



EMOTIONAL HEALTH
“How to Deal With
How You Feel ”
 Mark 12:29-30
 September 28, 2014

UNDERSTANDING MY EMOTIONS

✓ _____

✓ _____

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...’” Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

✓ Two Extremes to Avoid:
 Emotionalism: _____

Stoicism: _____

✓ God Gave Us _____ to Understand Our Emotions.

WHY I MUST LEARN TO MANAGE MY EMOTIONS

1. **BECAUSE** _____

“There is a way that *SEEMS* right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death.” Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)

2. **BECAUSE** _____

“Like an open city with no defenses is the man with no check on his feelings.” Proverbs 25:28 (NAB)

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

3. **BECAUSE** _____

“To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. . .

Those who obey their human nature cannot please God. Romans 8:6-8 (TEV)

4. **BECAUSE** _____

“[People] get lost and die because of their foolishness and lack of self-control.” Proverbs 5:23 (CEV)

“From now on you must live the rest of your earthly lives controlled by God’s will and not by human desires.” 1 Peter 4:2 (TEV)

HOW TO MANAGE AN UNWANTED FEELING

1. _____

“My thoughts are restless, and I am confused” Ps 55:2
 ASK:

2. _____

Eliphaz asked Job: “Why has your heart carried you away, and why do your eyes flash?” Job 15:12 (NIV)

ASK 3 Questions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

Everyday:

“When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

Everyday:

Self-control means controlling the tongue!” Prov.3:3 (LB)
 “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord!” Ps.19:14 (NIV)

TRANSFORMED Emotional Health

“How to Deal With How You Feel”

Mark 12:39-30

September 28, 2014 AM Worship

The Bulk of this Message is from Rick Warren however I edited and added other elements and my own personal illustrations as well as other extras.

We've been looking during 50 Days of Transformation first at spiritual health. Then at physical health. Last week we looked at mental health.

This week I want us to look at emotional health. That is how to deal with how you feel. Last week we talked about how to manage your mind.

Your thoughts. This week I want us to look at what the Bible says about how to manage your emotions. How to deal with how you feel.

Mark 12:29-30 Jesus says this “The most important commandment is this, You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.”

Hear the emotion in these words of Jesus? Jesus is saying I don't want you to just kind of love me, just kind of love God. I want you to love God passionately with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. God wants an emotional relationship with you. He doesn't want a head knowledge – yeah, I know Jesus. I know God. Blah, blah, blah, blah! I want an emotional passionate relationship that is full of feelings.

UNDERSTANDING MY EMOTIONS

Let me give you some facts about your emotions before we get into this.

1. First, God has emotions.

Many people don't realize this. God has feelings. God is an emotional God. God feels joy, he feels grief, he feels pain, he feels hatred towards sin. He has frustration with the people around him just like you do. God has emotions. The only reason you have emotions is because you're made in God's image. If God wasn't an emotional God you wouldn't have any emotions.

If God wasn't a God of love there would be no love on this planet. God is love. God created romance. God created emotions, created feelings. So God is an emotional God.

2. My ability to feel is a gift from God.

Your emotions are a gift from God. They may not always seem that way. But even the negative ones have a role in your life. Emotions are a great asset. They're the one thing that make you human.

If you didn't have emotions you'd just be a robot. You wouldn't be a human being. It is your emotional ability that allows you to love and create and to be faithful and loyal and kind and generous and all of the emotions that are attached to the good things in life.

One of the most astounding verses in the Bible is Genesis 1:26 "*Let us make man in our image.*" In our likeness. As I said the only reason you have emotions is because God gave them to you. And you were made in his image.

3. There are two extremes to avoid.

There are two extremes you need to avoid in dealing with emotions. One is called emotionalism and the other is called stoicism. Let me explain these to you.

Emotionalism means all that matters is how I feel. Emotionalism is the extreme of saying the only thing that matters in life is how I feel. It doesn't matter what I think, it doesn't matter what's right or wrong, it doesn't matter what's popular or unpopular, good or bad. What only matters is do what you feel. If it feels good do it and that extreme of emotionalism means everything I do in life is based on my emotions. They control my life, they dominate my life, they run my life and I'm a very emotional person.

Stoicism – feelings aren't important at all. Stoicism is the exact opposite. It basically says feelings aren't important at all. Feelings are not important at all. The only thing that matters is your intellect and your will – your volition and your intelligence. So the stoics say emotions are not part of life; feelings don't really matter.

