

Emotions

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning again and let me just wish all the mothers out there a happy Mother's Day and I hope you've already been blessed by the prayers that Dr. Kenny has prayed for all of them.

Now, this morning we're continuing on in our series called Inside Out, where we're exploring different facets of what it means to be human and we're going to be looking at the topic of emotions. And if you have the outline in front of you, that's probably the best thing to have.

There's going to be a lot of Bible passages and references and I think the best thing to do, like last week, is not try to flip to every single one of them but I think all the key ones will be on the screen. So just direct your attention to the screen when those verses are on and then just follow through the outline. Dr. Kenny said to me just before the survey started that the outline looks a bit complicated so I hope to uncomplicate it for you as much as possible as we open God's word together. But let's ask for God's help again and let's commit this time into his hands. Father, I just pray now that you would indeed be with us as we look at this topic of emotions.

[1 : 15] Please, Lord, would you help us to understand this from your perspective? Help us to not just understand but also therefore be able to respond emotionally in a way that is in line with what you wish for us.

And so, Father, we just pray, Lord, that you would indeed open up the word to us that we might really grasp it and absorb it. Please help me to be clear, to be... not to complicate things and just make sure that everyone can understand and most of all that it is faithful to what you intend your word to say.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. It's 2005 and I'm getting ready to head home from London for the holidays. It's no fun having to drag lots of luggage on my own on the train, especially as part of the train network is closed due to terrorist attacks just a couple of weeks before.

So my blood pressure is already a little higher than normal and it's a relief when I get to the check-in counter with plenty of time to spare. Until the MAS counter person informs me that I'm not actually on the passenger list.

[2 : 32] In fact, the flight is overbooked and so I can only be on the waiting list. I kill my blood pressure rising again. I call my brother in slight panic and then I have to endure a long wait while the uncle in front of me who is also on the waiting list keeps spouting off unnecessary commentary about our chances of getting on or not.

It gets on my nerves. Now eventually they tell me that I do have a place but still they keep me waiting until finally I make it to the gate with just 10 minutes to spare before the plane leaves when the guy checking my boarding pass makes some wisecrack about waiting for royalty.

It's not appreciated when I'm feeling as anxious as I was. Now let's go to another time, to the middle of 2017. I'm in Ipoh at the YMCA and it's late, nearly 1am.

I'm tired but my heart is full. It's the middle of the NextGen conference and I've just spent an entire day watching a group of keen young adults really get into the Bible.

In the evening, I have a number of deep and meaningful conversations with different people helping them to see how God might be working in their lives personally.

[3 : 48] It's the kind of day that everybody in ministry longs for to see a real impact being made and I'm joyful to see God making a difference. Now those are just two snapshots from my life and in many ways they're ordinary.

But what I wanted you to taste when listening to those little moments is how emotional they are. You see, whether we realise it or not, all of us experience life emotionally.

The satisfaction of a good day's work, the frustration of things spiralling out of control, the flashes of joy found in good food with friends and family, the bouts of depression when relationships go wrong, they're all related to our emotions.

It's been said that emotions bring colour to our lives. Without them, life would be black and white. Sure, we might process our emotions differently due to our different family upbringings, cultures, experiences and temperaments.

But they are still part and parcel of who we are as human beings. But how should we feel about how we feel? Now whether you're inside or outside the church, there's always been a perennial debate.

[5 : 09] One side is represented by the well-known Star Trek character, Mr. Spock. Spock is a Vulcan who serves aboard the spaceship, the USS Enterprise. And being a Vulcan, Spock values logic and reason while suppressing emotion.

He's always looking for the most rational way to tackle any problem. And so for many, Spock is the perfect icon of logic and rationality.

He represents the side that says emotions are basically negative things that we need to be suspicious of and control. And they have always been Spocks.

You know, come back thousands of years and listen to the philosopher and later Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, give advice that wouldn't sound out of place in a self-help book today on the screen.

If someone asks you how to write your name, will you bark out each letter? And if they get angry, would you then return the anger? Wouldn't you rather gently spell out each letter for them?

[6 : 14] So then, remember in life that your duties are the sum of individual acts. Pay attention to each of this as you do your duty. Just methodically complete your tasks.

In other words, ignore your feelings, stay cool, act dispassionately. Just don't get emotional.

However, there's another side that says emotions are everything.

How I feel is what matters. It's no longer I think, therefore I am, but I feel, therefore I am. Over the last 20 years, even in the business world, focusing on IQ is seen as out of date.

