

**Emotions**  
Charles Stanley

**Chapter 1**  
**Choosing to Triumph**  
**How God Makes Victory Possible**

*"I'm so confused. Why would God allow this to happen? Doesn't He care about me?"*

*"Sometimes I'm completely paralyzed by the thought that people will find out I'm a fraud. And when I consider the future, I am absolutely filled with dread."*

*"I feel so...trapped I just don't see a way out of all these problems. Why doesn't God help me?"*

*"Things are so bad right now I don't have the energy to go on. I just want to disappear."*

*"I feel so alone. No one really loves or understands me. And really, why should they? I'm not so sure I like myself."*

*"I know God forgives me, but after what I've done, I just can't forgive myself."*

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As a pastor for more than five decades, I've heard devastating statements like these repeatedly—the pain of people overwhelmed by deep emotional wounds. We cannot deny it—*emotions are powerful*. We cannot see, taste, or touch them, but we are constantly affected by their forceful presence and the incredible influence they have over us. They are able to alter how we view our day, other people, and even the major events of our lives.

Through our feelings, we have the ability to enjoy amazing triumphs and experience deep fulfillment. In fact, some of the greatest accomplishments in history were fueled by the love, enthusiasm, and compassion of the people who achieved them.

On the other hand, negative emotions left unchecked can lead us to some of the worst tragedies. Greed, pride, envy, fear, and hatred have destroyed lives and brought down empires.

God created you and me with the capacity to experience the full gamut of emotions so we could enjoy life, share our inner being with others, and reflect His image. They were given to us as a gift so we could interact meaningfully with our heavenly Father and the people we know. However, in this fallen world, our feelings have become a mixed blessing. The same capacity that allows us to experience intense, overflowing joy is also the gateway to sorrow so deep and overwhelming that, like Job, we may wish we had never been born. **(Job 3:3)**

Perhaps you have picked up this book because you have seen this in your own life or in the lives of those you love. You have witnessed a pendulum of emotion—highs so great and lows so extreme that you cannot help but question what is going on.

It could also be that you know people who seem to live in abiding peace and contentment, regardless of what they experience. Truly, "The joy of the LORD is [their] strength." **(Nehemiah 8:10)** You wonder if you could ever attain such emotional stability and satisfaction.

It's possible that you aren't quite sure what's going on inside of you, and you're just seeking answers. Throughout the years, people have often come to me saying, "Dr. Stanley, I know something isn't quite right, but I can't put my finger on it." I suspect most people have felt this way from time to time. They cannot pinpoint or define their problem, but they feel one exists nonetheless and long to get to the root of it.

Or maybe there is a pervasive agitation that lingers just below the surface of your emotions at all time and for whatever reason it just doesn't go away. Without much warning, your distress springs up and you respond with such intensity that it shocks you and those with whom you're interacting. You never know when this underlying current of anxiety, bitterness, guilt, insecurity, anger, loneliness—or any other destructive feeling—will rear its ugly head and leave destruction in its path. Even worse, you don't understand how to take control of or get rid of it. No doubt, somewhere within you there is a genuine desire to be free of this tyrannical and unpredictable ache in your soul. After all, no one likes to feel bad all the time.

Our emotions—especially the most damaging of them—can become a dominating force within us if we do not get a hold of them. Of course, most of us like to think that our feelings do not control us. But if we're managing them with anything other than the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the principles of God's Word, we will find it quite difficult to govern how they affect us when the storms of life arise. Given the right combination of circumstances and stressors, our emotions have the potential to motivate us to act recklessly and can also paralyze us from doing what is necessary.

So from the beginning, we see two important dimensions at work in our inmost being:

First, we have an incredible driving force within us that is not easily tamed.

Second, our feelings have a full range of expression: from peace, love, and joy to anxiety, hostility, and despair. From the passions that make life exciting and worth living to those which leave us desolate—wondering how we can go on.

With these in mind, we may wonder, *Can we heal and harness our emotions—taking control of this powerful influence within us? And can we choose to express the positive, life-enhancing emotions rather than the destructive ones?*

### **The Emotional Roller Coaster**

I recall a lady at one of the churches I pastored who struggled with uncontrollable emotions. She invariably wore her feelings on her sleeve. She was easily offended, often consumed with anger, and frequently grieved over the ways she had been mistreated. Sadly, she had no idea of how this was ruining her life and affecting those around her. She was unaware that she had a choice in the matter.

