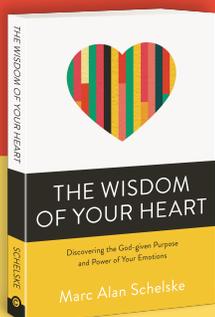




EMOTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

IS LEARNING HOW TO CHANNEL
EMOTIONAL ENERGY INTO
A LIFE OF LOVE
REFLECTING JESUS

GROUP READING & DISCUSSION FACILITATION GUIDE



#THEWISDOMOFOURHEART

www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com

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This Group Reading & Discussion Facilitation Guide goes along with
The Wisdom of Your Heart: Discovering the God-given Purpose and Power of Your Emotions.
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This study guide is offered as a resource to you. The website addresses throughout are offered as a resource. They are not intended in any way to be or imply an endorsement on the part of David C Cook, nor do they vouch for their contents.

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OPTIONS FOR YOUR EXPERIENCE

THREE GROUP OPTIONS

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER (17 Weeks)

This experience will take your group through the book chapter by chapter, reading one chapter per week. The discussion questions provided include both the questions from the end of the chapter in the book, as well as additional questions only available here. This is a good format if your main goal is to digest and process the material, if your group has slower readers, or if you just don't want to rush.

ONE QUARTER (10 Weeks)

This experience will take your group through the book in ten weeks, with the book divided into sections that make the most sense. The readings is approximately 2 chapters per week. This is the perfect length for groups that meet for a single quarter.

6 WK INTRODUCTORY GROUP (6 Weeks)

(ALSO CALLED "COURSE 1 - THE WISDOM OF YOUR HEART")

This six-week experience will guide your group through a high-level overview of the book. It is accompanied by 6 short discussion starter videos that can be found for free at www.TheApprenticeshipLab.com or via the book's website at www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com, labeled Course 1. Each week provides reading assignments, a discussion prompting video, and a few questions the facilitator can choose from to get conversation going. Use this if your group has limited time, or if you want to introduce people to the concepts of the book. **NOTE:** For people to get the best personal impact from the material, the 6 week introductory group is best followed up by the three additional 6 week courses available online.

FOLLOW UP EXPLORATION GROUPS

6 WK GROUP EXPLORING OUR STORIES

COURSE 2 - UNCOVERING THE STORY THAT SHAPES YOUR EMOTIONS

This six-week experience takes your group through the first 7 chapters of the book. This includes expanding on the idea of our personal story introduced in chapter 2, and examining the "inherited maps" from our family and religious upbringing that impact our emotional life. The questions in this guide are meant to be used in conjunction with the videos in the online course found at www.TheApprenticeshipLab.com, although they can be used on their own.

6 WK GROUP EXPLORING HOW EMOTIONS WORK

COURSE 3 - UNDER THE HOOD OF YOUR EMOTIONS

This six-week experience takes your group through the chapters 8-15 of the book, looking at the inner workings of our emotional response system and the meaning of our different emotions. The questions in this guide are meant to be used in conjunction with the videos in the online course found at www.TheApprenticeshipLab.com, although they can be used on their own.

6 WK GROUP EXPLORING HOW TO LISTEN TO OUR EMOTIONS

COURSE 4 - LEARNING TO LISTEN TO EMOTION'S TRUTH

This six-week experience goes much deeper into chapters 16 & 17 of the book, providing a step-by-step walk-through of the Five As, the process of listening and discernment taught in the book. The questions in this guide are meant to be used in conjunction with the videos in the online course found at www.TheApprenticeshipLab.com, although they can be used on their own.

OPTION 1 CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

WHY THIS OPTION?

This chapter-by-chapter experience is for a small group or book group that likes to leisurely review a book, reading only one chapter per week. This allows for more time to discuss each chapter's material in depth. This is also a good pace for people who are slower readers.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The Wisdom of Your Heart is 17 chapters long. One chapter per week will take 17 weeks.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Give the reading assignment to your group ahead of time, so that everyone can come to the group having read the same material. As the facilitator, you should select questions you want to use ahead of time based on where you want the group to go, and how much time your group meets.

Note that some of these questions press into personal or more intimate areas. Be mindful of the comfort level of your group, and what is appropriate in your context. Some of these questions may surface difficult or painful conversations. Be prepared to create safe space for these conversations.

Group Schedule

17 Week Option - 1 Chapter Per Week

Assign one chapter of the book ahead of each week's meeting. When you gather use the discussion questions for that chapter.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 1

READING

Chapter 1 “You Can’t Run Forever” (p. 19-29)

Discussion Questions

1. Were you taught that emotions are unreliable or untrustworthy? Where did this message come from in your life?
2. What came up for you when you spoke the two test sentences aloud: “You seem really reasonable today” and “You seem really emotional today”? Why do you think you had the reaction you did?
3. Think about the woman who asked whether our lives would be better if we could just turn off our emotions. If this were possible, how would life be different? How might it improve things for you? How would it make things worse? How might this affect your spiritual life?
4. The chapter ends with this statement:

“Here’s the truth: God didn’t create us as beings of pure reason who happen to be burdened by the glandular effects of irrational emotion. We’ll turn to scripture soon, and there you’ll see that God created us as whole beings—body, mind and spirit. All of that was made in God’s image. Let me be clear: This includes your emotions.”

