

Wholehearted Leadership: Cultivating Emotional Intelligence Through the Fruit of The Spirit

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“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4 NIV

“Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.”

James 1: 2-4 MSG

The Good News: Holy Spirit is our Master Gardener

He replants Eden inside us now. He produces the Fruit of the Spirit - no accusation, thorn, or weed can take root there.

This fruit ties directly to **Emotional Intelligence: Daniel Goleman's model**

- **Self-awareness** (knowing your emotions)
- **Self-regulation** (managing impulses)
- **Motivation** (inner drive beyond rewards)
- **Empathy** (understanding others' feelings)
- **Social skills** (building relationships)

Spirit-led emotional health flows from identity and security in God - not manufactured virtue.

We were created for Eden. Holy Spirit is cultivating in us:

- **Eden Union** - Deep, intimate union with God.
- **Eden Voice** - Speaking and co-creating with God.
- **Eden Vision** - Seeing the world, others, and ourselves as fully seen, known, and loved by God.
- **Eden Rest** - Work from rest, not performance or production; rest from striving.

(Adapted from Allan Arnold's, The Eden Option)

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The **Fruit of the Spirit** as
Emotional Intelligence in Ministry

LOVE:

Love is choosing the good of another person, even when it costs you.

There is no fear in love. **But perfect love drives out fear**, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

What Love Is Not:

- **Not controlling outcomes**
- **Not withholding affirmation to motivate performance**
- **Not keeping quiet scorecards**
- **Not confusing charisma with care**

What Emotional Maturity in Love looks like:

1. Owning your feelings.

Speak from humility, not accusation.

Ephesians 4:15 “Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

Love uses language that builds connection. It says, “*I felt...*” instead of “*You always...*”

What Emotional Maturity in Love looks like:

2. Forgiving quickly.

Do not store offenses. Release them.

Colossians 3:13 “Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Love does not keep score. It moves toward repair rather than resentment.

Love requires:

- Self-awareness (What am I feeling right now?)
- Self-regulation (Can I pause before reacting?)
- Empathy (What might they be feeling?)
- Relational skill (How do I respond in a way that builds trust?)

Reflection:

Love - What would change if I measured this season by how well I loved?

Joy

Simple definition: Joy is steady gladness rooted in God, not outcomes.

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” John 15:11

What Joy Is Not:

- Not forced positivity or spiritual bypassing
- Not denial of grief, stress, or disappointment
- Not adrenaline from applause or growth
- Not optimism based on circumstances

What Emotional Maturity in Joy looks like:

1. “Be” before you do.

Start with God’s presence, not pressure.

John 15:4-5 “Abide in me, and I in you... apart from me you can do nothing.”

Leaders shaped by joy begin with abiding, not achieving. Joy flows from communion, not performance.

What Emotional Maturity in Joy looks like:

2. Refuse rumination.

Name the disappointment, then shift toward gratitude and truth.

2 Corinthians 10:5 - We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Joy does not deny pain. It refuses to rehearse it endlessly. It names it, grieves it, and we return to truth.

Reflection:

Where have I tied my joy to outcomes or approval?

Peace

Simple definition: Peace is inner steadiness and wholeness because God is trustworthy.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.”

Matthew 5:9

What Peace Is Not:

- Not conflict avoidance or people-pleasing
- Not silence that hides fear
- Not control disguised as “keeping things calm”
- Not numbness

What Emotional Maturity in Peace Looks Like:

1. Embracing limits as a gift.

You are human. Limits lead to trust.

2 Corinthians 12:9 “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Peace grows when leaders stop pretending to be limitless. Weakness becomes the doorway to dependence, and dependence becomes strength.

What Emotional Maturity in Peace Looks Like:

2. Staying in a Curious Posture

Listen without rehearsing your rebuttal.

James 1:19 “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.”

Peace shows up in the space between stimulus and response.
It listens fully before it answers.

Reflection:

What limit have I been ignoring that is costing me peace?

Patience (Longsuffering)

In the New Testament, the primary Greek word is **makrothymia**, which literally means “long-tempered” - the opposite of short-tempered. It describes someone who is slow to anger and enduring with people over time.

“Love is patient” (1 Corinthians 13:4).

What Patience Is Not:

- Not passive enabling
- Not suppressing anger until it leaks out
- Not rushing people to heal or change
- Not contempt disguised as “I’m just being honest”

What Emotional Maturity in Patience looks like:

1. **Coach over criticize.** - No one wants to be bossed, everyone wants to be developed.

2 Timothy 2:24 “The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil.”

Patience corrects without contempt. It forms people rather than shaming them.

What Emotional Maturity in Patience looks like:

2. Hold boundaries with calm consistency.

Patient does not mean unclear.