I can still remember the day I went to lunch with her husband and he expressed his brokenness over their strained marriage. "It's exhausting," he confided wearily.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Nothing unusual," he said. "It's the norm, actually. But some days, I just find it so draining. I never know which version of my wife I'll find when I go to the breakfast table in the morning or what drama will be waiting for me when I get home from work at night. Some evenings, as I reach out to take the doorknob, I just pray, 'God, please give me the strength to face whatever is on the other side of this door.' I dread the emotional firestorm that awaits me. Sometimes she is happy—even giddy with good news, and that's great. But more often than not, she is said to the point of tears or so extremely angry that she throws the dishes. I never know what to expect. It's as if she is on a roller coaster that never ends. And unfortunately, I'm along for the ride whether I like it or not. It's exhausting."

I had no doubt it was an extremely difficult way to live. "How do you deal with this?" I asked.

He replied, "I try not to say anything. I avoid reacting or responding to what she does because I don't want to aggravate her in any way. I do everything I can to evade becoming the object of her sadness or anger. It's just survival, really."

What a tragedy. Instead of enjoying the wonderful gift of marriage they had been given, this couple was caught in a destructive cycle of outburst and avoidance. The more she would attempt to provoke a response from her husband through her emotional outbursts, the more he

would avoid her. And the more he tried to pacify his wife's pain by not engaging with her, the more explosive her responses to him became.

Though both were certainly responsible for some bad decisions, I was always struck by the intense anger and rejection that characterized her interactions with others, which is why I focus on her behavior here. These destructive emotions created a constant tension within her—she was continually plagued with anxiety and suspicion toward those around her. Worst of all, she refused to forgive those who wronged her. If something triggered those old hurts in her memory, she could recall and rekindle intense emotions she had experienced years before within seconds.

She allowed her emotions to rule her, and because of her inability to overcome them or to choose her responses, she was unable to fully enjoy the blessings the Lord had for her. She did not live with a sense of His victorious power. Rather, she endured the terrible bondage of continuous inner churning and relentlessness, which kept her from experiencing God's wonderful plan and purpose for her life. Seeing the agony she lived with day in and day out was absolutely heartbreaking.

Certainly she isn't alone. We all go through times of being on edge and distraught. But what I endeavored to teach her and hope to communicate in the book is that as believers, there is no reason for us to live this way. Yes, we may have endured terrible things in our lives and may have been deeply wounded in the process. But there is hope. We can harness our emotions—taking control of this powerful force within us. And we can choose how we respond—opting to express the edifying emotions rather than the destructive ones. Victory is possible. Genuine healing can occur if we're willing to allow the Father to set us free.

The good news is that the Lord wants to heal you and those you love. How do I know this? Because we serve the Great Physician, the One who delights in restoring His people, not just emotionally, but also spiritually. Look at the promises He has given us in Scripture:

- “I, the LORD, am your healer.” **(Exodus 15:26)**
- “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you.” **(2 Kings 20:5)**
- “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.” **(Psalm 34:18-19)**
- “They cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses. HE sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” **(Psalm 107:19-20)**
- “The LORD...heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” **(Psalm 147:2-3)**
- “He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.” **(Isaiah 53:5)**
- “I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him...creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,’ says the LORD, ‘and I will heal him.’” **(Isaiah 57:18-19)**
- “I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds,’ declares the LORD.” **(Jeremiah 30:17)**
- “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” **(John 14:27)**

The Father is uniquely *able* to give us the victory over the damaged emotions we have. And because we cannot become the healthy, fruitful believers He wants us to be until we learn to control our feelings, we know for certain He is willing to help us. We are confident of this because we are assured the Lord desires for us to experience the fullness of His wonderful

plans for our lives. He says, “I know the plans that I have for you...plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” (**Jeremiah 29:11**) Truly, we serve a loving God who will not fail to lead us to freedom if we trust in Him. (**John 8:32**)

### The First Step

Of course, in order to have a relationship with the Lord at all, the first thing we must be prepared to do is admit we cannot help ourselves. This is true in every area of our interactions with the Father—even the ability to experience Him or receive His healing. Why? Because there is something deep with us that completely cuts us off from His presence.

