

# Holistic Health

Practices and Mindsets for Joy in the Journey of the Ministry

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## Joy with Holistic Health

We are growing increasingly aware of the multifaceted interplay between one's:

- **Spiritual** life
- **Emotional** experience
- **Physical** body
- **Relational** reality

In their overall health, joy, and resilience.

## The Four Domains

We are:

- **Spiritual** beings with a living soul.
- **Emotional** beings with psychological realities.
- **Physical** beings with physical bodies.
- **Relational** beings that interact with other people.

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# Spiritual Health †

JOY THROUGH VARIABLES

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## Two Themes for Spiritual Health

- 1 Understanding the Law of Undulation
- 2 Leaning into Biblical Hope

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## The Law of Undulation

How busting a myth and accepting (not liking) reality can lead to joy.

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## What is the Law of Undulation?

"MY DEAR WORMWOOD, So you "have great hopes that the patient's religious phase is dying away", have you? ... Has no one ever told you about the **law of Undulation**? Humans are amphibians—half spirit and half animal. ... As spirits they belong to the eternal world, but as animals they inhabit time. This means that while their spirit can be directed to an eternal object, their bodies, passions, and imaginations are in continual change, for to be in time means to change. **Their nearest approach to constancy, therefore, is undulation—the repeated return to a level from which they repeatedly fall back, a series of troughs and peaks.** If you had watched your patient carefully you would have seen this undulation in every department of his life—his interest in his work, his affection for his friends, his physical appetites, all go up and down. As long as he lives on earth periods of emotional and bodily richness and liveliness will alternate with periods of numbness and poverty. The dryness and dullness through which your patient is now going are not, as you fondly suppose, your workmanship; they are merely a natural phenomenon which will do us no good unless you make a good use of it."

Quote from the Screwtape Letters: Letter VIII

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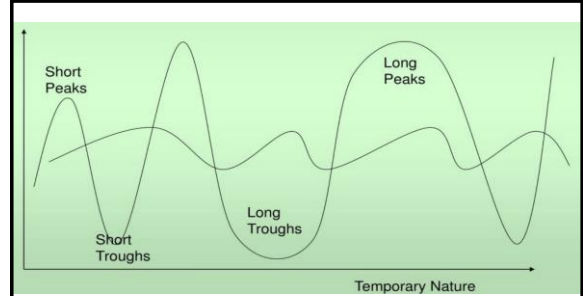


Image from [Christian Literature and Parallel Lives](#), Fundamental Principles for Counter Acting Spiritual Oscillations

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## Law of Undulation: Key Points

1. Human beings naturally hold the unconscious expectation that life should be in a constant state of goodness.
2. We typically believe that the "default setting" of life should be good and when it is not, we are perturbed until it is good again.
3. The fact that our heart craves constant good is our heart's longing for Eden to be restored... in other words – Heaven!
4. Unfortunately, life has periods (long-short, big-little, etc.) that show us that this world isn't our home.
5. Both God and Satan are at work in the peaks and the troughs.

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## Law of Undulation: Trials, Acceptance, & Joy

*"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [perseveres under trial]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* James 1:12

- Acceptance is not liking what is not likeable.
- Acceptance is not resigned defeat.
- Acceptance is acknowledging reality and that I can know God in this moment.

Positive psychology researcher, Todd Kashdan, says that the #1 thing that a person can do to feel happier is to learn to tolerate uncomfortable emotions.

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## Bottom of the Trough

CS Lewis in the Screwtape Letters: Letter VIII

"Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger, than when a human, no longer desiring, but intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."

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## Biblical Hope

1 PETER 1:1-9

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## Biblical Hope

1 Peter 1:1-9

<sup>1</sup> Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

<sup>2</sup> Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

<sup>4</sup> To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

<sup>5</sup> Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

<sup>6</sup> Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

<sup>7</sup> That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

<sup>8</sup> Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

<sup>9</sup> Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

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## Biblical Hope in 1 Peter 1:1-9

**Verses 1 & 2:** Relationship with Christ is the Basis of Hope

**Verse 3:** Believers have a Lively Hope

**Verse 4:** Biblical Hope is about Spiritual Reality

**Verse 5:** Biblical Hope is Confident Assurance

**Verse 6:** Our Abiding Joy is Not Based on Circumstances

**Verse 7:** Trusting God Through Trials

**Verses 8 & 9:** Our Faith Shall Be Sight

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Biblical Hope acknowledges both the world's brokenness AND God's restoration.

"Yes, the world is broken. But don't be offended by it. Instead, *thank God* that He's intervened in it, and He's going to restore it to everything it was meant to be. His kingdom is breaking through, bit by bit. Recognize it and wonder at it.

War is not exceptional; **peace is**.  
Worry is not exceptional; **trust is**.  
Decay is not exceptional; **restoration is**.  
Anger is not exceptional; **gratitude is**.  
Selfishness is not exceptional; **sacrifice is**.  
Defensiveness is not exceptional, **love is**.  
And judgementalism is not exceptional...but **grace is**."

Brant Hanson (2023)  
Unoffendable (Revised and Updated) p. 38

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## Spiritual Health Reflection Questions



1. Name some (A) Bible characters and (B) people in your life that have exhibited faithfulness to God through the peaks and troughs of their lives.
  - In what ways do they inspire you?
  - Remember, we are not looking for perfect people or people who did not have setbacks, sins, discouragement or failings.
2. Share some Bible verses, songs, and practices that promote gratitude and reflection on joy and biblical hope for you personally.
3. Describe some ways you have seen God's grace and restoration shine through in broken lives and in a broken world.
  - Express gratitude and praise to God!