Ephesians 4:2 “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.”

Patience is steady, not passive. It holds the line without hostility and remains grounded in love.

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Reflection:

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Kindness:

Simple definition: Kindness is compassionate action that strengthens others.

“Be kind and compassionate to one another.”

Ephesians 4:32

What Kindness Is Not:

- Not niceness that avoids truth
- Not manipulation for “ministry efficiency”
- Not flattery that hides fear
- Not enabling unhealthy behavior

What Emotional Maturity in Kindness looks like:

1. **Start with presence.** - Connection

Make people feel seen before you solve.

Colossians 3:12 “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”

Kind leadership begins with attunement. Before fixing, it notices. Before directing, it sees.

What Emotional Maturity in Kindness looks like:

2. Connect before you correct

No shaming. No sarcasm.

Ephesians 4:29 “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

Kindness tells the truth without tearing down. It preserves dignity while addressing reality.

Reflection:

Who needs a specific word of encouragement from me today?

Goodness

Simple definition: Goodness is integrity that chooses what is right, even when it costs you.

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21

What Goodness Is Not:

- Not image management
- Not competition or quiet comparison
- Not “ends justify the means” ministry shortcuts
- Not moral superiority

What Emotional Maturity in Goodness looks like:

1. Celebrate others without comparison.

Goodness is generous.

Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Good leaders do not shrink when others shine. They honor freely and rejoice without rivalry.

What Emotional Maturity in Goodness looks like:

2. Own mistakes without excuses.

Repair quickly.

Proverbs 28:13 “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”

Goodness takes responsibility. It does not justify failure. It seeks restoration without delay.

Reflection:

What mistake do I need to own - without spinning a story?

Faithfulness

Simple definition: Faithfulness is steady loyalty and reliability over time.

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Matthew 25:21

What Faithfulness Is Not

- Not overfunctioning to prove worth
- Not staying busy to avoid feelings
- Not saying yes to everything
- Not abandoning people when discouraged

What Emotional Maturity in Faithfulness looks like:

1. Being Trustworthy

Follow-through builds trust.

Matthew 5:37 “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

Faithful leadership is dependable. It does what it says it will do. Consistency forms credibility over time.

What Emotional Maturity in Faithfulness looks like:

2. Embrace limits so you can endure.

Burnout is not faithfulness.

Galatians 6:9 “Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

Faithfulness is sustainable obedience, not frantic overextension. Endurance requires rhythm, rest, and wise limits.

Reflection:

Where am I tempted to people-please instead of set healthy boundaries?

Gentleness:

Simple definition: Gentleness is strength under control that protects others' dignity.

“A gentle answer turns away wrath.” Proverbs 15:1

What Gentleness Is Not:

- Not weakness or passivity
- Not avoiding hard conversations
- Not “being nice” to keep control
- Not tolerating harm

What Emotional Maturity in Gentleness looks like:

1. Regulate yourself before leading others.

Calm leaders create calm cultures.

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

Gentleness begins with inner steadiness. It refuses to spread anxiety and instead offers regulated presence.

What Emotional Maturity in Gentleness looks like:

2. Use power wisely.

Authority is a stewardship.

1 Peter 5:2–3, “Shepherd the flock of God... not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

Gentle leaders do not intimidate. They influence through example, not control.

Reflections:

How can I regulate myself before I have the next hard conversation?

Self-Control

Simple definition: Self-control is choosing wisdom over impulse.

“Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.” Proverbs 25:28

What Self-Control Is Not:

- Not willpower alone
- Not repression that eventually explodes
- Not perfectionism
- Not controlling others

What Emotional Maturity in Self-Control looks like:

1. Govern your emotions before they govern you.

Feelings are information, not authority.

Proverbs 25:28 “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.”

Self-control builds inner walls of wisdom. It does not suppress emotion, but it refuses to let emotion take command.

What Emotional Maturity in Self-Control looks like:

2. Discipline your thoughts.

Not every thought deserves agreement.

2 Corinthians 10:5 “We take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

Self-controlled leaders examine the narrative running in their minds before acting on it.

Reflection:

What impulsive thought/action most disrupts my self-control?

- **Love:** What would change if I measured this season by how well I loved?
- **Joy:** Where have I tied my joy to outcomes or approval?
- **Peace:** What limit have I been ignoring that is costing me peace?
- **Patience:** Who is God asking me to shepherd/mentor slowly in this season?
- **Kindness:** Who needs a specific word of encouragement from me today?
- **Goodness:** What mistake do I need to own without spinning a story?
- **Faithfulness:** Where am I tempted to people-please instead of set boundaries?
- **Gentleness:** How can I regulate myself before I have the next hard conversation?
- **Self Control:** What impulsive thought/action most disrupts my self-control?