**Habakkuk 1:13** reports, “Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor.” Because God is absolutely holy, He is separated from all sin—all the things we have done wrong, the mistakes we have made, and the ways we’ve failed to do His will.

Usually, we recognize our sins right away because they are all too evident to us. We are aware of all the selfish acts and unwise decisions that make us feel unclean and unworthy. We also realize that no matter how much good we do, our mistakes stay with us. We cannot rid ourselves of them. We see firsthand that what the Bible says is true, “All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.” (**Isaiah 64:6**) We can try to cover ourselves with good works, but they will never be sufficient to cleanse the foulness we feel within our hearts. No matter how hard we try, our sins continue to follow us.

Why is this? It is because “the wages of sin is death.” (**Romans 6:23**) When we do wrong, we feel the sentence of death within us. So not only are we separated from God, but we feel the destructive consequences of our sinful actions taking hold at the very core of our being.

Thankfully, our heavenly Father had mercy on us. Knowing that we could never help ourselves, God took the initiative to forgive our sins and restore our relationship with Him. (**Romans 5:8**) How did He do so? By coming to Earth in the form of a Man—as Jesus—to die on the cross as the sacrificial, substitutionary payment for all our sins, He wipes them away completely. “As far the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” (**Psalms 103:12**)

And to show us definitively that He was absolutely victorious over sin and death—that what He did worked—Christ rose triumphantly from the grave after three days. Because of His bodily resurrection, we know for certain that Jesus will faithfully fulfill His promise to give us eternal life.

What Christ did on the cross solved our problem of being separated from God. An eyewitness of the crucifixion and resurrection, the apostle Peter explained to a crowd of faithful Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem:

“Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power...

“God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”... Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call unto Himself.” And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved.” (**Acts 2:22-24, 36-40**)

Peter proclaimed the truth of Christ’s provision to the faithful Jews, who were used to pleasing God by their adherence to the Law of Moses. Day after day, year after year, they made sacrifices in accordance with that Law, hoping it would be sufficient to earn them the Lord’s

favor. However, it was never enough. Each new day brought new temptations, sins, and violations of God's holy standards. It seemed hopeless that anyone could truly have a relationship with the Father. And it really was impossible because "There is none righteous, no, not one." (**Romans 3:10**) It was unattainable, that is, until Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave to make us holy and acceptable to Him once and for all.

**Romans 5** explains, "Since we have been made right in God's sight by faith in His promises, we can have real peace with Him because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us...Now we rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done in dying for our sins—making us friends of God." (**vv. 1, 11**)

When you trust Jesus as your Savior, you accept the fact that He makes you holy—fully capable of experiencing God's loving presence and healing. You rely upon Jesus' perfect provision of salvation, which means you have confidence in Him to forgive your sins, deliver you from the sentence of death, restore your relationship with the Father, and bless you with eternal life.

As I said, Jesus does it all for you because He knows you cannot do it yourself. **Ephesians 2:8** makes it clear, "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Therefore, the only thing you must do is accept His gift of salvation by faith. **Romans 10:9** promises, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Of course, you may be thinking, *Why is he introducing all this about salvation now—right at the beginning of a book about emotions?* There are two reasons.

### **1. Trusting Jesus Comes First**

If you cannot trust Jesus enough to save you, then nothing I write here will do you any good. You cannot even begin to have fellowship with God until your sins are forgiven once and for all through faith in Christ.

This is because when Jesus saves you, He sends His Holy Spirit to live within you and teach you. The holy Spirit is the One who searches your heart and mind—repairing your brokenness, counteracting wrong beliefs, and enabling you to overcome your circumstances. Without a relationship with Him, there can be no true emotional healing. Without the Holy Spirit empowering you, you cannot have victory over your feelings.

