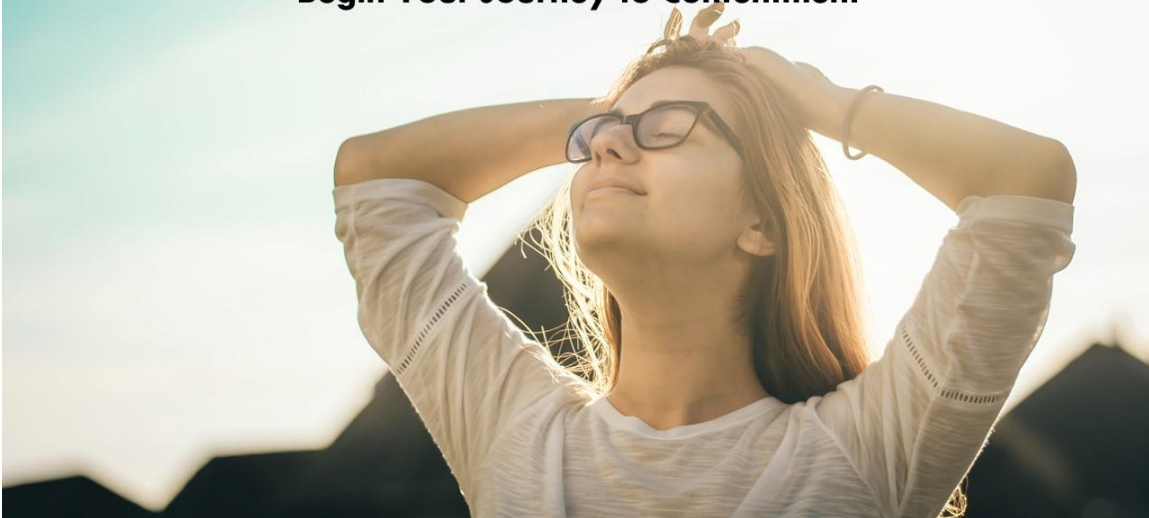


# QuickStart Guide to Managing Your Emotions

## Begin Your Journey to Contentment



I admit it. I am an emotional yo-yo. I don't like being so easily moved. Giving into my feelings has led to a lot of unnecessary pain and frustration for myself and others. But I didn't know how to change!

Then the Lord stepped in and rescued me. He showed me where I was thinking wrongly about emotions. He showed me one vitally important fact:

**I can't change the way I feel, but I can change the way I act.**

Once I understood this key, I got excited! It propelled me to further investigate the principles of managing and controlling my emotions in a God-honoring way. Oh, the secrets I have learned! My emotional shackles have been cut. And I must pass these freeing truths onto you. I have spent the last 15 years compiling and finetuning these wonderful biblical truths. This guide will jumpstart you into experiencing a much better way to live and a lot quicker than me!

This guide will:

- Give you a correct view of emotions.
- Teach you how to please, honor and glorify God with your emotions.
- Teach you how to put feelings in their proper place.

You are *not* going to learn how to *eliminate* your negative emotions, but to *manage and use them so they'll work for you not against you.*

I am not a psychologist or certified counselor. But I have counseled many women with these principles and *they work!* I use them every day of my life. They work *because* they are based on the inerrant Word of God.

I promise you, that if you apply these principles to your life you will have victory in increasing measure. But if you don't, you won't! I am here to give you the tools. The rest is up to you. But I assure you God will be with you every step of the way. And one more thing—this is a process, not an overnight cure!

## **BASICS**

### **Who has emotions?**

We all do. God made us that way. Some of us are just more expressive than others; more easily moved. It might surprise you that some very godly men and women suffer from depression. Did you know that the great Charles Spurgeon was one of them?!

Do you know who else has emotions? God! He loves, grieves, rejoices, delights. He even gets angry. And of course, Jesus being fully human had emotions.

### **Understanding what emotions are**

What are emotions? It's hard to come up with a definition, but we all know what they are even if we can't define them.

The prefix *e* in the word *emotion* means “coming out of or from”; the word *motion* means movement. In other words, emotions are a result of something happening to you that causes movement. They are a reaction to something.

Unlike thoughts, emotions cause an automatic physical reaction, a bodily response. For example, nervousness or excitement can cause “butterflies” in your stomach; anxiety may produce your heart to race or palms to sweat.

Gratefully we are more than just emotions. I love this word picture used by theologian, C. Ryrie<sup>1</sup>:

*"Man is like a diamond with its many facets. Those facets are not separate entities, yet they reflect various aspects of the whole. They may serve similar or overlapping functions, yet they are distinguishable. They are not parts; they are aspects, facets, faces of the whole." Aspects include: soul, spirit, heart, conscience, mind, flesh, & will.*

All are inter-related—each facet affecting and influencing the other.