It's really funny because stoics often marry emotional people. And emotional people often marry stoics. Typically often in a marriage you have one who is a stuffer and one who is a gusher. Stuffers and gushers marry. Stuffers always get frustrated with gushers because they think they're too emotional. And gushers always get mad at stuffers because

they think they're too uptight and closed down, shut down. Stuffers think you really shouldn't be sharing your emotions. And gushers think if you're not sharing your emotions you're not being authentic.

And the happy medium is where you really want to be. It's not emotionalism or stoicism.

It's interesting: There are entire Christian denominations built on these two approaches to emotions. You probably know some Christians who have decided that it doesn't really matter how you feel. The only thing that matters is the truth of the Word of God. They downplay emotions. They says it's like the caboose. The train can run with or without the emotions. It's not important.

That's not right. God gave you your emotions for a reason. God wants you to worship him emotionally. He wants you to feel it. In fact God complains in the Scripture many times you're just worshipping with your lips but not with your emotions, not with your heart. You don't really feel it.

And by the way the word "emotion" isn't used that often in the Bible because the Bible uses the word "passions" or "affections" or the number one term for emotions is "heart."

We still use that today. We say "I give you my heart." Heart is the symbol of love and emotions. Even today we say "I love you with all my heart." Of course in the Bible this is the metaphor. The mind represents the intellect and the heart represents emotions.

We now know that those are actually two different circuit systems in your brain. Your **emotions** have an amazing system as well as your **thoughts** do. Some things you just react emotionally without even thinking about it.

But some Christians say emotions aren't important. And other Christians say emotions are all that matters. When they come to church they're looking for emotion. When they worship they want an ocean of emotion. They want a quiver in the liver. If I haven't been enraptured in a moment of worship then I haven't worshipped.

That's wrong too. A lot of people are actually seeking an emotion not seeking God when they worship. And it becomes an idol too. So you can make your mind an idol and make doctrine and theology and

intellectual exercise of theology a god. Or you can make your emotion and experience a god. Both of those are wrong. Does that make sense? God gave you both a mind and emotion and they're both important to you.

4. GOD GAVE US THE BOOK OF PSALMS IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND OUR EMOTIONS.

If you have a hard time with some emotions in your life you need to spend a lot of time in the book of Psalms. Psalms has every emotion known to man in it – the good ones and the bad ones. The positive and the negative.

You read some of those psalms and you think, Why is this chapter in the Bible? It's there to teach you about even those negative emotions.

Because not all psalms are about praise and thanksgiving. There are psalms of anger and there are psalms of complaining and psalms of lament and sorrow. There are psalms of arguing with God. Every emotion known to man is in the Psalms and God is saying all of these are legitimate. I gave these things to you.

So we're going to look today at how to deal with how you feel. But what I want to do today is do **two things**. Talk to you about **why the Bible says it's important** to learn how to manage your emotions. And that's a skill. And you can get good at it. Most people are not good at managing their emotions. They're not good at it at all. But you can. And if you do you will have enormous advantages over the other people in your life if you **know how to manage your emotions**. It's the key to peace of mind, the key to success, and to a lot of other things.

Let's look at God's Word and look at first, why I need to manage my emotions. And then get into how do you do it.

WHY I MUST LEARN TO MANAGE MY EMOTIONS

Four important reasons why you need to learn to deal with what you feel.

1. BECAUSE MY FEELINGS ARE OFTEN UNRELIABLE.

They can lead you in the wrong direction. How many times have you thought, I know this is the right thing to do. I just feel it in my gut. And you do it and it doesn't work out. Every one of us have done that. Your gut is often wrong. Your intuition is often flawed. Your emotions often lead you down a blind alley. You can't depend on everything you feel.

Last week I said you don't have to believe everything you think and you don't have to accept everything you feel. Because not everything you feel is right. Not everything you feel is authentic. Not everything you feel is reality. Some of the things you feel about yourself are flat out dead wrong. Some of the things you feel about other people are dead wrong. You say, I'm sure this is the right direction, but it's not. So you need to manage your emotions.

Proverbs 14:12 says this *"There is a way that SEEMS [circle "seems"] right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death."* So your emotions are not infallible. Just because you feel it doesn't make it true. Our feelings are often wrong and they often guide us in the wrong direction.

2. BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO BE MANIPULATED.

If you don't control your emotions they will control you and you will be manipulated by your moods. If you're always guided by your feelings rather than by what's right, by your commitments, by the truth. If you're always guided by feelings other people are going to take advantage of you.

In fact salesmen and advertisers are trained in how to stir up your emotions because they know if they can get you hooked emotionally you're going to buy the product. So the color of the packaging and the music in the commercial and the things that they say in the presentation are all designed to elicit emotional response.

And if you make decisions like what you buy based on emotion it's called impulse buying you're going to buy stuff that you don't really need or want. Has anybody ever done this? Could I see your hands? We all have! You go home and you go, Why in the world did I buy that? Because the guy got my emotions and you go, I really need to buy that!

The Bible says in Proverbs 25:28 – I love this in the New American Bible, *"Like an open city with no defenses is the man with no check on his feelings."* You have no check on your feelings, you have no governor, you have no moderator. You have no manager on your feelings. He says you're like a city with no defenses.

Let me show you this verse in another translation, the New Living Translation says this *"A person without self control is as defenseless as a city with broken down walls."* **Not only are you defenseless against the manipulation of other people but you are defenseless to the**

manipulation by your old nature. We talked about that last week. Your old nature knows your moods and it just whips you around. It put is a mood in your life and all of a sudden you don't want to do what you need to do, what's right to do, what's healthy to do, what's good to do. Because you're being manipulated by a mood.

Worst of all Satan's favorite tool in your life is negative emotions. It's his favorite tool. He will use fear to whip you around. He will use **resentment** and **jealousy** and envy to whip you around. He'll use **bitterness** and **worry** and **anxiety**. He'll use **shame to beat you up.** Satan's favorite tool is to whip you around with negative emotions.

If you don't know how to manage your emotions you are helpless against Satan. You don't want to be manipulated so you want to learn the skill we're going to look at this weekend. Because he wreaks so much havoc in our lives emotionally.

1 Peter 5:8 says this *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* If you don't have self-control he will eat your lunch is what he's saying.

I need to manage my emotions...

3. BECAUSE I WANT TO PLEASE GOD.

I don't want to know just that my feelings are unreliable and I don't want to be manipulated by other people or by my old nature or by the devil but I also want to please God. **And God cannot be God in my life if emotions are god in my life.** God can't rule my life if emotions rule my life. **Jesus can't be Lord of my life if my emotions are Lord of my life.** If I make all my decisions simply based on how I feel then I've made my feelings god. And then God can't be God.

The Bible says in Romans 8:6-8 *“To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. . . . Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.”* Circle that. So you can't please God if your emotions dominate your life and they're running your life and your decisions are made based on how do I feel rather than what does God say.

The fourth reason I must manage my emotions is...

4. BECAUSE I WANT TO SUCCEED IN LIFE.

This is one of the number one predictors of success or failure in your life. Do you know how to manage your moods? Do you know how to deal with how you feel? Do you know how to control your emotions? If you don't learn how to do this you will never be the success in life that God wants you to be and that you want to be.

Study after study after study have shown that your EQ is more important than your IQ. *That for success in business Emotional Quotient is far more important than your Intelligence Quotient.* A lot of people who don't have a high IQ are very successful in life. They've got good smarts in dealing with their emotions. They've got good smarts in dealing with how they feel. As a result they are people-people. How to get along with others.

We've all known people who live by their emotions and waste their life. They get up in the morning and say, What do I feel like doing today? Not much. So they're not doing much. If you only deal with how you feel and you go based on what you're feeling you're not going to succeed in life. You're not going to make much of your life.

The Bible says in Proverbs 5:23 *"[People] get lost [he's talking about in life] and die because of their foolishness and lack of self-control."*

How many people do you know who ruin their reputation because of their lack of self control? How many people do you know who ruined a job opportunity because of something that happened on a stupid one night party? And foolishness and party and all of a sudden everything happened from an unwanted pregnancy to all kinds of different things. People get lost. People die – that's the opposite of living – because of their foolishness and lack of self-control.

When you give your heart to Jesus that includes your emotions. So when you say, "I gave my heart to Jesus," you gave your emotions to him to be managed by him. Because the heart is the seat of your emotions. Jesus wants to be Lord of how you feel not just what you think and what you do. He wants to be Lord of your emotions.

