

Week 1

God Gave You Emotions

Following Jesus through what we feel

Start Here

Your emotions are not the enemy.

They are not always right either.

They are God-given signals that need to be brought under the loving leadership of Jesus.

EMOTIONALLY FAITHFUL

Jesus Felt Deeply

“Jesus wept.”

John 11:35

He did not avoid grief. He entered it with love.

EMOTIONALLY FAITHFUL

Jesus Felt Deeply

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.”

Matthew 26:38

Psalm 42 —

Turn in your Bibles with me to Psalm 42.

Formation Is a Walk

Christian formation is not just knowing more.

The goal is **formation**: becoming a person who increasingly responds to God, ourselves, and other people in Christlike ways.

**We do not grow by hiding what is real.
We grow by bringing what is real to Him.**



Psalm 42 —

Turn in your Bibles with me to Psalm 42.

Before I dive into this further - notice how emotional this chapter is? This isn't someone who has everything figured out. This is someone who loves God and is struggling.

Psalm 42:1-2 —

Emotions are not necessarily instructions. But they are information.

Anger may tell me something feels wrong.

Fear may tell me something feels threatening.

Sadness may tell me I've lost something important.

Jealousy may expose something I desperately want.

Loneliness may reveal my need for relationship.

Joy may reveal something I deeply value.

So instead of asking:

“How do I make this feeling go away?”

Spiritual formation teaches us to ask:

“What is this feeling telling me about what is happening in my heart?”

Psalm 42:3-4 —

Now he says his tears have been his food day and night. That is an incredibly emotional description.

And then he remembers what life used to be like—going with the crowds into the house of God, worshiping, celebrating.

Things aren't the way they used to be.

And notice what Scripture does **not** say:

“Stop being sad.” “Have more faith.” “Quit complaining.”

Instead, God allows this man's grief to become part of Scripture.

We sometimes think acknowledging an emotion gives it too much power.

But often the opposite is true.

You cannot surrender something to God that you refuse to acknowledge exists.

Psalm 42:5 —

“Why, my soul, are you downcast?”

When you feel something strongly, ask:

What am I feeling?

Why am I feeling it?

What is this emotion telling me?

Is what I'm feeling telling me the whole truth?

Psalm 42:5–7 —

“Put your hope in God.”

And you might expect verse 6 to say:

“And suddenly I felt amazing.”

It doesn't.

Essentially, he says:

“My soul is still downcast.”

That's real life.

Sometimes you pray and you're still sad. You worship and you're still grieving. You know God's promises and you're still afraid. Sometimes you forgive someone and you're still hurt. And sometimes God does when you surrender the emotion completely change how you feel.

Faith isn't pretending the emotion disappeared.

Faith is choosing who will lead you while the emotion is still there.

Psalm 42:7 —

The imagery changes to waves and waterfalls.

It is almost as though he is saying:

“Everything is hitting me at once.”

We've all experienced that.

One difficult thing happens and you're handling it.

Then another. Then another. Then suddenly your response seems disproportionate to whatever just happened.

Someone says one little thing and you explode or cry.

“Why am I reacting like this?”

Because sometimes you're not responding only to *this moment*.

You're responding to five other things you've been carrying.

This is where emotional formation matters enormously for ministry leaders.

Unprocessed emotions do not simply disappear. They often come out somewhere else.

Maybe not at the person who hurt you. Maybe at your spouse. Your kids.

The Seven Connections

God forms us in relationship.

At CLI, we talk about seven key connections because emotions do not stay private. They shape how we love, lead, listen, forgive, serve, and witness.

God — **Spouse** — **Family** — **Friends** — **Church** — **Kingdom** — **World**

If I'm carrying unresolved anger, where does it go?

If I'm consumed by fear, who experiences it?

If I'm constantly comparing myself to other leaders, how does that affect my Kingdom connection?

Connection One: God

**Before I react to people,
I bring my heart to God.**

**Prayer is where I talk.
Scripture is where I listen.**

Psalm 42:8–10 —

“I feel forgotten.” Yet he doesn't run away from God with that feeling.

He brings the feeling to God.

When you're afraid:

“God, I feel afraid.”

When you're angry:

“God, I am really angry about this.”

When you're jealous:

“Lord, I'm embarrassed to admit this, but I'm jealous.”

Psalm 42:11 —

Why are you downcast, my soul? Put your hope in God.

And I actually love that Psalm 42 ends this way.

The circumstances haven't necessarily changed.

His emotions haven't completely disappeared.

But his orientation has changed.

He knows where he's going with them.

Toward God.

When I Serve While Emotional

I do not have to suppress it.

I do not have to spill it on everyone.

I can surrender it to Jesus.

This is how ministry becomes a place of formation instead of a place where our wounds run the room.

A Simple Practice

When emotions rise, ask:

- 1 What am I feeling?
- 2 What is this revealing?
- 3 Who is this affecting?
- 4 What does obedience look like right now? What do I need to bring to God right now?

This is emotional discipleship.

Application For Today——

Before you leave here today, identify the emotion that has been the loudest in your life lately

You could ask:

“Where is this emotion showing up in your connections?”

Is my anger affecting my **spouse**?

Is my anxiety affecting my **family**?

Even while I feel this, what would following Jesus look like?

What can you surrender to Jesus today.

Next Week——

We are going to start getting practical on how to handle maturely your different emotions as you serve in ministry. Next week we talk about Anger.