How does this statement sit with you? What questions come up for you as you hear it? If this is true, how might it change things for us?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 2

READING

Chapter 2 “A Crazy Prophet and My Hidden Shattering” (p. 31-44)

Discussion Questions

1. Because of the author’s backstory, accomplishment and performance became his primary path for building a sense of value and security in life. For some, the path to value and security is being right. For others, value and security come from being needed. Do you have a sense of what your primary path for creating value and security is? How do you think this came to be in your life?
2. Our stories (the narratives of our lives and the meanings we’ve given them) shape our lives deeply. Until we’re conscious of this, we tend to live either reacting to our stories (“I will never be like my dad!”) or reenacting them (“I feel most comfortable around strong women—like my mom”). Sometimes we do both. Do you see one or both of these forces at work in your life today? In what ways?
3. How might your story have led you into brokenness, unhealthy habits, or even sin? How has it shaped your experience of emotion?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 3

READING

Chapter 3 “A Killer GPS” (p. 45-59)

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe the mental maps about emotions you gathered and inherited growing up? What did those maps say? Where did they come from?
2. Did you pick up any of the four myths about emotions from your church or religious upbringing? How were these ideas communicated to you? How did they affect you? Were there others?
3. Do you see these mental maps and myths about emotions still impacting you today? Perhaps in your emotions, relationships, workplace, or church? How are they impacting you?
4. If we never talk about God and emotions, what impact will that inevitably have on our pursuit of becoming more like Jesus?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 4

READING

Chapter 4 “The Lost Image” (p. 63-44)

Discussion Questions

1. Read Romans 12:9–16 as a group. In this passage, Paul describes a community of Jesus followers. What emotions do you see Paul describe? What kinds of emotional skills would be needed in a community like this?
2. Have you ever done something good or godly because you were emotionally moved? If so, how was this experience different from times you did the right thing out of duty or simply because it was the right thing to do?
3. Has emotional maturity been a part of discipleship in your life? In what practical ways has your church experience and Christian learning contributed to (or hindered) your emotional health?
4. How could the church community do a better job helping us grow in this area?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 5

READING

Chapter 5 “An Emotional Jesus” (p. 81-94)

Discussion Questions

1. Think back on the picture of Jesus you’ve had in the past. How would you describe His emotional life? Would you have described Jesus as an emotional person? Why or why not?
2. Still thinking back to those formative pictures of Jesus, what kinds of emotions did you expect Jesus to feel?
3. Positive feelings like joy, compassion, and love seem to fit neatly into our picture of Jesus. Yet Scripture shows Jesus also experiencing emotions we’re far less comfortable with, such as anger and grief. How does seeing this affect your view of Jesus?
4. The incarnation means that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. It’s easy to ascribe all the emotions we’ve discussed to Jesus’ human side, yet He told us, “If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.” What do you think Jesus’ emotions can tell us about God?
5. Does thinking about Jesus’ emotions cause you to rethink your theology in any way? How so?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 6

READING

Chapter 6 “An Uncomfortably Messy Picture of God” (p. 95-109)

Discussion Questions

1. Before you read this chapter, how would you say you imagined God’s emotional life?
2. Reread Exodus 34:6–7 together. In this passage God is introduced. The language in this introduction is stunningly emotional. Why do you think God would choose to be identified in this way?
3. Many believe in a passionless God, the Unmoved Mover, but Scripture clearly shows God being moved. How might this emotional language referring to God affect your spiritual life?
4. This chapter and the previous one deal with our mental pictures of God. How might these ideas we hold about God and Godly emotions bear practical fruit in our lives and relationships with others? How might they impact our group or our church community?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 7

READING

Chapter 7 “The Breathtaking Affections of an Infinite Heart” (p. 111-120)

Discussion Questions

1. Thinking back over this week’s reading and the two previous chapters, do you find it uncomfortable to consider God as having a full, rich emotional life that spans everything from compassion to hatred? Why, or why not?
2. If you had to choose between a God who is “impassible” (the theological term for a God unaffected by emotion and unmoved by us) or a God whom we and our circumstances can move, which would you pick? Why does your choice seem better to you?
3. If you’re willing to push deeper, consider what your answer to the last question may say about you and your heart. What about your own story might lead you to be more comfortable with that particular picture of God?
4. Consider the idea presented in this chapter that God is omnimotive, able to contain and feel all emotions without the divine character being compromised or undone. Does this align with what you read in Scripture? How could this idea change your perspective of God and your spiritual life?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 8

