

Managing Your Mood

How you feel matters. If you feel hungry you look for food to eat, even if you are not hungry. There are things people do when they are feeling lonely even if they are not really alone. People buy things based on emotions that are often rooted in lies. The media tells them that they need it and then they have a feeling of FOMO because they don't have it, so they buy it to get rid of that feeling. It behoves us, therefore, to manage our emotions. *Proverbs 25:28 – "Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control."* The inability to control one's emotions is like a defenceless city. **A city without walls is defenceless, and so is a life without self-control.** Sadly, many believers think they are being authentic when they allow themselves to keep feeling a certain way. Our emotions send messages to us and it's up to us how we use them. However, if we are passive about the emotional state we remain in, those emotions can become toxic resulting in negative consequences for ourselves and others. We need to be careful of "fleshly emotions," which are destructive and toxic. These include malice, envy, selfish ambition, bitterness, overpowering lusts, and hatred. Such emotions are tied to the works of the flesh and lead to spiritual death. The purpose of this message is to demonstrate how we can take charge of our emotions and allow them to be used for good and not evil. One of the differentiating characteristics between a wise person and a foolish person is the ability to manage one's emotions. **Proverbs 29:11 – "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end."** Wisdom involves regulating emotions rather than letting them control us. In this message I will share with you 7 things every believer needs to know about managing emotions.

1. Our emotional state has consequences for our general well-being

Proverbs 17:22 – "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

Don't be deceived into thinking you can remain feeling a certain way and it will not impact your behaviour, your physiology, relationships and general well-being. **Your emotions are messengers, not masters—manage them before they manage you.**

Here are some common consequences of being downcast or having a crushed spirit (*Nekeah* – deep emotional distress, broken or stricken):

A. Emotional Consequences

- Increased **sadness** and hopelessness
- Loss of **motivation** and interest in activities
- Higher levels of **anxiety** and worry
- Feeling **overwhelmed** or stuck
- Increased **irritability** or mood swings

B. Mental Consequences

- **Negative thought patterns** (e.g., self-doubt, self-criticism)
- Difficulty **concentrating** or making decisions
- Overanalysing past mistakes (**ruminating**)
- Lack of **clarity** and perspective
- Increased **mental fatigue**

C. Physical Consequences

- Low **energy** and exhaustion
- Changes in **appetite** (overeating or loss of appetite)
- **Sleep disturbances** (insomnia or oversleeping)

- Weakened **immune system** (more prone to illness)
- Tension headaches or muscle aches

Toxic emotions don't just affect your mood—they impact your mind, body, and soul. At the end I have an appendix that gives you the references and details of 7 different studies showing this. Some of the findings are interesting as they show that how we feel and what goes on in our emotions really matters:

Study 1: This review concluded that **depression leads to immune system suppression, making individuals more susceptible to infections.** It showed that depression impairs immune response, which can affect the body's ability to fight off illness.

Study 2: The study found that **depression is strongly associated with heart disease and stroke.** Those who are emotionally down or stressed have an increased risk of cardiovascular problems, including higher rates of heart attacks and stroke.

Study 3: This research suggests that chronic stress—a common factor in being emotionally down—can increase vulnerability to infectious diseases and autoimmune conditions. **It found that stress impacts the body's cortisol levels, affecting the body's ability to fight infections and maintain a balanced immune response.**

Study 4: A study on cancer patients found that **individuals experiencing high levels of psychological distress had poorer cancer survival rates.** Negative emotional states, including feeling downcast, were associated with lower immune function and less effective treatment outcomes.

Study 5: This study emphasized that positive emotions, in contrast to being downcast or depressed, can boost immune functioning and promote better health. **Positive emotions like joy and gratitude are linked to lower inflammation, improved heart health, and better overall immune system functioning.**

Study 6: This study explored the relationship between depression and chronic pain. **It found that individuals who are depressed or emotionally down are more likely to experience increased sensitivity to pain and have a lower threshold for pain.**

Study 7: Robert Sapolsky's research on stress and its impact on physiology concluded that **chronic stress (often related to emotional states like depression or being downcast) leads to higher cortisol levels, which can contribute to a range of health problems, including hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and digestive issues.**

D. Social Consequences

- **Withdrawing** from friends and family
- Feeling **disconnected** or misunderstood
- Increased **conflict** with others
- Difficulty expressing needs and **communicating**
- Loss of interest in **social activities**

E. Spiritual Consequences

- Feeling **distant** from God
- Doubts about faith or purpose
- Struggles with **prayer and worship**
- Lack of desire to **read Scripture** or seek God
- Temptation to rely on **temporary escapes** rather than faith

2. We are called to ensure that our emotional state does not lead us to sin.

Ephesians 4:26 – "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. There are certain emotions that are natural to feel, but it behoves us to manage how long we remain in that state and whether we sin as a result of it. **Anger unchecked leads to sin—what starts as frustration can end in destruction.** Here are some stages of anger:

1) Frustration 2) Blame 3) They deserve to be punished 4) I will punish them.

