

OUR EMOTIONS

*How the Holy Spirit of God enables us to
handle our emotions in a Godly manner.*

6 Part Series

Study Guide

By Erilynne Barnum

Our Emotions
STUDY GUIDE

By Erilynne Barnum

Copyright © 2004 by Erilynne Barnum

All rights reserved.

Lesson outlines in this book may
be reproduced only for small group handouts.

CALL2DISCIPLE



Contact:

call2disciple@gmail.com

203.383.9320

www.call2disciple.com

Main Address:

PO Box 1493, Fairfield, CT 06825

Finance Office:

c/o All Saint's Church, 3560 Kings River Road
Pawleys Island, SC 29585

Our Emotions

All of us have to deal with emotions as it is part and parcel of being human. We are capable of profound sorrow, incredible joy, strong anger, bitterness, or resentment because of hurt or betrayal, as well as deep love and caring. We also often experience emotions that tend to frighten us which can hinder our growth as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are often taught to believe that virtue is found in keeping the “stiff upper lip” and that an outward show of emotion somehow indicates a lack of control which doesn’t become the Christian life. But, when we look in the Scriptures at how God has revealed himself, we learn he was capable of great emotion and speaks often of his burning anger, vulnerable love and deep grief. Then as we read of the Lord Jesus Christ, who being God and the perfect human being, we see that he at times displayed great emotion such as when he turned on hypocrites with anger and looked on the rich young ruler with great love. He both rejoiced in his spirit and sweat drops of blood in spiritual agony. We are told that he was easily moved with compassion and even wept openly and publicly.

Therefore, we can deduce from these things that our emotions are not to be suppressed. In fact, they seem to have an essential place in who we are as Christians and therefore, in our discipleship process. The Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, not only instructs our minds in the knowledge of the Lord, but he also pours into our hearts the love of God. This selfsame Holy Spirit causes us to say ‘Abba, Father’ and though we have not yet seen Jesus, we already love him and trust him being filled with “inexpressible joy”.

We are encouraged in the Psalms to lift our hands up to the Lord, to sing aloud with great joy, and even to clap our hands and dance before him. The Scriptures call upon us to greatly mourn our sinful flesh and to cry out to the Lord for his salvation. The Lord God expects that we should be greatly moved by his glory and the revelation of his grace and love and he is pleased when we bow down in great humility to joyfully worship his holy name.

Part of the discipleship process is learning how to deal with the whole range of our emotions. Our perspective is so often distorted by the sinfulness of our flesh and the world around us. This is especially true when our emotions become explosive. They can seemingly come upon us with little warning and we are often confused as to what we are to do with them. Is there a way to handle anger, fear, jealousy and envy, bitterness, lust, or pride in a Godly manner? Do the Scriptures speak to this and is there a way to experience the joy of our emotions and still know how and when to curb the negative side of these things with proper balance?

During this six-week study we will ask these questions as we sit under the Word of God. We will seek the Lord’s answers looking to understand how we are empowered to live as he intends for us to live, to the praise of his glory.

Lesson 1 - How to Handle Anger

Let's first look at the introduction preceding this page. Anger is a problem we all have to deal with. Are there any times when it's okay to be angry? How do we handle this in a Godly way?

Teaching:

- What is anger?
 - biblical definitions
 - how we experience it
- Why anger?
 - from God's image to self-centeredness Genesis 3, 4
 - violation of self (imagined or real)
 - my rights - my life
 - my person - my world
 - within context of worship Genesis 4:1-5
Matthew 5:21-24
 - sin of disobedience Exodus 17:5-7, Numbers 20:6-12
 - doing things MY way Jonah 3:10-4:11
- What does God say?
 - anger and sin are never far apart Ephesians 4:27, 30-32, James 1:19-20
 - giving place to God or the devil
 - the achieving of righteousness
- What does it take?
 - your offering Romans 12:1-3, 9-21
 - resting and trusting in the Lord 1 Peter 5:5b-11, Psalm 4

Discussion:

- Talk about the things that make you most angry. What kinds of situations cause the strongest angry reactions within you?
- In what ways can we begin to see the difference between a "righteous" anger and that which comes from a selfish motive?
- How can we begin to let the Holy Spirit strengthen us with self-control and peace?