READING

Chapter 8 “Reason’s Secret and Emotion’s Purpose” (p. 123-136)

Discussion Questions

1. The first purpose of emotion is to move us. How have you seen this play out in your life? Think of it from both positive and negative directions. When has emotion moved you in a negative or destructive direction? When has it moved you in a positive, life-giving, or God-honoring direction?
2. We tend to do things based on three motivations: duty (doing something because it’s the right thing), obligation (doing something because of a stated or unstated commitment), or desire (doing something because we want to). Think of examples in your life when you acted from each of these motivations. How were those experiences different for you emotionally?
3. If it’s true that emotion’s first purpose is to move us to act, how might this impact the way you see people around you or in your life who are making choices you don’t like?
4. Imagine you woke up one morning and a miracle had happened overnight. Your heart had changed. Suddenly you find that you naturally and authentically love the things God loves. How do you imagine your life would be different than it is now? What do you think godly obedience feel like?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 9

READING

Chapter 9 “Your Emotions Always Tell You the Truth...” (p. 137-145)

Discussion Questions

1. What was your reaction when you read that your emotions always tell you the truth? Why do you think you had this response?
2. Many people have a strong negative reaction to that statement. Of course, the sentence is intentionally provocative. The goal is to cause you to reflect on your own predisposition about emotions. Having heard in this chapter a bit more about how emotions function in the body and the brain, how does this alter your predisposition?
3. The first thing to understand about emotions is that all emotions are either a push away from something or a pull toward something. How might knowing this change the way you relate to your emotions?
4. Emotions are information. They are neither good nor bad, holy nor sinful. They provide feedback about your internal state and external circumstances. How does knowing this change the way you see your own emotions? Someone else's?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 10

READING

Chapter 10 “Seeing the Inner Workings” (p. 147-161)

Discussion Questions

1. Emotions are composite experiences that include four elements: a change of body state, a predictable pattern of thoughts, an object in mental focus, and a generated explanatory story. How might this framework change the way you think about and relate to emotions?
2. Did you find anything interesting or helpful in the basic emotions chart (p.155) or Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions (p.156)? What was it? How might thinking about emotions in these ways be helpful in your life, relationships, work, or church?
3. If God designed our emotions to function in a predictable way, they can be studied and learned from. What might this mean regarding the role of emotions in the process of personal or spiritual growth?
4. Understanding all of this, why do you think it might be vital that we do not suppress, ignore, or deny our emotions?

NOTE: If the Basic Emotions chart in the chapter looks helpful, downloadable color versions of the Basic Emotions Chart and other resources are available at www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 11

READING

Chapter 11 “When You’re Called to Fight” (p. 163-179)

Discussion Questions

1. What was your experience of anger growing up? Did anger play a significant role in your family when you were growing up? How did your family relate to anger?
2. How do you relate to anger (in yourself or others) now?
3. How do you understand the apostle Paul’s counsel in Ephesians 4:26, “Be angry and do not sin”? What does this look like practically?
4. Have you experienced anger as a flag marking injustice? When? What was that experience like?
5. When is our anger least like God’s anger?
6. When is our anger most like God’s anger?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 12

READING

Chapter 12 “When You’re Under Threat” (p. 181-193)

Discussion Questions

1. What was your experience of fear growing up? Did fear play a significant role in your family? How did your family relate to fear?
2. How would you characterize your experience of fear today? Do you consider yourself a fearful person? What impact does anxiety have in your life today?
3. Good and helpful fear alerts us to danger. Unhelpful fear keeps us from moving forward in our lives. What are some experiences you’ve had with fear functioning in these two different ways in your life?
4. How do you handle scriptures that tell you to “fear the Lord”? What does that look like in your life, practically speaking?
5. How can we see fear as a gift?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 13

READING

Chapter 13 “When You Want, Have & Lose” (p. 195-210)

Discussion Questions

1. Growing up, was your family a place where grief was safe to express or not? How has this shaped you?
2. Would you say you're more of a *feeler* or more of a *denier* when it comes to grief and loss? Do you primarily push into the grief and feel it, or do you push away from the grief with denial or distraction? Why do you think you do this?
3. Think about your most painful experiences of grief. What were you grieving? How did the intensity of your grief reflect on that lost relationship or object?
4. Think of the person who has been the most helpful to you in the face of grief. What did that person do for you? How did their action help you?
5. How does it affect you knowing that Jesus experienced great loss and grief?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 14

READING

Chapter 14 “When You’ve Got What You Want” (p. 211-224)

