



Eight Weeks Toward Emotional Fullness

A Companion to *Feel* for Personal and Small-Group Study.

By Matthew Elliott

with Laura Elliott and Andrew and Sarah Schmitz

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This study guide was written to help you dig into the content of *Feel*. I desire for you to learn about your own emotions. Your emotional makeup is a complex interaction between your personality, culture, family background, personal experience, and belief system. Each of us can benefit by knowing what emotions are and how God designed them to operate in our lives. To grow toward emotional fullness and maturity, we must take steps to inform and build our emotional lives on the truth.

One or two chapters of *Feel* will be covered in each lesson. The concepts in *Feel* are the building blocks that are behind this study guide. In each lesson, you will learn to know yourself a bit better, learn about emotions, and learn steps you can take to have a vibrant and full emotional life.

To facilitate this, each study is divided into these sections:

IN THE CHAT ROOM will give you the chance to think about your own emotions and your reaction to the book.

FOCUS ON THE WORD will encourage you to look at the Bible closely to see what God has planned for us.

KNOW THE TRUTH explores why you feel what you feel.

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS will highlight why emotions are important and how you need to grow toward emotional maturity. What do you want to feel, and how can you grow this in your life?

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION will help you find a specific step that you can take to begin your journey toward a new heart.

As God has promised, "I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart" (Ezekiel 36:26).

Week 1: Feel and Discovery

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard?
Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

God's plan for us is emotional fullness and vitality!

And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law." Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God. Mark 12:33-34

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT 1 Thessalonians 2:6-8; 1 Peter 1:18-22; Hosea 6:6; Psalm 34:1-5

KNOW THE TRUTH:

To be effective at growing your emotional life, you have to own the feelings you have right now. Real growth requires real honesty. *What do you really feel?*

What is the last thing you got really excited about? Why did it pump you up?
Did you share your joy with anybody?

When is the last time you got angry? How did you express it? Did you hold it inside without telling anybody about how you were feeling? Are you more likely to hold anger inside or to let it out in your words or actions?

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

How do you measure your spirituality by keeping a set of duties or rules?
What are some of those duties or rules?

Overall, do you feel like you are pursuing a new heart or
a set of achievements in your Christian life? *Why?*

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

How have you been taught to hide, belittle, or manage your emotions?

How have negative statements about emotions kept
you from pursuing the life God wants you to have?

Capture in one sentence how you want to relate to your feelings in a new way.

Week 2: Breathe

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard?
Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

We want God to do a new work in us, to breathe his life into us again!

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.
Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.
Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
Psalm 51:7-10

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT Psalm 42; Jeremiah 17:7-10; Galatians 5:13-25

KNOW THE TRUTH:

Are you growing more in love with Jesus? Explain your answer.

Think about the religious man whom Jesus challenged to give away all his stuff and told to “follow me.” What loves are keeping you from giving your full heart to God?

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

What does your emotional life reveal about your spiritual life?
Do you want to spend time with God?

Do you feel freedom to really celebrate with other people?
How does your answer affect your relationship with God and with other people?

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

Do you act like you really believe that God wants you to
live in love, joy, and hope? *Why or why not?*

Do your feelings show that you believe that God's Word is able to equip you to live this
way, whatever you are facing?

What are you doing to immerse yourself, to breathe, in God's truth?

Week 3: Bound and Release

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard?
Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

We have been bound up by false beliefs that often teach us to deny, suppress, and control emotion. We find something different in the Bible: a radical freedom.

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.
John 8:32

So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.
John 8:36

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT Genesis 45:1-15; Matthew 21:12-13; 2 Corinthians 4:8-16

KNOW THE TRUTH:

Which box are you more likely to be in, making reason king or making emotion king? Why are you in that box?

Describe a specific situation where you handled your emotions as if reason or emotion were king.

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

What false beliefs have you believed about emotion?

What feelings do you downplay, belittle, or ignore? What passionate, “uncontrollable” feelings do you blame for your wrong actions or shortcomings?

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

Are you sharing your deep feelings with a close friend or spouse, or do you cover up what is in your heart? *Why?*

If you were emotionally released, how would you start to communicate more openly with those that are close to you? Can you give an example?

Week 4: Power and Friend

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard? Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

Good deeds, the most powerful examples of sacrifice and service, are driven by our love for other people.

