

Inside Terry's Office June	1
Inside Terry's Office July	2
Camz Counsel—June	3
Camz Counsel—July	4
Book Sales	5

June/July 2019

Ministering to Our Feelings

Inside Terry's Office:

Primary Feelings-On Being Emotionally Strong

The following are excerpts from "*Stickman Theology*"

Sad: Because the world is fallen

Bad: Because I am a sinner

Mad: Because others are sinners

Glad: Because God is always with us

Numb: Because I can be emotionally tuned out, overwhelmed, inhibited

The above are our primary emotional responses. However, **every healthy emotional response is also a blend of these emotions.** For example, in the very worst moments of our life, God is still with us, so an element of Glad is maintained. In the most wonderful moments of our life there are still elements of Mad (because we must incorporate the experience into our relationships with our fallen peers), Sad (because the event takes place in a fallen world), and Bad (because we don't deserve the wonderful moment).

Let me describe how this works. I am told that, if you are not color blind, you can discern 3,000 different colors at one time. But the question is: how many colors are there, really? The primary colors are red, blue, and yellow. If you mix them equally together, you get black, the absence of colors creates white, and all other colors are blends.

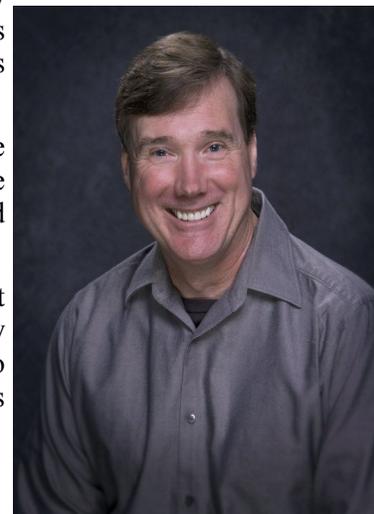
The same is true of our feelings. We have a basic or primary set of emotional responses—sad, bad, mad, glad, and numb, the blending of which comprise all these varied (secondary) feelings we have. So how many feelings do we have? We have as many as we can create names for.

Being "emotionally strong" is when a person is able to acknowledge and process his or her feelings without being controlled by them. For instance, when a man is able to acknowledge his anger and hold another person appropriately accountable for their offense without acting out in anger, he is showing emotional strength. When a man cries with another man over the death of a loved one he is acknowledging and processing his grief in a healthy manner.

However, when someone stoically pushes through their grief, they are not being strong. When a man cannot allow himself to cry, he is not being strong. When a man cannot admit his fears or anxieties, he is not being strong. He is stuffing and numbing.

An emotionally strong person will not wallow in feelings or use them as an excuse for inappropriate behavior. They will, however, be able to acknowledge and process their feelings honestly and consistently.

Because feelings do not respond directly to our thoughts, we cannot talk ourselves out of our feelings. We can "minister" to our feelings by telling ourselves truths, but our feelings will not respond directly to these truths. It will take some time (no set amount) before our feelings begin to change in response to the truths we believe.



In His Grip, TWE

ESTABLISHING A PLUMBLINE IN THE HEART OF GOD'S PEOPLE

The Plumbline

June/July 2019

Inside Terry's Office: Ministering to Appropriate Feelings of SAD

One of the goals of these newsletter articles is to teach/illustrate/promote healthy emotional processing. We've identified the primary emotions as Mad, Bad, Sad, Glad, and Numb. In this article we are addressing SAD!

An older gentleman, a spiritual leader of many years, confessed a long history of viewing porn and comforting himself with masturbation. He called his struggles "an addiction". Eventually, we were able to identify his struggles as "compulsions" instead. The difference had to do with this ability to process his appropriate feelings of SAD.

It turns out that when one of his family and/or friends passed away it was his role to be "strong". He was the encourager, sympathizer, comforter, etc. to others. He did not know how to experience his own grief (SAD) and receive caring from others. When he lost a loved one he would feel a painful hole in his chest. He had learned early in his adolescence that masturbation was a temporary relief to any negative feelings. The temptation to view porn and comfort himself nagged him until he would eventually give in.

This gentleman is an expert at processing feelings of BAD; guilt over his personal sin. Therefore, after his sin he would confess to safe people, make new commitments, accept God's forgiveness, and the hole in his chest would go away. YOU SEE, by transferring his feelings from SAD (which he didn't know how to process) to BAD (which he does know how to process) he could be released from the hole in his chest. He was able to recognize his obsession and compulsion to porn and masturbation as the result of his inhibition to feelings of SAD. As he learned how to express his griefs and let others care for him, his compulsions went away.

Feelings are a blend of a basic set of emotions. Each emotion is meant to serve godly purposes in our lives, which Satan works to twist and pervert. However, we must not try to avoid Satan's schemes by eliminating, conquering, or controlling our feelings (these methods fall right into Satan's hands), but by acknowledging and processing our feelings in a godly manner. Doing so is the very substance of **godly virtues**: **Love** is the virtue needed to properly process our appropriate feelings of Mad

Faith is the virtue needed to properly process our appropriate feelings of Bad

Hope is the virtue needed to properly process our appropriate feelings of Sad

Joy is the virtue needed to properly process our appropriate feelings of Glad, and

Wisdom is the virtue needed to properly process our appropriate Numb.

