

# Inside Out: God Transforms My Emotions

## SESSION 6 WHATEVER YOU DO: TYING EMOTIONS & ACTIONS TOGETHER

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17 (NIV)

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<sup>12</sup>Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.<sup>14</sup>And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

<sup>15</sup>Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

### Discussion on John 13-17

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Because of the length of last week's homework assignment, I thought we'd take time today to go through these chapters together and discuss what stood out to us. Here are the instructions to apply to your copy of the text, whether handwritten, typed, or just printed out.

1. Use a highlighter or crayon to color each mention of GOD's love. Use pink if possible. Put a heart in the margin.
2. Use a highlighter or crayon to color each mention of OUR love. Use yellow if possible. Draw a sunshine in the margin.
3. If you want, follow the above instructions for other significant words: GLORY, UNITY, OBEY, ETC. (ie: orange crown, green leaf, blue exclamation point)
4. Make a list of 5 takeaways about how YOU are meant to reflect God to the world.

## SESSION 6 : REFLECTING ON HOW I USE MY EMOTIONS

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Now that we've established that negative emotions aren't inherently sinful, the next step is to determine what it means, then, to use our emotions wrongly. I've started observing myself and others, and the ways that we often misuse our own emotions in ways that neither reflect nor glorify God. Here's one of many stories that can illustrate my point.

When I was 16, my older brother went away to college in Ohio. Even though we weren't *particularly* close, I was suddenly overcome in Pre-Calculus one day, thinking about his departure and the change wrought upon our family. As far as I was concerned, my WHOLE LIFE had changed. I'd never know life without him in it, day in and out, so being 16, emotional, and a touch melancholic, I welled up in tears right there in Pre-Cal.

Well, my teacher, who had also taught my brother saw my display and gently called me out into the hall to console me. When I told her why I was crying, she got a bit stiff. Then, without being overly brisk on one hand or tender on the other, she told me how her brother had been killed in the Air Force when she was a teenager. Of course, that dried me right up.

She wasn't a teacher I knew well or closely, so it felt awkward and strange to have this bit of information about her personal life. I went back into class soberly and spent the rest of 11<sup>th</sup> grade making sure we never had another meeting in the hallway.

My takeaway from my teacher was clear. My grief is bigger than yours. Your shouldn't be sad. You should be thankful. Suddenly, my grief, which felt real, solid, and significant, seemed stupid, meaningless, and childish. ***The thing is, reconstructing someone's emotions for them based on your own doesn't really work. Nonetheless, we do it all the time.***

I didn't really feel better, or even thankful, after talking to my teacher. Instead, I felt embarrassment on top of grief. I'm sure she was trying to be helpful (or perhaps just get me to shut up my crying), but she made a mistake that a lot of us make when our emotions are driven by our own spirit instead of God's loving Spirit.

In this story, what I experienced was emotional competition instead of empathy. We do this in lots of situations when we disapprove of someone's

reaction, typically judging it by our own--whether or not someone else's emotions are the size or intensity we would feel. We emotionally compete. Instead of receiving another's emotions in love, we react and reject and compete to glorify ourselves.

This is just one of dozens of examples we could give about how we can misuse our emotions. Looking back over our list of emotions from week 1, what are some other examples of ways that we use our emotions that don't reflect Christ?

1 Jn 2: 15, Eph 4: 26, Prov 24: 17, Mt. 6: 25, Ph 4:6, Lev 19:17

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In our own human power, we just don't know how to demonstrate selfless agape love. WE JUST CANNOT DO IT.

What we've seen with Jesus, is that he *receives* the emotions, whatever they are. Think of Mary and Martha and his responses to them.

Then he makes a promise to *transform* us and our emotions by his love if we *receive it*.

He asks us to acknowledge our belief in word and in deed.

Then he asks us to *remain in that love*.

What I am starting to recognize, little by little is that the ACT of speaking and acting on my belief is a discipline of acknowledging my belief in Jesus. As I exercise my belief, I remain in his love. My emotions reflect the “passion” of his love.

On the other hand, little by little the ACTS of complacency, of internalizing and silencing my beliefs develops a habit of disassociating myself from my belief in Jesus. As my belief atrophies, I fall out of his presence. My emotions become hollow, irritable, jaded, and selfish.

### **What’s the point?**

Our emotions are kind of the barometer of whose spirit/Spirit is in charge. So this week, in addition to reading about the LAST day Jesus had on Earth, we are going to be deliberately reflecting upon and journaling about our emotions. Just the act of recognizing our emotions should trigger a spiritual gut check. *How do I feel? How do I feel about how I feel? And how does God feel about how I feel?*

I would like you to do this on your own, in a journal or in this notebook, but I’m also going to put some threads on the Inside Out FB page that you can storytell on. The fact is, sometimes we are on social media reflecting on our feelings more than we are sitting in a chair with a journal. The threads will basically be the names of emotions and the comments can include any thoughts or experiences that relate to that emotion. If you experience an emotion that isn’t included, go ahead and start a new thread. 😊

## **HOMEWORK WEEK 6: HOLY WEEK THURS PM-FRIDAY PM**

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Matthew 26:17-27:66; Mark 14:12-15:47; Luke 22: 1-23: 56; John 18:2-19:42

1. Record words and actions that reveal emotion.
2. What is Jesus view of emotion?
3. What questions does this passage raise about emotion and God's design?
4. What applications can you draw for your own emotional life?