Soon afterward Jesus went with his disciples to the village of Nain, and a large crowd followed him. A funeral procession was coming out as he approached the village gate. The young man who had died was a widow's only son, and a large crowd from the village was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. "Don't cry!" he said. Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. "Young man," he said, "I tell you, get up." Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk! And Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Luke 7:12-15

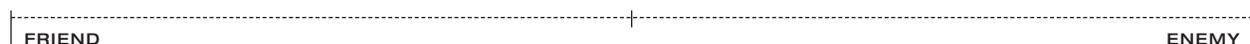
YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT Romans 5:1-5; Nehemiah 8:10; Ruth 1:11-18, 4:13-17; Galatians 3:2-6

KNOW THE TRUTH:

Emotions give us good advice when they line up with truth and bad advice when they do not. Either way, we need to listen, evaluate, and take action. When did an emotion give you a profound insight that helped you live life better or make a wise decision?

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

Have I usually acted like emotion is a friend or an enemy? Graphically represent this by drawing a line on this gauge.



How has the chapter “Friend” helped you have a better understanding of emotion?

Emotion can be a powerful force for good. When has emotion motivated you to reach out and encourage, serve, or sacrifice for another person?

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

How can emotion help you identify faulty thinking?

When emotion, as a friend and counselor, helps you identify a need for change in your life, what are some things you can do to respond?

Week 5: Truth

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard? Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

Our emotions are grown and transformed when we change our focus, knowledge, values, and beliefs. If we say we believe something but our emotions say we do not, we had best listen. How does what you feel line up with what God says is true and valuable?

Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

1 John 2:7-11 [NIV]

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT Ephesians 1:1-14; Matthew 13:44-46; Deuteronomy 6:4-12

KNOW THE TRUTH:

We have created the Truth Box, a practical tool you can use to understand and evaluate the emotions you are experiencing. On page 13, there is an example to help you understand how to use this tool. (Do not make this exercise too wooden; our emotions are too complex for that.) The Truth Box is a tool to train ourselves to connect the dots between what we feel and why we are feeling it.

Think about an intensely positive emotion you have had in last few months. Fill out a Truth Box (see page 14) for this experience.

Fill out a second Truth Box (see page 15) for a negative emotion you have experienced—something that was particularly damaging to you or those you loved. When you come across false thoughts (focus), facts (knowledge), values, or beliefs, make sure that, in the final step, you write down the truths that you want to hold onto deeply and believe.

THE TRUTH BOX IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT WWW.FAITHFULFEELINGS.COM

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

What did you discover in filling out the Truth Box that surprised or convicted you?

Which area — Focus, Know, Value, Believe — do you think has the greatest effect on your emotions?

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

When you evaluated the negative or destructive emotion, which area of our toolbox — Focus, Know, Value, Believe — did not line up with God's truth?

How do you think applying God's truth would have made you feel differently?

Truth Box

1. Describe the situation or context. *Start here and follow the numbers in order.*

DRIVING 4 HOURS TO SPEND 3 DAYS WITH MY PARENTS

3. FOCUS: What are your predominant thoughts about this situation?

LAST VISIT, MY MOM AND I HAD A BIG FIGHT. HOW DO I AVOID THAT NOW? I HAVE WAY TOO MUCH WORK TO TAKE ALL THAT TIME OFF.

4. KNOW: What facts influence the way you see the situation?

WITH THE DRIVE AND FAMILY TIME, I WON'T GET ALL MY WORK DONE.

TRUTH

TRUTH

2. Emotion/Feeling

PRESSURE WORRIED
FEARFUL

5. VALUE: What are your highest values in the situation?

Work
Avoiding Conflict

6. BELIEVE: What beliefs or assumptions do you attach to the situation?

I AM AFRAID OF ANOTHER CONFLICT WITH MY MOM. THERE WILL BE A LOT OF TENSION AND PRESSURE.

TRUTH

Check the Truth Box if you believe that what you are thinking lines up with reality/God's truth. If it does not, explain below. Star the toolbox quadrant that seems to have the most influence on the emotion.

TRUTH

KNOW: IT WILL BE GOOD TO SEE MY BROTHER AND HAVE A GREAT TIME. IT IS BETTER THAN BEING ALONE.

VALUE: GOD WANTS MORE FOR ME THAN JUST FOCUSING ON WORK AND AVOIDING CONFLICT. MAYBE IT IS TIME FOR ME TO WORK TOWARD A BETTER RELATIONSHIP AND PUT WORK IN THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE. HOW CAN I SHOW MOM LOVE?

Truth Box

1. Describe the situation or context. *Start here and follow the numbers in order.*

3. FOCUS: What are your predominant thoughts about this situation?

4. KNOW: What facts influence the way you see the situation?

TRUTH

2. Emotion/Feeling

TRUTH

5. VALUE: What are your highest values in the situation?

6. BELIEVE: What beliefs or assumptions do you attach to the situation?

TRUTH

Check the Truth Box if you believe that what you are thinking lines up with reality/God's truth. If it does not, explain below.
Star the toolbox quadrant that seems to have the most influence on the emotion.