Next Lesson: Fear / Anxiety
Read and Journal: Genesis 3:1-10 and 1 John 4:7-21

Lesson 2 - How to Handle Fear / Anxiety

Last week we talked about handling anger. Are we able in the Holy Spirit to recognize the motivation behind our anger, acknowledge our inability to control it, and can we then offer this to the Lord for His transformation in our lives? This week we turn our attention to “fear”... how then do we handle this terrifying emotion?

Teaching:

- What is fear?
 - Biblical definition: “phobos”
 - flight, fight, apprehension, panic, terror
 - Fear wears many coats...
 - some look good - concern, worry
 - healthy fear born of knowledge -
 - fear of the Lord, fear of harmful things
- Where does it come from?
 - I was afraid...so I hid” Genesis 3:10
 - The parent of fear: Tree of knowledge of good & evil Genesis 2:15-17
 - sinful nature fears harm, fears loss of control, fears the unknown and fears death—SELF RULES!!!
- Is there a way out?
 - “don’t be afraid” John 14:27
 - free at last Hebrews 2:15
 - given a gift 2 Timothy 1:7, Romans 8:15
- How does it work? 1 John 4:15-18
 - the Person of Love
 - fear is driven out—change of focus

Discussion:

- Share times when you have experienced great fear – what caused it? How did you react? How did you get through it?
- Talk about times when you have struggled with the Lord in your experiences of fear.
- How big a part does “trust” play in your struggles with fear? What’s the most difficult thing in learning to trust the Lord in areas of fear?

Next Lesson: Jealousy / Envy
Read and Journal: Genesis 37 and Matthew 27: 11-18

Lesson 3 - How to Handle Jealousy / Envy

After looking at anger and fear/anxiety in the past weeks we are beginning to understand more about the struggle we have with these emotions. We now come to the areas of jealousy and envy. These emotions are often at the root of much dissension not only in our relationships, but also within the church.

Teaching:

- Premise James 3:13-16
 - Definitions: “ardor”, “fervor”, “a burning”
 - jealousy wants to cling to and defend what it believes belongs to itself
 - envy wants, and thinks it deserves, what belongs to another
 - Old Testament word “covet” - 10th Commandment Deuteronomy 5:21
 - God’s jealousy is very different from ours Exodus 34:14
- Biblical Examples
 - Joseph and his brothers Genesis 37, 28
 - King Saul and David 1 Samuel 18:6-9
 - Jesus Matthew 27:11-18, Mark 15:9-10
- Where does it come from and where does it lead?
 - “serving created things rather than the Creator” Romans 1:25, 28-29
 - self-serving, self-worship, self-focus 1 John 3:11-15
 - Cain and Abel Genesis 4:1-10
 - “we want something and do not get it” therefore ... James 4:1-10
- What is the remedy?
 - not yet “able” (ready) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3
 - living into the fruit of the Holy Spirit Galatians 5:22-25
 - empowered behavior 1 John 3:18-24

Discussion:

- Share the kinds of things that seem to evoke jealousy and/or envy from you.
- Describe how you react/ behave when these feelings erupt within you. Is there any guilt associated with your reactions? Why is that?
- Can you begin to see how the person of the Holy Spirit can monitor, or even change, this behavior? Talk about how that might happen. (Refer to Acts 8:21-24)

Next Lesson: Bitterness

Read and Journal: Exodus 15:22-26 and Acts 8:9-24

Lesson 4 - How to Handle Bitterness

Like dams in a river, we are beginning to see how negative emotions can divert the flow of the Holy Spirit in and through us. Inasmuch as we do not allow the Lord to deal with these things in our lives, our spiritual growth is hindered. Years of holding on to any negative emotion will eventually produce a “root of bitterness”.

Teaching:

- Dams in the River
 - Words of Jesus John 7:37-39
 - Hebrew - "Mar" - bitterness, discontentment, anger
 - Greek - "Pikros" - to cut, a condition of extreme wickedness
- Let's name them...
 - End of any undealt-with negative emotion
 - crippling Acts 8:9-24
 - controlling
 - Things we have done
 - Peter Matthew 26:75
 - Judas Matthew 27:1-5
 - Always the choice
 - Thinks done to us
 - Naomi Ruth 1:13, 20-21
 - Esau Genesis 27:30-41, Hebrews 12:16-17
 - Always the choice
- What to do with them...
 - Back to the waters Exodus 15:22-26
 - Two woods
 - "Wormwood" (gall) Revelation 8:11, Deuteronomy 29:18
 - "Calvary" John 19:29-30
 - Always a choice Ephesians 4:30-32
 - Rivers of "Living Water"

Discussion:

- Is there any negative event or hurtful happening in your life that you can still recount with all the passion, hurt and pain as if it were just yesterday?
- What things are you holding on to? Are you aware that these things divert God's flow of blessing and healing inside you?
- In what ways can we help each other deal with the question of bitterness in our lives? How can we freely drink of the sweet water Jesus offers?

