

Grace Abounds Biblical Counseling

The Emotional Processing Steps Worksheet

Ecclesiastes 3:4 (NASB 1995)

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Philippians 4:6–7 (NASB 1995)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Step 1: Feel Your Feelings with Healthy Coping — Let Your Emotions *Up*

The Heart's Voice

Emotions are the voice of your heart. Allowing yourself to feel is letting your heart speak, but this does not mean we must do what it says. God is our Comforter, and He has sent the Holy Spirit to come alongside us in all of our feelings and situations. Choose healthy, non-sinful ways to create ways for your heart to engage while you process.

Matthew 6:21 (NASB 1995) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

John 14:26 (NASB 1995) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Psalms 34:18 (NASB 1995) The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Hebrews 4:15–16 (NASB 1995) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

I am feeling: (e.g., frustrated, anxious, sad, angry)

Healthy Coping Action:

Before processing, what will you do right now? Choose one or more:

- Go to God — bring your feeling honestly before Him (See also: **Matthew 5:4; Psalm 147:3**)
- Drink a glass of water or attend to a basic physical need
- Do deep breathing or another grounding exercise
- Listen to music or engage in a calming activity

I will cope with my feelings by:

Step 2: Discover the Reasons for Your Feelings

The Heart's Evaluation (Proverbs 4:23)

Emotions are the heart's reaction to whatever happens – interactions with people, events, or thoughts. Look at the emotions and what caused them to understand your heart and actual belief system.

A. Immediate Reason:

What is the surface-level trigger? (e.g., "I feel frustrated because I am stuck in traffic and running late.")

B. Deeper Reason:

What core belief or desire is being impacted? (e.g., "I feel like a failure because I believe being on time is necessary for success.")

C. Theological Heart Check:

As you look at this deeper reason, ask God to reveal where it fits in the biblical narrative:

Psalm 139:23–24 (NASB 1995) Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB 1995) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

● **Creation (Good Desires):** What created, God-honoring good am I rightly oriented toward here? (e.g., valuing stewardship of time, caring for others). **Response → Affirmation**

Luke 6:45 (NASB 1995) The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

● **Fall (Brokenness/Sinful Desires):** Where am I experiencing the brokenness of a fallen world, or twisting a good desire into something flawed? **Response → Seek Transformation**

Psalm 51:17 (NASB 1995) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

● **Redemption (Godly Desires):** How is the Holy Spirit working in me to desire God, His truth, and His ways above my own comfort or control? **Response —> Cultivation**

Psalm 51:10 (NASB 1995) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 119:11 (NASB 1995) Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.

Step 3: Process Your Feelings with the Truth

The Heart's Instruction

Emotions carry messages, but they are not always true messengers. We must filter out false beliefs and anchor ourselves to God and His Truth.

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NASB 1995) We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Temporal Truth (Addressing the Immediate Reasons with facts): **Example:** Traffic is backed up because there is construction. — **The truth about my situation is:**

Proverbs 12:25 (NASB 1995) Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.

Eternal Truth (Addressing the Deeper Reasons with Scripture): **Example:** I am not a failure because I am not defined by my work. I am defined by God. — **The truth about me is:**

Romans 12:1–2 (NASB 1995) Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Colossians 3:2 (NASB 1995) Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

Step 4: Express Your Feelings with Righteousness — Let Your Emotions *Out*

The Heart's Release

Emotions are not meant to remain bottled up, but they must be expressed in ways that honor God, rather than sinning in our reactions.

Ephesians 4:26–27 (NASB 1995) Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.

How will I express this feeling righteously? (Check all that apply and specify)

- ☐ **Directly to God: (Praying through the Psalms, lamenting honestly)**

Psalms 62:8 (NASB 1995) Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

- ☐ **Directly to Others: (Sharing with a trusted, supportive person who can help you process with wisdom and grace)**

Galatians 6:2 (NASB 1995) Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

- ☐ **Directly By Myself: (Journaling, completing this worksheet)**

Psalms 77:6 (NASB 1995) I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, and my spirit ponders.

- ☐ **Indirectly/Physically: (Crying, exercising)**

Lamentations 2:19 (NASB 1995) Arise, cry aloud in the night at the beginning of the night watches; pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord.

Step 5: Surrender to God — Let Your Emotions Go (Care, but Don't Carry)

The Heart's Relief

1 Peter 5:7 (NASB 1995) Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

John 14:27 (NASB 1995) Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Surrendering does not mean the feeling instantly vanishes. It means I stop carrying the burden of it and trust God to carry both the situation and me.

My Prayer of Surrender:

"Lord, I acknowledge that I feel

I confess that I have been trying to control this situation or believing the lie that

I surrender this feeling and this situation to You. I trust that You are sovereign over this, and I choose to rest in Your grace and cast my cares upon You today. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Applying This to Action: Handling the Situation

The Heart's Direction

Proverbs 16:32 (NASB 1995) He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

Now that my emotions are processed, how will I engage the actual situation?

1. Do I Need to Engage?

Note: Some situations are not ours to engage with directly. Prayerful wisdom may lead us to step back, trust God, and leave the outcome in His hands.

Romans 12:18 (NASB 1995) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

2. If so, Discern How to Engage

The most God-honoring way to handle this involves:

a. Tell the Truth:

Ephesians 4:15 (NASB 1995) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.

I will speak the truth in love by saying/doing:

b. Do What is Right & Wise:

Micah 6:8 (NASB 1995) He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Proverbs 21:3 (NASB 1995) To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice.

Galatians 5:22–25 (NASB 1995) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:15 (NASB 1995) Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise.

My specific, actionable next step is, by the power of the Holy Spirit:

c. Surrender the Results:

I release my need for a specific outcome. God is in control of the results, and my job is simply to be faithful.

Romans 1:17 (NASB 1995) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

Psalms 31:24 (NASB 1995) Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD.

John 16:33 (NASB 1995) These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.