

Emotional Regulation: One Step at a Time

Week 2

July 7, 2026

Last week we learned that emotional regulation begins with the pause.

This week we discovered one of the greatest enemies of that pause.

An overloaded life.

Most of us don't wake up one morning and decide to overwhelm ourselves. It happens one "yes" at a time. A committee here. A favor there. Another responsibility. Another expectation. Another good opportunity.

Before long, our plate is so full that we no longer have room to think, pray, or simply breathe.

That's exactly where Martha found herself.

In Luke 10, Martha wasn't doing anything sinful. She was serving Jesus. Yet Jesus gently reminded her that being busy for Him was not the same as being present with Him.

Her problem wasn't that she had bad things on her plate.

She simply had too many things on her plate.

That truth reaches all the way into modern neuroscience. Researchers have found that chronic stress gradually weakens the prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain responsible for judgment, reflection, and self-control—while allowing the brain's threat-response systems to become more dominant. In other words, when we stay overloaded for too long, we become more reactive and less reflective. We don't lose wisdom because we stopped loving God. We lose access to it because our brains were never designed to carry nonstop overload.

What a beautiful reminder that God's commands are never arbitrary.

Long before anyone understood cortisol, allostatic load, or decision fatigue, God built Sabbath into creation. Jesus invited weary people to exchange crushing burdens for a yoke that fit. Jethro told Moses, "What you are doing is not good...you will surely wear yourself out."

God has never measured faithfulness by how much we can carry.

He measures it by our willingness to carry what He has assigned.

That was the heart of our Plate Inventory exercise.

As we removed each card from the plate, we asked one simple question:

"Lord, did You assign this to me for this season?"

It is such a simple question.

Yet it has the power to change a life.

Some responsibilities belong on our plate because God placed them there. Others arrived through guilt, fear, people-pleasing, habit, or simply because no one else stepped forward.

The goal isn't to throw away responsibility.

The goal is to make room for obedience.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is lovingly set down something God never asked us to carry.

This Week's Scripture

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28–30

This Week's Truth

A full plate is not the same as a faithful life. God never intended you to carry everything. Peace often begins by discerning what belongs on your plate—and what never did.

This Week's Step Forward

Take ten quiet minutes sometime this week.

Write down everything currently on your plate—every responsibility, commitment, role, and expectation.

Then, one at a time, hold each item before God and ask:

"Lord, did You assign this to me for this season?"

Don't worry yet about how you'll remove something if it doesn't belong.

Simply begin by seeing your plate honestly.

Because discernment always comes before change.

And sometimes the greatest act of faith isn't adding one more thing to your life.

It's trusting God enough to set one thing down.

— Pastor Cindy H. Carr

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