## Types of Feelings

(not a complete list)

Sorrow	Bitterness	Happiness	Acceptance
Fear	Insecurity	Joy	Pride
Anxiety	Shame	Encouragement	Love
Worry	Guilt	Hopefulness	Fondness
Depression	Hate	Excitement	Fulfillment
Discouragement	Jealousy	Calmness	Satisfaction
Despair	Greed	Peace	Gratefulness
Anger	Emptiness	Awe	Trust
Frustration	Disappointment	Security	Humor
Hurt	Loneliness	Confidence	Like

Those on left are usually viewed as negative; those on the right as positive. But sadness can be good if it leads you to God. Contentment can be bad if it leads you to be lazy. Anger can be good if it motivates you to take action against injustice. As you see, this could be confusing if we're not careful!

### Other Facts about Emotions

- Emotions always follow thought. They are only responders.
- Emotions have no intellect; not rational.
- Emotions are reflectors; they reveal what's truly inside our hearts
- Emotions cannot tell the difference between past and present, i.e. memory can trigger past-felt emotions.

### What Emotions Are NOT

- *Not the truth.*

Although real, feelings are an *unreliable* source of information. We place too much stock on them. *We have trained ourselves to think that what we feel is real*, but many times our feelings have no connection with reality.

- *Not a guide* to make decisions or to determine God's will.

Feelings often cloud our judgement. Be careful not to mistake your feelings for the Holy Spirit's leading.

- *Not an excuse to sin*

- *Not a sin*

It isn't wrong to feel sad or discouraged. This was huge eye opener for me. I thought I was sinning when I was down. But Jesus wept and agonized in the garden. And we know that He didn't sin. How do we make sense of this?

**It's what we do with those emotions that count.**

Feelings influence our thoughts and actions, but we do have a choice.

- Disappointment is not a sin unless it turns into discontentment and we complain.
- Feeling hurt from unkind words isn't wrong, but responding in unforgiveness and retaliation is.

**Emotions are good things created by God. They became distorted when sin entered the world. They can be good again when allowed to play the role God intended.**

## **WHAT AFFECTS OUR EMOTIONS**

There are many things that affect our emotional state—some of which we cannot change. Gratefully, we can change, at least to a certain extent, many of them. Below is a list of the factors influencing our feelings color coded.

Red indicates those we cannot change.

Black indicates those we can change.

Black with asterisk indicates those we can change some.

1. **Past**
2. **Present circumstances, including the weather**
3. Future
4. **Personality/temperament**
5. Conscience
6. Will
7. Physiological condition
  - **Genetics**
  - Hormones\* (influenced by health and diet)
  - Brain chemistry\* (influenced by health and diet)
  - Overall health\* (influenced by exercise, sleep, and eating)
8. **God's Truth**
9. Mind
  - Thinking
  - Attitude
  - Perspective
  - Knowledge of the facts/truth (we cannot change the facts but we can change our knowledge of them).
  - Expectations
  - Needs\*
  - Desires/Dreams
10. Relationship with others\*
11. Relationship with God

As you can see there's a lot you can do to influence how you feel! You can exercise and eat healthier; you can change your perspective. Best of all, you can increase intimacy with the Maker of your soul—the One who is the source and Controller of all things!

***What you cannot change, you can accept by humbling yourself and surrendering it to the Lord.***

Pray this:

**The Serenity Prayer**

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.*

**MANAGING YOUR FEELINGS**

Hopefully by now I've given you some hope that your feelings don't have to control you. I'm sure, like me, that you don't want to be without *any* emotions. You simply want to stop feeling the negative ones, or at least minimize them.

God's not asking you to deny what you feel. Feelings are part of who you are. He wants you to learn how to *manage and use them so they'll work for you—not against you, and bring Him glory and honor no matter what you are feeling in any given moment.*

How is that possible? It's not! This yo-yo certainly couldn't glorify Him in the heat of the moment. I had to learn how to place my feelings under *God's* management. And I have seen some miracles! I have found that this is a much better way to live! So, get excited because you are about to see the divine handiwork of God in you! Here are 5 steps to get you started and begin your journey to contentment.

*...So that [you] may take hold of the life that is truly life.*  
(1Tim 6:19)

**Step 1: Determine Your “WHY”**

God wants this for you. So, the question becomes, “Do *you* want to change?”

It's obvious that changing the way we handle our emotions is going to take some effort. You're going to need some motivation.

What might be some of the reasons you want to change? Are you tired of:

- Hurting the people you love
- Making wrong decisions

- Getting flustered with inconveniences
- Allowing your circumstances to steal your joy and peace
- Getting stressed out frequently
- Losing sleep
- Biting your mate's head off
- Being ineffective in your job or service to God
- Grieving the heart of your Savior

I could go on and on but I think you get the picture. Each of our struggles are different.

You need a strong reason. Without knowing *why* you want to change the way you respond in negative situations, you will quit. I'm not trying to discourage you. I desire to minimize your failures. I'm trying to set you up for success. Take it from one who has failed a lot in this department!

**Your desire to change has to be stronger than your desire to remain the same.**

It will be worth it! I'm sure you've heard it said:

**Long term gain for short term pain!**

And don't forget: God longs to help you. He can even change your heart. Ask Him to make your desire to please Him greater than the desire to please yourself.

*Delight yourself in the LORD  
and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Ps 37:4)*

## **Step 2: Change Your Thinking**

As you saw above, there are many inter-related factors influencing your emotions. One of the biggest factors is your mind; what you think.