What you really need is EQ, emotional intelligence. And pop culture tells us that what we feel inwardly must be expressed outwardly. In the recent Disney film, Moana, the princess of a Polynesian island is told that she must submit to her traditional responsibilities as the future leader. But her grandma then sings a song about how her true self is not found in her roles and responsibilities, but in her inmost desires and feelings.

[7 : 29] And so the message is, your emotions should trump everything else. And so which is right? How should we feel about how we feel?

When we look inside the church, we can find a similarly confused picture. On the one hand, sometimes we hear a Christianized version of Moana. It goes something like this.

God is good. God made me. God gave me all my desires. Since God is good and gave me all my desires, then all desires I have must be good.

And since God gave me these good desires, I have a right to express them. Or others might say, well, it is good to study the word, but the most important thing is to feel God's presence.

Feelings are paramount. But ah, some of you might say, oh, those are the immature Christians. They only measure their spiritual lives by what they feel. What we really need to realize is this.

[8 : 31] Emotions are not to be trusted. Don't be fooled by your feelings. Just make sure that your doctrine is right. And then make sure to manage your emotions and not let your emotions manage you.

That's what being mature is all about. Perhaps that's what you expect to hear today. But is denying our emotions really the more mature approach?

Or is this also just a Christianized version of Spock? You see, when we turn to God's word, it doesn't seem so restrained. Now here is Song of Songs 5 verse 2, where romantic feelings are shamelessly expressed.

I slept, but my heart was awake. Listen, my beloved is knocking. Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one.

My heart is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night. Or listen to Jeremiah in 8 verse 22 to 9 verse 1. Is there no balm in Gilead?

[9 : 35] Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears.

I would weep day and night for the slain of my people. As Jeremiah delivers his message of judgment, he's not detached and aloof. No, he's filled with anguish and despair.

Or just listen to these rapid-fire instructions from Paul in Romans chapter 12. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual further serving the Lord.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. And then down to verse 15. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn. Now notice how many emotional words there are without any qualification whatsoever.

[10 : 42] Love sincerely. Hate evil. Love each other with devotion. Be full of zeal. Be full of joy. Rejoice. Mourn.

Empathize. For Paul, our spirituality is emotional. Pray, serve, and feel.

It all goes together. And so maybe it's time to consult the scriptures again with fresh eyes. Now this morning is going to be impossible to say everything, but what we'll do with the rest of our time is this.

First of all, we'll see what our emotions have to do with God. Then we'll look at what exactly emotions are and how that helps us better understand ourselves.

And finally, we'll explore what it means to be Christ-like in our emotional lives and how we can begin to cultivate that. So first, let's look at what our emotions have to do with God.

[11 : 43] And what we discover is this. Our emotions are a gift from our Creator to reflect Him. Just read through the Bible and it soon becomes clear that God experiences emotions.

Now I've put a whole list of references on your outline and we're not going to go through them one by one. But let me just pick a sampling. Here is Psalm 103 verse 13.

As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. And so God looks with concern at our suffering.

He shows sympathy and pity. For He's a God who delights and rejoices in us. In Zephaniah 3 verse 17, He will take great delight in you.

In His love, He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing. But God isn't just touchy-feely. He also gets displeased.

[12 : 45] Isaiah 59 verse 15. The Lord looked and He was displeased that there was no justice. Indeed, He even hates. Proverbs 6 verse 16 to 19 tells us what He hates.

Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, violent hands, and so on. So keep minding the scriptures and we'll see God is jealous and angry.

He's also loving and even happy. And so no wonder, as those made in the image and likeness of God, we also are jealous and angry, loving and happy.

We reflect Him. It's no accident we get emotional. It's how we're created. Now at this point, the theologians often raise a caution.

They remind us, rightly, that God is not like us. And so God doesn't experience emotions in the same way as us. We mustn't fall into the danger of making God just like another human.

[13 : 55] That's called idolatry. God is never controlled by His emotions. He never loses it. He's not like the gods of Greek or Chinese mythology who are all too human in the way that they often throw tantrums.

They salt around and they act childish. And God can be emotional in ways we can't. He can love infinitely, for example.

His jealousy is pure and holy. He doesn't depend on others to generate emotion. He doesn't depend on the world to feel joy.

He can have joy in himself. And so God is not emotional in the way we are. But that shouldn't take away from the fact that emotions are a legitimate part of being human because God expresses them.

