

Men and Their Emotions: Summary

This series about how men need to manage their emotions has taught me a lot about what keeps us from becoming godly men. While I found experts who describe the psychological (affecting the functions of our mind) and physiological (affecting the functions of our body) standpoints of our emotions, I do know this: everyone is impacted by their emotions differently and everyone manages their emotions differently.

But I still believe you can lean on your God Buddy to work through the basic levels of emotions to help you become more like Jesus Christ.

Let me briefly recap the posts to show what I mean.

Men and Their Emotions

During the introduction to this series, I wrote that emotions are biological reactions and a state of mind that derive from our circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. I found numerous theories on the number of emotions we have but listed 8 that I believe are difficult for men to manage:

1. Anger
2. Fear (especially of fear of failure)
3. Sadness
4. Happiness

5. Pridefulness (Ego)
6. Guilt (Shame)
7. Anxiety
8. Boredom (Aloneness)

The Why, How, and What of our Emotions

The next three posts suggested that we need to know the “Why”, the “How” and the “What” to do with each of the emotions in order to become the man God designed us to be. The subsequent posts on each emotion provided definitions of each and its physiological and emotional reactions,. I then provided some Biblical context and finished with how I felt God Buddies could help each other (and simply help themselves) by managing the particular emotion.

Oftentimes, a God Buddy relationship means opening yourself up for “constructive feedback” GBs also look to the Bible for wisdom about how God commands them to live based on how other men in history managed (or mismanaged) their emotions.



This starts by first acknowledging the emotion and how your mind & body reacts to it. You then identify the circumstances causing the emotional response. Finally, you take a deep breath and pray (rather than worrying), before talking with your GB about how to better manage the emotion.

Of course, you must get professional help if your struggle with any emotion becomes very serious since a trained counselor or therapist can provide treatment of any underlying health issues or medication.

Now a quick summary of each emotion.

Anger



The first post about anger indicated this emotion may be one of the most challenging emotions for men since many of us never learned to experience and express anger in a healthy manner. Men often use anger to hide our hurt and fear to give the illusion of maintaining power or control. How men manage anger, like so many of the emotions, is a result of how the culture says we're supposed to show our masculinity. Even Jesus showed "righteous anger" to convey extreme displeasure over sin and evil. But humans though, we are told to be "slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:20, ESV).

Fear



In the next post, I wrote that some men live with the fear they are "not enough". The world's ever-moving bar of excellence has taught us to somehow stifle our hearts and emotions so we never show when we are actually afraid. Many guys tend to face fears head-on since we are protectors and risk-takers. But deep down, our fears of rejection,

irrelevance, and disappointment can impact our relationships and our entire life. The Bible tells us to have a healthy fear of the Lord which is a reverence and awe of God's power and glory. Even the wisest man of all, Solomon, wrote, "*Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all.*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). God Buddies study God's Word and learn to pray to overcome our fears.

Sadness



When men feel sad about something or some situation, it often comes and goes quickly. Jesus felt sad (John 11:35) and wept so we too can feel down. God Buddies read the Psalms and Lamentations which tells us how men of God worked through their sadness. GBs also get outside for some exercise to offset Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) as a lack of sunlight contributes to depression, which requires professional help.

Happiness



The opposite emotion of sadness is happiness. Studies show that men are most happy when they are satisfied at work and our relationships with family and friends are working well. The Psalms and Proverbs are full of verses about happiness like *"Happy is he who trusts in the LORD."* (Proverbs 16:20). But happiness is mostly dependent on our circumstances, whereas true joy and contentment come from an eternal belief that we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength. (Philippians 4:12-13). GB's remind each other to trust in God for their joy.

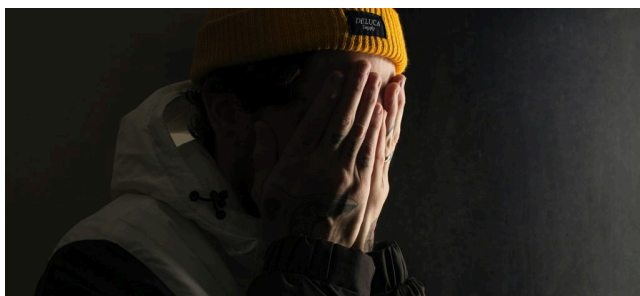
Pride



A man's pride can be both a Weakness and a Strength. Men frequently take pride in their accomplishments, which can lead to an inflated version of self and showing-off our ego. Excess pride leads to defensiveness, blaming others, narcissism, arrogance, manipulation, and lack of empathy. But the right amount of pride and proper use of it is also a good thing. It takes a strong, godly man to know how to keep his pride in-

check and use it in positive ways without straying toward boastfulness. Stay connected to other men that will hold you accountable and keep you humble. As C.S. Lewis reminds us, *“True humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.”*

Guilt



For most of us, our guilt is among the most painful of our emotions. A little bit of guilt channeled in the right way though, can actually help us own our responsibility as a godly man. In her article Men and Shame, author Lisa Ferentz states that the cultural influence and powerful messages boys get about what it means to be “a successful man” often leads us to avoid being vulnerable and causes pretending. God Buddies overcome our short-falls that create anxiety, self-doubt, depression, anger, grief, shame, and guilt. We also accept our responsibilities as a godly man to overcome the apathy and passivity that comes from guilt.

Anxiety



Anxiety is rising during this time of COVID-19, racial injustice, and economic uncertainty. Statistics show that men seek help less than women due to a cultural norm that showing your anxious feelings is not masculine. The Bible reminds us **“do not be anxious about tomorrow”** since **“being anxious can add a single hour to our life.”** (Matthew 6:27, 34). Scripture also tells us **“An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.”** (Proverbs 12:25) so check in with your GB for encouragement and prayer when you are anxious. Get some exercise with your GB as well but do NOT go out for a drink since alcohol and drug addiction do not relieve anxiety.

Boredom



Two truths define boredom: that God felt man needed accountability and said, **“It is not good for the man to be alone.”** (Genesis 2:18). The other truth comes from Søren Kierkegaard, the famous theologian and philosopher. Kierkegaard argued man’s impulse to keep busy is our greatest

source of unhappiness and when our true and evil self comes through.

Since men generally get bored more than women, we will also pursue more dangerous forms of entertainment and exhibit more risk-taking behaviors when our environments become dull.

The Bible also warns us against slothfulness because Satan will find the guy who lacks motivation.

Bored men are also more likely to hit the proverbial “mid-life crisis” so having a God Buddy can help keep you focused and motivated on your priorities and pursuit of God.

God Buddies and Emotions

I firmly believe having a God Buddy can help a guy manage his emotions. But we must first realize that only Jesus could perfectly manage all these emotions.

When it comes to managing our emotions, even King Solomon struggled so he reminds us ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”*** (Proverbs 3:5-6).

However, even Jesus had a small circle of friends with whom He did a major part of His life. Once you understand the cultural pressures that steer you to act “unmasculine” with your emotions, you can better manage those and continue your

journey toward Christ-likeness.

The bottom line is that –we all may struggle with controlling our emotions. But having a God Buddy who can come alongside you in prayer and provide encouragement, will remind you that your struggle should not define you, nor should it control you.

So turn your emotions over to Him in prayer and learn to trust that He will guide you through them. Learning to manage your emotions will help you become the man that God requires.