In fact the Bible says this to believers 1 Peter 4:2 *"From now on you must live the rest of your earthly lives [the rest of your earthy lives] controlled by God's will and not by human desires."*

What are human desires? It's your emotions. It's your affections. The way you feel. He says the rest of your life now that you're a believer your

life is to be controlled by God's will not by how you feel.

HOW TO MANAGE AN UNWANTED FEELING

So how do I do that? This is what I'm going to spend most of the time on today. How do I manage an unmanageable or unwieldy or an unwanted feeling? You do three things.

1. NAME IT.

The first thing you have to do in dealing with an emotion is to name it. You must name it. **What does that mean? *I've got to identify it. I've got to be specific. I've got to pinpoint exactly what it is.*** You can't manage a vague feeling. You can only change and control, manage something that you have identified. And if you don't know what the problem is in your life then you certainly can't work on it.

You are not as good in touch with your emotions as you think you are. We all think we're very, very much in touch with our emotions. No, we're not really. You may be very emotional and still not be in touch with your true emotions. And why you feel the way you feel.

I have to admit **I'm often confused about my emotions.** I'm often confused about how I feel. Sometimes I can't define it. I couldn't tell you the number of times I've been talking to my wife and Kay will say "So what are you feeling right now?" I don't know! I know I'm feeling something but I can't put a name on it. I can't identify it. I can't name it.

Any of you ever feel like this? You know what I'm talking about? I know I'm feeling something but I don't know what I'm feeling. If you can't name it you can't change it. You've got to name it first. Sometimes I feel like **David, Psalm 55:2** "*My thoughts are restless and I'm confused.*"

That's the way we are a lot of times about our feelings. We're confused.

So you want to ask a couple of questions. Write these two questions down. This is the first step to managing your emotions. To become an emotionally strong man, an emotionally strong woman, ask these two questions.

First, what am I really feeling?

What I mean by that is you need to **scratch beneath the surface.** Because what you think you're feeling is often not the real feeling. Sometimes you think "I'm feeling a little down today... I'm feeling a little discouraged..."

I've got the blues... I'm a little depressed..." You think the problem is depression.

No, that's not the problem. **You need to ask, What's making me depressed?** You look a little deeper and it was "I got criticized at work and I didn't like that." Or "I just got laid off." Or "An expectation didn't happen the way I expected it to happen." *You need to look and find the disappointment or find the worry. Sometimes it's fear. Sometimes it's repressed or put down or covered up anger.* So a lot of times what you think you're feeling, it's not. What am I really feeling here? If you stop and peel the onion a minute, "Maybe my irritation is not with you. honey. My irritation was with what somebody said to me right before I left work and came home. And now I'm taking it out on you." You know what I'm talking about? It's a transference. So you say, what am I really feeling?

Then the other question you ask is, What are my triggers? What triggered this? - is a good thing to say.

If I were to ask you to name the emotion that gives you the most trouble in your life would you be able to name it? If you don't, you're not as in touch with yourself as you think you are. Because you have certain emotions that trigger responses and you have certain triggers that trigger emotions.

If you can't talk about it it's already out of control. If you have a fear and you're afraid to talk about it, it's already out of control. It's actually in talking about it you gain control. If you don't talk it out you're going to take it out on your body. You've heard me say this before, When you swallow your emotions your stomach keeps score. Emotions weren't meant to be swallowed; they were meant to be shared. **So you ask yourself what's the trigger?** What triggered this?

- ***Sometimes the trigger can be sight.*** In other words I was at a particular place and I saw that and all of a sudden I feel very moody or very angry. It brings up something of the past.
- ***Sometimes a smell*** can trigger an emotion. Isn't that true? You smell something and it makes you feel warm and comfortable or it makes you feel afraid and angry.
- ***A trigger might be something you hear.*** The sound of somebody's voice. Or a certain noise.

- **Touch.** *The way someone touches you* can trigger an emotional response. You need to know these things. You can't manage what you don't know.
- **Taste.** **You can taste certain things** and it will send you back to childhood. And you have all kinds of experiences on that.

So you say, what am I really feeling and what triggered this?

Write this down to the side of TAME IT: I can't tame it until I name it. I can't solve a problem that I can't identify. So you start by naming the emotion that you're feeling, the negative emotion that you're feeling.

The second thing you do, that the Bible tells us to do is this...

2. CHALLENGE IT.

You challenge what you're feeling. **You don't just automatically accept what you're feeling.** You don't automatically assume that it's accurate. You don't automatically assume that what you feel is the truth, correct or even reality. You challenge it.

