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# TRANSFORMED

Transformed In My Emotional Health  
Philippians 4:6-7

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We've been exploring a series called Transformed. Ways to transform our lives to live more like Jesus. First we looked at spiritual health. Then at physical health. Last week we looked at mental health.

This week I want us to look at emotional health... your feelings and how to deal with how you feel.

Read Philippians 4:6-7.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

We all have feelings. They have been given to us as a gift from God. Think of all the times you have experienced love, joy, peace, and happiness in your life. It is so good to experience those feelings. I wish we always would experience those feelings all the time. Managing our emotions when we experience those types of feelings is easy. But if we are honest, we have all experienced feelings that are quite difficult. And it is those difficult feelings that can be more of a challenge to manage. Any of you ever experience the feelings of anger, bitterness, jealousy, even hatred? Just like this! (Show video clip from *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, <https://youtu.be/8i7oSx1DAHI>)

Now there is some real feelings coming out!

We all have experienced feelings that are difficult and many of us struggle with how to deal them.

We have been given a whole range of emotions. Some are really fun to experience and others are more difficult. Today I am going to focus on those challenging emotions that we experience...and ways to deal with them that can bring us peace.

Emotions tell us that something is going on inside of us. Think about it this way. It is like taking one's temperature. If we have no fever our bodies are telling us all is good. If we spike a fever, our body is letting us know that something isn't going right inside of us. Because pain is an indicator that something inside of us needs to be tended to.

Difficult emotions can be challenging for us to deal with and they need to be tended to. If we don't deal with our difficult emotions, if we ignore them or stuff them, they can make us sick. Holding on to those very emotions can make us sick, both mentally and physically. If we want to experience the peace of Christ, our difficult emotions need to be addressed.

Our emotions are a gift to us. And when we are able to work with them, we can experience that peace that comes from Jesus.

How do we tend to those difficult feelings inside of us?

## 1. NAME IT

The first step in dealing with your feelings is to name them.

What does that mean? In order to even begin to manage our feelings we can't ignore them and it helps to identify them. Try and figure out what feeling you are experiencing. You can't manage a vague feeling. You can only manage something that you have identified.

My husband, Jim, and I have been married for 30 years. Naming feelings, identifying feelings has been an issue in our marriage, for me. When we get into a "heated" discussion, tension is thick and voices are raised, one of us (Jim) stops and says, "What is going on inside of you? How are you feeling?" And my answer has usually been. "I don't know how I feel!!!"

I have to admit I'm often confused about my emotions. I'm often confused about how I feel. Sometimes I can't define it. I couldn't tell you the number of times I've been talking to my husband and Jim will say, "So what are you feeling right now?" I don't know! I know I'm feeling something but I can't put a name on it. I can't identify it. I can't name it.

Any of you ever experience this? You know what I'm talking about? I know I'm feeling something but I don't know what I'm feeling. Sometimes we can be like David, in Psalm 55:2 "*My thoughts are restless and I'm confused.*"

How do we go about identifying our more difficult feelings? How do we find a name for those feelings?

When things are difficult we can seek support. Go to a place or a person where you can be open and honest and start to share what is going on inside of you. In the video, the Grinch was all alone....he was hurting and had no one to support him. His anger was eating him up inside. It is okay to feel anger, but to allow it to fester doesn't bring us peace. And that is what God wants for us. Peace. To deal with what we are feeling.

God is our greatest support and gives us countless avenues to support us and help us to name what is going on inside

of us. Scripture, service, prayer, worship, nature, family, friends, all are examples of gifts given to us to help us name those difficult feelings.

I know that when I am able to name my feelings, the conversation with my husband, or really anyone for that matter, becomes more manageable and peace can begin to take place in my heart. Once you are able to name your feeling, the next step is to Claim it.

## 2. CLAIM IT

When you name what you're feeling, then You claim it. That means you take responsibility for it.

We often want to blame someone else for our feelings. Has someone ever said this to you, "You make me so angry!" or have you ever said to someone "You make me so mad!!" Well, guess what? No one can "make" you feel anything. You choose what you feel. That doesn't mean we aren't responsible for our actions and how we treat others. But each person is responsible for their own feelings. Personally, I would love to blame people for my difficult feelings because then I don't have to take responsibility for them. But that never works. What works is taking responsibility for our own feelings by claiming them.

We choose our feelings. And claiming them brings us the opportunity to move beyond being controlled by our feelings.

Last week, Pastor Jeff spoke about our mental health. Our mental health is connected to our emotional health. Sometimes our difficult feelings are a result of our own stinking thinking. So, it is important to identify how our thoughts lead us to our feelings. Typically, when something happens in our lives we process it through our own thoughts and it brings about our feelings. It is your own thinking that can often bring about your feelings. Your feelings are not the responsibility of anyone but you. When you claim what you feel, you can begin to deal with how you are feeling.

David, who wrote many of the psalms, often asked God to help claim his emotions. That's pretty smart, since God understands you better than you do. God knows what you're feeling and has an open heart to hear you as you claim it. God has also given you trusted people in your life to go to and claim your feelings so that you can move forward.

Once you name it and claim it, you are ready to channel it.

## 3. CHANNEL IT

You can take a difficult emotion that you're feeling and you can channel it. You channel it. What does that mean? You can use it for good.

For instance: Let's say you have been the victim of injustice. You've experienced prejudice by what you look like or where you live. You have experienced unfairness in the

classroom. Unfairness because you're a man or a woman or different from somebody else. You had something unfair in your life. And, naturally, the emotion that's going to come up in you is anger. That's a legitimate response.

Is my anger going to get me what I want? Probably not. But can my anger be used for good to help other people? Yes. And all of a sudden you become a champion for others. Because you know what it means to have experienced being put down or belittled. That make sense?

You've got to name it – here's what I'm feeling. Claim it – take responsibility for it. Then channel it – what's the real reason I'm feeling this way, how can I use this for good?

Difficult feelings usually are a sign of pain in our lives. What pain in your life are you using for good? A good friend of mine was attacked by a stranger. It took her time to work through the event. It caused her great pain. Here is how she dealt with it. She went to a trusted friend, a counselor, and to God. In order to bring peace into her life she had to name her feelings of extreme fear and anger. She took responsibility for her own feelings and then channeled them for good. She now is an advocate for women who have been attacked. She volunteers her time to sit with women who have had similar experiences and journeys with them. She shares the hope that they can move on, the hope that they are loved, and the peace that comes from God.

Your greatest ministry could come out of your deepest pain. And if it comes out of your pain then it can help others. All people have feelings of pain, and when we share our pain with others, they don't feel so alone. This can happen through the Holy Spirit. That is where we get the strength to use our pain to help others.

And when we channel our pain for something good we can begin to heal inside.

Our buried or repressed emotions will never go away. They actually can make us sick. We need to take responsibility for them. When we name them, claim them and channel them we begin to heal, then experience peace. And we can bring healing to ourselves and God's world through expressing our emotions in a healthy way.

So today, work on naming a difficult emotion that is inside of you. Take time to name it, claim it, and pray how you can channel it. Jesus tells us that we are not alone as we deal with our emotions. He shares these words with us in scripture from Matthew 11:28-30. *"Come to me all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*