## Emotional Health



AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT OF JOY

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### Three Areas of the Brain

**Cognition:** Thinking, learning, planning, remembering.

"Can I learn?"



**Relational:** Emotional state.

"Am I loved?"

**Survival:** Sensory processing and integration.

"Am I safe?"

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16:11

## Emotional Health

### The Practice of Facing your Shadow

- Lack of emotional health restricts joy.
  - We all have shadows from past experiences and our personalities.
- **Emotional Healthy Individual:**
  - Recognizes things might not be as they seem. (misperception easy)
  - Makes space for emotions.
  - Connects with the resources they have when emotions are present.
  - Stays connected to the present (reality) when emotions intensify.
- Knowing our shadow better positions, us to connect with present moment, regulate emotions and experience joy.

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## Emotional: Moving toward Emotional Health

1. Acknowledge the past (and personality) impacts your perception, emotions and behaviors.
  - How might my past experiences be impacting me in the present?
2. View emotions and actions as pointers toward insight.
  - What am I feeling? What did I do?
3. Seek help from trusted support.
  - Who could I invite into this with me?

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## Emotional:

### The Practice of Mindfulness as a Help

**Definition:** Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present and aware of the moment.

- A mindful person is attuned to his/her:
  - Thoughts, feelings and surrounding environment.
- Mindfulness can help regulate emotions, gain insight, and reduce the negative impacts of our shadows.

*"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*  
Psalm 16:11

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## Emotional Reflection Questions

- What are indicators that you are not in a place of emotional health?

- What is one area of growth toward emotional health for you to pursue? How might you pursue this growth?



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## Physical Health



OUR BODIES AND JOY

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## Physical Health

**Health:** The general condition of the body and the functioning of the body systems

- How we *feel* physically affects our emotional, spiritual, and relationship health

**Indicators of good physical health:**

- Normal blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.
- Good stamina and endurance for physical activities.
- A balanced diet that provides you with enough nutrients and energy.
- Drink enough water and stay hydrated throughout the day.
- A healthy weight for your height and age.
- Adequate sleep and rest to recover from stress and fatigue.

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## Physical: Develop Healthy Habits

### Healthy Habits

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Diet
- Breathing/Mindfulness
- A good understanding of your hormones/body cycles

### Learn to listen to your body

- What is your health telling you?
- How does our body respond to stress?
- How does your body feel when you're angry?
- What is your posture when you are discouraged?

**Practice activity scheduling to encourage the development of healthy rhythms.**

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## Physical: Healthy Pace

**Pace:** the speed at which something is done or happens.

*"...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," Hebrews 12:1 ESV*

**Reflection:** Who or what sets your pace?

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## Physical: Pursue Rest

**Rest:** the ending of motion or action of any kind; the freedom from activity.

The habit of rest takes **intentional** effort:

- **Physical Rest:** Slow down and quiet your mind and body each day.
- **Mental Rest:** Quiet your mind to increase awareness and focus on the important things.
- **Spiritual Rest:** Quiet the noise around you and take time alone with God.

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*"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

*Matthew 11:28-30*

## Physical Reflection Questions



- What matters are you hurrying yourself with?
- What does pacing look like in your schedule? Where have you seen success as you try to set a healthy pace in your life?
- How do you practice rest? What does physical, mental, and spiritual rest look like in your life?

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## Relational Health

JOY IN RELATIONSHIPS

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## Study of Adult Life

720 participants

1938 – Harvard Researchers

2 groups

Question Studied:  
"What makes us happy in life?"

**Relationships**

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*"Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. There is one alone, and there is not a second; ...yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."*  
**Ecclesiastes 4:7-10**

## Relational: Husband & Connection

**Are YOU there?**

- Accessibility – Can I reach you?
  - Prioritize husband.
- Responsiveness – Will you respond emotionally?
  - Allow yourself to be moved by his experience.
- Engagement – Will you stay engaged?
  - Let him know you are in it for the long haul.

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Genesis 2:18

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## Relational: Leadership & Comfort

**Invalidating**

- Dismissing, ignoring, or judging another's experience.
- "I don't know why this bothers you so much; it's not a big deal."
- "You should be thankful that..."
- "At least..."

**Validating**

Expressing acceptance of another's experience, thoughts, emotions.

- "Clearly this is a difficult situation for you. How can I support you right now?"
- "That must be really hard."
- "It makes so much sense to me that you are frustrated."

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

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## Relational: Church & Care

- Seek to understand and care based on your role in the relationship.
- Seek to let go of them being able to understand what it is like to be in your role in leadership.
- Seek to connect with others based on the experience.
- Prayerfully operate from place of shared knowledge.
- Engage with humility and interest.

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Romans 12:5

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## Relational: Realistic Mindset

Fulfillment

Difficulty

Time

Relationships don't have to be perfect to be wonderful.

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## Relationship Reflection Questions



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### **Connect**

Connecting can be challenging, particularly when we don't feel connected.

Of the three ways to connect (accessibility, responsiveness, engagement), which comes easiest for you in regard to your spouse?

### **Comfort**

Validation comes easy for some and difficult for others.

How would you assess your validation skills?

### **Care**

Take an inventory of your relationships in the church. Pick one to focus on.

What role do you play in the relationship under inspection? What adjustments could be made to fulfill that role?