Even more so, Jesus himself, whom Hebrews 1 verse 3 says is the exact representation of God's being, feels intensely.

[15 : 08] We'll explore the emotional life of Jesus a little more later. But for the moment, did you notice that both God and Jesus are said not just to love and be joyful, but also to grieve and get angry?

In other words, all those emotions, including the so-called negative ones, are God's gifts to us. That gives us a clue already that sorrow, fear, disgust, exasperation, all have a role to play in our lives. Those darker emotions are not necessarily a curse. Even they can be expressed in such a way that reflects our status as God's image bearers.

And so my friends, the implication today is that you can be emotional. Our emotions don't have to be relegated to the corner or pushed aside as unimportant.

Passionless duty is not what we're created for. We know this instinctively already, don't we? Why do some of you pick up the hobbies you do, whether that's photography or playing the guitar?

[16:33] Why did you marry your spouse? Why have you chosen to follow Jesus? Unless you will force into these things, your answer would surely include something about joy or pleasure somewhere.

Emotions are essential to being human and as you'll see later, to being Christian. But what exactly are emotions?

Now, the psychologists Fer and Russell once quip, everyone knows what an emotion is until us to give a definition. And so it can get complicated. But let's give it a go.

It is best to think of them as made up of two components. Number one, emotions are about what we feel in our bodies. Now, have you noticed that?

Emotions involve bodily reactions, whether they're tears or smiles, the heightening of tension in our muscles, or that sense of a weight being lifted off our back.

[17:37] Sometimes we feel them in overpowering ways. Imagine, for instance, that you're happily watching TV when you receive a phone call that your best friend has been killed in an accident.

Your body would react in certain ways, wouldn't it? You feel like you've been sucker-punched. Your mouth almost involuntary forms and oh, your eyes get watery.

You experience changes in your body seemingly without your input. A few Sundays ago, a member of our AV team was in the sound room and he didn't hear me come behind him to let him know about something.

And so when I called out, he went like this. You see? He says his body reacted with shock. It was subconscious. It was automatic. And so clearly, emotions involve our bodies.

And for some psychologists, that's all emotions. Ah, they're merely physiological. They're uncontrollable. You know, emotions happen to us. We can't do anything at all about them.

[18:49] But can that be right? You see, if emotions are purely about bodily feelings, then technically, a stomach ache or a change in heart rate caused by drugs in your system would count as an emotion.

Now surely that can't be. What is it that differentiates emotions from just bodily reactions? Well, that brings us to our second component.

Number two, emotions result from our interpretations and valuations. Now, suppose you're waiting for your friend to meet you at the cafe, but she's now nearly an hour late and she's not returning your phone calls.

If you're starting to think that she's involved in an accident, you get anxious. But if you think it's pretty likely that she simply forgot, you get angry.

What differentiates the emotions you experience? It's how you interpret the situation. It's tied to your beliefs and perceptions. And so it isn't just about your body.

[20:03] And emotions are ultimately about what we value. When Lee Zijia won the All England Badminton Tournament recently, would you be happy?

Well, it depends. If you like Zijia or you just like that Malaysia has won something, you've got a smile on your face. You value the victory. But if you're not a badminton fan or you don't think that Malaysia winning some silly sports tournament is a big deal, come on, let's focus on COVID-19, you'll be indifferent.

And if you're a Danish badminton fan, you'll be upset. And so it's about how much we value something or someone.

We feel sad when we perceive that we've experienced a significant loss. And that's why getting that phone call about your best friend is so devastating. But if the person on the phone told you that some random garden snake got run over by a car instead, you'll be asking him, why did you bother to call me?

You won't feel sad. Because you place much less value on the life of the snake than your best friend. Matthew Elliott, a Christian who has written extensively on emotions, puts it this way.

[21 : 25] Rightly understood, our emotions are connected to what we focus on, what we know, what we value, and what we believe. Emotions are not just feelings that arise physiologically, but lie at the intersection of body, thoughts, and desire.

They are based on how we perceive and interpret a particular situation and how much we value the object or person involved.

And that seems to be more in line with how scripture reveals our emotions. You see, biblically speaking, emotions are windows into our hearts.

that's how scripture often conceives of them. In Mark chapter 10, we hear about Jesus' encounter with a rich young man. He wants to know how to have eternal life.

And this young man says he's kept all the commandments and there's no reason to doubt his sincerity. But then, Jesus looks at him, tells him to sell all he has, and follow him.