Discussion Questions

1. The dictionary presents two different viewpoints on happiness: “favored by luck or fortune” and “enjoying or characterized by well-being and contentment.” Where does your personal definition for happiness fall?
2. In both the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek, the words “happy” and “blessed” are generally interchangeable. How might these two concepts be related?
3. If happiness is the emotion of contentment (as suggested in the chapter) then central to being happy is the ability to be truly present in the moment. After all, you can't be content if you can't stop to notice and experience what is happening to you in the present moment. How are you when it comes to noticing what is really happening in your inner landscape and outer circumstances? If you struggle with being present, why do you think this is?
4. Psalm 37 says that God wants to give us the desires of our hearts but indicates that this promise is activated for us when our hearts desire God. What does this say to you about the nature of happiness?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 15

READING

Chapter 15 “When You Feel Like God” (p. 225-234)

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever considered that *agape* was something you’ve felt? Or even could feel? Why or why not?
2. The human experience of *agape* is compassion, an emotion of “feeling with” someone else. Can you think of a time you felt with someone else or someone else felt with you? What was that like? How did it affect you?
3. What connection can you see between compassion and Jesus’ instruction in Matthew 22:39 to “love your neighbor as yourself?”
4. If *agape* love is expressed in compassion, what might this suggest to us about how Christians and the church ought to orient themselves towards the people around us?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 16

READING

Chapter 16 “Learning to Pay Attention” (p. 237-257)

Discussion Questions

1. Consider the process presented in this chapter called the “Five As.” What about this process seems helpful and wise to you?
2. Do you presently journal? Why or why not? Does your journaling help you listen for truth or wisdom in your emotions? If so, how?
3. Whether you journal or not, do you have some kind of practice for reflecting on and working through your emotions? If so, what is that process like?
4. If you have a process, which part of the “Five As” is missing from what you do? If you don’t have a process, why not? How might a process like this be helpful to you?
5. Consider Pete Scazzero’s quotation at the end of this chapter:
“At the very least, the call of discipleship includes experiencing our feelings, reflecting on our feelings, and then thoughtfully responding to our feelings under the Lordship of Jesus.”

What do you think this means practically?

6. Are you going to incorporate a process like this in your life? If so, how will you begin?

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION / WEEK 16

READING

Chapter 17 “We Grow Well When We Feel Well” (p. 259-267)

Discussion Questions

1. Did you grow up in an environment where emotional maturity was valued, modeled, and taught? How did your experience shape you? How do you want your life to be different in this regard?
2. How will authentic emotional maturity in the lives of individual Christians shape the churches they're a part of?
3. How might a reformation of emotional maturity change the culture of Christianity? How might it change the experience the world has of Christians?
4. What have you learned over the course of this book that you want to apply to your life today? How will you take that from a good intention into real action?

NEXT STEPS

If this study was helpful to you, you can go deeper into the topic in several ways. At www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com you'll find recommended books to help you on a variety of topics, including anger, grief, loss, identity in Christ, and others. You'll also find various downloadable resources.

In addition, the author has created 4 different 6-week online courses that cover the material in the book and are designed to help you go deeper into the material for real growth. You can find those at www.TheApprenticeshipLab.com or through the book website at www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com.

OPTION 2 TEN WEEK GROUP

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

WHY THIS OPTION?

This experience is for a small group or book group that meets in quarter-long blocks. The book is divided into 10 sections, so that the material can be discussed over in ten group meetings.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

By covering approximately two chapters per week, this experience can be completed in 10 weeks.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Give the reading assignment to your group ahead of time, so that everyone can come to the group having read the same material. As the facilitator, you should select the questions you want to use ahead of time based on where you want the group to go, and how much time your group meets. Because chapters are combined each week, you may want to pick a specific direction for the discussion.

Note that some of these questions press into personal or more intimate areas. Be mindful of the comfort level of your group, and what is appropriate in your context. Some of these questions may surface difficult or painful conversations. Be prepared to create safe space for these conversations.

Group Schedule

10 Week Option - Approx. 2 Chapters Per Week

Assign the reading below ahead of each week's meeting. When you gather use the discussion questions for that week.

Week 1
Preface & Ch. 1

Week 2
Ch. 2 & 3

Week 3
Ch. 4 & 5

Week 4
Ch. 6 & 7

Week 5

Ch. 8 & 9

Week 6

Ch. 10

Week 7
Ch. 11 & 12

Week 8
Ch. 13 & 14

Week 9

Ch. 15

Week 10
Ch. 16 & 17

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 1

READING

Preface & Chapter 1 (p. 9 - 29)

Discussion Questions

1. Were you taught that emotions are unreliable or untrustworthy? Where did this message come from in your life?
2. What came up for you when you spoke the two test sentences from chapter 1 aloud: “You seem really reasonable today” and “You seem really emotional today?” Why do you think you had the reaction you did?
3. Think about the woman who asked whether our lives would be better if we could just turn off our emotions. If this were possible, how would life be different? How might it improve things? How would it make things worse? How might this affect our spiritual life?
4. Chapter 1 ends with this statement:

“Here’s the truth: God didn’t create us as beings of pure reason who happen to be burdened by the glandular effects of irrational emotion. We’ll turn to scripture soon, and there you’ll see that God created us as whole beings—body, mind and spirit. All of that was made in God’s image. Let me be clear: This includes your emotions.”