Are things really as bad as I feel they are? Probably not. Or are things really as good as I feel they are? Probably not.

So you need to **ask yourself some questions.** You challenge it.

David who wrote many of the psalms often asked God to challenge his emotions. That's pretty smart since God understands you better than you do. **God knows what you're feeling even when you don't know it.** And **God knows what triggered it** even when you don't know what triggered that emotion. If you say, "God, I don't know what I'm feeling, I don't know where it came from but I need your help," that's a good thing to do. David often asked God to evaluate his feelings so since God is impartial God can help you out.

The Bible says in Psalm 26:2 "Lord, cross examine me. Test my motives and my affections." What are your affections? They're your emotions. Test my motives and my feelings, what I feel, my affections, my emotions. So you ask God to help you evaluate it.

SOMETIMES YOU NEED A FRIEND TO CHALLENGE YOU. GET A PARTNER.

Get a friend to help you. That is, sometimes it's best to have a friend who can challenge what you're feeling. You've got to have a pretty close

friend to do that.

Have you given anybody in your life the permission to challenge your feelings? Or does everybody have to be a yes-man or a yes-woman to you? You feel a certain way and there's no room for "Are you sure?" Are you sure that's a correct understanding? A true friend is somebody you give permission to say, Are you sure about that? You give them the ability to challenge your emotion and say, "Brad, I don't think you're thinking correctly right now. I don't think what you're feeling is actually true..."

Job had a friend like that. His name was Eliphaz. In Job 15:12 Eliphaz asked Job "*Why has your heart carried you away, and why do your eyes flash?*" That's a poetic way of saying, How come you've run off the deep end? Why do you get so angry?

Do you have anybody who can ask you that question and you wouldn't get mad at them? You know they're doing it out of love. You need partners in your life. *You need not only a small group – that's a good place to find them – but you need a spiritual partner.* Not a lot, just one person who you've given the right to challenge what you're feeling and say, "I don't think you're thinking correctly. That's not right. Why do you go off the deep end on this? Why are you getting so angry about it?" Give somebody that permission.

Ask three questions.

Let me give you three questions to ask about your own emotions when you're trying to figure out how to deal with how I feel. Let's say you're angry or you're upset or you're irritated or you're frustrated or you're depressed or whatever, you ask these three questions:

1. What's the real reason that I'm feeling this? That goes back to what we were talking earlier. Maybe it's fear. Maybe it's worry. Maybe it's hooked into something your dad said to you years and years and years ago and when your husband said it to you all of a sudden he gets all the wrath that you pent up against your dad. Or vice versa.

The second question to ask yourself....

2. Is it true? Is what I'm feeling right now true? **There's a point where Elijah in the Bible gets so down, discouraged, depressed.** He comes crying to God and he's complaining and he says, "God, I'm the only one in the entire nation of Israel left serving you." And God challenges him, Are you

kidding me? I've got all these people who are still serving me! Why are you acting like this? You're acting like you're the only one trying to do the right thing in the whole world! No. That's not true.

So what's the real reason I feel this way? In that case he was tired. And is it true? In that case it wasn't true.

The third question – and this one is real important...

3. Is what I'm feeling helping me or hurting me? Sometimes this is the simplest thing to changing an emotion by simply saying is what I'm feeling right now going to help me get what I want to get or is it actually going to hinder me getting what I want? In other words, will I get what I want by continuing to feel this way? A lot of feelings we have feel natural but they're actually self-defeating.

For instance: Let's say you go in and you sit down in a restaurant and the service is slow. And I mean it's slow. You're waiting and you're waiting and you're waiting and waiting to be served. Then a couple comes in like fifteen minutes after you and sits down and they get their meal before you do. And you look at your wife, Are you seeing this? Are you watching this? You're starting to get a little irritated and all of a sudden you feel an emotion welling up inside of you.

You go, What's the real reason I'm feeling those? I'm hungry!

Is it true? Yeah, it's true. I'm frustrated because the service is slow here.

That is particularly true.

But then, Is it helping or is it hurting? Question: Do you get better service by getting angry at the waitress? No. Absolutely not.

So it feels good to get angry like, I came to this place!!! Blah, blah, blah, blah! You may feel better but you just got worse service. It's usually the exact opposite of what you want.

So you ask yourself is this emotion actually getting me where I want to go?

