

FLOOD LILONGWE

Feel Free

"OBEYING GOD WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL IT"

Growth Group Studies

At Worship Gatherings the teaching team is exploring Old Testament characters of the Bible who faced emotional battles, showed their emotions, obeyed God and in the end God did his work in them.

This 13 week Growth Group bible study about emotions is from the Psalms. Each week the focus of the Psalm will align with the topic explored at the Worship Gathering through the Old Testament story.

At the end of the series the hope is to see people be more obedient to God even when they feel differently. The big question to answer is "how do you obey God when you have

these negative emotions?"

The Psalms are a collection of poems and songs, written as a creative expression and the reason human beings express truth with music and poetry is to awaken and express emotions that fit the truth. We encourage your group to use this series to promote creative expression of your faith and worship of God together!

DATE	EMOTION	SCRIPTURE	LEADER
03- 09 March	Shame	Psalm 44	
10-16 March	Anxiety	Psalm 4	
17-23 March	Sadness	Psalm 31	
24-30 March	Envy	Psalm 73	
31 March -6 April	Worry	Psalm 77	
7 -13 April	Doubt	Psalm 13	
14-20 April	Despair	Psalm 88	
21-27 April	Loneliness	Psalm 22	
28 April – 04 May	Insecurity	Psalm 91	
05-11 May	Anger	Psalm 37	
12-18 May	Resentment	Psalm 109	
19-25 May	Depression	Psalm 42 & 43	
26 May - June	Fear	Psalm 56	

03-09 March

Psalm 44 (Shame)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 44 & 1 John 1:8-9

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. Why does the psalmist state in vs 15, 'I live in disgrace all day long, and my face is covered with shame'? What does it mean?
3. What do you think is the cause of the psalmist's shame?
4. Is there a time from your life where you empathise how the psalmist is feeling?
5. In vs 26 the psalmist finishes this Psalm by highlighting the attribute of God that overcomes our shame. 1 John 1:8-9 outlines how we can be obedient through shame. What can we do in order for us to experience God's unfailing love in our shame?

Pray

One way we experience God's unfailing love is through confession. Have a time of group confession and prayer.

10-16 March

Psalm 4 (Anxiety)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 4 & Philippians 4:4-7

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. What brings comfort to psalmist in vs 3?
3. What counsel does the psalmist give himself and us in verses 4-5?
4. Explain the action that the psalmist is giving themselves in verse 7 and the promise in vs 8? Compare this to the action and promise outlined in Philippians 4:6-7.
5. What should we do in order for us to experience God's peace in our anxiety?

Pray

Share what you feel anxious about and what you're thankful for currently in your life. Pray for each other.

17-23 March

Psalm 31 (Sadness)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 31 & Hebrews 4:14-16

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. Vs 9-10 describe the psalmist's emotional state. What is the cause of this? Have you ever felt as the psalmist is describing? What was the cause?
3. Jesus quoted vs 5 of this Psalm as he was on the cross (refer to Luke 23:46). What was Jesus situation and what did he demonstrate? What does it mean for us to 'commit our spirits'?
4. What does vs 7-8 and the Hebrews passage teach us about God's action in our suffering?
5. The psalmist finishes the psalm by blessing the Lord with adoration (vs 21-24). How can we show adoration for God in our sadness?

Pray.

Share a need you have where you would like to see God's mercy and grace and pray for each other.

24-30 March

Psalm 73 (Envy)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 73 & 1 Peter 2:1-3

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. How are the wicked described in vs. 4-12? What about their life does the psalmist envy?
3. In what way(s) do you identify with these envious thoughts?
4. Verses 16-20 are the turning point in the psalmist's struggle. The key word is the word "till" in v. 17. Describe in your own words what happens in the psalmist's heart when he enters the sanctuary. What turns his struggle around?
5. The psalmist lists truths about God in vs. 23-28, what are these truths? What instruction does the 1 Peter passage give about our response to these truths?
6. How can we practice living out these truths, so we can see from God's perspective when we feel envy?

Optional Extra: Share some ways that you can bless someone around you who has something that you don't have.

Pray.

Spend some time praising God for His incredible goodness in each of your lives.

31 March -6 April

Psalm 77 (Worry)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 77 & Matthew 6:25-34

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. How do you respond when hard times come? What questions come to your mind and to whom do you go with them?
3. After reading vs. 7-9, list the characteristics of God that are brought into question. Why does the psalmist question these characteristics?
4. In vs. 11-15, the psalmist “remembers,” “ meditates,” and “considers” four times. Why does remembering what God has done in our lives help us to focus on what is true about him?
5. Vs 13-20 and the Matthew passage refer to God’s faithfulness in creation. How can we practice meditating on these truths to build our faith, especially when we’re inclined to worry?

Pray.

Share what is worrying you and pray for each other.

