

Published based on [How God Speaks to Us Through Our Emotions](#)

How God Speaks to Us Through Our Emotions



What emotions are you feeling right now? Can you name what is happening inside your inner world? Could God be speaking to you through your emotions?

Are you annoyed, ashamed, confused, hurt, depressed, jealous, anxious, fearful, stressed, angry, or sad?

While it may sound like a simple task to name what emotions you are experiencing, I haven't always been able to do that and I've found in my work as a therapist, that many, many folks are not able to accurately name what is happening inside them.

One part of my journey during the last few years has been getting connected to my true heart and my emotional life.

I vividly remember taking an Anger Inventory at a ladies' retreat a few years ago. I had organized the event for our church ladies' group. A therapist friend of mine, Susi Harbour, administered a personality test and an anger inventory to our entire group, including the other speakers I had invited. I remember being shocked at the results of both my test and the tests of the other leaders who were seated around my table. My score indicated that I was rarely angry; it was actually more like a non-existent score. I've since told my friend, Susi, that she should have pulled me aside at that point and scheduled an intervention immediately! You see, what that screams to me now is that I was out of touch with my heart, unable to express my anger, and needed to learn new skills for handling intense emotions.

The other women at my table were, well, fireballs at times! Their intense emotions were strange to me. Could it be acceptable to feel such a range of emotions? Was it godly?

Within six months, my husband and I were in the middle of a terrible crisis and I found myself struggling to survive emotionally. Time and time again, I answered our counselor with a resounding, "No", as he quizzed me as to whether or not I had shared my feelings about certain situations with my husband.

A long, long season of examination and growth have taught me that there were, in fact, lots of intense emotions in

my heart, but I didn't have a clue how to share them or feel safe with their intensity. And while that may be foreign to some of you, I had grown up in a home where avoidance and denial were our ways of relating. That does not mean that we didn't have love, we did. You see, we should value the positive things in our lives, and yet move to change the negative.

Is it okay to be angry? Are we sinning when we are angry?

Scripture clearly answers such questions. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are shown to have intense emotions, including anger. Certainly, the Godhead is holy, and experiences anger. But can we?

We have guidelines in the Word about how and how not to express our intense emotions, including anger. I've learned that anger usually comes from hurt or fear, and therefore must be attended to.

God gives us emotions as signals. These signals can tell us when our boundaries have been violated, when we have sinned and failed to repent, when we are living out of balance, when we are ignoring our physical health, spiritual health, mental or emotional health, and so much more.

So it stands to reason that if we are unable to properly name what is happening in our hearts, then we are not living from our truest heart.

Looking back, I can remember feelings of frustration, irritation, anger, fear, and more, and yet I couldn't really name those feelings. You see, if I had attended to my feelings, I could have heeded the signals God was giving me. It might have changed nothing, but I would have been healthier emotionally. When my world fell apart, I eventually become severely depressed. Still unable to name or express my anger, loss, or grief, I turned it all on myself.

It's been a long journey of learning new ways to relate and communicate and unlearning old dysfunctional ways.

I remember one day a year or so ago that I felt so angry at my husband. I went to him and spilled it all with intensity. When I stopped speaking, he smiled and clapped his hands and told me how proud he was of me for owning my feelings and sharing my true heart. We both laughed and enjoyed the moment that pictured how we both had grown.

Can we be led by our emotions in wrong ways? Certainly! Just as I had copped off and denied a lot of my emotions, others spew theirs in irresponsible ways and are led astray by their emotions. Either is unhealthy.

My journey has led me to live in more peace, more rest, and joy. No longer denying my emotions, I've connected to a more passionate life, both in my relationship with God and others. Passion and desire are God-given, and when used in healthy ways, allow us to live-fully here on the earth. There is only one word for desire in the New Testament. It can be positive or negative. It can lead us to truth and purpose-filled living or it can lead us to a life of sin.

I now regularly notice what my emotions are saying. When I feel disturbed, I stop and ask God what has happened. I can usually retrace my day back to a moment when I ignored my heart or spoke wrongfully or violated my healthy boundaries. In other words, I use my emotions as signals to tell me what is going on in my heart.

What are your emotions telling you today? Are you connected to God's life-giving flow? Are you listening to how he may be speaking to you through your emotions?

Our life journey should include becoming increasingly emotionally healthy. After all, God made us body, soul, and spirit; our emotions are a part of our on-board equipment that God has given us all. Through a life in the Word, led by the Spirit, and connected to Christian community, our emotions can become powerful indicators so pursue living from the truest place in your heart! God is speaking!

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