



WEEK TWO: AUTHENTICITY THE FIRST STEP

This week in *Loving People* we are studying *authenticity* and the important role it plays not only in our own personal growth and transformation but also in building healthy relationships with others. This week (and every week), we will divide the assigned reading, questions, and journaling into five daily studies. However, you can complete these assignments whenever you want. Just be sure to finish them before your Life Group meets next week!

DAY ONE

DAILY FOCUS

Today we will . . .

- ◆ **EXPLORE:** Ephesians 4:17-5:2
- ◆ **READ:** *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 7-8, pgs. 13-19
- ◆ **REFLECT:** On the relationship between emotional and spiritual maturity

◆ EXPLORE

This past weekend we learned that the Bible is full of relational teaching on how to live a life of love—but we often miss it because we don't have our "relational glasses" on. This week we will explore a key passage in the New Testament that illustrates what it looks like to live a life of love: **Ephesians 4:17-5:2**.

To get started, read the entire passage in the New Living Translation (NLT). (Don't forget, you can find this on the YouVersion Bible app or at Biblegateway.com.) As you read it, remember to put on your "relational glasses" and ask yourself this question: *What does this passage teach me about relationships and how to live a life of love?*

- 1) What stood out to you in this passage? Were there any verses or phrases that spoke to you in a powerful way? If so, jot them down as bullet points in your journal.
- 2) If you had to summarize this entire passage in just a sentence or two, what would you say?

◆ READ

One of the main books we are using for this study is *The Emotionally Healthy Church* by Peter Scazzero. The book starts with an excellent forward by Leighton Ford. Leighton was once a close associate of Billy Graham and is still one of the most respected evangelical leaders of our time. **Read his forward on pages 7-8 and Peter Scazzero's introduction on pages 13-19** (Audible: 00:00:19-00:04:05 and 00:08:14-00:24:48).

◆ REFLECT

1) In the Introduction, Leighton writes,

Emotions were discounted in much of the evangelical teaching I heard growing up. We were taught about “facts, faith, and feelings” — in that order. Faith was to be based on the facts of the Christian message (an essential emphasis, to be sure), but we should not rely on feelings because they were unreliable, secondary, and untrustworthy. Certainly there is truth here. Feelings do go up and down — mine certainly do! But while our emotions may be changeable, they are not unimportant!

- *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 7-8

Have you ever heard similar teaching about the relationship between “facts, faith, and feelings?” What do you think about this? What role do you think our emotions should play in our spiritual life? Jot down your thoughts in your journal.

2) In the Forward, Peter writes,

The sad truth is that too little difference exists, in terms of emotional and relational maturity, between God’s people inside the church and those outside who claim no relationship to Jesus Christ. . . Many are supposedly “spiritually mature” but remain infants, children, or teenagers emotionally. They demonstrate little ability to process anger, sadness, or hurt. They whine, complain, distance themselves, blame and use sarcasm—like little children when they don’t get their way. Highly defensive to criticism or differences of opinion, they expect to be taken care of and often treat people as objects to meet their needs.

- *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 17,18 excerpts

What do you think about this quote? Do you agree or disagree? What has been your experience?

3) In the Introduction, Peter writes,

Loving God and others well is both the climax and point of the entire book. . . . But unless we integrate emotional maturity as a focus in our discipleship, we are in danger of missing God’s point completely—love. . . I can no longer deny the truth that emotional and spiritual maturity are inseparable.

- *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 18,19 excerpts

What do you think about the relationship between emotional and spiritual maturity? Do you tend to see them as two separate entities, or do you see them as more closely connected?

4) Write a prayer asking God to use this study to help you better understand His vision for your spiritual and emotional maturity.

DAY TWO

DAILY FOCUS

Today we will . . .

- ◆ **EXPLORE:** Ephesians 4:17-24
- ◆ **READ:** *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 20-28
- ◆ **REFLECT:** On the definition of spiritual maturity

◆ EXPLORE

Today we will continue our study of **Ephesians 4:17-5:2** by focusing on **Ephesians 4:17-24**. Read this passage in the Common English Bible (CEB), and then answer the following questions in your **journal**.

- 1) What is the core problem with the world's approach to life and relationships (Ephesians 4:17-19)?
- 2) What is the solution to this problem for us as Christ-followers (Ephesians 4:24)?
- 3) How do these insights impact the way we should approach our relationships?

◆ READ

Read pages 20-28 in *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. Stop at the heading *My First Call for Help* (Audible: 00:24:49-00:46:36).

◆ REFLECT

- 1) As you read the start of Peter's story about his life, ministry, and marriage, what lessons or insights stand out to you the most?
- 2) Write a prayer based on what you learned from Ephesians 4:17-24 and Peter's journey.

DAY THREE

DAILY FOCUS

Today we will . . .

- ◆ **EXPLORE:** Ephesians 4:25-30
- ◆ **READ:** *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 29-34
- ◆ **REFLECT:** On Jesus' emotional and spiritual maturity

◆ EXPLORE

Today we will continue our study of **Ephesians 4:17-5:2** by focusing on **Ephesians 4:25-30**. Before you get started today, take a couple minutes and ask God to speak to you through this study.

Yesterday Paul described the big picture problem of the human race—and what God has done to solve it through Jesus (Ephesians 4:17-24). Now he begins to give us many specific examples of what it looks like to “put off the old self” and to “put on the new self” *so we can live a life of love*. Read **Ephesians 4:25-30** in the New Living Translation (NLT) and then answer the following questions.

- 1) Paul gives several specific commands that illustrate what it looks like to live a life of love. Summarize each of these commands briefly with a bullet point in your journal.
- 2) Look back over your list. Put on your “relationship glasses.” What does each command teach us about what true love looks like? In other words, how will our relationships be strengthened or damaged if we follow or neglect these commands?
- 3) Which of these commands speaks to you most powerfully at this point in your life, and why?

