

# Emotionally Healthy Activism

What is it? Why is it important? Why is it Good News?

Our emotional maturity and spiritual maturity are inextricably linked and core to a discipleship that is deep and wide - especially around the most pressing issues of our day. God is calling us as His disciples to preach the Gospel in word, deed, and power; and to do that, it is paramount that we grow in our spiritual and emotional health, awareness, and intelligence. To help us grow and engage more fully, we developed the Emotionally Healthy Activism resources. Please check out an audio version of this, [here](#).

## What do we mean by “Emotionally Healthy”?

When we are emotionally healthy and mature, we are able to identify our emotions along with their origins, articulate them, and respond to God, ourselves and our neighbors in a sincere, loving, and timely way, fully engaged with our own history, experience, and context.

## What do we mean by “Activism”?

Romans 12: 1-2 says this:

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

We define “activism” to be any purposeful actions that are taken to intentionally disrupt the patterns of abuse, violence, exploitation, greed, corruption, and every other sin that is at odds with the intended will of God for all of creation.

## Who are Emotionally Healthy Activists and what is Emotionally Healthy Activism?

Emotionally Healthy Activists take discerned, purposeful, contextualized, loving action informed by prayerful reflection individually and in community. They do not operate out of the broken patterns and narratives of their cultures, families, and systems of this world; instead, they resist them. Emotionally Healthy Activism is the loving, purposeful disruption of the patterns of abuse, violence, exploitation, greed, corruption, and every other sin that is at odds with the intended will of God for all of creation by people who are:

1. aware of the wounds and gifts that they carry individually and in community.
2. committed to resisting the powers and principalities that come against God and His people and His purposes in every area of life.

To know Jesus and to follow Him is to be resistant to the powers and principalities that operate in this world and reflect the Kingdom of God and victory of Christ over sin - individual and corporate - in every area of life. Thus we believe emotional health and activism to be vital to the life of His disciples.

Please pause to reflect on these questions:

- What resonates with you about what you just read?
- Where do you experience tension, stress, or suspicion?

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## Core Patterns of Emotional Unhealthy Activism

We have identified 3 core patterns of Emotionally UNhealthy Activists that resist the humility, prudence, and selflessness called for by Jesus.. They are:

- Pride and Resistance to Learning and Correction (Proverbs 12:1)
- Narcissism and Incessant Self-Centeredness (Philippians 2:3-4)
- Hurry and Reactive Impulsiveness (Proverbs 14:8)

### Pride and Resistance to Correction

Read and reflect on the Proverbs 12:1: *Whoever loves instruction and discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof and correction is stupid.*

- What are your feelings about these verses? What thoughts come into your mind immediately when you hear the words "love" and "hate"?
- When you think about receiving feedback, correction, or criticism, what are your immediate feelings in light of last week? (Anger, fear, mistrust, excitement?)

### Narcissism and Incessant Self-Centeredness

Read and reflect on Philippians 2:3-4: *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

- What attributes stick out to you from this passage and why?
- Where in the passage do you feel inspired? Convicted? Challenged? What thoughts are behind those feelings?

### Hurry and Reactive Impulsiveness

Read and reflect on Proverbs 14:8: *The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is self-deception.*

- How comfortable are you with waiting for things you really want?
- Please describe a situation where you made a decision quickly and you wish that you had taken more time.

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