

Emotions: strong feelings such as love, hate, fear, disappointment, and loneliness. To experience on an emotional level means to draw feeling from the experiences of the heart. It is to make personal the impersonal, vague, and formless.

Jesus and Emotions

The teenage years are an emotional roller coaster. It seems as though you fluctuate between the emotions of love and hate and that the middle ground is very narrow. It is a time when you become easily attached to others and easily intimidated at the same time. You are a sensitively wrapped package that can easily become torn and crushed. Everyone seems to be making demands of you emotionally. Sometimes you feel like a giant emotional fireball waiting to explode and envelop others. The teenage years are times when you struggle to make personal the impersonal, vague, and formless within and without. Emotions can rule your life if you let them gain control over you. When you let emotions remain bottled up inside, you destroy yourself by imprisoning your gifts and talents. It is also tempting to try to ignore what is going on inside when you don't want to deal with something. Emotions don't go away and, if you don't express them, they will be released in other forms: depression, anxiety, stress, physical symptoms, nervousness, loss of energy, and being short-tempered. It is hard to find an outlet or a place where you can unload and recharge your emotions, but that outlet can be Jesus.

If you have any doubts about Jesus' being able to understand your emotions, think about the crucifixion. If you truly understand the crucifixion, you will never doubt the approachability, sensitivity, and empathy of

Jesus. Jesus experienced physical pain beyond what we can imagine. It is from the pain of Jesus that we can learn most about his ability to help us deal with our emotions and pains in life. Jesus, during his ministry and crucifixion, experienced the following:

- **Anger** — At times Jesus became very angry that people were not taking his word seriously. Jesus got angry over the fact that his Father's house was used for human profit and not true worship.
- **Betrayal** — Jesus experienced those who claimed to love him turning their backs on him and denying his importance in their lives. He experienced the very people he was ministering to stripping him of his humanity, which was the way God communicated God's love for us. He opened his total self to others and was rejected out of ignorance and blindness.
- **Insults** — He was accused of being blasphemous and crazy. He was spit upon and mocked like an animal. People treated him like a criminal and a thief. He was beaten and tortured.
- **Abandonment** — Some of Jesus' followers said they didn't know him in an attempt to save their own lives. Jesus experienced loneliness and frustration in his attempt to bring God's message alive.
- **Humiliation** — Jesus was stripped, mocked, and taunted by those who wished simply to inflict pain on him and make a fool out of him. He was given vinegar when he was thirsty and made to wear a crown of thorns.
- **Mental Turmoil** — Jesus, while on the cross, wondered if the God on whom he staked his life was real. In the midst of it, he said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."