BREAK

Core Beliefs and the Soul Care of Those in Ministry

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Search me, God, and know
my heart; test me and know
my anxious thoughts.

Psalm 139:23

We don't see things as
they are, we see
things as **we are.**

CORE BELIEFS ABOUT OURSELVES

CORE BELIEFS ABOUT OTHERS

CORE BELIEFS ABOUT THE WORLD

▪ I will never be good enough for my parents.

▪ I need to conceal my emotions.

▪ I'm incapable of loving others.

▪ I need to 'earn' happiness.

▪ Feeling good is not okay.

▪ I don't deserve the things I want.

▪ Nobody respects me.

▪ I'm uninteresting.

▪ I shouldn't be enjoying myself.

▪ Nobody cares about what I have to say.

▪ It's unwise to trust authorities.

▪ I need to control my environment to manage my feelings.

▪ Life is always difficult.

▪ The world is a dangerous place.

▪ Life is unjust.

▪ Risk and danger are everywhere.

▪ I'm never safe.

▪ The future is bleak for mankind.

▪ I need to look great to be attractive.

▪ Once someone knows me, they'll lose interest.

▪ I need to control my significant other.

▪ My family and friends should support my romantic relationship.

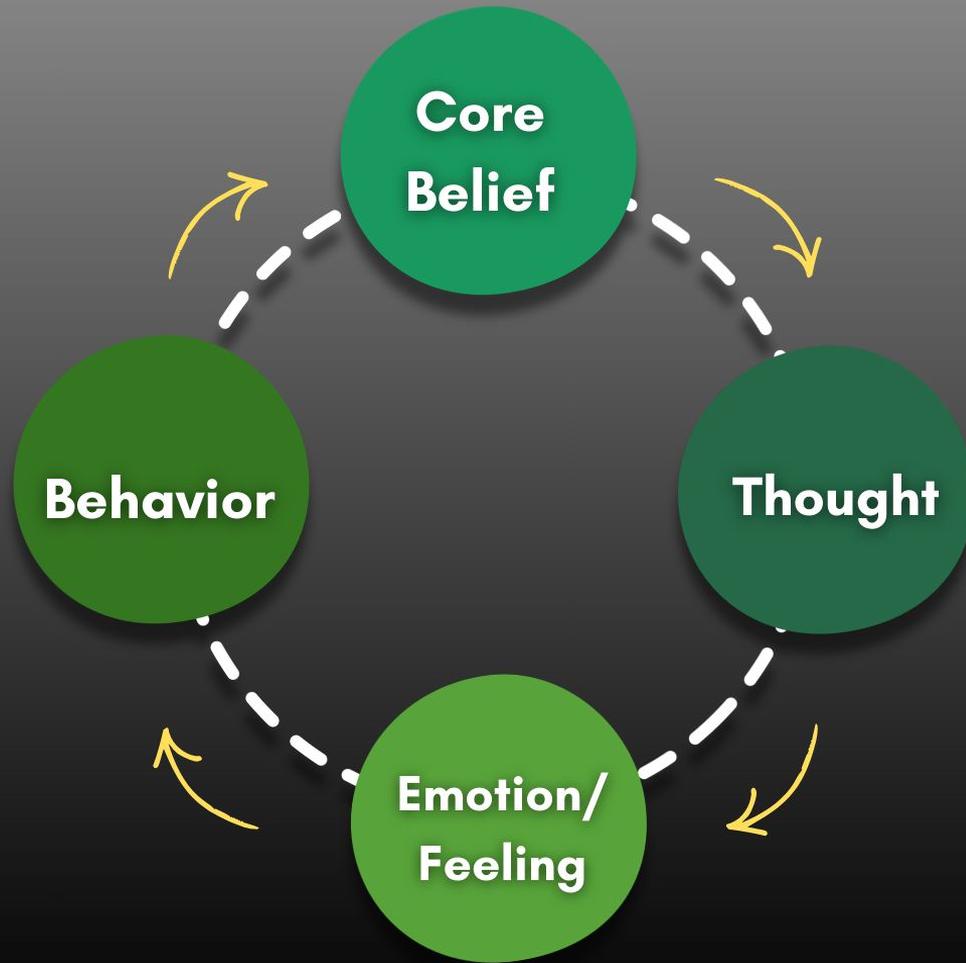
▪ I'm not a 'relationship person'.

▪ Breakups are a sign of weakness.

▪ The people I love will always end up leaving me.

▪ I'm bad for my partner.

