

## **PROGRAM 55 TEASER**

Emotions. Moods. Those two words sound innocent enough. But you and I know better. I know people who are being suffocated under the weight of changing moods. It's really true that negative emotions and moods left uncontrolled can destroy your health, marriage, friendships and even one's sanity and life. Whether you are going through tough times or know someone who is, today's message is one of hope. "Surviving and Conquering Your Moods". Don't miss this one. I'm Frank Eiklor—and here comes More Than Talk.

## **SURVIVING AND CONQUERING YOUR MOODS**

### **Page 1 One Place Where I'm An Expert**

I'm an expert on going through moods! Who isn't? We've all battled blue moods, bitter moods, resentful moods, jealous moods. We've been left aching, hurt, disappointed, broken, crushed, revengeful, prideful. You and I go through a battery of tests, trials, temptations and triumphs that send our moods on roller coaster trips—from dizzying highs to screaming lows.

### **What Are Moods?**

I can almost hear you saying "Amen, brother!" to the above statements. But just what are moods? For the sake of simplicity, let's call them affected emotions. These affected emotions can lead to moods that control you—from slap-happy euphoria in triumph to a somber, hopeless dejection in defeat. Today, Christians and non-Christians alike are suffocating under the crushing weight of changing moods. Emotions and moods left uncontrolled have destroyed marriages, friendship, health, sanity and even lives. Yes, dark moods that lead people to think there is no hope and so they commit suicide.

The same thing can happen to you or me. Whether you're an extrovert or an introvert, the fast pace of our 21st century society is geared to leaving you frazzled, fizzled and frustrated. Some folks let it all out and fly apart. Others keep it all in and blow up. What's the difference? Either way, you've had it.

This program is meant to bring you hope, faith and courage. I don't like using the word "expert" for anything, but I suppose I am an expert when it comes to changing moods. I'm an emotional person who, in many years of Christian life and ministry, has known both the peaks and pits of moods. I've known victory and defeat. Discouragement and joy. Attack and oppression from Satan. Comfort, power and deliverance from the Holy Spirit. And I've obviously talked to thousands of people whose emotions and moods threaten to overwhelm them—even for them to contemplate suicide. And some did just that—killed themselves!

Maybe you're one of those being tested severely by affected emotions and deep, blue moods. Or perhaps you know someone who is going through terrible struggles. This message is meant to help. I want to tell you how to face those changing, powerful moods and not only survive them, but conquer them.

### **Misery Loves Company**

In order to help you, I'm going to be vulnerable enough to tell you how I'm still learning to face fears, failures, frustrations, discouragements and sins—and overcome them as well as the changes in moods that each problem brings.

No matter what I go through, I always remind myself that Jesus has been there. I'm so glad that God wrapped Himself in human flesh and faced life just like I must. If there had not been a Jesus, I would never be able to trust God as one who understands and knows where I'm coming from. After all, God is pristine, pure, powerful—and high above all the foibles, frailties, failures and frustrations of human life.

But Jesus—ahhh—He's different. God in the flesh, yes! But also high priest who knows where I'm coming from, because He faced what I'm facing. “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Did you get that? You will—on page 2!

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### **Page 2 Case Examples Of Moods**

Jesus was tempted in every direction, just like you and me. Satan hurled temptations of bitterness, anger, discouragement, fear, worry, hatred, and a thousand other fiery darts at Jesus. The difference is that He never sinned—but He did experience the worst that the tempter could throw. It's important to know that, in order for you to believe you can do what the next verse tells you to, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4: 16). You're invited to come boldly for help and not only expect God's aid in surviving all your trials but also his grace that leads to growth.

Let those simple truths saturate your mind and heart as a foundation on which to build. The big difference for us Christians is that we're not facing our battles with human strength as does the world. We have an arsenal of the promises of God behind us and the power of God within us. No matter how long we've allowed that power to remain dormant, it's all there residing in the person of the Holy Spirit. Let's take one of the worst moods we can face and see how we can not only survive that mood—but grow spiritually because of it.

### **A Case Example**

Ever felt bitter? Perhaps you were hurt, slighted or deliberately ignored by someone. Or someone lies about you or receives credit for something that really was your accomplishment. Or a loved one says or does something that leaves you cut to the core and you sense bitterness creeping through your system like a cold, malignant chill.

I've wrestled bitterness. But I knew I had to win it in a hurry or it would not only destroy me, but others around me (see Hebrews 12:15). I usually ask myself, “Frank, why are you bitter?” Yes, sometimes it is good to talk to yourself—and answer yourself. David did when he asked, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?” (Psalm 42: 11). He answered himself with, “Hope in God.”

