

How Are Your Accounts?

I know that if I were to ask you about your bank account status (or your financial health) that this would be much too personal of a question for me to ask you. But, relax, I am not asking about your financial account status. However, **I am going to ask you about your emotional bank accounts.** What do I mean by emotional bank accounts?

I am convinced that as humans we have to be sure to keep track of and evaluate three major components in our lives. These three form what I believe to be a 3 legged stool. **The three areas are those of spiritual, emotional and physical well being.** These three are tightly integrated together for you and I as leaders and in those we lead as well. To illustrate the integration, the 3 legged stool shows us that if one leg is not healthy then the seat is out of balance. You

may think that balance is not a big issue, but balance is essential in order for the seat to perform its intended function.

Scripture speaks loudly about these areas of our lives and honestly we as Christians probably could fall prey to the idea that all that matters is the spiritual aspect. But let me challenge you to allow God's Spirit to whisper to you in the midst of this article and His Word. In Luke 2:52, we see that Jesus grew in wisdom (intellectually), stature (physically), socially and spiritually. **Did you know that Jesus, the Messiah, fully God and fully man, needed to grow as well in a multitude of areas.** Jesus continues to discuss emotion as well in Matthew 22:37, where he mentions the need to love the Lord with all your **heart, soul and mind** (emphasis added).

I want to mainly deal with the area of emotional health in this article. One way to view your emotional health is to see it as a bank account. In banking, to keep in the black is to have a positive balance. It requires that you save more than you spend when it comes to finances. Put another way, **you have to have more in deposits than in withdrawals.** That is easy to understand and even to monitor as well. Most banks will give you a simple print out to show your balance and you can easily see if your deposits for a given time period are more or less than the withdrawals.

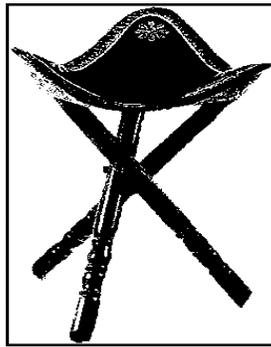
I wish it was that easy for us emotionally. **I have yet to receive an emotional "bank account statement" in the mail telling me of my status.** So how do we really know how we are doing in this area, not just for ourselves but even for those who we serve in our leadership teams?

I think a great starting point would be the list of the fruits of the Spirit. You may be saying, hold on I thought we were talking about emotional, not spiritual. Yes. But all of these

areas impact one another and I think this list will lend some light to our thoughts and emotions.

The fruits of the Spirit as seen in Galatians 5:22-23 are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. **Evaluate yourself in each of the above.** Maybe rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5. If the fruit is not there at all rate yourself a 1. Rate a 5 if it is abundant for all

to see. Choose a number in between if you are in between one of those. If you struggle with this, take a moment to list out opposites of each of the above and see if those are the negative fruit you are seeing. (You may also want to compare your heart and actions with the thoughts that Paul gives us in Gal. 5:19-21).



It takes maturity as a person to be able to understand yourself emotionally. We talk a lot about spiritual growth, but I am becoming more and more convinced that emotional growth is an important aspect of our spiritual growth as well. For example, if you are depressed you are more than likely to feed your emotions with something unhealthy. You can see the connections I believe.

One way to see more clearly is to pause and look inward. Secondly, ask those around you to tell you what they see in your smile, joy, energy, enthusiasm,

speech, etc... you will begin to see how your emotional bank account is doing.

We have looked at our current balance in our emotional accounts. Are you living healthy in the black with emotional reserves to give to others? Or are you in the red, in a deficit? Trying to do good things for others, but not having the emotional reserves to continue is a sure sign of need. These are real questions that deserve some real answers from you before God as He speaks to you. **Honestly, if you are operating in the red emotionally speaking, there is a good chance that you are not doing well spiritually either.** An evaluation of your life, the deposits versus the withdrawals, needs to be closely examined.