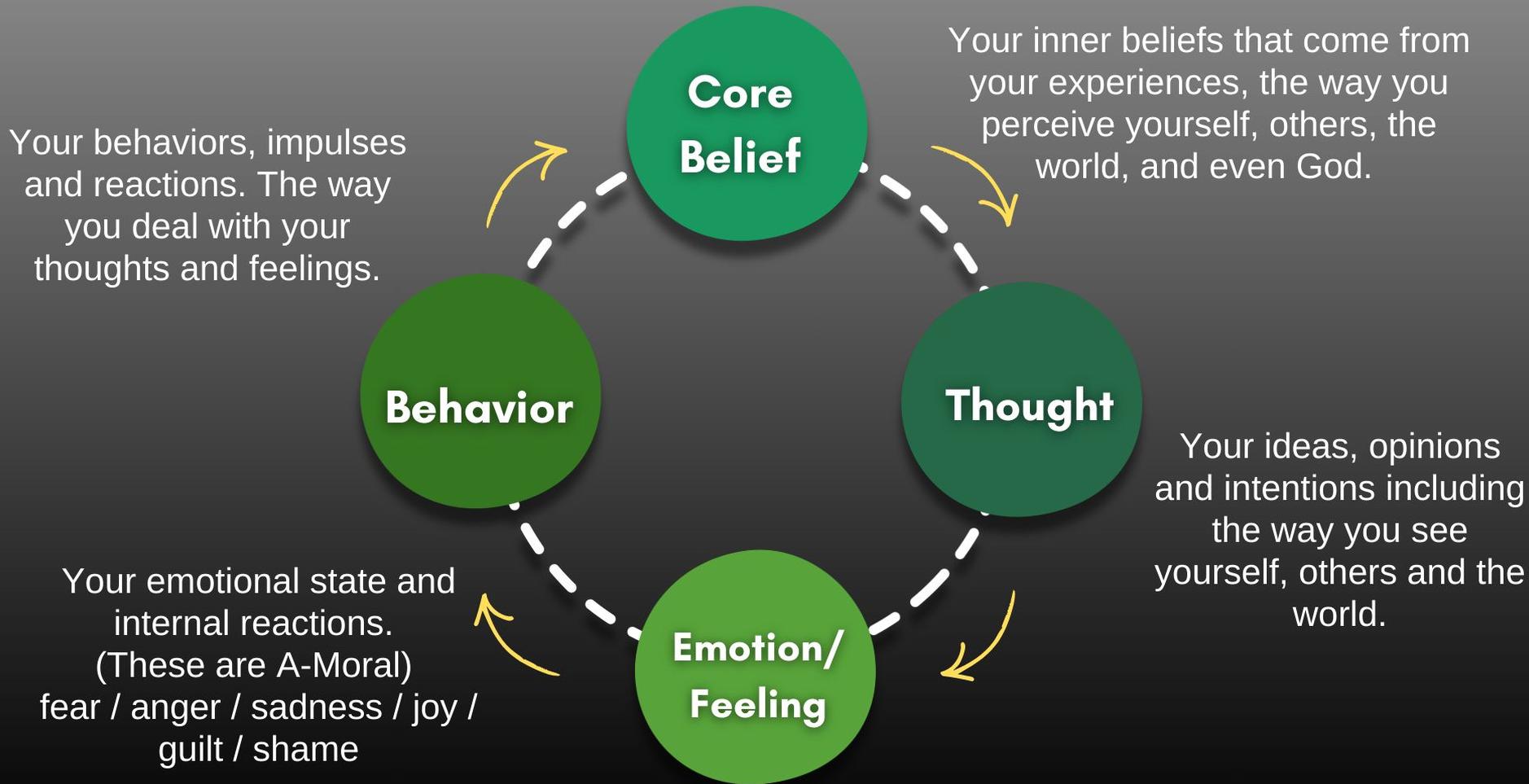
▪ Other people can't be relied on.



THERE ARE NO "GOOD OR BAD" EMOTIONS



ONLY GOOD OR BAD REACTIONS



shame

“self hatred at my expense.”