It's important to have enough self-awareness to know what you are experiencing and ascertain when it becomes sin. Self-awareness, the first pillar of EQ will assist us in the second pillar, self-management. **Often the sin is not in the emotional expression but the mindset that led to it.** Anger is often rooted in sin such as impatience, self-righteousness, control, domineering attitudes, resentment, unforgiveness, bitterness and pride.

3. There are specific actions that are an antidote for toxic emotions

Philippians 4:6-7 – "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, **by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Develop a strategy for what you will do when you are feeling a certain way. I am not saying you must suppress your emotions; ignore and over-ride. At the same time, it's not about saying to yourself, "don't worry" 100 times. Rather, we are called to displace the anxiety with prayer and thanksgiving. Thanksgiving helps you to remember God's goodness.

Psalms 42:5 – "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

His spirit is commanding his soul to align with God's eternal purposes. He is problematizing the notion of being downcast. He is not embracing it as a normal emotion he must just passively accept. When someone is downcast, I don't see them being fruitful and God-honouring in their attitude. It does result in sin.

Downcast (shachach) → to sink, bow down, or be depressed. This verb suggests deep emotional discouragement or depression.

נַפְשִׁי (nafshi) – **My soul.** From נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh) → refers to one's inner being, emotions, life, or self.

וַתְּהַמֵּי (vatehemi) – **And why are you disturbed?** Root: הָמָה (hamah) → to growl, murmur, be in turmoil.

This conveys deep inner unrest, like raging waters.

Put your hope Root: יָחַל (yachal) → to wait, hope, expect.

4. Renewing your mind has a direct impact on your emotional state

Matthew 22:37 (NIV) *"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'"*

◆ **Key Point: Loving God includes renewing our minds and dedicating them to Him.**

Romans 12:2 – *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

What is transformed when I renew my mind to think God's thoughts?

2 Corinthians 10:5 – *"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*

We are called to take control of our thoughts and align them with Christ. This will inevitably affect our emotional state.

Many people are too lazy to renew their minds, but you cannot separate deliverance from discipleship.

Renewing your mind isn't optional—it's the key to transformation."

5. We have the power to choose where to place our focus.

Colossians 3:2 – *"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."*

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) – *"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."*

The bible doesn't just tell us what we must do, it also tells us what to think about.

→ **What you focus on shapes your mindset and emotions.**

Isaiah 26:3 (NIV) – *"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."*

Shalom Shalom = Perfect peace. (shalom) → peace, completeness, wholeness, well-being

The repetition of the word *shalom* emphasizes absolute, complete peace (not just absence of conflict, but total well-being).

Steadfast = Describes a mind that is firmly established and unwavering.

Peace is not automatic—it is given to those who keep their minds steadfast in trust.

What we focus on affects our peace—if we focus on God's faithfulness, we experience shalom.

A wavering mind lacks peace, but a steadfast (firmly fixed) mind rests securely.

→ **A steadfast mind leads to peace.**

Where we focus our minds affects our emotions and attitudes.

Earl Nightingale, known as the Dean of Personal Development said, "We become what we think about most of the time."

→ **Your dominant thoughts determine your emotional state.**

Someone who could be seen as the father of modern self-help and personal development movement, **James Allen wrote, "A person is limited only by the thoughts that he chooses."**

Viktor Frankl – "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves."

My screen saver says, **"You are as spiritual as your thoughts."**

6. Managing your emotions is part of the fruit of the spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 – *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*

This second pillar of EQ, emotional containment in essence is self-control which is a key mark of a Spirit-led life. It's the Greek word *enkrateia* – (self-control, mastery, restraint). This means having power over one's desires and impulses. It suggests discipline, temperance, and the ability to regulate emotions and actions. **Managing your emotions is not just a leadership capability, it is the result of being born of the Spirit.**

7. Managing your emotions is a biblical command and something expected of leaders.

Proverbs 16:32 (NIV) *"Better a patient person than a warrior, those with self-control than those who take a city."*

◆ **Key Point: Self-control is more valuable than physical power or strength.** A leader's ability to exercise patience and control over their actions shows wisdom and authority.