How does this statement sit with you? What questions come up for you as you hear it? If this is true, how might it change things for us?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 2

READING

Chapters 2 & 3 (p. 31-59)

Discussion Questions

1. Because of the author’s backstory, accomplishment and performance became his primary path for building a sense of value and security in life. For some, the path to value and security is being right. For others, value and security come from being needed. Do you have a sense of what your primary path for creating value and security is? How do you think this came to be in your life?
2. Our stories (the narratives of our lives and the meanings we’ve given them) shape our lives deeply. Until we’re conscious of this, we tend to live either reacting to our stories (“I will never be like my dad!”) or reenacting them (“I feel most comfortable around strong women—like my mom”). Sometimes we do both. Do you see one or both of these forces at work in your life today? In what ways?
3. How would you describe the mental maps about emotions you gathered and inherited growing up? What did those maps say? Where did they come from?
4. Did you pick up any of the four myths about emotions from your church or religious upbringing? How were these ideas communicated to you? How did they affect you? Were there others?
5. If we never talk about God and emotions, what impact will that inevitably have on our pursuit of becoming more like Jesus?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 3

READING

Chapters 4 & 5 (p. 63 - 94)

Discussion Questions

1. Read Romans 12:9–16 as a group. In this passage Paul describes a community of Jesus followers. What emotions do you see Paul describe? What kinds of emotional skills would be needed in a community like this?
2. Have you ever done something good or godly because you were emotionally moved? If so, how was this experience different from times you did the right thing out of duty or simply because it was the right thing to do?
3. Think back on the picture of Jesus you've had in the past. How would you describe His emotional life? Would you have described Jesus as an emotional person? Why or why not? What kinds of emotions did you expect Jesus to feel?
4. The incarnation means that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. It's easy to ascribe all the emotions we've discussed to Jesus' human side, yet He told us, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." What do you think Jesus' emotions can tell us about God? Does thinking about Jesus' emotions cause you to rethink your theology in any way? How so?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 4

READING

Chapters 6 & 7 (p. 95 -120)

Discussion Questions

1. Reread Exodus 34:6–7 together. In this passage God is introduced. The language in this introduction is stunningly emotional. Why do you think God would choose to be identified in this way?
2. Many believe in a passionless God, the Unmoved Mover, but Scripture clearly shows God being moved. How might this emotional language referring to God affect your spiritual life?
3. If you had to choose between a God who is "impassible" (the theological term for a God unaffected by emotion and unmoved by us) or a God whom we and our circumstances can move, which would you pick? Why does your choice seem better to you?
4. If you're willing to push deeper, consider what your answer to the last question may say about you and your heart. What about your own story might lead you to be more comfortable with that particular picture of God?
5. Consider the idea presented in chapter 7 that God is omnimotive, able to contain and feel all emotions without the divine character being compromised or undone. Does this align with what you read in Scripture? How could this idea change your perspective of God and your spiritual life?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 5

READING

Chapters 8 & 9 (p. 123 - 145)

Discussion Questions

1. The first purpose of emotion is to move us. How have you seen this play out in your life? When has emotion moved you in a negative or destructive direction? When has it moved you in a positive, life-giving, or God-honoring direction?
2. Imagine you woke up one morning and a miracle had happened overnight. Your heart had changed. Suddenly you find that you naturally and authentically love the things God loves. How do you imagine your life would be different than it is now? What do you think godly obedience feel like?
3. What was your reaction when you read that your emotions always tell you the truth? Why do you think you had this response? Many people have a strong negative reaction to that statement. Of course, the sentence is intentionally provocative. The goal is to cause you to reflect on your own predisposition about emotions. Having heard more about how emotions function in the body and the brain, how does this alter your predisposition?
4. Emotions are information. They are neither good nor bad, holy nor sinful. They provide feedback about your internal state and external circumstances. How does knowing this change the way you see your own emotions? Someone else's?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 6

READING

Chapters 10 (p. 147 - 161)

Discussion Questions

1. Emotions are composite experiences that include four elements: a change of body state, a predictable pattern of thoughts, an object in mental focus, and a generated explanatory story. How might this framework change the way you think about and relate to emotions?
2. Did you find anything interesting or helpful in the basic emotions chart (p.155) or Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions (p.156)? What was it? How might thinking about emotions in these ways be helpful in your life, relationships, work, or church?
3. If God designed our emotions to function in a predictable way, they can be studied and learned from. What might this mean regarding the role of emotions in the process of personal or spiritual growth?
4. Understanding all of this, why do you think it might be vital that we do not suppress, ignore, or deny our emotions?

