

# *excess* **BAGGAGE**

Unpacking your hurts, habits & hang ups  
**SMALL GROUP GUIDE**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** Series Overview
- 5** Tips To A Successful Group
- 7** Tips for Online Small Group
- 8** Part 1: "The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality"
- 16** Part 2: "Go Back In Order To Go Forward"
- 24** Part 3: "Journey Through the Wall"
- 32** Part 4: "Healing & Freedom Through Grief & Loss"
- 40** Part 5: "Embrace Your Limits"
- 46** Part 6: "Grow Into an Emotionally Mature Adult - pt 1"
- 54** Part 7: "Grow Into an Emotionally Mature Adult - pt 2"





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## **SERIES OVERVIEW**

We all go through life with emotional baggage. Join us on this journey as we unpack some of our hurts, habits, and hang ups and discover how to live Emotionally Healthy Spirituality.

## **SERIES SCRIPTURE**

*My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak,  
but God remains the strength of my heart; He is mine forever.  
Psalm 73:26 (NLT)*

**Please observe the following in person Small Group gathering  
COVID-19 GUIDELINES:**

Wear a mask  
Maintain 6 feet social distance  
If you are feeling sick, please stay home

# TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- 1. WELCOME NEW PEOPLE.** Take time to introduce new people.
- 2. START & FINISH ON TIME.** Doing this will show your small group you value their time.
- 3. BE REAL, AUTHENTIC & TRANSPARENT ABOUT WEAKNESSES & STRUGGLES.** Some people in your group may be new to faith or new to small group often think there's a *right* way to answer discussion questions—or at least a few *wrong* things to say. So, they show up and listen in, but don't feel permission to say what's really on their minds. Set examples by sharing honest vulnerable answers. Sharing with a level of vulnerability sets the tone and gives permission for everyone—regardless of spiritual maturity—to respond authentically.
- 4. PLAN SOMETHING FUN.** Due to our current COVID-19 social distancing recommendation from the local government and CDC, we ask that any special and fun gatherings in person follow the guidelines by practicing social distancing of 6 feet apart and wearing a mask.
- 5. NO GUILT, NO SHAME.** This series is not meant to guilt or shame anyone into doing anything.
- 6. SILENCE CELL PHONES.** As a courtesy to those who are sharing in your group, please try to stay off your phones unless for emergencies. It is okay with the exception of the use of your smartphone device for online meeting (Zoom).

# TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

**7. BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

**8. MAKE GROUP A PRIORITY.** Communicate in advance when you will be unable to attend by either calling and/or texting your host or responding to the zoom email invitation by accepting or declining. This will help your host to plan accordingly especially if it is an in person small group gathering.

**9. CONFIDENTIALITY IS IMPORTANT.** Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: "What is said in small group, stays in small group." Nothing, nobody, never... Share *nothing, to nobody, never*" outside of the group.

**10. TECHNOLOGY CAN BUILD REAL RELATIONSHIPS.** Using a group texting app like GroupMe or WhatsApp makes it easier than ever to send quick logistical updates, share prayer requests, or just check in with someone mid-week. Connecting beyond your once weekly meeting communicates to your group member that *I see you and I'm thinking about you.*

**11. AVOID TALKING or TEACHING TOO MUCH.** Small groups are designed for everyone to share and grow together.

# TIPS FOR ONLINE SMALL GROUP

- 1. SEND OUT AN EMAIL INVITE.** Ensure to send out a calendar invite with the meeting details and how to connect to the meeting platform on zoom if your group meets online and/or in person.
- 2. SEND OUT A REMINDER DURING THE WEEK.** Keep everyone in your group connected by sending a reminder during the week of your upcoming small group meeting. You can do this by using text message and/or email.
- 3. ONCE ON THE CALL, START ON TIME.** For your scheduled meetings, it's recommended to get started within 5 minutes of your scheduled start time.
- 4. HYBRID GATHERING (ZOOM &/OR IN PERSON).** If you're meeting together on Zoom, familiarize yourself with the Zoom features on your electronic device. It is helpful for everyone to know where the mute button is located. Ask the attendees to self-mute to avoid environmental noise when someone else is talking & sharing. Doing this will help with the flow of your SG discussion time. If your group decides to meet in person, please practice safe social distancing by following the guidelines of being 6 feet apart and wearing a mask.
- 5. STICK TO YOUR TIME SCHEDULE.** Most small group meetings are held for about 60 minutes.
- 6. DOWNLOAD ZOOM APP.** In order to participate in the Online Small Group, download the Zoom App from your iPhone or Android. You may also download the Zoom App from your lap top PC or iPad device.
- 7. HOSTING AN SG MEETING ON ZOOM.** If you are interested in hosting a small group on zoom through New Hope Windward, let us know. NHWW small group team will help you get started. Zoom training is available weekly.
- 8. BREAK INTO SMALLER GROUPS.** For larger online groups on Zoom, it is best to break up into groups of 3-4 people during the discussion segment. Zoom has a feature that allows individuals to be grouped together in smaller clusters. This can increase more transparent conversations and provide more time for each person to join the conversation.