Therefore, if you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, I urge you to do so now. It is not difficult—He has done all the work for you. All you must do is confess your belief in Him either in your own words or with the following prayer:

*"Jesus please forgive my sins and save me from eternal separation from God. By faith, I accept Your work and death on the cross as sufficient payment for my sins. I rejoice that Your resurrection from the dead shows Your complete victory over sin and death—making me holy and acceptable in God's sight. Thank You for providing the way for me to have a relationship with my heavenly Father and eternal life. Thank You for hearing my prayers and sending Your Holy Spirit to heal me in areas where I have been wounded and my emotions have been damaged. Please give me the strength and wisdom to walk in the center of Your will now and forevermore. In Your holy and precious name I pray, Lord Jesus. Amen."*

### **2. Saving Faith Models Trust in God**

The second reason I am talking about salvation at the beginning of a book about emotions is because your saving faith is a model for the kind of trust in God you'll need for healing.

Let me explain. Just as you cannot save yourself, you cannot change your feelings. Just as you must fully rely upon Jesus to make you holy and acceptable for a relationship with Him, it is likewise necessary for you to depend on Him to completely restore your emotional health. Your responsibility is simply to obey Him as He directs you. He does the rest.

This is because God knows you perfectly, sees your hidden scars, and fully understands the reason you react to situations as you do. On the other hand, you may believe that you can try hard enough to get better or heal by sheer willpower, however, that will never be enough. Why? Because you do not know which of your habits and response patterns have been formed in order to protect your damaged emotions—and you don't have a way of finding this out apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. And even if you could know what behaviors and reactions to target, you wouldn't have an effective plan for how to supplant them—destroying their deepest roots within you and replacing them with the truth that heals you.

Recall the couple I described earlier. The wife certainly was not trying to drive away her husband through her emotional outbursts. Likewise, the husband was not seeking to hurt his wife by avoiding her. However, neither was responding to the other beneficially. Their relational patterns were making their problems far worse, not better. And the harder they tried, the more their broken, wounded ways alienated each other.

Unfortunately, this is our reality. We simply don't know how to deal with the issues that lie buried so deep within our souls. This is because of what we find in **Proverbs 16:25**, "*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*" Thankfully, our God is more than willing to make "*the path of life*" (**Psalms 16:11**) known to us. He knows exactly how to heal us, and as we saw in Scripture, He is more than willing to do so.

### **You Have an Example of Triumph**

Before we go on, however, there is something that must be made abundantly clear: If you are struggling with difficult feelings, you are not alone.

One of the most devastating things about our injured emotions is how isolated they make us feel. They can make us think there is something wrong with us—that we are weak, alone, incapable of improving, and that no one will want to be around us. We wonder if we're being punished—set apart from the rest of humanity to suffer. We may even begin to believe that no one in history has ever felt as incredibly low and terrible as we do, and that we're damaged as no one else has ever been. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I live in Atlanta, which is infamous for its exceedingly slow rush hour. Waiting in bumper-to-bumper traffic often gives me time to read the stickers on fellow commuters' automobiles. Many leave me groaning rather than laughing. However, I recently saw one that said, "Nobody get out of life alive." The author could have easily added, "And nobody gets through life without some scars." Just as sure as all of us will someday face death, is the certainty that we will all face painful circumstances that will wound us deeply.

It is a universal fact: every person faces hard times, obstacles, disappointments, and some degree of emotional pain throughout his or her life. If you haven't yet faced any difficulties—trust me, you will. Unfortunately, in the fallen world, they cannot be avoided.

The great King David often felt emotional agony, which we can read about in **Psalms**. Yes, he had some astounding times of joy and success. But he also suffered staggering betrayals, unbearable losses, and heartrending failures. He wrote, "I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long...I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart." (**Psalms 38:6, 8**) His inspiring hymns have often comforted the hurting because he understood firsthand the pain all of us feel at one point or another.

The apostle Paul suffered greatly as well. He said, "We were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life." (**2 Corinthians 1:8**)

Even our perfect, sinless Savior, Jesus, felt profound and overwhelming anguish. He said, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death." (**Matthew 26:38**)

No, you are certainly not alone in your feelings. I say all this because there have been others throughout history who have felt as you do and who've found victory over their emotions. Just as it was feasible for them, it is possible for you as well. They are your example. As I said,

we can take control of the driving force of emotions within us and we can also choose how we respond. God taught them how to do so, and HE will show you, too.

### **The Path to Victory**

So how did the saints of old triumph over these devastating emotions? It was through the principle David wrote about in **Psalms 26:2-3**. He said, “Examine me, O LORD, and try me; test my mind and my heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth.” In other words, David overcame his destructive emotions by asking God to reveal any wrong way of thinking within him and replacing it with the Lord’s facts and unfailing principles.

