

LIVING  
IT OUT



**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Get a grip! – Mixed Emotions

September 12, 2022

This past weekend, we were introduced to our new series, *Mixed Emotions*. I love the way the stage was set for thinking about our emotions in different ways, primarily through the bottom line: ***Emotions are a guess, not a guide.***

I grew up in a home that did not welcome emotional displays. We were always fine. There were no harsh words, no yelling, no profanity, but there was a lot of passive-aggressive behavior. My family members had repressed emotions—still do!

It took me years to discover how I actually felt about things, and I'm still not great about sharing those feelings. However, I have come to realize that once I identify my emotions, they can help me understand my reactions. Understanding my reactions helps me respond in the way I want to respond as a follower of Jesus, with love and compassion.

We learned in the message that our emotions are not hardwired. They are more of a gauge or an indication that something is going on and our brain is trying to make sense of it. However, without further information, the brain doesn't always settle on the correct interpretation. That's why God gives us an instruction that is critically important in these times.

## **Romans 12:2**

***Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by **changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (emphasis added)***

**2 Timothy 1:7** assures us that we are not helpless victims of our emotions:

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*

The good news is that if you let him, God will do the work! By his design we have received a spirit of power, love and self-discipline. **Matthew 11:28-29** invites us to come to Jesus with our emotions.

*<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Without direction and help, our emotions can become heavy burdens that we don't know how to handle. When we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, we can learn to channel our emotions into positive energy, which puts us in the center of God's will—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

**Questions:**

How do you feel? (Hint: Most likely, the answer is NOT fine!) Do you know? What do you do when your emotions overwhelm you? Are you happy with that behavior, or would you like to try something else?

**Next Steps:**

Write down some emotions that you are feeling about your current situation. Ask God to help you learn the truth about them. It may be helpful to share your thoughts about your emotions with a trusted friend and get their perspective.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of emotion! Thank you for the gratitude I feel at a beautiful sunset, the anger I feel at injustice, the joy I feel when I am with my crazy family, and the love that I feel for my husband. Help me learn how to use my emotions to celebrate all the beauty in your world and to be an instrument of your peace. Emotions are not my master; you are. Help me live in that truth today. Amen.*

# Tame the Inner Toddler – Mixed Emotions

September 13, 2022

This past Christmas was emotionally difficult for me. I was dealing with health struggles and feeling insecure about some relationships. ... And I wanted a puppy—not one of those tiny little puppies that you can put in your handbag, a big one—a Bernese Mountain Dog.

As if homeschooling 5 children (ages 4 to 11), dealing with health struggles, and caring for my family was not enough, I wanted to add a new layer of chaos—a puppy! Well, when my best-laid plans were not falling into place like I wanted, my inner toddler came out. I am not proud of how I acted and the tears of frustration I shed, but there it is. It's easy to get stuck and allow our emotions to dictate our behavior. Sometimes that inner toddler will not stay inside, and we find ourselves acting like a two-year old. Thankfully, we don't have to allow our lives to be dictated by that inner tyrant.

This past weekend, we learned how our emotions are not a guide but a guess. When we encounter a situation, our reaction is a choice. We can react in a way that demonstrates maturity and trust or set the toddler free. Even in difficult situations, God has given us more control over our emotions than we realize.

## **2 Timothy 1:7**

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*

When we encounter a situation that sets our emotions rolling, we have a choice: We can allow ourselves to lose control, or we can demonstrate a maturity that can only be found in trusting God. He has given us the power to discipline ourselves, to react to difficult situations in a way that honors him and shows the world that we have been transformed.

## **Romans 12:2**

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

By allowing God to change the way we think about a situation and trusting him with the outcome, we demonstrate to the world that we have a great and powerful God. When we allow the Holy Spirit to take our emotions and shape them into something productive, we are a powerful witness to the world.

In case you are wondering about the puppy situation—we were able to adopt a mama dog at the beginning of February, and our new puppy was born earlier this month. In November, my husband and I will be the proud parents of five children and two giant dogs. Pray for us.