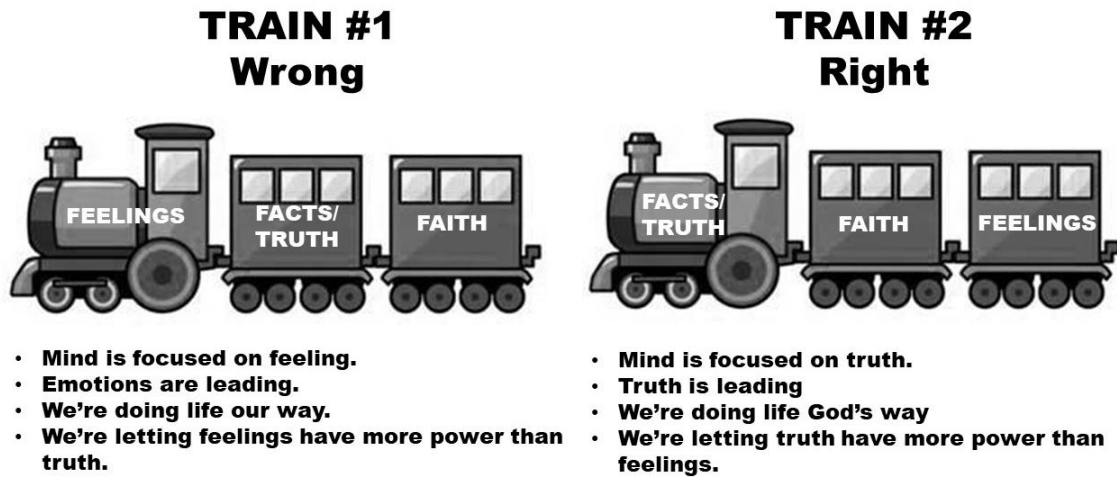
Remember these two important facts: *Feelings always follow thought and so do our actions.*

“Sow a thought, and you reap an act  
Sow an act, and you reap a habit  
Sow a habit, and you reap a character  
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.”  
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

The following train illustration will help you here.

## *Train Illustration*

Too many of us live our lives with feelings dictating our actions.



Train #1 depicts what most of us do. The engine determines which track our life will take. One leads to a desolate, despairing land; the other to the land of abundance.

To choose the right train, we need to know the facts. Our minds can only act on what we know.

### **Step 3: Learn the Truth**

The real truth found in the inerrant Word of God—true facts of who God is and how He works.

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:2)*

*I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God.... (Jer 24:7)*

*Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord....*

*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, **knowledge.***

(2 Pet 1:2, 5, emphasis added).

The more you get to know God, the more you will realize how truly wonderful it is having this all-powerful, wise and loving One manage your emotions!

## Step 4: Apply the Truth

Knowing the truth isn't enough. You need to think about it, then act on it by faith—recall the train illustration.

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—**think about** such things. Whatever you have learned...**put it into practice**. And the God of peace will be with you.*

(Phil 4:8-9, emphasis added)

Thinking here doesn't mean a passing thought, but dwelling upon it. This truth also needs to be *specific* to what you personally are feeling at the moment. For example...

If you are fearful, learn and think about verses dealing with fear.

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* (Joshua 1:9)

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*  
(2 Tim 1:7)

If you are feeling angry, learn and think about verses dealing with anger.

*In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,* (Eph 4:26)

*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.* (Pr 15:1)

**You need *specific key truths* applied to your *specific situation*.**

That's the way to victory!

## Step 5: Trust God to do His part

Jesus said:

*"If you hold to My teaching you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free...."* (John 8:31-32)

That's a promise from God Himself! God's Word has divine power (Eph 6:17, 2 Cor 10:4-5).

*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.* (2 Pet 1:3-4)



## CONCLUSION

There's so much more that I want to tell you! However, too much information may overwhelm you instead of helping you. This material will give you a good jumpstart in managing your emotions and put you on the right track toward the land of abundance.

I know you still have questions and wondering how it'll all work out. Go through this material first, then you'll be able to progress further. I have [workshops and seminars](#), and in the near future an online course, that will help you. Along the way, you'll want to check out the many blogs related to managing emotions God's way on the *He's So Worth It Ministries'* [website](#).

I am on this train with you. I haven't arrived at the final destination where there will be no more negative emotions. I've simply been on the journey a bit longer than you. I can encourage you to stay on the right track. Let me help you not get derailed. I use these principles every day of my life. They work! Choose to get on the right train; let God show you how they can work for you!

You *can* succeed in this most-worthwhile endeavor. It's a win, win, win. You win in experiencing a more fulfilled, contented life. Others win by your positive rather than negative influence. And most of all God wins—His kingdom will be further and His Name glorified because you started on this journey!



Are your emotions stealing your peace and joy  
OR  
are they leading you to the abundant life?

Learn how to manage and use your emotions so they'll work *for* you—not *against* you.  
Put your feelings in their proper place:  
Under God's management and for His glory!

<https://heisworthit.com/emotions-workshops/>

**Please contact our office if you'd like to schedule one of these life-changing sessions at your church or home! 304-314-4328**



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