

Emotions¹



SABBATH—DECEMBER 25

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Samuel 13; Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12–14; Luke 19:41–44; John 16:20–24.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘What I’m [I am] about to tell you is true. You will cry and be full of sorrow while the world is full of joy. You will be sad, but your sadness will turn into joy’ ” (John 16:20, NlrV).

EMOTIONS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT MAKES US HUMAN.² They can be a powerful force for good or for evil. They can make us happy, sad, fearful, or full of joy.

Positive emotions can make us feel satisfied and happy. Negative emotions may cause us pain and suffering. Positive emotions encourage mental health. But negative emotions may cause problems in our relationships with others. We should understand that emotions play an important part in how we feel overall.

God wants us to enjoy the benefits (good or helpful effects) of positive emotions. But, because of sin, we often face many negative emotional³ experiences. Bible characters⁴ also experienced good and bad emotions. Some succeeded in getting them under control. Others lost control of their emotions, which led them to do the wrong thing.

The connection between what we feel and how we act is not always clear and direct. At times painful emotions may drive us to pray to God for help and support. At other times struggles may cause people to give up their faith.

It is very important that we learn more about our emotions and how they influence⁵ our lives because learning about our emotions can help us to control them.

1. emotions—strong feelings (such as love, anger, joy, hate, or fear).

2. human—having to do with people.

3. emotional—having strong feelings, such as love, anger, joy, hate, or fear.

4. characters—people who appear in a story.

5. influence—to affect or change someone or something.

SUNDAY—DECEMBER 26**NEGATIVE EMOTIONS
(2 Samuel 13)**

The story in 2 Samuel 13 contains (has) many negative emotional experiences. In the middle of this turmoil (trouble; disturbance), people caused each other much physical and emotional pain. Their actions caused suffering in the lives of everyone in the king's family. Even future generations⁶ suffered because of what happened in this story.

What emotions did Amnon, Tamar, David, and Absalom feel?

Amnon's "love" for his sister Tamar could not have been true love. This was only a strong sexual drive because as soon as Amnon got what he wanted, he "was filled with deep hatred for Tamar. In fact, he hated her now more than he had loved her before" (verse 15, NIV). Amnon's experience reveals (shows) two very strong emotions: (1) lust (a strong feeling of sexual desire) and (2) hatred. Actions caused by such negative emotions are almost always unbalanced and can cause terrible suffering to ourselves and others. Amnon's "love" quickly turned into hatred. He ignored his sister's cries for mercy (kindness). And he ordered her out of his house by force.

Tamar was truly the victim.⁷ She did everything she could to stop her

brother from having sex with her. This made him angry. When Amnon made it clear that he wanted to have sex with her, Tamar warned him of the terrible results of such a wicked act. But Amnon was stubborn. He paid no attention to reason. He went ahead with his plan.

As any woman who has suffered rape or abuse, Tamar must have felt angry, ashamed, and used. She surely suffered from a loss of self-respect. But her brother Absalom did not offer much relief. Instead, he told her to keep quiet. But Absalom secretly made plans to kill Amnon in revenge for her rape. (Also, if he murdered Amnon, Absalom would have a better chance of taking over his father's [David's] throne.) David, Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom experienced anger and grief over these events.

When have you experienced hatred, sadness, fear, rage, or jealousy? How did you deal with these emotions? What do you wish you had done differently?

MONDAY—DECEMBER 27**POSITIVE EMOTIONS
(Galatians 5:22)**

Negative emotions, such as hate, worry, fear, rage, and jealousy, affect our bodies immediately. For example, negative emotions can cause the heart to beat faster and the muscles to become more tense. They can

6. generations—groups of people born and living during the same time.

7. victim—a person who has been attacked, injured, robbed, or killed by someone else.

cause dry mouth, the body to break into a cold sweat, and “butterflies in the stomach.”⁸ Experiencing these reactions too often or too long may lead to more serious problems with the heart or the stomach.

But positive emotions, such as compassion,⁹ kindness, a humble spirit, gentleness, and patience, help us to feel good and happy. They help us have a positive relationship with others and with God.

Positive psychology¹⁰ is a new and widely accepted part of psychology. It encourages people to have positive emotions in order to obtain happiness and to prevent mental illness. There is proof that having certain negative emotions can cause poor health and shorten life. But positive emotions can lead to better health and longer life. In other words, the more positive your emotions are, the healthier you will be.



Negative emotions can cause a feeling of “butterflies in the stomach.”

Read Galatians 5:22. How should the fruit of the Spirit make a difference in the way people experience life?

Read Colossians 3:12–14. What does Paul say is the most important positive emotion? What does “clothe yourselves” (NIV) mean in these verses? What happens when someone puts Paul’s words here into practice?