Paul explained it like this in **2 Corinthians 10:5**: “*We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*” These men rejected their destructive patterns of behavior and thinking—preferring instead to believe what God said about them above all else.

Napoleon Hill, author and advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, summarized this principle when he said, “If you direct your thought and control your emotions, you will ordain your destiny.” In other words, if you will deliberately govern what you think, you will transform your emotions—you will manage them instead of them ruling over you. And as you choose how you feel and bring your beliefs in line with what God says about you, the Lord works to make you into the person He created you to be.

So let me ask you: What are the most painful experiences you’ve had and what wounds remain from them? What emotions assail you as a result of those difficulties? Now consider this carefully: When those feelings rise up within you, what are the thoughts that play over and over again in your mind? Are there messages you’ve come to accept as a result of the pain you’ve experienced?

I ask you this so you can deal with the problems and find victory in them. If the messages that play repeatedly in your mind do not line up with God’s Word, they are false and must be supplanted. This means you must confront the treacherous beliefs directly in order to have control over them and be able to choose your response.

Therefore, as we explore difficult feelings such as fear, rejection, bitterness, guilt, and despair, we are also going to discuss how to overcome them individually. These will vary some from chapter to chapter, but the basic components to triumphing over your emotions include the following:

### **1. Experiencing the New Birth**

As I said previously, healing begins with a relationship with God through faith in Jesus’ saving work on the cross. That does not mean your emotions are repaired immediately when you accept Him as Savior. Sadly, there are many believers who have never enjoyed that deep restoration. Rather, you receive the Lord’s presence with you through His Holy Spirit, which means you have everything you require to be victorious.

**Ephesians 1** tells us, “God...has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (**v.3**) These include a *new nature (v.4)*, *identity (v.5)*, *future (v.11)*, *purpose (v.12)*, *hope (v.18)*, and *power (v.19)*. As we look at the false hoods that continue to damage our emotions, we will see how these spiritual blessings—which we receive at salvation—counteract them.

Again, if you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, I pray you will. Do not remain in bondage, friend; a better life is within reach. Invite God into your life and allow Him to heal you.

### **2. Examining the Thoughts that Dominate Your Life**

As we’ve discovered emotional brokenness does not heal automatically. Although we’re often told, “Time heals all wounds,” it simply isn’t true. The passing of the days, months, and

years may cause the memory of the offense to fade to a degree, but the pain it caused becomes part of us, tainting how we view the world and respond to our circumstances. This is because time itself has no power to heal; it cannot remove the unhealthy thought patterns formed when our wounds are created—it cannot even identify them.

Only the Father can pinpoint where we've been injured and what destructive coping mechanisms we've developed to protect ourselves. Only He recognizes what lies we believe about ourselves and which attitudes keep us in bondage.

This is one of the reasons we study the consequences of feelings such as fear, guilt, and so forth. Because once we realize how these emotions affect us, we can then trace them back to their roots.

I've had all sorts of people come up to me after Sunday morning services and say, "I never knew that was an issue for me. But when I heard you list the effects, I realized it's a real problem in my life. That's what I have been struggling with—I just didn't know it."

When we discover what is actually affecting us, we can then begin to recognize what it was in our past that created our misunderstanding about who we are. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in us—He exposes the false messages that drive our identity, decisions, and interactions with others. God then unearths those false beliefs so He can replace them with truth and make us whole.

This leads to the third component of healing your emotions.

### **3. Exchanging Your Thought Patterns**

Once the ideas that fuel our feelings are revealed, they must be replaced by a godly thought process. This is not something that can be developed overnight, of course; it takes time to learn. But the most effective things we can do is read Scripture, which not only familiarizes us with what the Father thinks but also teaches us His principles, how He expresses emotion, and the method by which He makes decisions.

After all, who better to learn from than the Lord God Himself? "With Him are wisdom and might; to Him belong counsel and understanding." (**Job 12:13**) When we immerse ourselves in God's Word, He begins to renew us—changing the way we see things and giving us His perspective of situations. He reveals the conditions that trigger our damaged emotions and teaches us to respond in a manner that builds us up, rather than tears us down. And He shows us how to enjoy the abundant life He created us for. (**John 10:10**)

Truly, when the Father shows us how to think and control our emotions, we begin to enjoy life at its very best. No wonder King David wrote, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; who satisfies your years with good things." (**Psalms 103:2-5**)

Of course, if we really want to exchange our thought patterns for good, we must actively engage in this next component.