Let's say you want to change your husband or your kids or your wife or somebody who works with you. Does nagging work? Has it ever worked? Anywhere? Does nagging work on you? When somebody comes and tells you all the things you're doing wrong, doesn't that just make you want to change? No! All it does is make you defensive.

So you need to ask yourself, I know I'm, frustrated right now with this

person in my life but is expressing my frustration at them going to actually make a change and I get what I want out of this? *No, it's not. That's called managing your emotions.*

You've got to name it – here's what I'm feeling. And here's the trigger. Then you've **got to challenge it** – what's the real reason I'm feeling this way. Is it true? Is it helping me or is it hurting me?

Then the third thing you've got to do is

3. TAME IT. Or change it. You've got to change it.

You've got to make the change in the emotion that you want to make when you have that unwanted emotion.

Last week we talked about managing your mind; this week we're talking about managing your heart. If you want to succeed in life you must **learn how to master your moods**. When you have a mood, when you have emotion that isn't getting you where you want to get, you've got two options: You either change it or you channel it.

Change it or channel it. Let me talk to you about both of these things.

A. Sometimes you just need to CHANGE what you're feeling.

Some emotions are so destructive, so damaging, so hurtful, so non effective the other thing you can do is to change it. You've got to change what you're feeling.

Philippians 2:5 says this *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”* So your attitude – that includes your emotions, what you're feeling should be the same as that of Jesus. **So you ask yourself, How would Jesus feel in this situation?** Would Jesus get irritated with this waitress? No. Would Jesus be yelling at the person? No. Would Jesus be getting up wringing his hands and worrying that it all isn't going to work out? No. Would Jesus be fearful? No. Would Jesus be worried? No.

So the **bottom line** on this one is, **I instantly dismiss any feeling that doesn't make me more like Jesus**. Your attitude should be the same as Jesus. So if I'm feeling an emotion and I've identified it, Would Jesus have this emotion? No. Then that's not the way I should be responding to my wife right now. **Jesus wouldn't respond that way**. So I instantly dismiss any feeling – Jesus would not *be prideful or envious or not be bitter. Jesus would not be enraged*. I would instantly drop that attitude.

B. Sometimes you need to CHANNEL what you're feeling.

But sometimes you can even take a negative emotion that you're feeling and rather than change it, you channel, it. You channel it. What does that mean? You use it for good.

For instance: Let's say you have been the victim of injustice. You've experienced prejudice. Maybe racial profiling. You have experienced unfairness in the classroom. Unfairness because you're a man or a woman or a different color from somebody else. Or whatever. You had something unfair in your life. And naturally the emotion that's going to come up in you is anger. *That's a legitimate response.*

Is my anger going to get me what I want? Probably not. **But can my anger be used for good to help other people? Yes.** And all of a sudden you become a champion for justice. Because you know what it means to have experienced injustice. That make sense?

So you take a negative emotion – anger – and when you use your anger for your benefit that's selfish anger. That's a sin. When you use your anger for the benefit of other people that's righteous anger.

Anger is not a sin. The Bible says in Scripture, *“Be angry and sin not.”* It's *what you do with that anger* and it's the reason you're angry that makes it a sin or not. You can get angry. If somebody hurt my wife and kids I'd get angry. Because anger is sometimes evidence of love. If you never get angry about anything it means you're apathetic. It means you have no love in your life. Because if you love something, someone, and somebody hurts them you're going to get angry. That's the natural thing. Love gets angry.

God gets angry. The only reason you have the ability to get angry is because God gets angry. God gets angry at sin. God gets angry at evil. God gets angry when women are raped. God gets angry when children are molested. God gets angry when people are abused and misused and at injustice. **So you can take a negative emotion and you can use it in a positive way.**

Let me give you another example: Many of you have wanted to be married and it just didn't happen. Your love has been blocked to date. Some of you are married and you wanted to have children. And it hasn't happened. And your love has been blocked. To date.

What do you do with a blocked love? Do you pull yourself back into a prison, lock the door, pull up the drawbridge, fill the mote with alligators and say I'm never going to let anybody hurt me again! No. That's dumb. What do you do?

What do you do with a blocked love? You re-channel it. Maybe you didn't get to love the person you wanted to love. **But the world is full of people who need your love.** Maybe you didn't get to have the children you wanted to have. But there's a 137 million orphans in the world. And there are children on your street who need your love.

You re-channel a blocked love. You use it for good. You don't stew in your hurt. You use it for good. If you don't change the emotion you channel the emotion. And use it for good.