**Questions:**

When something does not go your way, how do you react? Do you get stuck in the cycle of big emotions and feel out of control? Have you ever considered that while your emotions are not bad, they do not need to control your behavior?

**Next Steps:**

The next time you feel your emotions rising to the surface, remember God has given you a spirit of self-discipline. Pray for strength to see the situation as it really is and not how it feels in the moment.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for giving me feelings. They help me experience the highs and lows of life in a way that is distinctly human. They make me who I am and show me that I am made in your image. Thank you also for giving me the power to control them. Help me to remember that, in the midst of a difficult situation, I can call on you to help me react in a mature way. Help me to use my emotions in a way that draws others toward you. Amen.*

*This post was written by Julie Mabus, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# What's in a Name? – Mixed Emotions

September 14, 2022

**Name your problem.** That is the first step to solving whatever is getting to your emotions.

It can't be that simple, can it?

Yes, it is!

Once something is named, you can begin to use its name to gain authority over it, to get curious and seek answers to overcome it. I for one have a tendency to let things get to me when I don't know what it is or can't control it. When I go to see my doctor and he orders tests—I do exactly what we're warned against—I go home and look it up on the internet. And then, the unknown and my lack of control causes me even more distress!

Anxiety and depression—those are two names that I was given in a diagnosis. What I had been wrestling with, finally, had a name. Unfortunately, the diagnosis came before I began my life-changing adventure with Jesus, and I knew nothing of giving my burdens up for him to carry. I was in the state of mind that if I wanted something, I had to do it myself, or I had to earn it. I didn't know what grace truly meant.

## **Matthew 11:28**

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."*

Once an issue or diagnosis is named, it definitely helps to narrow the focus and understand it more, but the issue doesn't just disappear. Knowing my diagnosis certainly doesn't prevent me from getting full-blown panic attacks when my fear gets the best of me.

In 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul asked God to make his suffering disappear:

## **2 Corinthians 12:8-9**

*<sup>8</sup> Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. <sup>9</sup> Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*

Just like the apostle Paul begged God, we too might find ourselves asking him to make the difficult things go away so we feel better. However, those hard times and difficult feelings offer us opportunities to grow closer to God—to trust him and give Christ the space to work through us for his glory.

Once I had a name for my panic attacks and knew they were caused by anxiety and fear of the unknown, I was able to get curious and look for ways to avoid them. Connecting with God, finding life-giving methods to reduce my stress, and making healthy changes have been helpful in managing my emotions.

### **Psalm 61:2-3**

*<sup>2</sup>From the ends of the earth, I cry to you for help when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the towering rock of safety, <sup>3</sup> for you are my safe refuge, a fortress where my enemies cannot reach me.*

By naming the problem; finding refuge in God through prayer, Bible study, and worship music; surrounding ourselves with life-giving people; and seeking any needed care, we can begin to think and live differently.

### **Questions:**

What do you do when you get nervous about things you cannot control? Do you pray for God to take away your suffering, or do you ask him to help you find a name for it so you can start to understand the problem?

### **Next Steps:**

Join a life-giving [Group](#). They are such a blessing! Someone there might be going through the same thing you are. Read about what Jesus says to do with emotions, and trust him with what he says.

Spend some time journaling your emotions. It offers an opportunity to name them, get curious about them, and search for where they are coming from. (Plus, I have found that I can go back and see how I solved a past problem.)

### **Prayer:**

*God, allow me to name the problems that come my way so that I can ask for your help more specifically. Teach me how to comfort myself and others the way Jesus did. Help me learn to not expect the outcome I want but, rather, what you say I need. In Jesus' name, amen.*

*This post was written by Casey Stengel, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Replace My Burden – Mixed Emotions

September 15, 2022

My grandparents dreamed of retiring to Maryland; however, when my mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, they stayed in Ohio to help raise us and take care of her. The decision was easy for them because good parents do what is necessary.

My mother tried to remain independent even as her body betrayed her spirit. But when life's stresses started snatching our childhood, she placed herself in a nursing home. Her decision was meant to lighten our hearts and replace work with the freedom of life.

