

Emotional Regulation: One Step at a Time

Week 2

June 30, 2026

This week we began a new series on emotional regulation, and what a wonderful way to begin the conversation. One thing became clear very quickly: emotional regulation isn't something we master. It is something we practice for a lifetime.

As followers of Christ, we all know what it's like to respond well in one situation and poorly in another. We know the joy of seeing God grow us, and we also know the humility of realizing we still have more to learn. That realization isn't discouraging—it's part of discipleship.

One comment shared during our discussion captured the heart of the evening. A participant recalled hearing a young man say,

"I don't always know what the next right step is, but I've decided to make the next step right."

What a beautiful picture of the Christian life.

Most of us won't have every answer before we move forward. We won't always know what tomorrow holds. But today we can choose to honor God with the next decision in front of us. One faithful choice at a time eventually becomes a faithful life.

We also talked about how beautifully Scripture and science complement one another. Modern neuroscience tells us that negative thoughts increase activity in the amygdala—the part of the brain that alerts us to danger and prepares us to react. Positive, hopeful, and thoughtful thinking engages the areas of the brain responsible for reasoning, wisdom, and self-control. Rather than competing with Scripture, these discoveries help us appreciate how wonderfully God designed us.

Dr. W. Lee Warren shares this beautifully in *The Life-Changing Art of Self-Brain Surgery*. After experiencing the unimaginable loss of his nineteen-year-old son, Dr. Warren devoted himself to understanding both the science of the brain and the hope found in Christ. His work reminds us that while we cannot always control what happens to us, we can learn, with God's help, to reshape the way we respond.

That truth has been there all along.

The apostle Paul wrote,

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

Long before neuroscience described the brain's pathways, Scripture was already inviting us into the lifelong practice of renewing our minds.

Throughout the coming weeks, we'll explore practical ways to strengthen that ability. We'll look at people like Joseph, whose life reflected remarkable emotional maturity, and Peter, whose impulsive reactions remind us that spiritual growth is often a journey rather than a destination.

This Week's Scripture

Romans 12:2

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

This Week's Truth

Emotional regulation is not about suppressing our emotions. It is learning, through the Holy Spirit, to pause long enough for wisdom to guide our response.

This Week's Step Forward

The next time you feel yourself reacting quickly, pause.

Take a slow breath.

Pray for wisdom.

Then ask yourself:

"What would make my next step the right one?"

One faithful step may not seem like much in the moment.

But over time, one faithful step after another becomes a life that increasingly reflects the heart of Christ.

— Pastor Cindy H. Carr

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