Now that you may have a grasp of where your account is currently, look at the area of **on-going future deposits and withdrawals.** Even if you feel you have, at the present time, a positive balance, do the work to understand yourself better now so that you can insure that you will stay healthy. If you are in the red you know the need already for continuing. ☺

How Are Your Accounts? (cont.)

You need to do some personal inventory to discover what an emotional deposit is for you. What are the things that recharge your emotional batteries? For some it is time alone. For others it is being in large groups and for some it is smaller groups of people. Family can and should be a place of input for you, but that is not always the case for some of us. I cannot analyze this for you, but **take time to think about what strengthens you**. Ask those around you to speak into your life and to tell you what they think encourages you, excites you...etc... For me, getting alone recharges me. I deeply need alone time. The two key areas of this for me are to get alone in His Word and with praise music. Secondly, is to get alone in nature (where I physically exercise as well). Riding a bicycle, walking or doing cross-country skiing are all emotionally, spiritually and physically uplifting for me. **These things make real and tangible deposits into my accounts and give me balances to draw upon to give to others.**

What about you? One of the biggest barriers for most people in this process is time and busyness. It is far too easy for us to “do” than it is to pause and listen. For many people the “doing” covers up the emptiness they feel. By staying too busy, they do not have to confront their emotional hurts. **Is that you? Are you adventuresome enough to journey into your heart and soul to really listen to what you hear there?**

It is not an easy thing to look at accounts. Many people do not do well with accounting, numbers and books. **But if you fail to read your emotional “bank statement” of accounts you may some day find yourself bankrupt.** Bankruptcy is not just a state where you do not have much, as we can all be in that state at times, physically, emotionally and spiritually. **Bankruptcy is when you are in EXTREME debt**, when you hurt emotionally or are numb, and you may have ignored or hurt others. I hope you do not find yourself there today. But the Good News is that if you are, Christ has paid your debts and maybe through this article He is asking you to start some new transactions that feed you, versus eat at you.

This personal journey and evaluation is one that is extremely critical in your leadership as well. However, you must realize that your number one priority is self-care, which will enable you to care for others in the long-term. **Those around you need emotional deposits and you will need to get to know your people to see what a positive input is for them.** You cannot protect them from having withdrawals emotionally. They need to face tough things in life and ministry and I am sure they will, but they need to have emotional reserves to withstand those times.

I recall the statements in Luke 2:41-52 when Jesus was with his family as a teen, that his mother treasured all these things in her heart, the good and the bad. I am also convinced that Joseph was treasuring the times he had with his son Jesus as well. This simple thought of having twice as many encouragements as criticism's has always stuck with me. I wish I could say that I have fully practiced these at all times, but I am growing as well. The thing for you and I to consider as leaders of others is, **do we give twice as many encouragements as criticism's/notes of improvement?** If we can always have more deposits emotionally into others than withdrawals we will know that those around us have a better opportunity for health and growth, not just emotionally, but physically and spiritually as well.

Chris Davis

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Action Items:

1. Review the following scripture individually or as a team: Galatians 5:16-24.
 - a. What do you learn about your emotional accounts from these spiritual gauges?
 - b. Can you see these as guides in checking where you are at in your emotional accounts?
2. Consider reviewing the following very insightful document on understanding self and leadership written by Dan Webster. http://www.authenticleadershipinc.com/samples/Lead_Yourself_First.pdf
 - a. What did you learn from this article?
3. Take time to list out the things that help you stay strong emotionally. Also list the things that drain you emotionally as well. Are there some of those withdrawals that you can/should get rid of? Or are they items you need to walk through to become stronger?

Emotional Deposits List:

Emotional Withdrawals List:

4. If you think of your life in the three areas (like the 3-legged stool) of emotional, physical and spiritual health, which leg is the weakest? Which leg is the strongest?
 - a. What actions would you like to take to improve the weak area?
 - b. What actions do you want to add in order to keep the strong area going?
5. As a leader of those around you in your ministry, your family and elsewhere how can you begin to make better emotional deposits and more emotional deposits into others lives?