

HANDLING EMOTIONS



Overview:

Certain emotions are difficult to experience. How do we deal with them in a way that honors God?

Lessons:

1. How Emotions Work
2. Addressing Your Anger
3. Facing Fear
4. Struggling with Sadness



HOW EMOTIONS WORK

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/Handling-Emotions

TALKING POINTS

Feeling angry, sad, or afraid? God created all of our emotions, and he can use every part of our emotional life to help us grow mature in our relationship with him.

- Emotions are a part of _____. Some emotions are great, but others are more difficult. Yet God created all of our emotions. He can use your emotions to help you grow in _____ him.
- The Psalm writer is not _____ to express sorrow, regret, depression, and shame. Yet, many people feel that the _____ life is mainly about ideas and actions, and it can be confusing to know where emotions fit. **Psalm 42:3-5,9**
- Because of our _____, emotions so often are expressed in negative and harmful ways, but they can also be expressed for _____. Jesus experienced anger and sadness without sin. **Ephesians 4:26**
- Process your _____ by spending time asking God to show you your heart and life. Then respond to your feelings in a way that _____ God – not by stuffing them, but by choosing God's ways in spite of how you feel. **Psalm 42:9,11**

DISCUSSION

1. *Do you ever find emotions confusing? If so, in what ways?*
2. *Do you think emotions are good, bad, or neutral? Explain.*
3. *Read Deuteronomy 9:22. In what ways are God's emotions like ours, and different from ours?*
4. *Read Matthew 26:37-38. What do you learn from the examples of Jesus' emotional life?*
5. *Why is it important to reflect on your emotions in God's presence? How would a person actually do that?*
6. *Read Psalm 42:9,11. How can you respond to your feelings in a way that honors God – without denying or burying them?*

ADDRESSING YOUR ANGER

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/Handling-Emotions

TALKING POINTS

Anger is often destructive. But anger can be good when it impels us to take action for things that matter.

- Everyone experiences anger. Anger is a _____ emotional response with a _____ expression.

- Human anger is usually tainted by _____, as a selfish response to not getting what we desire or think we deserve. Yet it is possible for our anger to be _____. **Ephesians 4:26-27**

- Evaluate your anger.
 - Don't deny that you're feeling angry. Allow yourself to feel it but do it _____. Hit a pillow or scream in the bathroom but don't take it out on anyone.
 - _____ whether your anger is righteous or not. Are you responding to an injustice or are you just mad that someone wronged you.
 - _____ the deeper issues. Find out what is making you so angry. Pray about it and _____ your emotions to God.

DISCUSSION

1. *On a scale of 1 to 10, does your anger tend to simmer on the inside (1) or explode for all to see (10)? Give some examples.*
2. *What are some ways you have seen anger cause harm?*
3. *Read Matthew 21:12-13. Can human anger ever be good? Why or why not? How would you describe Jesus' emotions in this passage? What does this teach us about anger?*
4. *Why do people feel a need to deny their angry emotions? What happens when they do?*
5. *Read Ephesians 4:26-27. How can you tell whether your anger is righteous or not?*
6. *In what ways can anger reveal deeper issues beneath the surface of the soul?*

FACING FEAR

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/Handling-Emotions

TALKING POINTS

We all have different fears, some reasonable and some not. Fear can protect us, but it can also paralyze us from honoring God.

- Fear takes many _____: dread, terror, anxiety, worry, and more. Fear is a _____ reaction to danger or the threat of pain.
- Fear can be good because it can _____ us from real dangers. Fear can also serve evil. Fear can keep us from _____ God.
- The emotion of fear is not _____ to faith. Faith is about action, not emotion. However, the _____ of fear is the opposite of faith. **Psalm 55:4-5**

DISCUSSION

1. *On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you like scary movies or amusement park rides?*
2. *How is fear both a common and a unique experience?*
3. *When can fear be helpful? How have you experienced that?*
4. *Read Psalm 55:4-5. When can fear be sinful? How have you experienced that?*
5. *Read Matthew 26:36-37. "The emotion of fear is not opposed to faith." How did Jesus demonstrate this? How can you harness your fear to propel you to do what God wants you to do?*
6. *How can a person evaluate what action to take when facing some particular fear?*

STRUGGLING WITH SADNESS

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/Handling-Emotions

TALKING POINTS

No one likes being sad, but surprisingly, God can use sadness to make us better people.

- Everyone will experience _____. Sadness is emotional pain that results from any kind of personal _____.
- Sorrow can be good and bad. Sadness can be _____. Our sense of loss may be related to selfish life patterns or self-centered goals. It can be a result of _____ the wrong things in life. But the Bible gives many examples of godly people experiencing sadness.
- God can use our sadness to _____ us.
 - God can use sadness to _____ what we value. It can cause you to evaluate what things really matter enough to truly be mourned.
 - God can use sadness to _____ our souls. Sorrow can make you a deeper, wiser, more compassionate person.
 - God can use sorrow to develop greater _____ on him.
- God can use you to help others with their sorrow. We can show _____ and care for others because we can relate to their pain.

DISCUSSION

1. *What is the last movie that made you cry? What happened?*
2. *When is sadness sinful? Give an example.*
3. *On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you expressing sorrow openly or in public? Explain.*
4. *What are some examples of things you've been sad about that weren't worth your energy? What are some examples of things that were painful in your life that were worth expressing your sadness?*
5. *Read 2 Corinthians 7:10. What are some ways that God can use sadness to transform us?*
6. *How have you discovered God at work during times of sorrow?*
7. *Read Romans 12:15. Who was there to weep with you in your sadness? What did they do that helped you the most?*