Grace

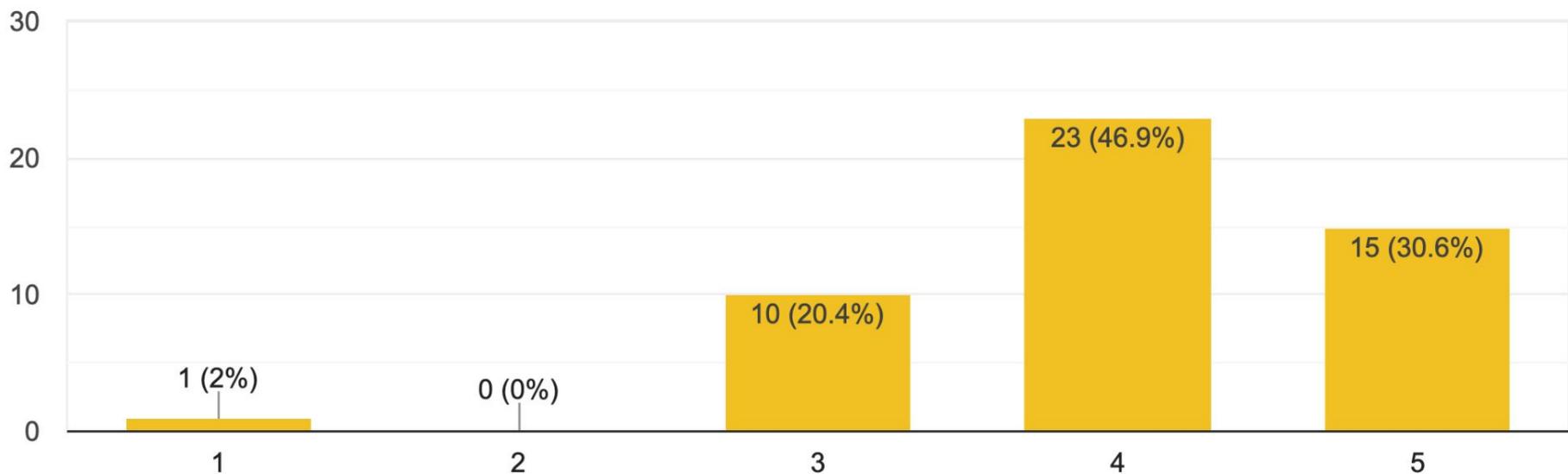
“God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.”

- **Beliefs about Myself:** These are self-directed, often rooted in helplessness, unlovability, or worthlessness.
 - "I am weak/inadequate" (helplessness: "I'm a failure if my church doesn't grow")
 - "I am unlikable/unwanted" (unlovability: "No one will stay if they see my real self")
 - "I am bad/toxic" (worthlessness: "My mistakes make me disqualified from ministry")
- **Beliefs about Others:** These project distrust or abandonment.
 - "People will always let me down" or "Others are out to get me" (unlovability extended: "Congregants will abandon me if I show weakness")

- **Beliefs about the World:** These paint reality as hostile.
 - "The world is dangerous/unfair" (helplessness extended: "Ministry is stacked against me—nothing I do will last")
- **Beliefs about God:** These distort His character or favor.
 - "God is distant/unfair" (worthlessness extended: "God won't bless my work because I'm flawed").

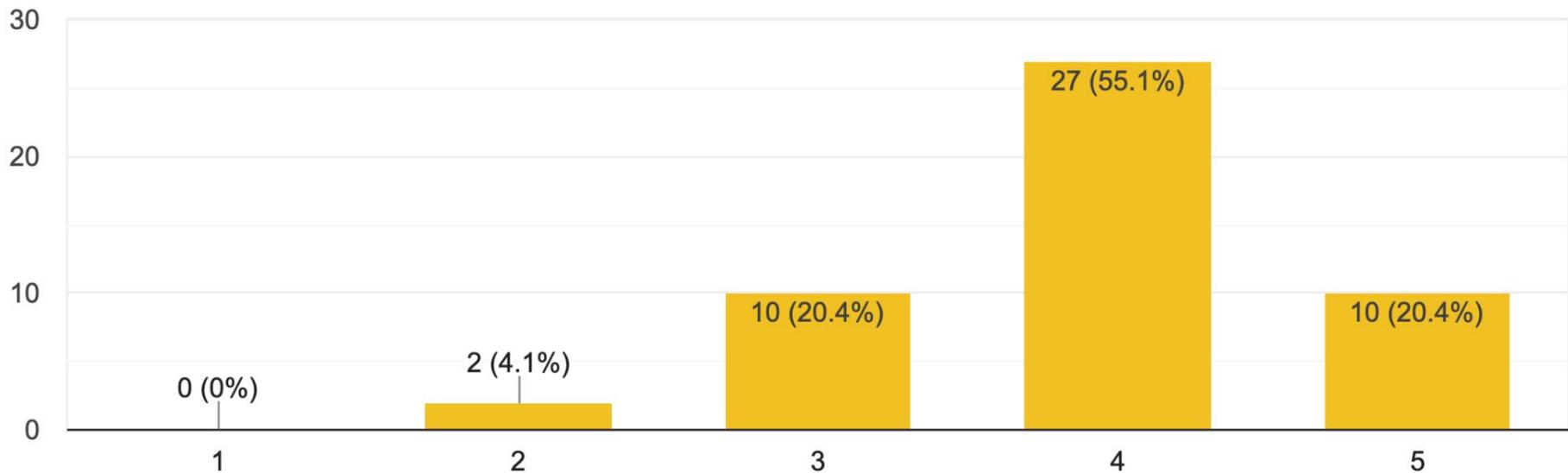
4. I feel spiritually nourished, not just spiritually busy. *My walk with Christ feels alive, not mechanical.*