## **Matthew 11:29-30**

*<sup>29</sup> "Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*

We learned from the weekend message that Jesus doesn't only take the problem away, he teaches us to see things differently. Jesus changes the way we see and live our lives. Walking in God's light replaces our weariness with rest and our burden with his yoke.

What does that mean? A "yoke" is that heavy, wooden harness between a pair of oxen, allowing them to work together to pull a load. Jesus is offering to share our burdens. He wants to team up with us. His yoke—a new way to live and view the world—is easy to bear and fits us well. It brings us rest.

Jesus teaches that our problems don't disappear like Thanos snapping his fingers. My Marvel friends know what I mean. However, teaming up with God makes things easier to handle. My grandparents improved my mother's last years because they teamed up with her for her fight, giving her the strength to teach us about true love and sacrifice.

And when the time came, Jesus provided me with the fortitude and wisdom I needed to tell my mother to let go and finally rest.

## **Questions:**

What do you do when the burden of life tires you out? Do you attempt to ignore or hide your stress?

**Next Steps:**

Stop living life alone by joining a [Group](#). Pray and find strength in God's promises to aid and guide you through your troubles.

**Prayer:**

*Lord, grant me patience when I am anxious. Give me rest when I am too stressed to make proper decisions. Teach me how to let go of the problems that are too big to handle, and allow me to learn how to see the lessons within those problems. I am grateful for the love you give. Amen.*

# God's Unconditional Love – Mixed Emotions

September 16, 2022

We kicked off a new series this week called, *Mixed Emotions*. The bottom line was *emotions are a guess, not a guide*.

I recently experienced a bunch of different emotions. Someone I dearly love told me something that really upset me. I felt hurt, angry, disappointed, and unloved.

I talked to my husband and a very close friend, and they both suggested I cool down before I discussed the issue any further with her. So, I waited a bit and tried to call her—she didn't answer.

I prayed for wisdom on how to handle the situation.

A couple more days passed, and I decided to text her but had second thoughts. God was definitely trying to tell me something! I finally decided to put up walls, toss the ball back into her court, and stubbornly wait until she reached out to me. With emotions clouding my thinking, this plan seemed rational at the time.

A few days later, during my morning quiet time, I felt led to call a dear and wise Christian friend to discuss the situation. She took the time to point out how my emotions had gotten me off-track, how this choice to avoid my loved one could further damage our relationship. She reminded me about grace and loving people where they are at—that it wasn't my job to change anyone. It was my job to love them, to accept them for who they are, and to pray for them. She gently reminded me that when my loved one finally reached out to me, I should be grateful. Because it would show I mattered to her.

And then I had an epiphany: **I often don't treat God how I want others to treat me.** Instead, I frequently do what I want to do, without any consideration of God's feelings about it. Sometimes I am just selfish, only caring about my wants and desires. Yet, God would never put up walls with me, like I had considered doing. I realized how much grace and love God continually shows me. He never tells me how badly I hurt him when I return to him. He just loves me where I am at, and he changes me for my good. I felt deeply humbled.

**Romans 5:8**

*But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

God loves us so much that he sent his Son to die on the cross to save us from our sins. When we put our faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are rescued and no longer condemned for our sins. Instead, our relationship with God is restored, and we are loved and accepted as his children.

**Romans 8:1**

*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

As we grow in our faith and truly accept God's unconditional love and forgiveness, we learn to unconditionally love and forgive others.

**1 John 4:19**

*We love each other because he loved us first.*

**Questions:**

How do you handle tough emotions? What are effective ways you can deal with your emotions?

**Next Steps:**

Next time you have strong emotions: Take a deep breath. Pray. Seek wisdom from a wise Christian friend.

**Prayer:**

*God you are so awesome. I praise you that you're loving and full of grace. You wait patiently for us to return to you. You love us so much that you don't want to just save us, you want to restore us. Help me to love others as you have loved me. Fill me with your grace and compassion. Change me Lord, I cannot do this on my own. Amen.*

*This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*