When I investigate the reason for my bitterness, I find it's because of self-hurt. Something or someone hurt my feelings, my reputation, my loved ones—but always "MY". I remind myself of Romans 8:28, "All things work together for good ..." and 1Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." That helps me realize that God allowed this test to come my way. Maybe He didn't send it, but as my sovereign God, He allowed it. Because He love me, He asks me to trust: and I thank Him, no matter the pain. That's often difficult to do, but as I praise and thank Him, I sense His love within helping me see the issue in a new "growth" perspective.

### **Joseph's Rejection**

Next I go to the Word to see how others handled things that could have drowned them in the fetid swamps of bitterness. Joseph was sold out by his own flesh and blood, yet later comforted his frightened brothers with, " But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good ... "(Genesis 50:20). Joseph saw beyond the issue, to the intensity of God's loving hand on his life. He knew the Lord would never allow anything that would leave him bitter—only better.

### **Paul's Prison**

Paul was in the same boat. He landed in so many jails that even his best friends deserted him. In his final book, written in prison just prior to his death, he reports, "...no one stood with me, but all forsook me... But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me..." (2 Timothy 4: 16, 17). The possibility of bitterness setting in as a result of human companions selling him out was replaced by the blessedness of Paul's supernatural Friend whose light is better seen when our situations are the darkest.

### **Jesus' Humiliation**

And did anyone ever face any greater reasons to become bitter than Jesus did? Crowds that said "Hail" one moment, screamed "Crucify him" the next. A disciple who said "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble" (Matthew 26:33), shortly thereafter used curse words in denying he ever knew the Savior. Jesus was left virtually alone at the cross, hanging naked and

humiliated for your sins and mine—while we mocked and jeered. Even God the Father turned His back on Christ when, in that mysterious moment, He took on and became the sin of the world (2 Corinthians 5:21). What are you or I going through that's any worse than that?!

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### **Page 3 Cut Your Problem Down To Size**

Are you beginning to see it? Find out where you're coming from and cut the problem down to size with the following simple plan.

1. Face the fact that you're filled with this tremendous mood or emotion of bitterness. Don't try to deny it, because you won't be real and will only compound the problem. Admitting it's there is 50% of the victory called "being honest." The other 50% is fighting the war successfully.
2. Ask yourself, "Why am I feeling this bitterness?" (or whatever mood you're experiencing) If it's nothing you can put your finger on, it's an emotion and, like the Chinese proverb says, "This too will pass." If it's something where you feel God has let you down, talk it all out with Him on a long walk or in a room alone—out loud so you can hear yourself.

When we were struggling with a brand new Shalom ministry in New England in 1979, I could have grown bitter when our three team members were struck by a drunken driver. The drunk wasn't scratched, but two of our friends were killed. As I talked it out with the Lord, I began seeing through my tears that which I never could have seen through a telescope. I found myself able to trust Him even though I couldn't trace Him, and rest and peace settled in even while the tears flowed.

If your bitter mood is being caused by meanness some person has done to you, let it be your opportunity to become more like Jesus. Look what we did to Him! And look what we do to Him every day of our lives through ignoring Him, failing to listen to Him, refusing to talk to Him in all kinds of prayer situations and often failing to represent Him in a loving and gracious manner to others. Yet He keeps caring, because genuine love refuses to hurt for itself—only for others.

If a hurtful person treats you as an enemy, then treat him as Jesus tells you to treat an enemy, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew

5:44). Those four actions of loving, blessing, doing good, and praying for that person can result in turning an enemy into a friend.

If your bitterness is caused by recognition you failed to achieve, then thank God that He loves you so much that He didn't allow you that recognition which might have destroyed you with pride.

3. Open your Bible and see how others faced, and won, the same type of battle you're going through. You can also study how some refused to face their problems (like King Saul) and lost—and this will fill you with a genuine fear of God (Hebrews 12:28) that will snap you out of any self-pity.

4. Thank God for allowing you to go through different experiences, emotions and encounters. Praise Him for His sovereignty over your life and that He guarantees everything will work together for your good (Romans 8:28). Remember that He doesn't say everything looks good or even is good—but that it works for good to those who love Him. Face the fact that the mood you're going through proves you're weak in that very area or you wouldn't be bothered, but that out of weakness you can be made strong (Hebrews 11:34).

5. Rather than fear ever going through such a similar "mood attack" again (you'll have many more battles), ask God to make this "growing-ground" for your life. A good prayer might be, "Father, this is an area where I need to grow. I wouldn't be hurting so much if this were not a weakness. Take this tendency (bitterness, discouragement, anger, blueness, worry, etc.) and turn it into one of my greater strengths. Invade this area of my life through your Holy Spirit and don't let up until I not only know how to survive the next attack—but experience growth."

6. You've concentrated on the mood or emotion long enough. It's time to look outward at others who are in far worse shape than you are. Force yourself to forget yourself by going out and doing something good for another—perhaps even a person you feel has done you harm. You'll be amazed at how caring about others will cause your own negative mood to evaporate.