NOTE: If the Basic Emotions chart in the chapter looks helpful, downloadable color versions of the Basic Emotions Chart and other resources are available at www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com.

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 7

READING

Chapters 11 & 12 (p. 163 - 193)

Discussion Questions

1. What was your experience of anger and fear growing up? Did anger or fear play a significant role in your family when you were growing up? How did your family relate to these emotions?
2. How would you characterize your experience of anger and fear today? Do you consider yourself a fearful or angry person? How do these emotions impact your life today?
3. How do you understand the apostle Paul's counsel in Ephesians 4:26, "Be angry and do not sin"? What does this look like practically?
4. How do you handle scriptures that tell you to "fear the Lord"? What does that look like in your life, practically speaking?
5. How can we see anger or fear as a gift?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 8

READING

Chapters 13 & 14 (p. 195 - 224)

Discussion Questions

1. Growing up, was your family a place where grief was safe to express or not? How has this shaped you?
2. Would you say you're more of a *feeler* or more of a *denier* when it comes to grief and loss? Do you primarily push into the grief and feel it, or do you push away from the grief with denial or distraction? Why do you think you do this?
3. How does it affect you knowing that Jesus experienced great loss and grief?
4. The dictionary presents two different viewpoints on happiness: "favored by luck or fortune" and "enjoying or characterized by well-being and contentment." Where does your personal definition for happiness fall?
5. If happiness is the emotion of contentment (as suggested in the chapter) then central to being happy is the ability to be truly present in the moment. After all, you can't be content if you can't stop to notice and experience what is happening to you in the present moment. How are you when it comes to noticing what is really happening in your inner landscape and outer circumstances? If you struggle with being present, why do you think this is?
6. Psalm 37 says that God wants to give us the desires of our hearts but indicates that this promise is activated for us when our hearts desire God. What does this say to you about the nature of happiness?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 9

READING

Chapters 15 (p. 225 - 234)

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever considered that *agape* was something you've felt? Or even could feel? Why or why not?
2. The human experience of *agape* is compassion, an emotion of "feeling with" someone else. Can you think of a time you felt with someone else or someone else felt with you? What was that like? How did it affect you?
3. What connection can you see between compassion and Jesus' instruction in Matthew 22:39 to "love your neighbor as yourself?"
4. If *agape* love is expressed in compassion, what might this suggest to us about how Christians and the church ought to orient themselves towards the people around us?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 10

READING

Chapters 16 & 17 (p. 237 - 267)

Discussion Questions

1. Did you grow up in an environment where emotional maturity was valued, modeled, and taught? How did your experience shape you? How do you want your life to be different in this regard?
2. How will authentic emotional maturity in the lives of individual Christians shape the churches they're a part of? How might a reformation of emotional maturity change the culture of Christianity? How might it change the experience the world has of Christians?
3. Consider the process presented in this chapter called the "Five As." What about this process seems helpful and wise to you?
4. Do you presently journal? Why or why not? Does your journaling help you listen for truth or wisdom in your emotions? If so, how? If you have a process, which part of the "Five As" is missing from what you do? If you don't have a process, why not? How might a process like this be helpful to you?

5. Consider Pete Scazzero's quotation at the end of chapter 17:

"At the very least, the call of discipleship includes experiencing our feelings, reflecting on our feelings, and then thoughtfully responding to our feelings under the Lordship of Jesus."

What do you think this means practically?

6. What have you learned over the course of this book that you want to apply to your life today? How will you take that from a good intention into real action?

10 WEEK GROUP / WEEK 10

NEXT STEPS

If this study was helpful to you, you can go deeper into the topic in several ways. At www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com you'll find recommended books to help you on a variety of topics, including anger, grief, loss, identity in Christ, and others. You'll also find various downloadable resources.

In addition, the author has created 4 different 6-week online courses that cover the material in the book and help you go deeper into the material for real growth. You can find those at www.TheApprenticeshipLab.com or through the book website at www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com.

OPTION 3 SIX WEEK INTRO

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

WHY THIS OPTION?

This experience is for the many church classes and small groups who like to cover a topic or theme in six weeks. The book is divided into 6 sections, meant to give participants a high-level overview of the material.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

This experience will be completed in 6 weeks. The reading varies from week to week, from 30 to 60 pages, depending on the section of the book.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Give the reading assignment to your group ahead of time, so that everyone can come to the group having read the same material. As the facilitator, you should select the questions you want to use ahead of time based on where you want the group to go, and how much time your group meets. More questions are provided than you will likely use.

Video Intro: Each of the six sessions begins with a short discussion-starter video of the author introducing the content in that week's session. These videos are available through the book website www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com and at www.TheApprenticeshipLab.com. Make sure that you have the video prepared and ready to go before the group begins.