Love is the greatest emotion of all. But love is more than an emotion. God is love, and it is His plan for His children to experience love for others and from others. God wants us to know what it means to love Him and to be loved by Him. Love helps us feel all kinds of positive feelings and emotions that lead to more positive behaviors (actions).

How have your positive emotions influenced your actions? Why is it important to not make decisions while you are very emotional?



Paul says to “clothe yourselves” in love (Colossians 3:12–14, NIV).

8. “butterflies in the stomach”—a person may experience a feeling of “butterflies in the stomach” when he or she feels worried or nervous.

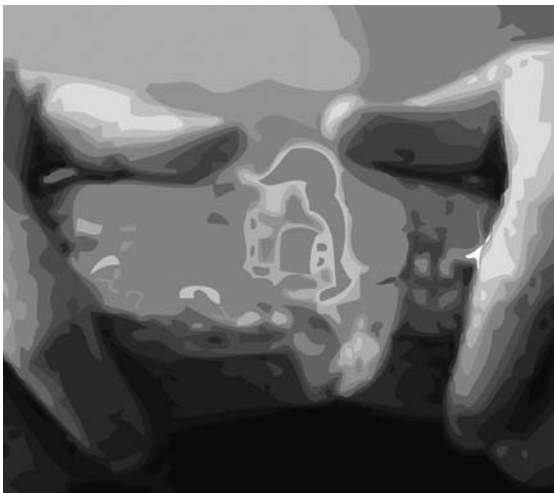
9. compassion—a feeling of wanting to help someone who is sick, hungry, in trouble, and so on.

10. psychology—the science or study of the mind and behavior.

TUESDAY—DECEMBER 28**WHAT JESUS FELT: PART 1
(Mark 1:40, 41)**

In Mark 8:1–3, compassion led Jesus to feed a large crowd of people. Nobody else thought of the needs of these people. They had eaten almost nothing for three days. Jesus saw that some had traveled far. So, He knew that they could faint from hunger if they were sent home without anything to eat.

Jesus took care of feeding the crowds. But what other acts of Jesus were done out of compassion according to Mark 1:40, 41 and Mark 6:34?



Jesus had compassion on the large crowd of people and fed them before sending them home.

People were often very mean to lepers. No illness struck more fear or pity in the hearts of people than leprosy did. People with leprosy were not allowed to mix with other people. They were often

forced to live in a special camp away from society. Whenever others came near, the lepers were required to shout “Unclean! Unclean!” This was meant to warn people to move away and avoid getting infected. Jesus felt compassion for the leper in Mark 1:40–45. For this reason, He cured him quickly and then sent him on his way. Jesus also told him not to tell anyone. But the cured man could not keep this wonderful act of love a secret. So, he started telling everyone how Jesus healed him.

Jesus felt compassion for people who could not take care of themselves. But He also showed compassion for people who were without leadership, direction, or goals. For example, before giving food to them, Jesus felt the deep spiritual needs of people and taught them about the kingdom of God.

Christ’s compassion also can be seen in Mark 9:36, this time in the use of physical touch. Jesus held children and showed love for them. He also reached out and touched diseased people to show God’s healing power and love.

In the meeting with the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21, 22), Jesus loved him even though the young man chose not to obey Him. In this moment, both men felt strong emotions. Jesus showed love while the rich young ruler showed sadness.

How do you show compassion? Why is feeling compassion (most people do that) not enough? Why must you show it through your actions too? How can you better show the compassion you feel

for those who are hurting? What words or actions could you use?

WEDNESDAY—DECEMBER 29

WHAT JESUS FELT: PART 2 (Luke 19:41–44)

Read Luke 19:41–44. What made Jesus weep over Jerusalem? We can be sure that Jesus felt deep sadness when He looked into the future and saw old Jerusalem’s end. But even more so, Jesus felt sorrow for the many city people who refused to accept Him. “Jesus wept upon the mountain when he looked down over the city of his love and care. He wept while thousands of people were rejoicing and singing ‘hosannas!’ His tears were the last pleadings of a love and compassion that were rejected.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 3, page 20.

The Gospel¹¹ writers record two times that Jesus wept. People usually cry for themselves. But Jesus’ sorrow came from a deep feeling for others.

What were some of the painful emotions Jesus experienced in the following verses: Matthew 26:37, 38; Mark 3:5; Mark 8:12; John 11:32–38; Mark 11:15, 16. What caused the emotions Jesus experienced?

The first few verses of Isaiah 53 show that Jesus was a Man of Sorrows. Jesus did experience many moments of joy. But He also felt great emotional

pain. Much of Jesus’ suffering came from feeling frustrated that His followers did not understand His message. Jesus showed the people His great love for them and gave them many signs (miracles) of His divine power. But still, many did not understand that Jesus was the Messiah (Chosen One). Jesus also suffered greatly as He watched the results of sin upon people.

