

## EMOTIONAL BLACK HOLES

*I have gone astray like a lost sheep.*

*Psalms 119: 176*

We each have a spark of divinity within us that connects us all to each other. This is what makes us different from all other creatures. It is how we instinctively know right from wrong, regardless of our culture or upbringing.

God is love.<sup>1</sup> Because we all have a spark of His divinity in us, we all have an innate basic need to love and to be loved. However, because we are born into an imperfect world, all of us have been disappointed and let down by others we depended on. This creates an emotional vacuum that, on a very deep subconscious level, demands to be filled.

In some people, these emotional holes are extremely large due to abuse while in others they are less extreme, having resulted from neglect. In any case, all of us have some emotional deficiency resulting from being raised by imperfect parents in an imperfect world. These emotional deficiencies are like black holes that constantly pull us down despite our personal effort to resist.

These emotional deficiencies directly impact our lives and how we relate to others at a very deep level. Often they are the basis of marital discord and problems with interpersonal relationships. They may create a fear of rejection and abandonment, a fear of not being valued, or a fear of loss of control. Regardless, this subconscious quest to

fill our personal emotional deficiency has a greater impact on our lives than we probably realize.

We all are searching for ways to fill our emotional holes. Unfortunately, some people seek to fill their emotional emptiness with things that are destructive, such as drugs or alcohol. Many of us take good things, like work, sex, relaxation, excitement, and yes, even religion, to an extreme in an effort to fill our emotional needs. However, these things only temporarily distract us from feeling our emptiness.

Some people seek the rigidity of rules and strict discipline to give themselves a false sense of control, while others reject almost all restrictions in hope of escaping from the emptiness that haunts them. However, none of these things fill our true needs. Consequently, our emotional needs often grow because we are “looking for love in all the wrong places.”<sup>2</sup> Eventually, our life may even become completely out of control and unmanageable.

Regardless, while we are searching for ways to fill our own emotional emptiness, we leave potholes behind us in the lives of individuals who are close to us, especially our children who depend upon us for their understanding of love and how to relate to others. We may sense our inadequacy and indulge our children in an effort to mitigate our sense of guilt; but, material things will not fill the emotional black holes we create in our children. We may even become frustrated with our children as they act out or use inappropriate means to try to fill these emotional holes.

Because we are so focused, without even realizing it, on filling our own emotional needs, our perception of reality gets distorted. We may be hypersensitive to certain situations or personality types. For example, we may find it hard dealing with individuals who are authoritarian, or be