

Inside Out: Walking IN the Spirit

SESSION 8 PLUGGING INTO THE POWER SOURCE

1 GALATIANS 5:16-26 NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

¹⁶So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^[a] you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.



Reflections on Last Week's Homework

Take notes on what the other ladies say. It may help you to think of something.

1. From your reading about Christ's resurrection, did you make any observations about emotion? Take a minute to share with the group.
2. Were you able to find time to spend with the Lord this week? What did that look like? What worked? What didn't?
3. In reflecting on your own emotional life, what have you realized over the last seven weeks?
4. In studying Holy Week and Jesus' emotional life, what has stood out to you?

SESSION 6 : USING MY EMOTIONS FOR GOD'S GLORY

As I stated much earlier in this study, I keep thinking about the kind of ceramic Christmas tree pictured on the previous page as a good illustration of how our emotions can function.

These ceramic Christmas trees have a cylindrical lightbulb that fits into the hollowed-out center. When the tree is plugged in, the lightbulb is illuminated and the colored plastic glows, sprinkling little rainbow confetti colors all over the walls. But the plastic pieces do not have power any power of their own. Even the lightbulb does not have power. Possessing the tree and the lightbulb do not create any power. Understanding the need to plug in the tree is also not enough to get the colors upon the walls. Even a vast working knowledge of electricity is of no use whatsoever in getting the colors to cast themselves around the room. The fact is, the lights will only glow WHEN and AS LONG AS they are plugged in to the power source.

We were created by God with an array of colorful emotions. Designed in God's likeness, we are emotional, not because we are sinful, but because it is part of HIS nature that he made us to emulate. HE IS EMOTIONAL. Our emotions are a creative expression of who HE has made us to be, with free wills and feelings and thoughts. He likes us to display our emotions the way that He does. He does NOT like when our emotions don't reveal him. Like the lights on the ceramic Christmas tree, our emotions are colorful, but without the illumination and the indwelling power of the Spirit, our emotions just don't function according to design. They are flat, weak, and ineffective at bringing change to our environments.

Broken, faulty emotions don't glorify God or point back to him. They might be self-seeking or feeble or just erratic, but without connection to their designer, our emotions don't beautifully display God's glory.

In studying Jesus during his emotional journey toward the cross, we've learned a lot about what got him "fired up." We've realized a lot about when and how Jesus' emotions, which were fully plugged into the Spirit, glorified the Father. So for our final meeting, I thought we'd revisit some of the things that stood out about keeping our emotions connected.

Reflecting Christ from the Inside Out

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From our first week, studying the Triumphal Entry, I was impressed by how much God requires and passionately LONGS for our recognition of Him as Father and God. Scripture is replete with commands to give him honor and praise and confess him as Lord and glorify him and on and on. HE IS GOD. His design is written on our lives and coded into our DNA, but we are given FREE WILL, which means that we have the ability to deny, reject, disown, ignore and betray him. He seems to understand and empathize with a gamut of emotions from anger to fear to grief, but man, he doesn't like dispassion, apathy and complacency. He says that if we are "lukewarm" he will spit us out of his mouth. He PASSIONATELY wants us to recognize him as Father and belong to him as children. He wants us to KNOW him as again, as the maker of our image, which reflects Him and his emotional nature.

Psalm 63; Psalm 91:14; Matthew 10: 32; Romans 10: 9; John 6:69; John 10:26-28

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Jesus' interaction with Mary and Martha after Lazarus died shows us that he was an emotional man. He weeps. Even knowing that He will momentarily raise Lazarus, he fully feels his grief. Not only that, we observed that Jesus' reaction to each woman seems to mirror the type of emotional expression she shows. He meets Martha's pragmatism with pragmatism and Mary's sadness with sadness. He doesn't belittle emotion but receives his own emotions and the emotions of others thoughtfully and empathetically. He accepts what he and others are feeling in the moment. He doesn't usurp the feelings of the moment with trite statements. He acts emotionally without being sinful. He invites and welcomes all sort of desperate people into his world without a barricade to relationship.

John 11: 1-37; John 14: 6-9; Matthew 20:34; Luke 22: 42; Mark 10:21; John 4:7

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Not only does Jesus receive emotions without reluctance, he responds to them in a very consistent way. Jesus' emotions are ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS about love. His angry fit in the temple is ZEAL, a passionate love, to protect his Father's house. His tirade at the hypocritical Pharisees is punctuated by a broken-hearted plea to gather them as a mother hen gathers her chicks. His weeping at Lazarus' tomb is about his love for his friends and their grief. His responses and reactions are ALWAYS motivated by a love for His Father and His Father's children. Even his anguished response to the anxiety he feels approaching his death is "your will be done"—a loving submission to God's command.

Mt. 23: 37; John 2: 14-17; Lam 3:32; Hosea 2:23;

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The fact is, the answer to personal emotional transformation is not complicated at all. It is quite simple. Of course, we all know that simple doesn't necessarily mean easy. Just like the ceramic Christmas tree, we have to STAY plugged in. If we are plugged in, we are illuminated. If not, NOT. We have no source on our own. Our emotions just need a constant, continuous supply of the Holy Spirit. It isn't a rechargeable battery. I remember reading something interesting about the fruit of the Spirit once. We do not *grow* the fruit by hard work. The fruit IS of the Spirit—not of us. Thus, as we are remaining in the Spirit, we have fruit, immediately. The emotions love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control are organic outcomes of connectedness with Christ. Continuous abiding means continuous fruit. And how do we remain, abide, or stay in step with the Spirit? *It is through the WORD*, the Sword of the Spirit. HE IS THE WORD. We have to let the WORD, dwell in us.

Ephesians 6:17; John 6:63; John 15:7; Gal 5: 24-25; Col 3: 15-16

John 15: 4 **Remain in me**, as I also **remain in** you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must **remain in** the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you **remain in me**.

Looking back at the passage at the start of this lesson, what is one key takeaway for you about what needs to happen in your life?
