



Learning to Feel

Each week for 6 months we will send out a couple thoughts and a journal prompt to guide us through this process of learning to love God with the emotions that He created us with. Each month we will focus on a different core emotion and we will look at it from multiple different angles, because though core emotions are foundational, we experience them very differently in different situations. These mini devotionals are meant to be used as tools to help each of us continue practicing the 4 questions we've just spent the past month learning. Our hopes are that we, as a church, will find ourselves learning how to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, AND to love our neighbor as ourselves.

As you work through these thoughts and prompts, remember to ask yourself...

What am I feeling?

Where am I feeling it in my body?

When did I first feel this?

Who am I going to share this with?

There will be times where you are not feeling the emotion we are talking about, but I would encourage you to think about times in the past where you have felt that emotion. Allow yourselves to be drawn into that memory and meet God there. Allow yourself to be pulled closer to God in those feelings. At our next meeting, on January 26@ 6:30, we'll gather to talk and process what God does in us as we learn to feel.

For the sake of this devotional, Esther's words will look like this...

AND CHRIS' INPUT WILL LOOK LIKE THIS

Anger

Jealous - wanting what other people have

Language for feeling Jealous -

“This is mine”

“They aren't all that great”

“Eyes roll”

I've been reading the book of Job, and in it I am struck by the ways in which jealousy colors our responses and the ways in which it sneaks into our lives. I think we've all experienced this feeling, and know just how consuming it can be. How many times do I respond to others making them feel small or less than who they are simply because I am jealous? This feeling is like poison in my body making me feel as though I deserve something that is not mine. I know we are all broken, sinful human beings, and we all want our own way. I am no different. It makes me feel embarrassed when I see this feeling rising to the surface within me.

I DON'T GENERALLY STRUGGLE WITH JEALOUSY OVER THINGS. I DON'T USUALLY DESIRE TO HAVE THE STUFF THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE. BUT TALENT AND OPPORTUNITY GET ME. EVERY TIME I HEAR MY WIFE SING, I'M JEALOUS OF HER VOICE. WHENEVER I HEAR SOMEONE PLAY AN INSTRUMENT WITH REAL SKILL, I'M JEALOUS. WHEN I HEAR A SPEAKER COMMAND AN AUDIENCE, I'M JEALOUS. I TEND TO JUDGE MYSELF BASED ON MY SKILL AND CAPACITY SO WHENEVER I WITNESS SOMEONE WITH MORE SKILL AND CAPACITY, I'M JEALOUS. JEALOUSY MAKES ME FEEL SMALL. I FEEL INADEQUATE AND MOSTLY, I FEEL LIKE GOD DIDN'T DO A GOOD JOB WITH ME, LIKE I WAS MADE LESS THAN I COULD HAVE BEEN. ULTIMATELY MY JEALOUSY IS ME SAYING I DON'T TRUST GOD. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT HE KNOWS WHAT'S BEST AND HE MADE ME EXACTLY THE WAY HE WANTED ME.

God, help me to bring this feeling to you. Help me to recognize it for what it is, a reminder that I need you to help me change. Help me to turn to you and allow you to lead me into a place where I can recognize who you have created me to be and not desire to be or have something that you have

not given me. Help me to learn to truly be present with others, pointing them to you rather than focusing on myself and my desires.

Failure - the feeling of not being who you want to be

Language for feeling Failure -

“I suck”

“I can’t do anything right”

“I’m not enough”

“Dropped head, slumped shoulders”

I think most of us would rather avoid this feeling. We seek to do all we can, try our hardest to not fail. We hate this feeling. We seek to always be right. We seek to always do the right thing, but inevitably, we do fail. We make mistakes. We miss things we should have caught. We forget important events, and we let those we love down. Failure can be painful, but if you’ve read or watched very many inspirational stories you know that at times failure can be the soil from which really good things grow. Read about Einstein or Edison or better yet look within the pages of the Bible to men like Moses, Peter, Paul and so many others. This feeling can become a place where we find ourselves stuck and overwhelmed, but God... God has called us the very righteousness of Christ. He does not see us as our failures, but as He has called us to be. He loves us even when we fail and let him down. He loves us and calls us beloved when we are wrong, when we make mistakes, when we miss things or forget things. He loves us even when we cause hurt and damage to the ones we love. His love for us is so big!!! God, help me to move through this feeling, to not allow myself to get stuck believing that I am anything less than your beloved daughter. Help my failures to truly become the fertile soil from which you grow beauty within me.