The events around Lazarus’s death caused Jesus great sorrow too. John tells us that Jesus groaned in the spirit (John 11:33). The word *groaned* comes from a Greek word that means to show very strong suffering, along with sounds that come from the throat and nose. Greek playwright Aeschylus (525–456 B.C.) uses the same word to describe the snorting¹² of horses. “Groaned” is used five times in the New Testament. Four of them describe Jesus’ emotion.

Studying the emotional experiences of Jesus can help us understand how much Jesus understands our own emotional stress. Read this verse: “We have a high priest who can feel it when we are weak and hurting” (Hebrews 4:15, NIV). How can the message of this verse bring us into a closer bond (union) with Jesus, especially in times of suffering?

THURSDAY—DECEMBER 30

GOD’S PLAN FOR PAINFUL EMOTIONS (John 16:20–24)

11. Gospel—having to do with any one of the first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) that tell the life of Jesus.

12. snorting—forcing air loudly through the nose.

Read John 16:20–24. What is Jesus’ promise about pain and grief?

These verses offer great hope to anyone going through great physical or psychological (mental) pain. Here are a few things that we can learn from these verses:

- *The world seems to be full of joy.* Often we look around, and we are reminded of the unfairness of life. Wicked people seem to enjoy themselves, while many who are faithful to God are in pain. But Jesus promises us that this will not go on forever. Looks often are deceiving. We often think that others are happier and more successful than we are.
- *Grief, sorrow, and suffering will turn to joy.* This is the heart of Jesus’ promise. Believers must treasure the idea that sorrow will not only go away but also that joy will take its place.
- *Past pain will be forgotten.* Memories of the unpleasant past can cause much suffering. Many psychologists work hard to help people deal with pain from their past so they can live happier lives. A woman forgets about the pain of birth when she holds her newborn child. In the same way, Jesus promises that His followers will one day forget the pain of the past.
- *No one will take away our joy.* Jesus is offering us total happiness. This is an eternal (without end) gift that no enemy can take away from the saved.

- *There will be no needs.* Jesus promises that faithful people will no longer ask for anything. They will not need to ask Jesus for anything because all their needs will be met.

How can you hold on to the promise that your sorrow will turn to joy? How can this promise help you go through the problems of life? How can you use Jesus’ promises to encourage someone in grief?



Just as a mother forgets about the pains of birth when she holds her child, Jesus promises that His followers will one day forget the pain of the past.

FRIDAY—DECEMBER 31

ADDITIONAL STUDY: “Jesus looked over the polluted court of the temple. All eyes of the people in the court were turned toward Him. The voices of the people and the noise of the cattle were

silenced. Priest, ruler, Pharisee,¹³ and Gentile [non-Jew] all looked with silent wonder and awe upon the Son of God. Jesus stood before them with the great beauty of heaven's King. His glory¹⁴ was flashing through His human form. It gave Jesus an appearance that He never had before. A strange fear fell upon the people. Those nearest to Jesus backed as far from Him as the crowd would permit. Except for a few of His disciples [followers], the Savior stood alone. All was quiet. The deep silence made the people afraid. When Jesus started to speak, His voice rang out in very clear tones. There was a groan or sigh of relief from all people there.

“Jesus spoke in clear tones and with a power that caused the people to sway as if moved by a powerful wind: ‘It is written, My house is the house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves.’ Jesus walked down the steps. With greater authority [power] than He had shown there three years before, and with a voice that rang like a trumpet through the whole temple, Jesus commanded, ‘Take these things away.’”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of*

Prophecy, volume 3, pages 23, 24.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How would you describe the emotions of Jesus as shown in Ellen G. White's quote above? What lessons can we learn from this about how our emotions can be used for good?
- ② How can positive emotions make up for negative ones? Think about the experience of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, who went to look at Jesus' tomb, and were “afraid yet filled with joy” (Matthew 28:8, NIV).
- ③ Jewish communities celebrate Purim¹⁵ to remember the time that “their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration” (Esther 9:22, NIV). Discuss with your class ways to make sure we do not forget the many times our sorrow has turned into joy. Share with the class a time when you experienced this emotional change.
- ④ How can we learn to hold on to God's promises when, at times, they seem so far and unreachable?

13. Pharisee—a member of a Jewish group that followed Jewish religious laws and teachings very strictly.

14. glory—great beauty, power, and royal perfection.

15. Purim—a Jewish holiday celebrated on the 14th day of the month of Adar on the Jewish calendar. It is a reminder of how the Jews were saved from Haman's plan to kill them.