Each virtue is a gift that God gives us as we share our feelings with Him and allow Him to walk through them with us.

In His Grip, TWE



Camz Counsel

June 2019

“It’s Just Sad!”

Often we will say about a situation or state of affairs that “it is *just* sad”. *Just* meaning here--“simply; only; no more than.” Is it? Is it truly *just* [no more than] sad? If it is just sad what is our response?

In our *Identifying the Feelings* model, the **definition for sad is a “Negative feeling created in response to common trials of life, when the situation is no one’s fault.”** For every God given emotion God has provided a corresponding virtue and for sad the virtue is Hope experienced through comfort and encouragement in community. Let’s examine the definition a little further by looking at what constitutes a common trial? A definition for **common**,

Shared by, coming from, or done by more than one; belonging to, open to, or affecting the whole of a community or public.

When we speak of a **trial**, we mean, “a person, thing, or situation that tests a person’s endurance or forbearance”. As I consider the notion of a common trial, I realize that every common trial has come from an original misdeed but it is the consequences of the misdeed that becomes a common trial.

An example of the consequences of misdeeds becoming a common trial comes up when a woman counselee expresses her lament over how her husband uses the Ephesians 5:22 directive of “wives submit to your husbands” as a means of manipulation to meet his own needs. The biblical concept of submission has long been twisted from being something God meant for good, an act of voluntary and mutual (Ephesians 2:21) sacrifice, and minimized to a reinforcement of male authority. **The common trial here is the shared struggle** among Christian wives who find when it comes to submission they don’t know who to BE?

When sad is not processed appropriately we will know by the experience of the following symptoms: *Critical, Cynical, Betrayed, Victimized, Neurotic*. As we consider each of these symptoms, we can see that all are directed outward---something outside of me is controlling my internal well-being---and the visceral reaction becomes to blame or feel shame.

As I regard the expression, **it’s just sad**, and our above definition of the adverb *just* in regard to processing sad there appear to be two options of responses. One option is to give in and minimize the significance which sets us up to internalize and become critical, cynical, feel betrayed, victimized and neurotic. A second option is acceptance which is not giving in but letting it be true. It is sad and God has given us the process of grief to work through the losses of life. This state of being allows for things to be mostly sad while acknowledging the blend of the other God-given emotions.

So let’s call the wife who struggled for years with how to be a submissive wife, Gloria. Gloria has been married 45 years to Chuck who for years challenged her to be more submissive which meant “be what I want you to be for me”. She comes into counseling feeling resentment toward her husband, the church and God for putting her in this position of subjugation. With Gloria’s growing awareness of what true submission is she becomes aware of her choices and gains the confidence to self-represent. She recognizes the legitimate mad that Chuck’s negative behavior had a negative effect on her; her legitimate bad in buying into a lie that she had no voice in submission; and with sad Gloria is now able to grieve the losses and experience the glad in enjoying God’s presence and strength to move forward in grace.

Grief is best processed in community. The word community comes from the Latin word, *communis*, “*shared in common*”. Receiving comfort and encouragement from others restores hope. We are not alone. Others have walked this same path.

He always comes alongside us to comfort us in every suffering so that we can come alongside those who are in any painful trial. We can bring them this same comfort that God has poured out upon us. 2 Corinthians 1:4, TPT

Carol Anne



Camz Counsel

July 2019

The Godly virtue that God has provided to respond to mad is love. As I write this a Beatles' song pops in my head---

All you need is love
All you need is love
All you need is love, love
Love is all you need!

Sounds simple, right? And yet, maybe it is!

In his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13:4-9(NIV), Paul gives definition to love:

4Love is patient; it is kind; it does not envy; it does not boast; it is not proud. **5**It does not dishonor; it is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. **6**Love does not delight in evil; rejoices in the truth. **7**Always protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres. **8**Love Never Fails.

According to our emotional processing tool, the definition of the God given emotion of Mad is experienced when we recognize that someone else's sinful behavior has had negative effects on my life. **We will know we have crossed the line of rationality in our responses to those negative effects when** we experience bitterness, withdrawing, fantasizing, impulsivity, and violence.

Paul's love passage prepares our hearts for a rational attitude of forgiveness and creates an environment for relational accountability. The kind of **relational love that God models and calls us into is a love that does not "seek a return on its investment."** In counseling the most common relationship in which I encounter forgiveness and accountability crises is in the context of a marriage where vows have been broken. When asking a couple about their wedding vows many do not remember what they said to each other and yet they are clear in their assumption that vows were made and broken. Often 1 Corinthians 13 is quoted in wedding ceremonies but even if it is not, you can recognize the undertones in the vows expressed. I am always hopeful when a couple comes in together for counseling that there can be reconciliation.