Group Schedule

6 Week Option

Assign the reading below ahead of each week's meeting.

Week 1**Maps, Myths & Marc's Story**

Preface, Ch. 1 - 3
p. 9 - 59

Week 3**Why Emotions Do What They Do**

Ch. 8 - 10
p. 123 - 161

Week 5**Sadness, Happiness & Compassion**

Ch. 13 - 15
p. 195 - 234

Week 2**Emotional Jesus, Emotional God?**

Ch. 4 - 7
p. 63 - 120

Week 4**Fight or Flight?**

Ch. 11 - 12
p. 163 - 193

Week 6**Learning To Listen**

Ch. 16 - 17
p. 237 - 267

6 WEEK INTRO GROUP / WEEK 1

Maps, Myths & Marc's Story

READING

Preface & Chapter 1-3 (p. 9 - 59)

Video Intro

Start your discussion by playing the first video segment called "Maps, Myths & My Story."

Discussion Questions

1. What in Marc's story do you relate to?
2. What came up for you when you spoke the two test sentences aloud: "You seem really reasonable today" and "You seem really emotional today?" Why do you think you had the reaction you did?
3. Think about the woman who asked whether our lives would be better if we could just turn off our emotions. If this were possible, how would life be different? How might it improve things? How would it make things worse? How might this affect your spiritual life?
4. Our stories (the narratives of our lives and the meanings we've given them) shape our lives deeply. Until we're conscious of this, we tend to live either reacting to our stories ("I will never be like my dad!") or reenacting them ("I feel most comfortable around strong women—like my mom"). Sometimes we do both. Do you see one or both of these forces at work in your life today? In what ways?
5. How might your story have led you into brokenness, unhealthy habits, or even sin? How has it shaped your experience of emotion?
6. How would you describe the mental maps about emotions that you gathered and inherited growing up? What did those maps say? Where did they come from?
7. Did you pick up any of the four myths mentioned in chapter 3 about emotions from your church or religious upbringing? How were these ideas communicated to you? How did they affect you? Were there others?
8. Marc ended with this thought:

"Here's the truth: God didn't create us as beings of pure reason who happen to be burdened by the glandular effects of irrational emotion. We'll turn to scripture soon, and there you'll see that God created us as whole beings—body, mind and spirit. All of that was made in God's image. Let me be clear: This includes your emotions."

How does this statement sit with you? What questions come up for you as you hear it? If this is true, how might it change things for us?

6 WEEK INTRO GROUP / WEEK 2

Emotional Jesus, Emotional God?

READING

Preface & Chapter 4-7 (p. 63 - 120)

Video Intro

Start your discussion by playing the first video segment called “Emotional Jesus, Emotional God?”

Discussion Questions

1. Has emotional maturity been a part of discipleship in your life? In what practical ways has your church experience and Christian learning contributed to (or hindered) your emotional health?
2. Think back on the picture of Jesus you’ve had in the past. How would you describe His emotional life? Would you have described Jesus as an emotional person? Why or why not? What kinds of emotions did you expect Jesus to feel?
3. The incarnation means that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. It’s easy to ascribe all the emotions we discussed to Jesus’ human side, yet He told us, “If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.” What do you think Jesus’ emotions can tell us about God?
4. Reread Exodus 34:6–7 together. In this passage God is introduced. The language in this introduction is stunningly emotional. Why do you think God would choose to be identified in this way?
5. Many believe in a passionless God, the Unmoved Mover, but Scripture clearly shows God being moved. How might this emotional language referring to God affect your spiritual life?
6. If you had to choose between a God who is “impassible” (the theological term for a God unaffected by emotion and unmoved by us) or a God whom we and our circumstances can move, which would you pick? Why does your choice seem better to you?
7. If you’re willing to push deeper, consider what your answer to the last question may say about you and your heart. What about your own story might lead you to be more comfortable with that particular picture of God?
8. Consider the idea presented in this chapter that God is omnimotive, able to contain and feel all emotions without the divine character being compromised or undone. Does this align with what you read in Scripture? How could this idea change your perspective of God and your spiritual life?

6 WEEK INTRO GROUP / WEEK 3

Why Emotions Do What They Do

READING

Preface & Chapter 8-10 (p. 123 - 161)

Video Intro

Start your discussion by playing the first video segment called “Why Emotions Do What They Do.”