49 responses



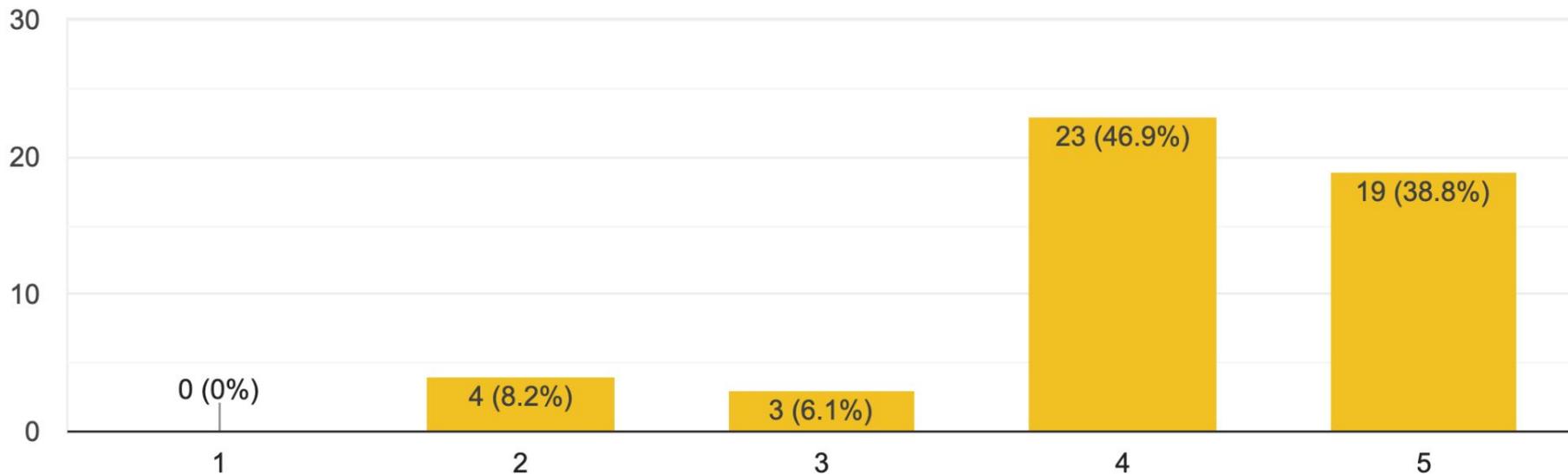
7. I can process criticism without being undone by it. *I seek growth without internalizing shame.*

49 responses



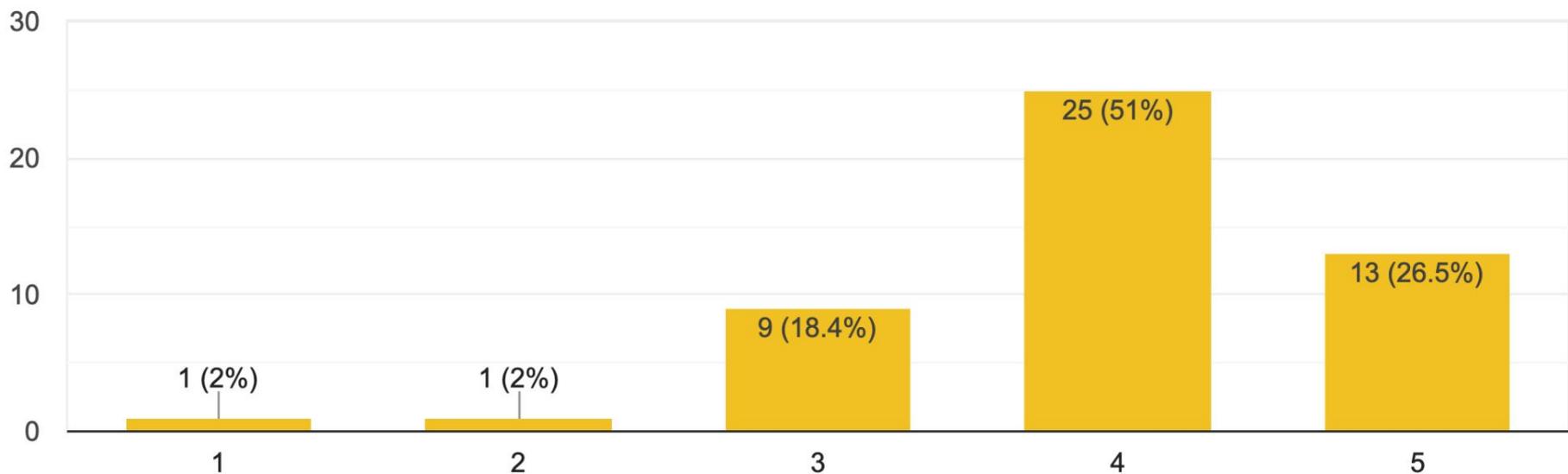
18. I can accept my limitations without shame. *I embrace being human with all of my limitations.*