TRUTH

Truth Box

1. Describe the situation or context. *Start here and follow the numbers in order.*

3. FOCUS: What are your predominant thoughts about this situation?

4. KNOW: What facts influence the way you see the situation?

TRUTH

2. Emotion/Feeling

TRUTH

5. VALUE: What are your highest values in the situation?

6. BELIEVE: What beliefs or assumptions do you attach to the situation?

TRUTH

Check the Truth Box if you believe that what you are thinking lines up with reality/God's truth. If it does not, explain below.
Star the toolbox quadrant that seems to have the most influence on the emotion.

TRUTH

Week 6: Grow

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard?
Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

If we ever want to become the people we long to be, we must cry out for God to fill us with his love, joy, and hope. And we must seek it by choosing to focus on the beliefs, values, and knowledge of God.

We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people. For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you. So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-7

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT Luke 6:27-36; Philippians 1:9-11, 4:4; Jeremiah 29:11; Proverbs 8:13

KNOW THE TRUTH:

List five to ten favorite things that bring you a lot of joy, pleasure, and happiness.

What are a few things you really hope will happen in the next six months?

What items on your joy list are not necessarily related to your spiritual life?

What on your joy list is directly about worship, serving God, and serving others?
Do you feel the same or more joy and pleasure for these things than the things that are not directly related to worship, serving God, and serving others?

How do the hopes you listed line up with your spiritual values?

What steps can you take to increase your joy and hope in the things that matter most?

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

Write one thing you learned from the chapter for each of the Grow emotions.

Love for neighbors, God, and goodness

Joy in God, good relationships, and the good things in life

Hope in our eternal destiny, God's supreme power, goodness, and promises

Hatred of evil

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

Look at your answers for "Value Your Emotions." What is a very practical application you can make to your life from each of the four truths you highlighted?

Love for neighbors, God, and goodness

Joy in God, good relationships, and the good things in life

Hope in our eternal destiny, God's supreme power, goodness, and promises

Hatred of evil

Week 7: Keep and Done

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard?
Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

We must live in and get through Keep emotions and work to shed those emotions we need to be done with. We must get rid of our love for evil if we want to overcome besetting sins.

KEEP:

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"
John 11:33-36, [NIV]

DONE:

These men turn from the right way
to walk down dark paths.
They take pleasure in doing wrong,
and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil.
Proverbs 2:13-14

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT Jeremiah 8:18-9:1; Psalm 27:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-10; Colossians 3:8-10; 2 Corinthians 7

KNOW THE TRUTH:

What are some ways you can tell the difference between a Keep emotion and a Done emotion?

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

Have you faced a big-time trial in which you tried to be strong and stuff down what you were really feeling? Explain this situation. What were your reasons for not expressing what you felt?

How does your response match up with some of the full emotional expression we see in the Bible? How would you handle things differently now toward God and other people?

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

What is a love you need to be done with? Use the chart on page 21 to identify two or three Done emotions in your life. Make sure to add an object to the emotion. (For example: love for pornography, anger at insignificant things, or jealousy of others' lifestyles.) Start to work to identify changes you wish to make in your focus, knowledge, values, and beliefs. If you would like, download a Truth Box and use that as a tool to help you in the journey of transformation.

DONE: pressing delete for *Done* emotions

DONE EMOTION	Why do I love it? What do I really believe?	What does God say about it?	How should I respond? What should I be thinking?

Week 8: Heart

IN THE CHAT ROOM:

Which blog did you most relate to? What about it hit you hard?
Share your own blog(s) with the group.

FOCUS ON THE WORD:

God wants you to be so full of his Holy Spirit, so immersed in his truth, that you can live out of that fullness.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.
Colossians 3:12-17

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:3, 5:16-22; Deuteronomy 30:6-20; John 15

KNOW THE TRUTH:

How has your heart changed over the course of this study?
What do you long to see God do in your heart?

VALUE YOUR EMOTIONS:

Is loving God and other people at the center of your life? If so, what is that love motivating you to do? If not, which love is driving your life?

BELIEVE FOR TRANSFORMATION:

We want to live out of the overflow of our hearts. Do you feel that you have the new heart that God has promised you? Psalm 42:1 reads, "As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God." Take some time to pray, confessing the true state of your heart and asking God to give you a heart that longs for him more than anything else.