[22 : 37] And the young man goes away sad. Why is he sad? Because he values his possessions. He wants to follow Jesus, but not at the expense of giving up his wealth.

And so, his emotional response gives us a window into his heart. It shows us where his heart truly is. Because as Jesus said last week, where your treasure is, there your heart is also.

And so, faced with a choice between the two, his heart treasures wealth more than Jesus. And that's why he's sad when asked to give up his wealth.

His heart is not ultimately inclined to the Lord. But did you notice we're also given an insight into Jesus' emotions? When this man approaches him to ask how he can gain eternal life, and he confidently affirms the uprightness of his life so far, how does Jesus respond to him?

Does he shake his head and say, this guy has no clue? Does he feel irritated that this guy doesn't know he is God himself? No, look at verse 21.

[23 : 54] He looks at him and loves him. And so, we get a window into Jesus' heart. He values this person's eternal destiny.

He values a relationship with him. And that becomes the springboard for his action, which is to invite this man to give up all he has and follow him.

Because that's when the man will experience God's love in all its fullness. And Jesus wants him to experience that.

Or consider Paul in Philippi. Paul is in prison. And while he's there, other Christians are exploiting the situation.

We're told in Philippians 1 verse 16 and 17 that some were preaching Christ out of envy and rivalry to enhance their own reputations while Paul was in jail.

[24 : 53] And that they were also preaching out of selfish ambition. Supposing that somehow their preaching would actually land Paul in more trouble. But what is Paul's response in verse 18?

Well, he rejoices. Why is that? Because the thing he values most is that Christ is preached.

What he treasures is that Jesus is made known to as many people as possible. It doesn't matter who the messenger is. It isn't that Paul is never sad or found his prison conditions hard.

But his joy ultimately flowed out of a heart that interpreted what was happening to be good because the thing he valued most was being done.

And so Paul's joy gives us a window into the condition of his heart. His emotions help us to see that the gospel has truly gripped his heart.

[25 : 58] It was right where God wanted it. And that was also the springboard for his action which is not to hold grudges against these people.

And so that's what emotions are. They're about bodily feelings that arise because of our interpretations and valuations of what's going on around us.

And so they provide a window into our hearts. And sometimes they are springboards for our actions. emotions. And so when we understand emotions in this way it helps us better understand ourselves.

If our emotions are windows into our hearts that means our emotions also help us assess how our hearts are doing.

Think of them as spiritual MRIs. You know they reveal what's really going on inside of me whether good or bad. Last week I talked about the need to study our own hearts and exploring our emotions are a great way to do just that.

[27 : 07] See as we ask why am I feeling what I'm feeling we are able to explore what our heart really believes and desires.

And so if I'm getting jealous for example at my friend's recent success maybe I'm valuing being seen as successful more than my friends doing well.

And because emotions can also act as springboards for our actions they can help us to act where we ordinarily might not act.

So for example if we see someone being mistreated really really badly our own anger might cause us to intervene where otherwise we might not our emotions act as a springboard for our actions.

But that raises a question. As we examine our hearts we'll inevitably find traces of ungodliness and as Christians we want to pursue Christ-likeness and that includes growing to be more like Jesus in our emotional lives.

[28 : 24] But how do we do that? What does that even look like? Well the obvious place to look is at Jesus himself. What is Jesus' emotional life like?

Well let's briefly explore. Let's turn first of all to Luke 7 verse 12 to 13 on the screen. As Jesus approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, don't cry. And so as Jesus moves around, he bumps into this widow who is about to bury her own son.

And as he witnesses this tragic situation, Jesus' heart goes out to her. He expresses the emotion that's most commonly associated with God, compassion.

He's not indifferent to her pain. He shows that it is right to be deeply moved when we see something like this. And indeed that depth of emotion is on display again in John 11 verse 33 to 36.

[29 : 37] As Jesus comes to the tomb of Lazarus, even though he knows that Lazarus is going to rise again, Jesus still weeps.

He is saddened by the tears of Mary and saddened by the fact that right at this moment, his friend lies in the grave. He is grieved by the ways sin and death have caused so much havoc in this world. And he gets angry. When it says he was deeply moved in verse 33, the Greek word used could possibly be communicating a sense of anger at how things go wrong.

Now certainly in Mark 3 verse 5, it's not on the screen, Jesus gets really angry that Pharisees have misinterpreted the law for their own ends such that they cannot bring themselves to admit that Jesus healing a man on a Sabbath is a good thing.

