

First Tuesday
MANAGING YOUR MOODS
Session #1 A Bundle of Emotions

We all feel such a wide range of emotions. As you begin this study, which of your moods and emotions most trouble you?

Lucy Swindoll: *If I choose to live out of my emotions, no telling what might happen or where I might go to salve my depression, dissatisfaction, or discouragement. Feelings fluctuate with the day, the wind, my hormones, circumstances, and human relationships. But because God told me he doesn't change, I can choose to believe him no matter how I feel.*

When we start talking about moods and emotions, we must begin with the heart. I guess you could say it's the heart of the matter! We call it the seat of our emotions, and we try to explain our feelings by referring to it. People can be described as hardhearted, softhearted, open hearted, warmhearted, coldhearted, fainthearted, or even heartless. Some people wear their heart on their sleeve. We know what its like to lose heart, take heart, have our heart set on something, have a change of heart, and have our hearts skip a beat. We know what it's like to do something to our heart's content. We can be heavyhearted, halfhearted, or lighthearted. A story can be heartwarming, heart wrenching, or heartening. We can share from our hearts, set our hearts on a thing, learn something by heart, have our hearts in the right place, and win the hearts of others. We have known heartache. We have been heartsick. Some days we don't have the heart to tackle the job heartily, going at it heart and soul. Those we love are always close to our hearts. We have people who are dear to our hearts and set our hearts at rest. We know the kinds of things that do a heart good. We have read God's word and taken it to heart. We have given heartfelt thanks for the blessings we receive. We know, in our heart of hearts, the right thing to do. And I hope, from the bottom of my heart, you will follow after God with all your heart. Whew!!! How about a hearty Amen to that! (JT: I don't think they missed much!)

1. The Scriptures are filled with descriptions of our hearts. Have you ever noticed how many amazing adjectives are used to describe it – for good or for bad? Take a few moments to match the passages with the words it use to describe the attitudes found in our hearts.

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| ___ Psalm 112:7 | a. standing in awe |
| ___ Psalm 119: 80 | b. merry |
| ___ Psalm 119: 161 | c. blameless |
| ___ Psalm 131:1 | d. backslidden |
| ___ Proverbs 14:14 | e. steadfast |
| ___ Proverbs 16:5 | f. haughty or humble |
| ___ Proverbs 17:22 | g. noble and good |
| ___ Luke 8:15 | h. proud |

2. The Bible talks a lot about the heart, and the emotions tangled up within it. God knows we all have our ups and downs.

What would cause us to have so many ups and downs?

How much control of our own plans do we have according to **Proverbs 16:9**?

How should we react to that Proverb?

3. The Psalms are wonderful for giving us glimpses into the inner turmoil of the heart which we experience in our moods.

In **Psalm 25:16-17**, what does David say about his troubles?

Do life's problems always seem to go from bad to worse?

If God is to keep our moods on an even course, what must we do according to **Psalm 66:18**?

We are moody people, as changeable as the weather. But, because we're all so experienced in emotions, we know how to spot them. We can read faces. We can interpret body language. Usually, the attitude of our heart and the mood we are in come across loud and clear. Folks notice. Whether we realize it or not, we are being defined by the emotion we display most consistently. We make reference to a mood when we describe people to each other. For example: She strikes me as a very nervous person. She's the clingy type. What a whiner. Well, you know how possessive she is. She's a cold fish. She's so upbeat. Such a worrier. High-strung. Snob. Such a sweetheart. Always so bubbly. We also notice changes in mood. For example: What's gotten into her? I wonder what's wrong with her today? Though we might try to hide our inner turmoil, our emotions and moods leak out when we're with other people.

4. How do our emotions leak out with other people?
5. Our moods can affect us physically. How does David's distress affect him, according to **Psalm 102:4**?
6. Our emotions can prompt us into action. What tangle of feelings led Paul to write his letter to the church in Corinth in **2 Corinthians 2:4**?

Marilyn Meberg: *Talk about an unloader; David unloaded throughout the Psalms. One of the reasons I so love his God-inspired writing is that he didn't hold or hide his emotions. I find the Psalms therapeutic because whatever I may be feeling, I can find a Psalm in which David expresses the same feeling.*

7. When we allow our feelings—like worry, fear, and doubt—to carry us along, how does **James 1:6** describe us?
8. We often say our goal should be to have the mind of Christ. Now, there was a man who was able to manage his moods. Jesus never allowed his feeling to lead him into sin. Still, it's a comfort to know the Lord completely understands how we feel. How does **Hebrews 4:14-15** describe Jesus' inner struggles while on earth?
9. Moods, emotions, feelings, attitudes of the heart—they are powerful and easily overrule what we know is the right thing to do. What exhortation does Paul make in **Colossians 3:16** that can powerfully counteract the tugging of our hearts?

Patsy Clairmont: *When we think God's way, we not only become wiser but also emotionally steady. I don't know how you feel about that, but I'm ecstatic! Consider that together we can become, and are, influential women of faith, making amazing contributions to our families and to society.*

TRINKET TO TREASURE: At the close of each session, a gift will be placed in your hand to serve as a reminder of the things we have learned through scripture and our time together. It will be a small token to keep us from forgetting the faith journey we are traveling.

Comments or items to share:

Closing prayer together: Heavenly Father, in the days ahead, help us to ponder what is in our hearts. We pray for a measure of detachment, so that we can see the feelings that flit through our hearts, the moods that shape our days, and the emotions that rule our lives. Help us to come to you or turn to scripture to sort out how we should respond. Help us to understand that the heart is not easily swayed by swinging moods if it is to be a dwelling place of the powerful word of God. Amen.