◆ READ

Read pages 29-34 in *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. Stop midway down the page at *The Unexpected Beneficiary — New Life Fellowship* (Audible: 00:46:37-1:00:26).

◆ REFLECT

1) In Chapter 1, Peter writes,

The questions I was raising and the feelings I was experiencing were considered off-limits in most of the Christian circles in which I had lived the previous twenty years.

- *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, p. 30

Have you ever felt like certain questions or feelings were “off-limits” to raise or discuss in Christian circles? If so, jot down some examples.

2) Later in Chapter 1, Peter writes,

Paul teaches that once a person comes to faith in Christ, “the old things [have] passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17 NASB). I never imagined that influential sin patterns passed on from generation to generation in my family, were still operative. Since I believed the power of Christ could break any curse, I glossed over the idea that I was still being shaped by the home I left long ago.

- *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, p. 32

Have you ever thought about how your family growing up has impacted the way you approach relationships? Can you identify any specific examples (positive or negative)? If so, write them down.

3) Peter shares how his painful journey led him to read the Scripture with a “new set of eyes”. For example, he was surprised to discover how Jesus experienced and expressed his emotions. **Review the list of Jesus’ emotions on page 33** (Audible: 00:56:49-00:57:46). Do any of these descriptions surprise you? If so, which ones, and why?

4) If Jesus is our model of authentic spiritual maturity, what are some implications for the way we process and express our emotions?

DAY FOUR

DAILY FOCUS

Today we will . . .

- ◆ **EXPLORE:** Ephesians 4:17-24 & 4:31-32
- ◆ **READ:** *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 51-58
- ◆ **REFLECT:** On a new paradigm of spiritual maturity

◆ EXPLORE

Spend a couple minutes asking God to meet with you and speak to you today through this study. Then reread **Ephesians 4:17-24** in the Common English Bible (CEB), and then **Ephesians 4:31-32**. In these final two verses, Paul gives us many more specific “relational” commands to illustrate how to live a life of love.

- 1) What are some of the old negative actions, attitudes, and emotions we need to “put aside”?
- 2) What are some of the new positive actions, attitudes, and emotions we need to practice?
- 3) Which of these instructions (positive or negative) speaks to you the most, and why?

◆ READ

Read pages 51-58 in *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. Stop at the heading *A Second “Conversation”* (Audible: 1:29:22-1:45:38).

◆ REFLECT

- 1) On pages 51-52 (Audible: 1:29:22-1:34:25), Peter describes the concept of “paradigms.” Describe what a paradigm is in your own words in your journal.
- 2) In Chapter 3, Peter writes,

I believe the thesis of this book—that emotional health and spiritual health are inseparable—will amount to a Copernican revolution for many

in the Christian community. It is not possible for a Christian to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.

- *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, p. 52, excerpts

What do you think about this? Do you agree, or disagree—and why?

3) In Chapter 3, Peter writes,

To truly love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength requires that we know not only God but also our interior—the nature of our own heart, soul, and mind.

- *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, p. 57

Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

4) Are you having any significant thoughts, reactions, emotions, or questions as you work through this study? If so, take a few minutes and jot them down in your journal.

DAY FIVE

DAILY FOCUS

Today we will . . .

- ◆ **EXPLORE:** Ephesians 4:17-24 & 5:1-2
- ◆ **READ:** *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, pgs. 60-67
- ◆ **REFLECT:** On the inventory of emotional & spiritual maturity

◆ EXPLORE

Start today by reading **Ephesians 4:17-24** one last time—but this time in the New International Version Anglicised (NIVUK). Then continue reading **Ephesians 5:1-2**. In these two final verses, Paul sums up this entire passage (Ephesians 4:17-5:2) by challenging us to “live a life of love”. (Remember that when Paul wrote Ephesians, there were no verse or chapter breaks between chapters 4 & 5!)

- 1) How would you paraphrase Ephesians 5:1-2 in your own words?
- 2) Compare Ephesians 4:24 with Ephesians 5:1. How do these verses describe God's vision for your life?
- 3) How does this compare with your vision for your life?

◆ READ

Read pages 60-67 in *The Emotionally Healthy Church* and **take the inventory**. (Audible: 1:49:30-2:11:06). If you want, you can download a PDF of this inventory from the Week 2 study on the lovingpeople.rockypeak.org website.

◆ REFLECT

- 1) Take a few minutes and score your inventory and read the Interpretation Guide: Levels of Emotional Maturity on pgs. 66-67 (Audible: 2:07:48-2:11:06).
- 2) What did you learn from this inventory? Any new insights? Questions? Surprises? Jot down your insights or questions as bullet points in your journal.
- 3) Write a prayer based on your study this week. Is God prompting you to take any next steps based on what you learned?

WEEKEND MESSAGE REFLECTION

After you listen to the second message in this series (*Authenticity . . . The First Step*), take a moment to answer the following questions:

1) This weekend we read many passages where spiritual leaders in the Bible (Jeremiah, Job, Jesus, Paul, etc.) model a radical level of honesty in their relationship with God. Did any of these passages surprise you? Why or why not?

2) We also learned that to grow in our relationship with God, experience transformation, and build authentic relationships, we need to learn to be radically honest with our deepest thoughts, emotions, and our past. Where would you put yourself on the spectrum below right now? How about three years ago? Where would you like to be six months from now?

Total Denial

Reasonably Honest

Radically Honest

3) Think through the sermon this week, as well as your personal study time. Write one sentence to summarize what key things you've learned. Then write a prayer asking God if he has any next steps for you to take this week.