49 responses



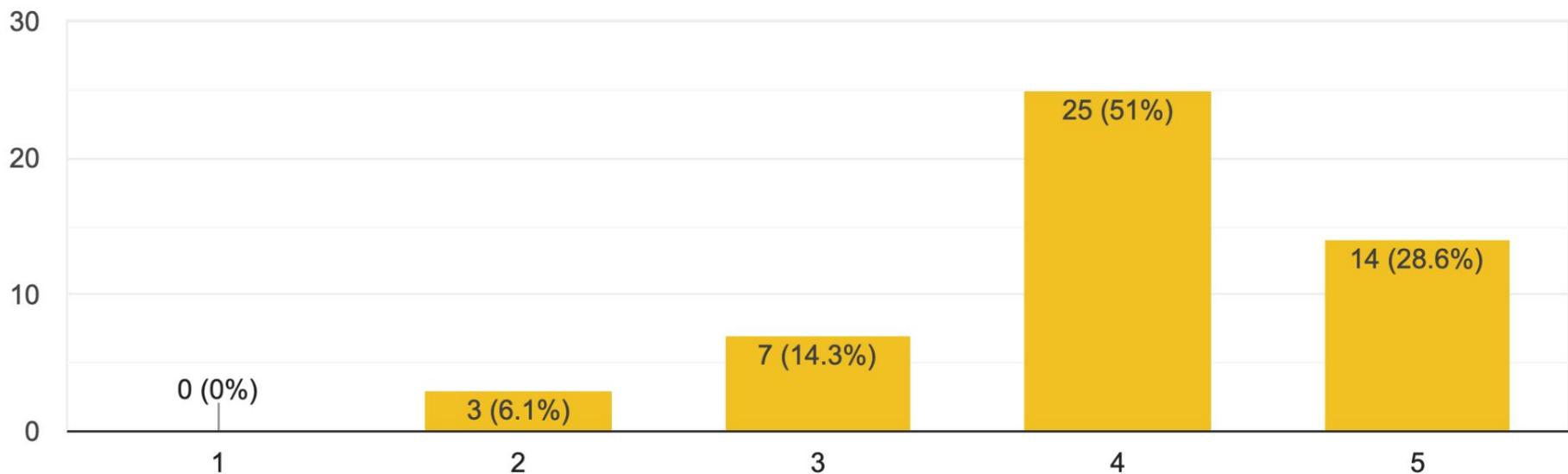
6. I notice when I am nearing burnout and take corrective action. *I recognize signs like irritability, exhaustion, apathy.*

49 responses



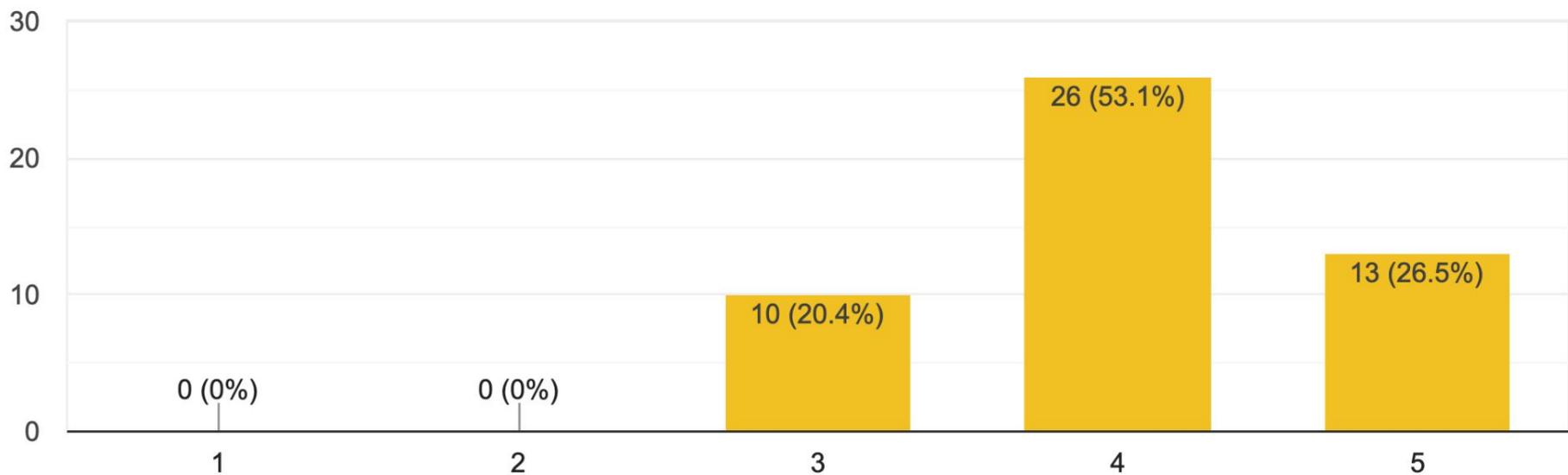
Boundaries & Self-Care 13. I can say “no” without guilt when necessary. *I don’t overextend just to please others.*