ILLUS: My Story and What I Am Trying to Do I'm not about to waste a hurt. I'm not about to waste any pain I go through. If I'm going to have it I'm going to use it for good.

What pain in your life are you using for good? Maybe you have been in so much pain you didn't even want to talk about it. Then you need to learn to manage your emotions. You need to name it, you need to challenge it, and then you need to channel it if you're not going to change it. And use it for good. God can use it in your life. Your greatest ministry could come out of your deepest pain. Your greatest ministry will not come out of your strength and successes. Your strength and successes people just go, goody for you. You're good at it. But if it comes out of your pain then it can help others.

So you change it or you channel it.

What about those ones that need changing. How do you tame a wild emotion? Some of you say, **I'm a worrier** and I can't stop worrying. I can't stop that emotion. I just worry, worry, worry. **I am a perfectionist** and I can't stop it. I just **criticize and judge and pick** and nag. I'm **lazy** and I just tend to be lazy. All these emotions. **Fear.** I'm a fearful person. **Anger.** I'm a naturally angry person. I lose my temper and I either blow up or I clam up. There's different kinds. There's Mt Vesuvius and there's the mute and there's the martyr – poor me. There's lots of ways. But it's a problem in your life.

How do you tame a wild emotion? Not by will power. [The Bible says](#)

this in Zechariah 4:6 *“You will not succeed by your own strength or power. But by my Spirit says the Lord almighty.”* You don’t change an emotion by willpower. I’m going to force this emotion to change. It doesn’t work that way. It’s not by power, it’s not by might. It’s by my Spirit says the Lord.

How does that happen? **How do you let the Holy Spirit change an emotion that’s hurting you and hurting other people in your life?** Let me give you two final suggestions. Two starter suggestions:

1. Every day ask God to fill me with his Spirit.

Every single day. I don’t get out of bed. My feet don’t touch the ground without me saying, “Holy Spirit, fill me today. I need your Spirit in my life. Because it’s not by might or by power, not willpower but by your Spirit I’m going to be able to manage my moods and my emotions today.”

Galatians 5:22-23 says this *“When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace,* [We could stop right there. I’ll just take those three! My life would be a whole lot better if my life were filled with joy, love and peace. Wouldn’t yours? But there’s nine of them here! Nine fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy and peace...]
patience [anybody need that one?] *kindness* [You are kind when the Holy Spirit fills your life. When you’re unkind there’s no way the Holy Spirit is filling your life. The Holy Spirit does not motivate unkindness.],
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness [you’re gentle when you’re filled with the Holy Spirit. You’re gentle with kids, you’re gentle with your spouse, you’re gentle with your customers], *and [notice the last one] self-control* [circle that one].”

Self-control comes from God control. The more I let God control my mind and emotions the more self-control I have. I don’t become a religious nut. I become more self-controlled. **A lot of people think, “If I let the Holy Spirit fill my life they’re going to turn me into some nut, a religious fanatic.”** No. If you let the Holy Spirit fill your life you get more self-control than you’re ever had in your life. **That’s a good thing.**

It says when the Holy Spirit controls your life He fills you with this. When you’re **filled with** love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control - that’s a **whole lot better than being filled with** anger, worry, fear, guilt, shame, worry, & these other things.

So what about it? **When you're put under pressure at work, at home or anywhere else do you know what comes out of you? Whatever is inside of you – Whatever you are full of!** And if you're filled with worry, fear, doubt, loneliness, envy, jealousy, bitterness, gossip when the world puts on pressure you know what's going to come out? Worry, fear, doubt, anger, ego, and all those things.

But when you're filled with the Spirit and the world puts pressure on you and it will – What's going to come out? Love, joy, peace, patience....

If I take a bottle of shampoo and I squeeze that bottle what comes out?

Shampoo. If I take a **tube of toothpaste** and I squeeze it what comes out?

Toothpaste. Peanut butter doesn't come out; toothpaste comes out. Why?

Because whatever is in it comes out when it's under pressure.

That's true of your life. Whatever is in you comes out when you're under pressure. When I'm full of myself almost anything can tick me off. When I'm full of God, nothing can tick me off. I'm filled with love and joy and peace. It doesn't matter what happens; I can handle it. This is nothing. I can just handle anything. **So whatever is inside of you is going to come out.**

So the first key to managing emotions is to be filled with the Spirit so you're full of love and joy. Be filled with the Spirit. And that's what's going to come out in your emotions.