Next Lesson: Lust

Read and Journal: James 1:2-8, 12-18 and 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Lesson 5 - How to Handle Lust

We have been dealing with anger, fear, jealousy/envy and the root of bitterness. We now seek an answer to a major problem of the human heart and mind - lust. We are continually being enticed to reject God, forget others and selfishly indulge our desires. The Word of God shows us how the Lord has provided for this area of struggle.

Teaching:

- What does the Bible mean by “lust”?
 - words simply mean “strong desire” (OT and NT) in sinful nature
it becomes set over/against God or is directed to that which is
sinful, usually sexual in nature James 1:13-15
 - marked as a key sin James 4:2, 1 John 2:16
- Cause and Effect ... Romans 1:18-23
 - knowledge of God and Truth evident within every person Romans 1:19-20
 - that knowledge suppressed vs. 18
 - choice to not honor God
 - who do we worship? Romans 1:21-22
- Biblical example ... 2 Samuel 11, 12:1-14
 - Therefore,
 - God gave them over to
 - the degrading of their bodies Romans 1:24
 - shameful lusts vs. 26
 - a depraved mind vs. 28
 - Healing and hope
 - Jesus takes it to the cross
 - who do we worship? Romans 6:1-14
 - Therefore, “I urge you...” Romans 12:1-2
 - offer your bodies
 - spiritual act of worship
 - renewal of the mind
 - Transformation/Transfiguration Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Discussion:

- Share the times when you have felt overwhelmed by a strong desire which you believe was opposed to God's best for you. (You may not have strong desires in a direction of sexual impurity, but what about overeating, compulsive or addictive behaviors, or longing after any object for purely self-fulfillment?)
- Do you believe that these lusts can be truly overcome in Jesus? In what ways can we begin to do just that? How can we help each other in this struggle?

Next Lesson: Pride

Read and Journal: Mark 10:35-45 and Philippians 2:1-18

Lesson 6 - How to Handle Pride

Here we are at the end of this six-week study and a strong theme has begun to emerge in these lessons. As we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, the Holy Spirit of God enables us to handle these negative and often overwhelming emotions in a Godly manner. In considering “pride”, it has been said that it is the very essence of sin and often the underlying cause of many of our problems.

Teaching:

- A Biblical overview
 - Definitions
 - “to show oneself above others”
 - “to lift oneself up”
 - “usually attended with rude treatment of others”
 - What God thinks
- Why the problem?
 - A simple parable
 - arrogance vs deep humility
 - The root and the pattern
 - “you are not God but you have made your heart like God.”
 - an attitude of sin
 - man caught up in the attitude
 - Pride rears its ugly head
 - Nebuchadnezzar
 - Jesus tempted to prideful behavior
 - God can handle it
 - Wrong diagnosis - terrible results
 - Acknowledge the problem
 - There is a way out
 - Don’t believe the lie
 - Have this attitude in yourselves
 - Humility begins at the cross
 - Our offering
 - Standing firm in the truth

Associated Words
Arrogant
Boastful
Braggart
Puffed Up

Isaiah 2:10-18

Luke 18:9-14

Ezekiel 28:1-5

Isaiah 14:12-15

Genesis 3:1-5

Daniel 4

Matthew 4:1-11

Job 33:8-18

Deuteronomy 8:1-6, 10-18

1 John 1:8

1 John 3:1

Philippians 2:5

Romans 12:1-2

1 Peter 5:5-6

Discussion:

- When in our lives have we repeated the attitude of Job? In what ways do we justify ourselves in God’s sight?
- When and how do we find ourselves saying that God has become our enemy (or, just saying that God doesn’t really care about us)?
- Read 1 Corinthians 4:7 together. Share your reactions to this statement of Paul’s. In what areas of our lives do we seem to easily manifest a prideful attitude?

Remember the Five Components of Discipleship...
Worship, Prayer, Bible Study, Small Groups and Journaling.
To know more see our handout, "Maturity in Christ...The Call to Disciple"

