
CHAPTER 4

INVENTORY OF SPIRITUAL/EMOTIONAL MATURITY



The previous chapter outlined a biblical basis for a new paradigm of discipleship, one that includes emotional maturity. The following diagnostic does the same thing, but in a practical and personal way.

Emotional health is not merely an idea to think about. It is an experience for you when you are alone and in your close relationships with others. Take a few minutes to reflect on this simple inventory to get a sense of where you are as a disciple of Jesus Christ, both as an individual and at church. It will help you get a sense of whether your discipleship has touched the emotional components of your life and, if so, how much.

It's natural to feel uneasy or uncomfortable about some of the questions. Try to be as vulnerable and open as possible. Remember that the inventory will reveal nothing about you that is news to God. Take a moment to pray that God will guide your responses and to remember that you can afford to be honest because he loves you dearly without condition.

Because of space limitations, I have kept Part A to a minimum. I suspect most readers will be far more familiar with the concepts indicated in Part A than in Part B.

Emotional health
is an experience for
you when you are
alone and in your
close relationships
with others.

Emotional/Spiritual Health Inventory

Please answer these questions as honestly as possibly.
Use the following scoring method:

Not very true
 Sometimes true
 Mostly true
 Very true

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 quality, regular 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 (John 11:33-35; Luke 19:41-44). | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. I am willing to explore previously unknown or unacceptable parts of myself, allowing Christ to more fully transform me (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 _____ |

Not very true
Sometimes true
Mostly true
Very true

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 <i>all</i> 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; compare 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 to 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 |

	Not very true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Very true
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 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. 3:1–8; 5:1–12).	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

Not very true
 Sometimes true
 Mostly true
 Very true

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. 29:11; James 1:19). 1 2 3 4

33. I have a healthy sense of who I am, where I’ve come from, and what are my values, likes, passions, dislikes, and so on (John 13:3). 1 2 3 4

34. I am able to accept myself just the way I am (John 13:1–3; Rom. 12:3). 1 2 3 4

35. I am able to form deep relationships with people from different backgrounds, cultures, races, educational, and economic classes (John 4:1–26; Acts 10–11). 1 2 3 4

36. People close to me would say that I suffer with those who suffer and rejoice with those who rejoice (Rom. 12:15). 1 2 3 4

37. I am good about inviting people to adjust and correct my previous assumptions about them (Prov. 20:5; Col. 3:12–14). 1 2 3 4

38. 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

39. I rarely judge others quickly but instead am a peacemaker and reconciler (Matt. 7:1–5). 1 2 3 4

40. 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 ____

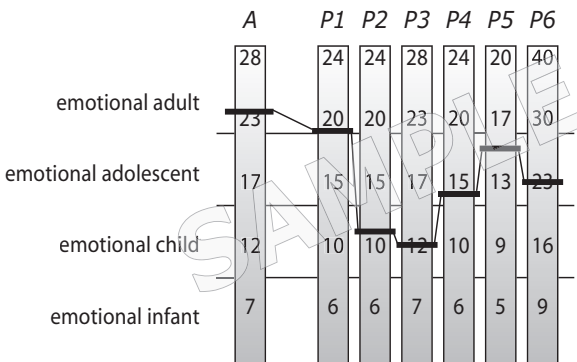
Inventory Results

For each group of questions on pages 60–63:

- Add your answers to get the total for that group. Write your totals on the top portion of page 65, as the sample below illustrates.
- Next, plot your answers and connect the dots to create a graph on the bottom portion of page 65, again following the sample below.
- Finally, see page 66 for interpretations of your level of emotional health in each area. What patterns do you discern?

SAMPLE

	Questions	Total
Part A		
General Formation and Discipleship	1–7	<u>24</u> /28
Part B		
<i>Principle One—Look Beneath the Surface</i>	1–6	<u>20</u> /24
<i>Principle Two—Break the Power of the Past</i>	7–12	<u>11</u> /24
<i>Principle Three—Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability</i>	13–19	<u>12</u> /28
<i>Principle Four—Accept the Gift of Limits</i>	20–25	<u>14</u> /24
<i>Principle Five—Embrace Grieving and Loss</i>	26–30	<u>16</u> /20
<i>Principle Six—Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well</i>	31–40	<u>23</u> /40



	Questions	Total
Part A		
General Formation and Discipleship	1–7	___/28

Part B

<i>Principle One—Look Beneath the Surface</i>	1–6	___/24
<i>Principle Two—Break the Power of the Past</i>	7–12	___/24
<i>Principle Three—Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability</i>	13–19	___/28
<i>Principle Four—Accept the Gift of Limits</i>	20–25	___/24
<i>Principle Five—Embrace Grieving and Loss</i>	26–30	___/20
<i>Principle Six—Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well</i>	31–40	___/40

	A	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
emotional adult	28	24	24	28	24	20	40
emotional adolescent	23	20	20	23	20	17	30
emotional child	17	15	15	17	15	13	23
emotional infant	12	10	10	12	10	9	16
	7	6	6	7	6	5	9

Interpretation Guide: Levels of Emotional Maturity

Emotional infant. Like a physical infant, I look for other people to take care of me more than I look to care for them. 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, and am unaware of how my behavior is effecting/hurting them. People sometimes perceive me as inconsiderate, insensitive, and self-centered.

Emotional children. Like a physical child, when life is going my way and I am receiving all the things I want and need, I am content and seem emotionally well-adjusted. However, as soon as disappointment, stress, tragedy, or anger enter the picture, I quickly unravel inside. I interpret disagreements as a personal offense and am easily hurt by others. 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 have difficulty calmly discussing with others what I want and expect from them in a mature loving way.

Emotional adolescents. Like a physical adolescent, I know the right ways I should behave in order to "fit in" mature, adult society. I can feel threatened and alarmed inside when I am offered constructive criticism, quickly becoming defensive. I subconsciously keep records on the love I give out, so I can ask for something in return at a later time. When I am in conflict, I might admit some fault in the matter, but I will insist on demonstrating the guilt of the other party, proving why they are more to blame. Because of my commitment to self-survival, I have trouble really listening to another person's pain, disappointments, or needs without becoming preoccupied with myself.

Emotional adults. I can respect and love others without having to change them or becoming critical and judgmental. I don't expect anyone to be perfect in meeting my relational needs, whether it be my spouse, parents, friends, boss, or pastor. I love and appreciate people for who they are as whole individuals, the good and the bad, and not for what they can give me or how they behave. I take responsibility for my own thoughts, feelings, goals, and actions. When under stress, I don't fall into a victim mentality or a blame game. 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 and freely discuss them with others. Deeply in tune with my own emotions and feelings, I can move into the emotional worlds of others, meeting them at the place of their feelings, needs, and concerns. I am deeply convinced that I am absolutely loved by Christ, that I have nothing to prove.

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