### **4. Exercising the Powerful Privilege of Prayer**

If you've listened to me for any amount of time or read any of my other books, you know how absolutely essential I believe prayer is to our lives. This is because prayer is an intimate conversation with the God of all the exists, and your relationship with Him determines the impact of your life and the influence you have with those around you. Time alone with Him is vital for the growing believer. It is also crucial if we desire true emotional healing.

The Word of God is powerful on its own. But I have found that there is nothing more life-changing than getting on my knees, opening Scripture, and waiting before the Father with an attitude of listening. It is astounding what the Lord reveals when we come before Him in love and reverence, and how He heals the brokenness within us. This is why I often say, "We stand



tallest and strongest on our knees.” Because when we humble ourselves before the God of the universe, He helps us and lifts us up. **(1 Peter 5:5-6)**

Therefore, in the pages to come, we will examine some of the godly thought patterns that can help you overcome your emotions so you can enjoy the wonderful blessings God has for you. But I will also challenge you to seek the Father’s face for true, lasting healing.

## **5. Expecting God’s Healing to Begin Immediately**

Finally, throughout this book, I will encourage you to endure courageously, knowing that the Holy Spirit is already at work in your heart, though you may not be aware of what He has accomplished. In fact, you may not feel any better for a while—but that is the point. It is your emotions that are damaged, and some deep spiritual surgery is needed.

As God transforms the way you think, everything within you may want to fight against what you’re learning and your pain may even intensify. This is because you are working on areas that are profoundly battered and bruised.

Persevere anyway. It is only temporary. Exercise your ability to endure despite your feelings because you’re finally on the path to taking control of your life and experiencing the edifying emotions the Father made you to enjoy. Your effort is not in vain; this struggle is worthwhile. And you have been given a divine guarantee; if you have faith in God and obey Him, He will bless you every single time. He will bless you every single time. He will heal your emotions. Freedom is just around the corner.

So what are the painful wounds that you wrestle with daily? What false messages are driving your emotions? What ache do you feel in your heart? Perhaps they spring immediately to mind. Or maybe you just don’t know. Either way, spend some time in prayer now, asking God to prepare you for the journey that is ahead.

*Father, how grateful I am for all You have done for me. Thank you for saving me, giving me life, and providing me with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. I also give you thanks for helping me find the path to victory over these feelings that are so painful and overwhelming. I confess that I have allowed them to rule me—hurting my relationships, destroying my joy, and preventing me from fully understanding the purposes You have planned for me. Thank You for forgiving me, Father. Please reveal the destructive thought patterns so I can repent of them and walk in the center of Your will.*

*I bring my damaged emotions to You right now and ask You to deliver me from them. Father, thank You for hearing my prayers and healing my damaged emotions. It is my heart’s desire to respond in a manner that honors You and bring You glory. I am so grateful You are teaching me to take control of my emotions so I can become the joyful, fruitful believer. You created me to be. Thank You for healing me, restoring my hope, and giving me purpose, Lord God. I praise You for Your great love and for leading me to freedom.*

*In Jesus’ name I pray.*

*Amen*

### **Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Study**

1. What emotions do you experience most powerfully when relating with your friends and family members? Is there any relationship that raises particularly negative emotions? Why do you think that is?
2. Do you ever feel alone when you experience negative emotions? How have you coped with those feelings of loneliness? Is this manner of coping working for you? Why or why not?
3. What do you think is the one thing that is preventing you from fully experiencing God's healing in your life?
4. Do you believe your faith in Christ's salvation is important for the restoration of your emotional health? Why or why not?
5. In the list of Bible promises regarding God's provision of healing, are there particular verses that bring you comfort?
6. Have you ever tried to manage your feelings in any of the ways described in this chapter? What was the result?
7. Through the years, have you received the genuine healing that can come only from the Father? Are you hopeful you can experience it now? Why or why not?
8. Which of the steps in triumphing over your emotions are you ready to apply to your life and thought patterns immediately?