I think our (Plumblin) forgiveness model captures the essence of the biblical framework of the reconciliation found in forgiveness and accountability. Read Colossians 3:13-14 in The Passion Translation:

"Tolerate the weaknesses of those in the family of faith, forgiving one another in the same way you have been graciously forgiven by Jesus Christ. If you find fault with someone, release this same gift of forgiveness to them. For love is supreme and must flow through each of these virtues. Love becomes the mark of true maturity."

The forgiveness model allows the *offended* the opportunity

To name the offender and the offenses. In so doing acknowledge their *mad*. We learn that acknowledging that we have been hurt/offended by someone is an act of love. "If I never get mad with you, I am communicating that I don't care enough *for* you to be hurt by you." (Stickman Theology, p. 150)

To identify the motivational sins at work in the offense for both you and the offender? This is an important step as the more I understand about me, the less I have to judge you. (*Tolerate the weaknesses of those in the family of faith, forgiving one another in the same way you have been graciously forgiven by Jesus Christ.*)

To identify the consequences of the offense to both the offended as well as the offender. Often we mistake being forgiving as lifting the suffering of natural consequences off the offender. A common phrase to describe this would be, "sweeping it under the rug". The problem with this is when that rug is lifted all the dust from the gathered consequences blows up in our faces resulting in a passive/aggressive reaction!

To describe a *punishment due*. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a). We allow people the freedom to describe the punishment they would ascribe to the offender IF they were the judge.

To release the punishment due to God. *But the gift of God is eternal life* (Romans 6:23b). We can trust God in his grace and or in his mercy to reconcile the sinner to Himself (Matthew 18-21-35).

So yes, all we need is love, Christ's love,

For it is Christ's love that fuels our passion and motivate us, because we are absolutely convinced that he has given his life for all of us. . . ."

(2 Corinthians 5:14, TPT)

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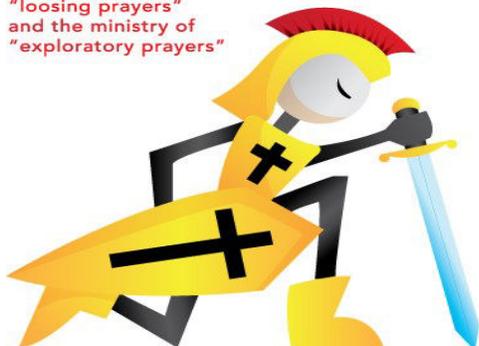
Carol Anne

Stickman's Prayers

Plumblin's newest book, *Stickman's Prayers* has been published and is now available at Plumblin!

stickman's prayers

the everyday practice of
"loosing prayers"
and the ministry of
"exploratory prayers"



Michelle Carpenter
Terry Ewing
Erin Garcia
Margo Hanne
Carolyn Knippers
Carol McNamarra
Sue Merrill

Would you be surprised to know that the "Prayer of Jabez" was a joke?

Would you be happy to know what kind of prayers are appropriate for you to pray for yourself and what kinds are meant for you to pray for others and others for you?

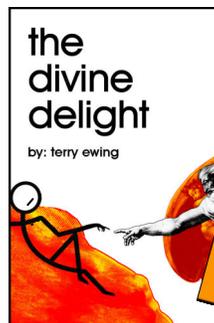
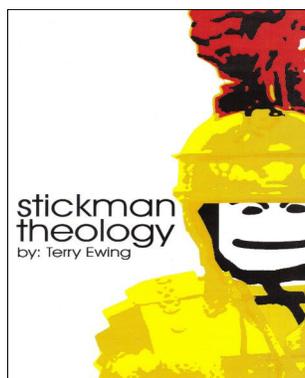
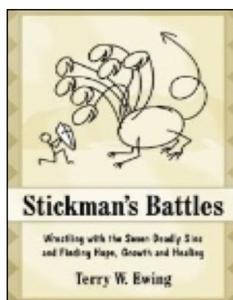
Would you like confidence and freedom to simply enjoy your personal and ministry prayers?

Praying is the most natural thing in the world for Christians; an on going conversation with our best friend, counselor, and confidant; gratitude to our Savior and provider; intercession on behalf of our friends; requests to our Creator. In this regard, a book on prayer may seem presumptuous. When you write a book on Prayer aren't you suggesting that some are praying wrongly, or, at least could be praying better?

That really is not the kind of message we look to promote. So...why the book?

The *Stickman's Prayers* serves two purposes. First, to challenge some ideas that other teaching and preaching concerning prayer has promoted. And, to offer simple encouragements to personal prayer and prayer ministries.

Available at Plumblin for a suggested donation of \$10.00 each



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Stickman Theology

On your KINDLE?

Did you know that when you shop on Amazon, you could be helping to financially support Plumblin? Through the Amazon smiles program, **Amazon will donate a portion of the sales to Plumblin.** All you need to do is go to smiles.amazon.com, designate Plumblin Ministries, and start shopping! Amazon will then donate 0.5% of the total sales price to Plumblin. Please remember to bookmark that page and you can help us as you shop!

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