



Big Mad | James Powell | 09.23.2023

Weekly Study

SHARE

In week three of Alive & Free, Pastor James Powell discussed the dangers of emotional decision making in his message, *Big Mad*. Many of us have grown up believing that certain emotions are bad, which has given them power they were never meant to have. While James focused on anger and rage specifically, he reminded us that all emotions are God-given and are meant to be felt because they provide us with important information that leads our spirit to what it needs. It is not our emotions that get us in trouble but the decisions we make based on our emotions that can lead to more problems. Aggression will never conquer anger, only submission to the One who knows us best will.

What was a highlight from your week?

Think about the happiest moment of your life. What's one word that describes how you felt in that moment? (blissful, ecstatic, free, alive, blessed, peaceful, etc.)

How challenging was it to find a word that represented the emotions you were feeling in the question above? Explain.

GROW

Read Ephesians 4:31-32

If you've ever felt shame or embarrassment for letting your emotions get the best of you, you're not alone. Moses murdered an Egyptian standing up for someone; in one of Peter's many explosive outbursts he cut off a soldier's ear; Cain killed his brother Abel out of jealous rage; and king David poured his soul out in the psalms as he shared every emotion he ever experienced, some of them in a healthy way and others in a not-so-healthy way. Marc Brackett Ph.D., author of *Permission To Feel* says that "our ability to reason and think rationally is our highest mental power, above our unruly emotional side. This is but a trick our

brain plays on us - in fact, our emotions exert a huge, though mostly unconscious, influence over how our minds function" (pg.31). Our emotions happen at the subconscious level forcing us to make knee jerk "fight or flight" decisions but the problem with this is that the vast majority of time we are not actually in a life-threatening situation. As James mentioned, it's incredibly important to take a step back for a moment and surrender the emotions we feel to God who gave them to us in the first place so he can help us navigate and discern what they're truly trying to say about us. When we can learn to do that, we can stop surviving day-to-day with a "fight or flight" mentality and start living the way God intended us to – alive & free.

Is there a specific emotion that has some control over your life? Explain. Is there an emotion you have a hard time discerning or feeling? Explain.

Are there specific situations you experience in your life that trigger instantaneous reactions that you frequently regret after the fact? What are they and what is the most difficult thing about those emotions when they come up?

What do you think your emotions are trying to tell you in those situations?

M O V E

James mentioned three primary sources of critics: culture, community, and our self. Between these three areas we are constantly filtering information about who we are and what kind of value we believe we have. Oftentimes, our emotions get the best of us, and we start to believe the words of our critics over what God has already proclaimed over our lives, but James taught us that if we PAUSE we can start to control our emotions and stop letting them control us.

P - Pause my feet and pause my heart

A - Ask God for patience

U - Understand what is happening to me

S - Stay close to God

E - Expect God to act

Where is your biggest critic coming from in this season of life? Culture, community, or your own inner critic? Explain.

Which messages from your critic are the hardest for you to deal with? Why do you think that is?

When you start to hear the words of your critic, are you PAUSE-ing? Which ones are you doing well? Which ones are missing?

P R A Y

God, thank you for giving us permission to feel this week. We surrender all of our emotions, all of our pain, all of our frustrations, and all of your shortcomings to you. Will you remind us that our emotions are from you to help us discern how we need to draw nearer to you, they are not here to make us suffer or control our thoughts and our actions. This week, will you remind us to PAUSE, to take a breath, to trust that you are with us, and to expect you to move in our life in the way we need most.