

BUILDING FAITH BEYOND SUNDAYS

At Northland, we believe following Jesus isn't limited to Sunday mornings—it's a whole-life journey. This guide exists to help you and your family or small group continue growing in faith together during the week. As we explore emotions through the lens of the gospel, we invite you to process, reflect, and engage with God and each other more deeply.

THE MAIN THEME

In this week's message, Dr. Josh Laxton kicked off our "Inside Out" mini-series by exploring the biblical foundation for emotions. Emotions, far from being something to suppress or let rule us, are gifts from God meant to move us toward Him. We examined the core emotions featured in the movie *Inside Out*—joy, sadness, anger, fear, and disgust—through both cultural and Christian lenses. The main takeaway: emotions are not our enemies, but opportunities to reflect the image of God and grow in Christlikeness.

DIGGING DEEPER...

Culture often tells us to "follow our feelings" or "stuff them down," but neither extreme reflects God's design. Emotions are meant to be expressed under the lordship of Jesus. The Bible shows us that even God expresses emotion—He rejoices, grieves, gets angry, and shows disgust—but He never fears. That's because fear, in its broken form, reflects our sin and separation. However, awe-filled, reverent fear of God is holy and core to our worship.

This message also introduced Emotional Intelligence (EQ) from a gospel perspective—learning to understand, manage, and harness emotions for God's glory, personal growth, and loving others well. Through personal stories from Africa and scripture's rich emotional expressions, we were invited to reflect on how our own emotional health affects our spiritual life, relationships, and witness to the world.

WHAT NOT TO MISS...

- Emotions are good and come from God—they're part of being made in His image.
- God experiences core emotions: joy, sadness, anger, and disgust—but not fear.
- Cultural view: self and feelings at the center. Christian view: Jesus at the center.
- Emotional health is crucial for spiritual maturity and relational wholeness.
- Emotional Intelligence (EQ) has four components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.
- Emotions move us—literally, the word comes from Latin for "to move out."

- We must process emotions through the gospel: Label it, Learn the why, Look to Jesus, and Lean into His direction.

LIFE APPLICATION...

This week, take inventory of your emotions. Are there feelings you've been ignoring, misplacing, or letting control you? Use the "feelings wheel" and pray through one core emotion each day. Ask God: "What are You trying to show me through this feeling?" Practice emotional self-awareness and invite the Holy Spirit to shape your response. Remember, emotional health is a key part of spiritual health—how you respond in moments of anger, sadness, or joy reveals much about your walk with Christ.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Genesis 1:31 – "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."

This verse captures joy—the core emotion at creation. Use this verse to remind your family or group that God's design for emotions was good from the beginning. Look for glimpses of His goodness this week and celebrate them together.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which emotion from Inside Out do you most relate to right now—and why?
2. What cultural messages about emotions have shaped you (positively or negatively)?
3. How does knowing that God expresses emotions change how you see your own?
4. What does it mean to "submit your emotions to Jesus' rule"? How do you do that?
5. Which of the four EQ components is most challenging for you? Why?
6. In what ways have you seen emotions help—or hurt—your relationships?
7. How does fear show up in your life? Is it awe of God or anxiety of the unknown?
8. What spiritual discipline helps you regulate or process your emotions best?
9. How can your small group support one another in growing emotionally and spiritually?
10. What emotion do you want to bring before the Lord this week?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

As a group or family, pick one emotion to focus on each day this week. Talk about how each person experienced or responded to that feeling. Then pray together, asking God to help shape how you express and respond to that emotion. Make space to check in midweek and celebrate growth by next weekend.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL (MON–FRI)

MONDAY – Joy: The Starting Place

READ: Genesis 1:31, Philippians 4:4

REFLECT: Joy is God’s starting emotion—it’s what He felt when He made you.

RESPOND:

- Journal: What brought you joy today? Where did you miss it?
- Activity: Share one joyful moment around the dinner table.

TUESDAY – Sadness: God is Near

READ: Psalm 34:18, John 11:35

REFLECT: God doesn’t run from sadness—He enters it with us.

RESPOND:

- Journal: What loss or disappointment are you holding?
- Activity: Reach out to someone hurting. Offer presence, not just words.

WEDNESDAY – Anger: Righteous and Ruled

READ: Ephesians 4:26, James 1:19–20

REFLECT: Anger isn’t sin—but how we express it can be.

RESPOND:

- Journal: What triggered your anger recently? What’s the root?
- Activity: Pause and pray before responding in a tense moment.

THURSDAY – Disgust: Holy Discontent

READ: Romans 12:9, Revelation 3:16

REFLECT: God feels disgust—not at people, but at sin, injustice, and apathy.

RESPOND:

- Journal: What in the world makes you righteously upset?
- Activity: Take a small step to right a wrong—volunteer, give, speak truth.

FRIDAY – Fear: Reverence Over Anxiety

READ: Proverbs 1:7, 2 Timothy 1:7

REFLECT: Fear of God leads to wisdom. Fear of man leads to slavery.

RESPOND:

- Journal: What fear is holding you back right now?
- Activity: Declare God's truth over that fear with a friend or family member.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Start with a personal example to model vulnerability—it sets the tone.
- Don't rush to "fix" emotions—allow space for honest sharing.
- Use the "label it, learn it, look to Jesus, lean into His direction" framework as a tool.

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT

- Thank God for creating us with emotions and for the chance to grow through them.
- Pray for deeper relational connections through vulnerability and honesty.

CARE

- Pray for emotional healing for anyone battling grief, shame, or anxiety.
- Ask God to grow compassion in us for those who are hurting.

CULTIVATE

- Pray for disciples to grow in emotional maturity and reflect Jesus in their responses.
- Ask the Lord to develop leaders who model EQ with grace and truth.

COMMISSION

- Pray for boldness to bring God's perspective on emotions to workplaces and families.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to use us to bring emotional wholeness to our neighborhoods.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You for making us emotional beings, in Your image. Help us not to be ruled by our feelings, but to bring them under the loving leadership of Jesus. Teach us to recognize, reflect, and respond with wisdom and grace. May our joy be rooted in You, our sadness draw us near to You, and our every emotion lead us to love You more and love others well. In Jesus' name, amen.