Discussion Questions

1. The first purpose of emotion is to move us. How have you seen this play out in your life? Think of it from both positive and negative directions. When has emotion moved you in a negative or destructive direction? When has it moved you in a positive, life-giving, or God-honoring direction?
2. The second purpose of emotion is to tell us the truth. What was your reaction when you read that your emotions always tell you the truth? Why do you think you had this response?
3. Many people have a strong negative reaction to that statement. Of course, the sentence is intentionally provocative. The goal is to cause you to reflect on your own predisposition about emotions. Having heard a bit more about how emotions function in the body and the brain, how does this alter your predisposition?
4. Emotions are composite experiences that include four elements: a change of body state, a predictable pattern of thoughts, an object in mental focus, and a generated explanatory story. How might this framework change the way you think about and relate to emotions?
5. Imagine you woke up one morning and a miracle had happened overnight. Your heart had changed. Suddenly you find that you naturally and authentically love the things God loves. How do you imagine your life would be different than it is now? What do you think godly obedience feel like?
6. If God designed our emotions to function in a predictable way, they can be studied and learned from. What might this mean regarding the role of emotions in the process of personal or spiritual growth?
7. Understanding all of this, why do you think it might be vital that we do not suppress, ignore, or deny our emotions?

NOTE: If the Basic Emotions chart in the chapter looks helpful, downloadable color versions of the Basic Emotions Chart and other resources are available at www.TheWisdomOfYourHeart.com.

6 WEEK INTRO GROUP / WEEK 4

Fight or Flight?

READING

Preface & Chapter 11-12 (p. 163 - 193)

Video Intro

Start your discussion by playing the first video segment called “Fight or Flight?”

Discussion Questions

1. What was your experience of anger and fear growing up? Did anger or fear play a significant role in your family when you were growing up? How did your family relate to these emotions?
2. How would you characterize your experience of anger and fear today? Do you consider yourself a fearful or angry person? How do these emotions impact your life today?
3. How do you understand the apostle Paul’s counsel in Ephesians 4:26, “Be angry and do not sin”? What does this look like practically?
4. Have you experienced anger as a flag marking injustice? When? What was that experience like?
5. How do you handle scriptures that tell you to “fear the Lord”? What does that look like in your life practically speaking?
6. Good and helpful fear alerts us to danger. Unhelpful fear keeps us from moving forward in our lives. What are some experiences you’ve had with fear functioning in these two different ways in your life?
7. When is our anger least like God’s anger? When is our anger most like God’s anger?
8. How can we see anger or fear as a gift?

6 WEEK INTRO GROUP / WEEK 5

Sadness, Happiness & Compassion

READING

Preface & Chapter 13-15 (p. 195 - 234)

Video Intro

Start your discussion by playing the first video segment called “Sadness, Happiness & Compassion.”

Discussion Questions

1. Would you say you're more of a *feeler* or more of a *denier* when it comes to grief and loss? Do you primarily push into the grief and feel it, or do you push away from the grief with denial or distraction? Why do you think you do this?
2. How does it affect you knowing that Jesus experienced great loss and grief?
3. The dictionary presents two different viewpoints on happiness: “favored by luck or fortune” and “enjoying or characterized by well-being and contentment.” Where does your personal definition for happiness fall?
4. In both the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek, the words “happy” and “blessed” are generally interchangeable. How might these two concepts be related?
5. If happiness is the emotion of contentment (as suggested in chapter 14) then central to being happy is the ability to be truly present in the moment. After all, you can't be content if you can't stop to notice and experience what is happening to you in the present moment. How are you when it comes to noticing what is really happening in your inner landscape and outer circumstances? If you struggle with being present, why do you think this is?
6. Psalm 37 says that God wants to give us the desires of our hearts but indicates that this promise is activated for us when our hearts desire God. What does this say to you about the nature of happiness?
7. The human experience of *agape* is compassion, an emotion of “feeling with” someone else. Can you think of a time you felt with someone else or someone else felt with you? What was that like? How did it affect you?
8. What connection can you see between compassion and Jesus' instruction in Matthew 22:39 to “love your neighbor as yourself?”
9. If *agape* love is expressed in compassion, what might this suggest to us about how Christians and the church ought to orient themselves towards the people around us?

6 WEEK INTRO GROUP / WEEK 6

Learning To Listen

READING

Preface & Chapter 16-17 (p. 237 - 267)

Video Intro

Start your discussion by playing the first video segment called “Learning to Listen.”

Discussion Questions

1. Did you grow up in an environment where emotional maturity was valued, modeled, and taught? How did your experience shape you? How do you want your life to be different in this regard?
2. Consider the process Marc presented called the “Five As.” What about this process seems helpful and wise to you?
3. At the end of the video, Marc quoted Pete Scazzero:

“At the very least, the call of discipleship includes experiencing our feelings, reflecting on our feelings, and then thoughtfully responding to our feelings under the Lordship of Jesus.”

What do you think this means practically?

4. How will authentic emotional maturity in the lives of individual Christians shape the churches they’re a part of?
5. How might a reformation of emotional maturity change the culture of Christianity? How might it change the experience the world has of Christians?
6. What have you learned over the course of this book that you want to apply to your life today? How will you take that from a good intention into real action?

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