2. The other thing to do is not only every day ask God to fill me with the Spirit but everyday ask God to help me manage my mouth.

You knew I was going to get to this one! Every day I ask God to help me manage my mouth. I get up in the morning and I say, Lord, put a guard on my mouth. Zip it up. *The Bible says "In a multitude of words there is sin."* Proverbs 13:3 says this, *"Self-control means controlling the tongue."*

This is what the whole 3rd chapter in the book of James is about.

There's a whole chapter in the book of James on the power of your words and your tongue. It says... *A giant horse.* You can have a rider on the horse that weighs one fourth of the horse and yet he's controlling the horse. Why? Because there's a bit in the horse's mouth. And wherever the mouth goes the horse is going.

The same is true with you. The Bible says that your tongue is like the

rudder on a big ship. A little tiny rudder can direct a big ship in any direction. The tongue is the rudder of your life. What you say is where you're going to go. And you're not going to experience what God wants you to have until you say what God wants you to say. So you say, Lord help me to manage my mouth.

Here's the last key. **Write this down. Make God's Word my word.**

In other words begin to put the words of the Bible into your mind.

Memorize some verses. Write them down on little cards and memorize them. Underline verses in your Bible. Read the Bible every day. Listen to the Bible. Subscribe to Drive Time Devotions. Get the Word of God in you. Every day. Feed yourself on the Word of God. Then when his Word becomes your Word you're going to see miracles take place in your life.

Psalm 119:11 says this *"I have hidden your word in my heart [What's your heart? That's where your emotions are.] that I might not sin against you."* And Psalm 19:14 *"May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight O Lord."*

Notice the connection between your heart and your mouth. *What's inside your heart is going to come out of your mouth.* Jesus said, "It's not what goes in you that makes you unclean; it's what comes out of you that makes you unclean....." **My heart is revealed in my words. So some of you what you need to say is God I need a heart transplant.** I've got a *bitter* heart. I've got a *worried* heart. I've got an *angry* heart. I've got a *lonely* heart. I've got a *prideful* heart. I've got an *arrogant* heart. God, I've had a *jealous* heart. I've got an *envious* heart. I've had an *impatient* heart. God, I need a heart transplant."

When you say that to God and you say, fill me with your Spirit, he'll put a new heart inside of you. And when you get a new heart you get new words and your words direct your life.

Prayer:

Father, I thank you that you are an emotional God. I thank you that you gave us the ability to feel. That we're not robots. That we're not unfeeling, uncaring, that we can experience both highs and lows in life. Help us to avoid the extremes of emotionalism that all that matters is how I feel and stoicism the feeling that things aren't important, feelings aren't important at all. Thank you for the book of Psalms that shows us that every emotion is understood by you and that you can give us the power to change it or to channel it.

Now you pray. Say, Lord, I know that my feelings are often unreliable. I don't want to build my life on feelings; I want to build my life on your truth. I don't want to be manipulated by other people. Or by Satan. I don't want to be manipulated even by my own old nature. But I want to be self controlled and alert. More than that, Lord, I want to please you. I want to do the things that please you. I want you to be the Lord of my emotions. I want to succeed in life by being controlled by your will not by my feelings. So help me to practice what I've just learned this week. When I start to get upset, when I feel overwhelmed by very strong emotions help me to name it, help me to figure out what am I really feeling and what's the trigger and what triggered me and why am I feeling this way. You've said in your Word that wisdom gives a man patience. Help me to understand my emotions. Where they came from. Then Lord, help me to challenge my emotions. To not automatically accept them as the gospel truth. But to ask is it true and is it helpful and is holding on to this emotion going to get me the result I need? Help me to realize the real reason that I feel what I'm feeling. And to challenge my emotions and not to just automatically accept them. Then help me to change or channel what needs to be changed and channel what could be used for good. Dear God, beginning right now I'm asking you to fill me with your Holy Spirit. I want my life to be filled with love and not hate. With peace not chaos. With joy not sorrow. With patience not impatience. Lord, I want to be kind. Fill me with goodness. Fill me with faith. Fill me with gentleness. Fill me with self-control. Help me to develop the habit of asking you to fill me moment by moment. Then Lord, most of all I ask you to help me to manage my mouth. May I learn to put your words in my mouth and to speak the Word of truth. In your name I pray. Amen.