

## **The Power of a Renewed Mind**

*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

*Romans 12:2*

Lindy has a successful career in financial services. After her sixty-hour work weeks, she rarely has the energy to initiate friendships. Instead, Lindy arrives home late, pops a frozen dinner into the microwave, flips on the television, and sinks into the couch until bedtime. While she is pleasant and competent at the office, Lindy is lonely and isolated in the rest of her life.

Erin is angry, though she doesn't want anyone to know that. Her two teenage daughters—once her sweet, carefree little girls—are disobedient and disrespectful. They like to party every night, even during the school week, and Erin feels helpless to stop them. She wants her friends to think she's a capable mother, so she hides her emotions with a continual smile. Like a duck gliding across the water, she appears calm on the surface—but in reality, she's paddling wildly just to stay afloat. Erin wants to scream, "Doesn't anyone know how much pain I'm in?" But instead she replies with a cheery, "Oh, I'm fine!" when anyone asks how she's doing.

Emotions are a normal part of life. As human beings, each of us has a full range of emotions—love, happiness, joy, delight, peace, disappointment, loss, grief, doubt, compassion, sadness, depression, jealousy, anger, bitterness, guilt, and many others. We are happy when a friend comes to visit, we are sad when our dog dies, and we are frustrated when we can't seem to lose weight.

Throughout the Bible, women and men—even Jesus—display a variety of emotions. I imagine Adam and Eve were deliriously happy in the Garden of Eden. The woman caught in adultery and pushed before a condemning crowd must have felt humiliation. Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, was fearful when she learned she was pregnant, then joyful when she discovered the news was true—she would give birth to the Savior of the world! David was afraid for his life while Saul pursued him with murderous intent. And Jesus felt alone, broken to the point of sweating blood, as He prayed for His life to be spared.

Emotions, whether positive or negative, can be powerful—even overwhelming at times. Managing those emotions is a part of maturity. When our emotions aren't processed in healthy ways, they can get stuck like a clogged drain. Help comes when we surrender our feelings to the One who has the power to blast away our emotional congestion.

Prayer is essential to managing emotions. In fact, it transforms us. Praying powerfully for this area of our lives can begin with praying 2 Corinthians 10:5, asking God to help us "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." To change how we feel, we need to adjust the way we think. When we alter the way we view our situations, we can change the way we respond to them—with wisdom, rather than impulsive actions we may later regret.

With God's help, we can get through both the valleys and the victories in life.

PRAYER: Lord, what a blessing You have given us such an array of emotions to express ourselves. Help me to be more like You—slow to anger and abounding in love. Help me to be a woman who is forgiving. I pray for more discernment, so that in whatever comes my way I will have the grace to think, speak, and ask with a good and godly attitude.