

Lutheran Women in Mission



Emotions-God's Gift? by Gretchen Gebhardt

Opening

Sing together "How Can I Thank You, Lord," (*TLH* 417, *LW* 385) stanzas 1 and 2 or "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" (*All God's People Sing* 147). Note the emotions expressed or implied in these hymns.

How do you feel?

Imagine your feelings if someone informed you that:

- a) Authorities are looking for an escaped convict near where you live.
- b) Your daughter is "in love" with a married man.
- c) The new *LWML* president is no longer doing things "the way we've always done it."
- d) Your husband, son or grandson is considering attending seminary and becoming a pastor.

In each case, would your feelings help you respond to the news or would they be a hindrance to godly actions?

"My Emotions Made Me Do It!"

Without emotions our lives would be dull, empty and joyless. But since we fall into sin, we can't always trust our feelings to help us make godly decisions. Emotions are a cause for much of the sin in the world. Read the following passages and identify the emotions that led people to sin.

- **Genesis 4:4-8**
- **Genesis 16:1-6**
- **2 Samuel 11:2-5, 14-15**
- **Luke 10:38-42**

When have your emotions led you to sin? (If people are hesitant to respond to this question, provide a few moments of silence for personal reflection and prayer.)

"For God so Loved"

Jesus experienced the same emotions we do, yet He did not sin. Read the following passages to discover more about the emotions of Jesus. How might these godly emotions be an example for us?

- **Matthew 23:37**
- **John 2:13-16**
- **John 11:32-35**
- **Luke 23:32-34**



"Christ's Love Compels Us"

Jesus' love for us is so great He willingly gave His life on the cross as a punishment for our sins. How does our new life in Christ affect our emotions?

- **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**
- **Galatians 5:14-26**

When there's no "Joy, Joy, Joy Down in Your Heart"

In what ways do you identify with the following scenario? Discuss with your group.

"Pastor, I believe Jesus is my Savior, but I don't feel saved," Connie complained. "I go to church. I go to the Lord's Supper. I read God's Word and I don't feel it."

"What do you expect to feel?" Pastor asked.

"Well, I expect more joy, like I feel when the choir sings on Christmas Eve or on Easter. I would like to feel a fire in my heart. I would like to feel Jesus touch me."

"Those feelings are all nice, Connie. But life is not all joy and celebration. We don't always feel loved, forgiven, chosen or saved. We're blinded by sin so we can't see God's glory or His action in the world. But your faith doesn't depend on your feelings. Keep reading God's Word and attending worship and the Lord's Supper. The Holy Spirit will continue to strengthen your faith. You are saved, Connie. Trust God, not your feelings!"

Closing

Sing together "Be Still, My Soul" (*TLH* 651, *LW* 510) or "In You Is Gladness" (*All God's People Sing* 137).

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