THIS IS A COMMON EMOTION FOR ME. ADHD IS FERTILE SOIL FOR THE FEELING OF FAILURE. NO MATTER HOW MANY THINGS I GET GOOD AT, NO MATTER HOW TALENTED I BECOME, I FORGET/MESS UP/MISS/OVERLOOK/FUMBLE THE SIMPLEST TASKS... I HURT PEOPLE WITH MY OVERSIGHT. I OFFEND PEOPLE WITH MY CARELESSNESS. I ABSOLUTELY HATE THIS. I HATE THAT MESSING UP COMES SO EASY TO ME. I KNOW PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DECISION TO DO A THING, AND THEY JUST DO IT. I MAKE A DECISION TO DO A THING ON A REGULAR BASIS, AND IN THAT MOMENT, I MEAN IT AND THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT TO ME IN THE WORLD... AND THEN I FORGET 10 MINUTES LATER THAT I EVEN MADE THAT COMMITMENT. MEANWHILE I CAN QUOTE SCRIPTURES,

SERMONS AND BOOKS THAT I HEARD OR READ 30 YEARS AGO. ANYWAY... FAILURE MAKES ME NAUSEOUS. I FEEL IT IN MY GUT AND I'M NOT A FAN.

exhausted - deep tiredness that fuels anger

Language for feeling exhausted -

“I’m done

“I’m sick of trying”

“I don’t have anything left”

This is where I live right now. I hate this feeling. I hate the way my body feels like it is underwater all the time. I struggle to breathe, move and even hear and attend to the needs of those around me. I don't want to be here. I want to push through. I want to fix things. I want to fix my physical body, fix relationships and systems. I want to know God hasn't left me forever. I'm so tired and weary. But, this is where I am living, what I am feeling, and here I will find God calling me to bring my exhaustion to Him.

I DON'T GENERALLY EQUATE EXHAUSTION AND ANGER. FOR THE MOST PART, I LIKE BEING TIRED, EVEN EXHAUSTED. I LIKE WORKING UNTIL MY MIND QUIETS. IF I'M NOT TIRED, THERE IS WAY TOO MUCH GOING ON IN MY HEAD. BUT THE GIST OF THIS EMOTION IS THAT YOU ARE WORN OUT TO THE POINT THAT YOU FEEL THE TEMPTATION TO GIVE UP... TO GIVE UP ON DOING RIGHT... TO GIVE UP ON RELATIONSHIPS... TO GIVE UP ON JOBS. THIS EMOTION IS THE ONE THAT PAUL WARNS OF WHEN HE SAYS, "LET'S NOT GROW WEARY IN DOING GOOD." WHEN WE GET EXHAUSTED, WE NEED TO TAKE THAT TO GOD. OTHERWISE WE CAN DO MUCH DAMAGE WHILE WE'RE HERE.

God, I feel you calling me to rest, to stop pushing aside my need for you and for others. I feel you calling me to wait on you and allow you to change me first. I don't want to be like the Israelites wandering in the desert, exhausted and frustrated at every turn. I know you cared for them even there, and you will care for me as well, but I want to move through this feeling. I want to move through this season. In this place help me to sit at your feet and wait, learning more of you and who you are rather than trying to do and be more so that I can hurry things up. Help me to find in you the comfort and rest I need.

Betrayed- the result of someone violating your trust

Language for feeling Betrayed-

“I can’t believe they did that to me”

“I thought we were friends”

“I did not see that coming”

This is another feeling where I can get stuck. This hurts so bad. I spin my wheels trying to figure out what I said and did that caused this break and rupture in this relationship. The confusion and hurt that come as I realize I’m being asked to become something to make someone else comfortable always leads to deep anger that makes me want to yell and scream. I was wrong about our relationship, and the fact that you can walk away as though I never meant anything is crushing. Why don’t you care about me? Why are my needs, desires and wants not important to you? Why don’t I matter?

Ugh! The selfish motives of my heart are showing. I want another to meet my needs. God, I want you to help me move through this. I want you to help me see this situation through your eyes. I want your heart to change mine. Give me grace where I feel this feeling. Help me to release my need to be seen and validated, and instead help me to pray that you would draw both of us close to you. Help me to recognize that your love is deeper and more perfect than my own, and that your heart is always for restoration and healing.

THIS ONE ALWAYS BLINDSIDES ME. I NEVER SEE BETRAYAL COMING. I TEND TO GIVE EVERYONE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. I TRUST. AND WHEN PEOPLE TURN ON ME, I AM CRUSHED. I GENERALLY BLAME MYSELF. IT ALWAYS FEELS LIKE I NEED A BETTER RADAR TO PREDICT THIS STUFF. IN ALL HONESTY, THIS EMOTION MAKES ME FEEL HOPELESS LIKE NO ONE CAN BE TRUSTED WHICH I KNOW ISN’T TRUE. I FEEL REALLY HEAVY WHEN I’M FEELING BETRAYED. I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I SHOULD DO BETTER.

Psalm 22:19-27

O LORD, do not stay far away!

You are my strength; come quickly to my aid!

Save me from the sword;
spare my precious life from these dogs.

Snatch me from the lion's jaws
and from the horns of these wild oxen.

I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters.[c]
I will praise you among your assembled people.

Praise the LORD, all you who fear him!
Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob!
Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel!

For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy.
He has not turned his back on them,
but has listened to their cries for help.

I will praise you in the great assembly.
I will fulfill my vows in the presence of those who worship you.

The poor will eat and be satisfied.
All who seek the LORD will praise him.
Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy.

The whole earth will acknowledge the LORD and return to him.
All the families of the nations will bow down before him.