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### **Page 4 Fear, Hopelessness And Worry**

What is your fear? What makes you afraid? Don't run and hide but instead face that fear. God hasn't given it to you. On the contrary, He says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). The psalmist said, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You." He didn't deny the fear. He just made his fearful moments time of growth by choosing to trust in God.

Come right out with your fear. Let your heavenly Father be your chief psychiatrist. You'll love the bottom line on the bill He sends which is already written "Paid in full." If you're afraid of something you must do, take the hand of the Lord and walk through it together. Ask God for a close "heart buddy"—someone you can trust with your inner heart—and, if you can't whip that fear with you and God alone, ask your friend to help you.

Whether yours is a fear of failure, the future, death, or a thousand different things, tell God you're tired of being governed by that fearful mood. Put it in perspective, see your Lord infinitely bigger than your fears, and cut them down to size with prayerful, positive actions. For example, perhaps you want to further your education but you're afraid because you're older now. Give that fear to Jesus, thank Him for putting within you the desire to learn, and sign up for the course you want to take. You'll pass with flying colors.

### **Hopelessness**

Are you often filled with a mood of hopelessness? Perhaps it's because you either have a "little faith" concept of God or a low opinion of yourself. What situation do you think could possibly whip God? When you think about it, nothing!

But you say you're different. God is special, but you're not. Then you really don't think God is special, because no special person could be a liar—and God is a liar if you're not special! After all, He only calls you an heir and joint heir, a king and priest, a rare and beautiful treasure that He gave His all to redeem! He didn't die for

dogs so why reduce yourself to one? He didn't die for worms so why crawl like one?

The same God who loves you with an everlasting love has promised to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ..." Hopeless moods have us centering in on ourselves (that's why they're hopeless) rather than on the God of faith, hope and love. Lift up your head, throw open your heart and let the King of glory come striding in. You won't be hopeless or discouraged anymore.

## **Worry**

There are a million things to worry about if that's how we want to spend our lives. Crumbling morals. Possibility of economic collapse. Nuclear war. Suffocating pollution. Diseases with no cures. Crime with no end. Bad as those things are, our great and good God was here first. And He will be here when all else crumbles.

That's why it's important that you pin-point your worry and ask yourself "Why?" Worry is sin because it reduces God to mere human size. In fact, worry is really rebellion, because it cancels out God's imperative in Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing" (don't worry about anything). View worry as a sin and you'll be less apt to entertain such.

When an anxious or blue mood strikes, begin singing or saying, "Who shall separate (me) from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate (me) from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35,37,38,39). Make these promises your own personal pillar to lean on when the winds of worry blow, and you'll still be standing when the storm subsides.

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### **Page 5 The Choice Is Yours**

Whatever your mood, you can not only survive but grow. If you're discouraged or bored because you think life has passed you by—senior citizens often face this one—don't believe what people say, but believe God. To senior citizens comes the promise that "They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing" (Psalm 92: 14). Ask God and others what you can do to make your hours filled with production and meaning. We're never too old to stop loving others.

At any age, changing moods are really our greatest means to defeat or growth. Negative moods will not only control your emotions if you allow them, but your will and intellect as well. Or you can allow the Spirit of God and the "new you" to run your life rather than those fluctuating emotions and moods. The choice is yours.

Sometimes your moods will want to soar into a slap-happy kind of euphoria that will leave you so high that, like Humpty Dumpty, you'll come down with a great fall. Or it may be the reverse—with you filled with such a penetrating blueness that you bring down others in your midst.

You and I can learn to handle those highs and lows and live somewhere in the balanced middle if we'll realize that God allows those changing emotions and moods not so that they will be stumbling stones to defeat us but stepping stones to cover new spiritual distance. That's why He says, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

And Jesus also reminds us that, "... In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Recognize that you're not going through anything that all of us as human beings don't have to face. Some turn out winners, some losers. Determine to be a winner by conquering your moods—rather than a loser who was conquered by them. And don't ever blame your problems or emotional make-up on your past or blood-line. You have a new

blood-line—that of Jesus Christ—as well as a personal and magnificent Heavenly Father. Boldly declare His ownership over you and His life within you.

Make sure your mood-battling is not being caused by something physical. Change your diet from junk foods to that which is nutritious. Get proper sleep and exercise. Learn to thank God for the circumstances you're in and, as much as lies within your power, change them. Leave the rest in God's hands and go on singing. Let life's bottom line be the Bible rather than anything you read or hear.

For example, with God's love and life I no longer fear “growing old” to which so many folks succumb. On the contrary, God is more exciting to me today than He was yesterday, but probably not as thrilling as He will be tomorrow. You see, with correct biblical attitudes, you and I can not only survive our moods, but they can be our means to greater maturity and spiritual growth. Changing moods! Another part of life where God wants to make us more than conquerors!