And so that's how Jesus perceives the situation before him. And because he values God's word and God's character, he reacts with anger against the Pharisees who don't. But Jesus is also joyful.

[30 : 55] Have a look at Luke 10 verse 21. At that time, Jesus full of joy through the Holy Spirit said, I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.

Yes Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. You see, Jesus sees that his followers are beginning to understand the kingdom of God. It's very nature and that brings him great joy.

You see, God's plan is beginning to be revealed and grasped and Jesus delights in that. Now, we can look at a few more examples of Jesus' love and distress and even frustration but this is probably enough.

But as you think about all those verses, what strikes you about Jesus' emotional life? Well, firstly, notice Jesus' emotional range.

Jesus is not Yoda. He is not some Zen master. He's not afraid to let himself experience the full range of emotions, both positive and negative.

[32 : 17] Now, I wonder, what is your picture of a mature Christian? Perhaps you picture someone who is calm all the time, who never gets angry, who never experiences negative feelings like sorrow.

But Jesus certainly gets angry. Jesus is moved to tears. Jesus gets all passionate. Emotional maturity then isn't the same as emotional repression.

It is not wrong to feel. It's not even wrong to feel the negative emotions when the situation calls for it. In fact, it can be wrong not to feel in those situations.

There's both a depth and a diversity to Jesus' emotions. Christian maturity and getting emotional per se are not at odds with one another.

But then secondly, notice Jesus' emotional aptness. Sorry, I couldn't think of a better word, but here is what I mean. Jesus' emotions are strong, but they are never out of control and they are always appropriate to the situation.

[33 : 44] He feels for the right reasons. When he gets angry, he's not doing so because simply life has become inconvenient for him. No, he gets angry because God is not glorified and that's justified.

When Jesus gets sad, it's because what has happened is truly saddening, like with Lazarus. Jesus is sensitive to the full range of human experiences and he knows different experiences call for different emotional reactions.

And he always has the right emotion in the right proportion. And then thirdly, notice Jesus' emotional regulation.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, we're told in Mark 10 verse 33 to 34 that he was deeply distressed and troubled. In fact, he was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Given that he's about to face the cross, that's certainly appropriate. And yet, he does not have a certain mood swing. He's the man of sorrows, but that doesn't cause him to back doubt or throw a tantrum.

[35 : 06] He doesn't look at Peter, James and John who couldn't keep watch, but keep falling asleep and get overcome with rage or irritation thinking, oh man, I'm just going to die for this useless sinners who can't even follow a simple instruction.

Now instead, when we go down to verse 42, he says, let us go. Here comes my betrayer. He's about to face a traitor and the way he regulates his emotions is simply astonishing.

And that gives us a sense of what a godly emotional life looks like in its range, in its aptness, in its regulation. But as the pastor Graham Bannon puts it, our struggle comes because either we feel the wrong things or we feel them to the wrong degree.

So when we hear of somebody going through a difficult time, the right emotion should be compassion. But the truth is sometimes we don't feel that.

Sometimes we might even feel relief because oh thank God it isn't me who's going through the hard time. We have the wrong emotion. Or compare how we sometimes feel about being saved by Jesus with how we feel about say getting a pay raise or a promotion.

[36 : 36] Sometimes we might feel much more excited about the latter rather than the former. It's not that our emotional reactions are wrong in itself. It's obviously natural to feel happy at getting a pay raise.

But the problem is that we feel them to the wrong degree. They're out of proportion to the event. And so we know we don't always feel as we ought to.

But what should we do? Well, the good news is that if we are Christians, there is hope. Now, we know that we can't just switch our emotions on and off like a bedroom light.

I can't just say, Brian, be joyful, or Brian, be thankful, and ta-da, I've got the right emotions. But the Bible hearts and we have the mindset of the spirit.

Now, did you ever notice that scripture sometimes commands us to feel a certain emotion? Take Philippians 4, verse 4, for example. Rejoice in the Lord always.

[37 : 49] And how can scripture command such things? Well, if emotions are purely physiological, if there are things that happen to us, then this would be an impossible and frankly cruel command. But when we recognize that emotions are based on how we perceive and interpret a particular situation and how much we value the object or person involved, then we begin to realize our emotions can be influenced.

It is possible to cultivate godly emotions. And often scripture is what helps train our minds and hearts to perceive a situation rightly and to assess the value of something correctly.

We can rejoice in the Lord when we understand from the Bible how good he is, for instance. And so how might all this work? Well, when an emotion wells up within us, it's good to ask, why am I feeling what I'm feeling?