7 -13 April

Psalm 13 (Doubt)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 13 & James 1:5-8

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. What do the psalmist's questions in vs 1-2 tell us about his relationship with God at that time?
3. Have you had a time when you felt distant or doubtful of God?
4. How does the psalmist respond to God in vs 3-4? How can this guide us when we are feeling distant from God or doubtful?
5. According to the James passage when does doubt become detrimental to our receiving of what God can give us?
6. The psalmist finishes with a declaration of trust and praise in vs 5-6. How can we practice trusting and seeking God?

Pray.

Share promises of God that you find confidence in and pray over them.

14-20 April

Psalm 88 (Despair)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 88 & 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. Have you had a time or situation where you felt without hope like the psalmist?
3. This Psalm offers hope not at its ending, but at its beginning. What is this hope?
4. How was the situation of Paul in 2 Corinthians similar to that of the psalmist?
5. Where did Paul and the psalmist find hope and meaning amidst their suffering?
6. What hope and meaning has God promised us that provides us hope?

Pray.

Share the one area of your life you would like God to help you trust him more and pray together over these things.

21-27 April

Psalm 22 (Loneliness)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 22 & Matthew 27:45-56

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. This psalm sounds like it was written at the foot of the cross. How do verses 1, 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 31 point to the cross of Jesus and describe what he endured? (refer to the Matthew passage)
3. Have you ever asked God, "Where are you?" Have you ever felt like the world was against you and God was distant and silent? If so, what was it like for you to endure that particular storm in your life?
4. What promises does the Psalmist highlight in vs 27-31? What do these promises mean to you?
5. In vs 3-5 and vs 9-11 the Psalmist reminds of Gods presence. What can you do to remind yourself of God's presence when you feel abandoned and alone?

Pray

Share prayer points and pray for each other.

28 April – 04 May

Psalm 91 (Insecurity)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 91 & 2 Corinthians 4:8-12

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. The psalm is organized into 2 stanzas: vs. 1-8 and vs. 9-16. What theme do you find in the opening lines (vs. 1-2 and vs. 9-10) of both stanzas.
3. According to vs. 5-8, why does the psalmist feel secure from danger?
4. Based on these passages, would you say that the believer is protected FROM danger and sorrow or protected IN the midst of hard times? Cite the verses that support your answer. Why is the distinction between the two situations an important one?
5. According to vs. 9-12 and vs. 14-15, what gives the psalmist confidence that he has a secure refuge?
6. Whatever life circumstances cause you to feel insecure, God calls you to tell him your need and put your faith in him. In what specific ways can you make him your refuge and dwelling place as you persevere through hard times?

Pray.

Pray for God to be your refuge and dwelling place this week.

05-11 May

Anger (Psalm 37)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 37 & Ephesians 4: 26-31

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. What causes the psalmist to be angry (vs 8-21)? What evil around you causes you to be angry?
3. What is the difference between righteous and unrighteous anger? What are some examples you can think of God demonstrating righteous anger?
4. What advise and admonition is given in this psalm about how to respond to anger (vs 8-9)? How does this advice compliment or contrast the advice given in Ephesians?
5. What makes you feel angry when you look around you in our city and country?

Pray.

Pray for God's goodness and grace to prevail over the injustices that we see happening around us.

12- 18 May

Resentment (Psalm 109)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 109 & James 2:8-13

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. How does the psalmist describe his enemies and their actions in vs 1-5?
3. In vs 6-15 the psalmist suggests a form of judgement. Does the psalmist lack mercy? What does the James passage teach us about mercy and judgement?
4. What can you do so you don't become resentful when ill-treated?
5. How can we be inspired by the mercy that is shown us to demonstrate mercy to those who ill-treat us?

Pray.

Praise God for His generous mercy and pray for those who have ill-treated you.

19 May

Psalm 42 & 43 (Depression)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 42 & 43

Discuss:

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in these psalms?
2. Describe the psalmist's situation. What does he request? How does Psalm 43 continue and complete the theme begun in Psalm 42?
3. Consider the image of the thirsty deer and the flowing stream. What circumstances do they depict? Describe a time in your life when you have had the same desire. How was that need met?
4. Psalm 42:5, 11 and 43:5 form a refrain for this psalm. List in your own words the key thoughts of this refrain. How can they help you in the midst of spiritual depression?
5. What circumstances tend to make you depressed? What specific things did you talk with God and others about in your despair? Based on the lessons of psalms 42 and 43, what specific steps can you take to cope with your feelings of depression?

Optional extra: What ideas can you come up with for our church to support people who experience depression? (These ideas can be returned to Kate)

Pray.

Pray for those around us who are feeling depressed.

26 May - June

Psalm 56 (Fear)

Creative expression: Have one member of your group share a poem, song or story.

Read Psalm 56 & Romans 8:31-39

1. What emotions do you observed being expressed in this psalm?
2. The psalmist starts vs 3 with 'when I am afraid'. Why is the psalmist feeling afraid (vs 1-2)? What situations make you feel afraid?
3. The psalmist finished vs 3 with 'I put my trust in you'. How does the psalmist demonstrate his trust in God?
4. According to Romans 8, what promises does God give us that we can place our trust in?
5. What does this look like for you to put your trust in God when you feel afraid?

Pray.

Share something that you're trusting God with and pray about it.