I do not divide my leadership into sacred/secular categories. I treat the executive/planning functions of leadership as meaningful as prayer and preparing sermons. 1 2 3 4
- TOTAL** _____

INVENTORY RESULTS:

For each group of questions on previous pages:

- Add your answers to get the total for that group. Write your totals on the section below.
- Next, plot your answers and connect the dots to create a graph below similar to this sample:
- Finally, see the next page for interpretations of your level of emotional health in each area. What patterns do you discern?



ASSESSMENT TOTALS:

Part A

General Formation and Discipleship

QUESTIONS TOTAL

1 – 7 ___ /28

Part B

Principle 1 – Look beneath the Surface

1 – 6 ___ /24

Principle 2 – Break the Power of the Past

7 – 12 ___ /24

Principle 3 – Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability

13 – 19 ___ /28

Principle 4 – Receive the Gift of Limits

20 – 25 ___ /24

Principle 5 – Embrace Grieving and Loss

26 – 30 ___ /20

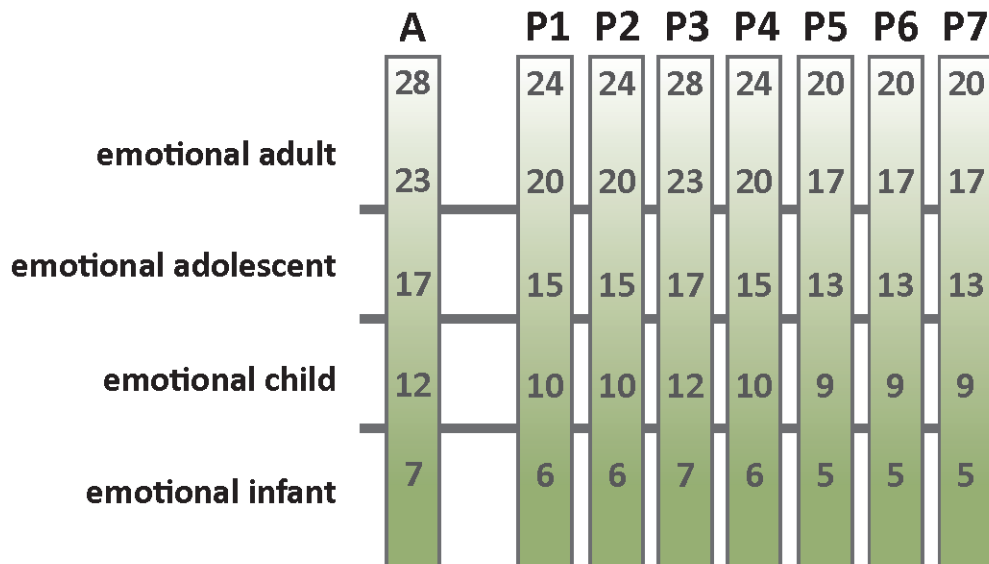
Principle 6 – Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well

31 – 35 ___ /20

Principle 7 – Slow Down to Lead with Integrity

36 – 40 ___ /20

GRAPH:



Interpretation Guide: Levels of Emotional Maturity

Emotional infant.

I look for other people to take care of me emotionally and spiritually. I often have difficulty in describing and experiencing my feelings in healthy ways and rarely enter the emotional world of others. I am consistently driven by a need for instant gratification, often using others as objects to meet my needs. People sometimes perceive me as inconsiderate and insensitive. I am uncomfortable with silence or being alone. When trials, hardships, or difficulties come, I want to quit God and the Christian life. I sometimes experience God at church and when I am with other Christians, but rarely when I am at work or home.

Emotional child.

When life is going my way, I am content. However, as soon as disappointment or stress enter the picture, I quickly unravel inside. I often take things personally, interpreting disagreements or criticism as a personal offense. When I don't get my way, I often complain, throw an emotional tantrum, withdraw, manipulate, drag my feet, become sarcastic, or take revenge. I often end up living off the spirituality of other people because I am so overloaded and distracted. My prayer life is primarily talking to God, telling him what to do and how to fix my problems. Prayer is a duty, not a delight.

Emotional adolescent.

I don't like it when others question me. I often make quick judgments and interpretations of people's behavior. I withhold forgiveness to those who sin against me, avoiding or cutting them off when they do something to hurt me. I subconsciously keep records on the love I give out. I have trouble really listening to another person's pain, disappointments, or needs without becoming preoccupied with myself. I sometimes find myself too busy to spend adequate time nourishing my spiritual life. I attend church and serve others but enjoy few delights in Christ. My Christian life is still primarily about doing, not being with him. Prayer continues to be mostly me talking with little silence, solitude, or listening to God.

Emotional adult.

I respect and love others without having to change them or becoming judgmental. I value people for who they are, not for what they can give me or how they behave. I take responsibility for my own thoughts, feelings, goals, and actions. I can state my own beliefs and values to those who disagree with me — without becoming adversarial. I am able to accurately self-assess my limits, strengths, and weaknesses. I am deeply convinced that I am absolutely loved by Christ and, as a result, do not look to others to tell me I'm okay. I am able to integrate doing for God and being with him (Mary and Martha). My Christian life has moved beyond simply serving Christ to loving him and enjoying communion with him.

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