And what does that show about what I value? Is what I value a good or a bad thing according to God's word? So let's just take one concrete example. So the first thing that's good to do is to describe the situation.

What is going on? Perhaps the situation that's triggering your emotion is having to pay a visit to a relative who you know is very argumentative. And then you name the emotion.

[39 : 11] So you put into words what you're feeling and you consider its appropriateness. Now this is harder than it sounds. But with experience or a wise friend alongside you, we can eventually get better at it.

And so we name the emotion. Are you feeling irritation, nervousness, anxiety? Let's say it's anxiety. And so next thing you do is to work out your values and your beliefs in the situation.

Perhaps what you value most is conflict avoidance. You just want to be left alone in peace. But you believe conflict is inevitable. And so that's why you're anxious.

And then you take God's word and you hold it up as a mirror to your situation. Or perhaps a better way to say it is you let it shine a light on your situation. What might God be saying?

Perhaps he takes you to Philippians 4 verse 4 to 7 one of the Bible readings today. And you discover that you forgotten to pray. But if you do then that will help you to rest secure in God's promise.

[40 : 15] Not that you won't have conflict but particular fruit of the Spirit peace. Or perhaps he'll take you to James 3 verse 19 which says peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

And you realize that according to James although you value avoiding conflict God values something more. God values you being someone who responds in a godly way during conflict.

And so you have to see yourself in that role. And that might help change the way you see your situation and influence the emotion you're feeling. Now that is a simplified scenario and often it's more messy than that.

For one thing we can have mixed emotions. If you're moving places to a new job you might feel both excited to be doing so but also at the same time sad because you're leaving friends and both could be appropriate.

And so it for another the relationship between our minds and our bodies are not straightforward. It's not always a case of as soon as you get your thinking and your values right your bodily feelings will follow.

[41 : 36] No, sometimes it can even be the other way around because we are broken people with broken bodies living in a broken world sometimes our bodies work in disordered ways.

Our brain chemistry gets imbalanced and so our bodies affect our minds and they in turn affect our emotions causing us to suffer from a prolonged depression. And so you can see it's not always straightforward.

Our thinking our feelings and our choices our bodies and our brains are all mutually impacting one another. But we are not helpless.

So Graham Bannon puts it this way, we can't really speak of controlling our emotions, at least not directly like with the on-off switch, but we can cultivate them to grow a certain way, just like you water plants.

With the help of the spirit, we can work on our hearts, directing them to value and indeed to see God himself as the most valuable.

[42 : 40] And over the long term, we can then grow to be emotionally more Christ-like. And we can ask God for the right emotions. Look at how Paul prays for others in Romans 15 verse 13.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the Now, as we cultivate a godly emotional life, that doesn't mean life will get easier.

We still live in a world that labours under the curse of sin. And that's why we saw Jesus getting distressed. That's why Paul speaks of having a broken heart in Acts 21 verse 13.

That's why the psalmist often cries, how long, O Lord? But our hope is this. As Psalm 30 verse 5 said, Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

We know we are being formed for a life of joy. How do we know that? Because Christ himself was heading for a life of joy. Look at Hebrews 12 verse 2.

[43 : 52] For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus could see what was coming. He knew he would be exalted, and that drove him on. And consider this, he chose to become the man of sorrows, so that you too would one day experience this joy.

You will one day know sorrow and distress and grief to be a thing of the past. Now isn't that something to get emotional about.

So my brothers and sisters, let's obey Philippians 4 verse 4. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice.

Let's pray and then let's praise him. Heavenly Father, as we come again before you, we want to submit all our lives and all our being to you, Lord, and that includes our emotions.

[45 : 05] Father, we know that in this broken and fallen world, our emotions don't always work as they should. Sometimes we feel things excessively, sometimes we feel things wrongly, we don't respond as we should.

But Father, thank you that you have poured out your Holy Spirit on us and that your Holy Spirit is now at work in us, sanctifying us and transforming us.

And so Father, we pray that the Spirit will indeed transform our emotions. Will we help us to value what you value? Please, Lord, may your Spirit direct us to the Spirit inspired word which helps us to understand how we should look at things, how we should look at the world and how we should treasure things, what things we should treasure and what we shouldn't treasure.

And so Father, please, Lord, we pray that for all of us we will keep learning to cultivate godly emotions and we'll help each other to do that. And so we just commit all this into your hands and we thank you that you are a God who loves us so much and that we can rejoice in you.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.