49 responses



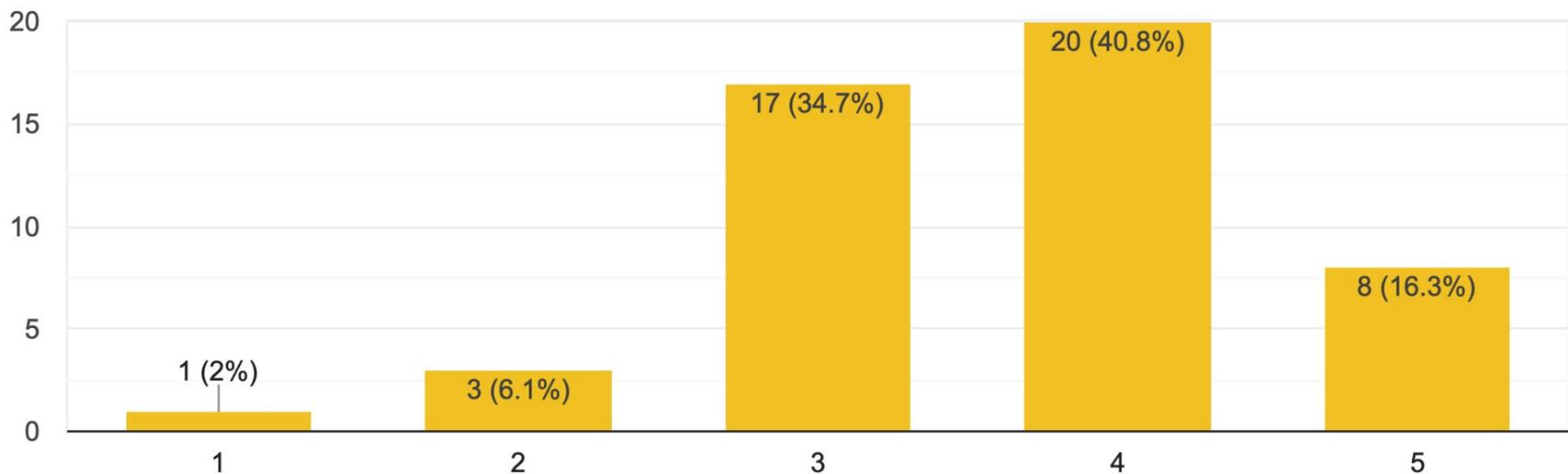
16. I do not feel enslaved to constant availability (phone, email, emergencies). *I can be present without guilt.*

49 responses



14. I have clear boundaries between work and rest. *I disconnect from ministry responsibilities regularly.*

49 responses



Boundaries:

A boundary is a property line that defines what is me and what is not me. It shows where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership. - Dr Henry Cloud

Without boundaries:

- We overfunction
- We resent
- We enable
- We burn out
- We lose clarity about
Identity and calling

With boundaries:

- We can love without controlling
- Serve without resentment
- Lead without overfunctioning
- Say yes freely because
we can say, “no” honestly

Five Steps to Format New Neural Pathways:

1. **Identification:** Naming the shame signal
2. **Reflection:** Why this belief? Childhood soil?
3. **Disputation:** Evidence trial - countering Satan's accusations
4. **Exploration:** The Truth of God's Word
5. **Adoption:** Align our beliefs and thought life with Holy Spirit, our Advocate (John 14:26), who teaches and reminds us of truth

Thank You!

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and Annual Conference 2025.



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