Titus 1:7-8 (NIV) *"Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined."*

1 Timothy 3:2-3 (NIV) *"Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money."*

Questions to help you manage your emotional state daily

How are you feeling? E.g. frustrated, helpless, belittled, angry, happy, elated, relieved....

- 1. What are the triggers causing these emotions?**
- 2. What is the impact of your current emotional state on yourself right now?**
- 3. What are the mis-beliefs / lies behind your emotional state?** E.g. feeling fearful often rooted in the lie that something bad is always going to happen and that you are constantly in danger, leading to anxiety.
- 4. What are the counter arguments? What else could be true?**
- 5. What is the impact of your current emotional state on others right now?**

- 6. If you continue feeling this way what are the possible consequences?**
- 7. What choices do you have?**
- 8. What positive emotions can you condition yourself to experience today?**

Appendix (For Notes only)

The Link between Emotional State and Physical Health

1. The Impact of Depression on Immune Function

Study: Depression and Immune Functioning: A Review of the Literature (2004) by Kiecolt-Glaser, et al.

Findings: This review concluded that depression leads to immune system suppression, making individuals more susceptible to infections. It showed that depression impairs immune response, which can affect the body's ability to fight off illness.

Conclusion: Chronic negative emotional states like being downcast or depressed can weaken immune functioning, increasing the risk of illness.

2. Emotional Stress and Heart Disease

Study: Depression, Heart Disease, and Stroke by Wulsin, et al. (2003)

Findings: The study found that depression is strongly associated with heart disease and stroke. Those who are emotionally down or stressed have an increased risk of cardiovascular problems, including higher rates of heart attacks and stroke.

Conclusion: Emotional states, especially depression and being downcast, can contribute to increased inflammation and vascular damage, leading to heart problems.

3. The Relationship Between Chronic Stress and Disease

Study: Chronic Stress, Stressful Experiences, and Depression (2003) by Cohen, et al.

Findings: This research suggests that chronic stress—a common factor in being emotionally down—can increase vulnerability to infectious diseases and autoimmune conditions. It found that stress impacts the body's cortisol levels, affecting the body's ability to fight infections and maintain a balanced immune response.

Conclusion: Being emotionally down or experiencing long-term stress can contribute to weakened immunity and higher susceptibility to illness.

4. Psychological Distress and Cancer Prognosis

Study: Psychological Stress and Cancer Survival (2008) by L. L. Andersen et al.

Findings: A study on cancer patients found that individuals experiencing high levels of psychological distress had poorer cancer survival rates. Negative emotional states, including feeling downcast, were associated with lower immune function and less effective treatment outcomes.

Conclusion: Emotional health plays a critical role in cancer recovery and prognosis. Being emotionally down or distressed can negatively affect the body's ability to heal and fight illness.

5. The Role of Positive Emotions in Health

Study: Positive Emotions and Health: The Impact of Positive Emotions on Health and the Immune System by Fredrickson (2000).

Findings: This study emphasized that positive emotions, in contrast to being downcast or depressed, can boost immune functioning and promote better health. Positive emotions like joy and gratitude are linked to lower inflammation, improved heart health, and better overall immune system functioning.

Conclusion: There is evidence that negative emotional states, including being emotionally down, can suppress immune function, making it crucial to address and manage negative emotions.

6. Chronic Depression and Pain Sensitivity

Study: Chronic Pain and Depression (2005) by Bair, et al.

Findings: This study explored the relationship between depression and chronic pain. It found that individuals who are depressed or emotionally down are more likely to experience increased sensitivity to pain and have a lower threshold for pain.

Conclusion: Emotional distress and being downcast can amplify physical pain, leading to higher levels of discomfort and chronic pain conditions.

7. The Biochemistry of Stress and Illness

Study: Stress and Disease: From Mechanisms to Therapy by Sapolsky (1998)

Findings: Robert Sapolsky's research on stress and its impact on physiology concluded that chronic stress (often related to emotional states like depression or being downcast) leads to higher cortisol levels, which can contribute to a range of health problems, including hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and digestive issues.

Conclusion: Prolonged emotional distress affects the body's hormone balance, leading to a range of physiological disruptions that can increase vulnerability to disease.