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Editorial Office 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904
Come visit us at our Web site: <http://www.absg.adventist.org>.

Principal Contributor
Julian Melgosa

Editor
Clifford R. Goldstein

Associate Editor
Soraya Homayouni

Publication Manager
Lea Alexander Greve

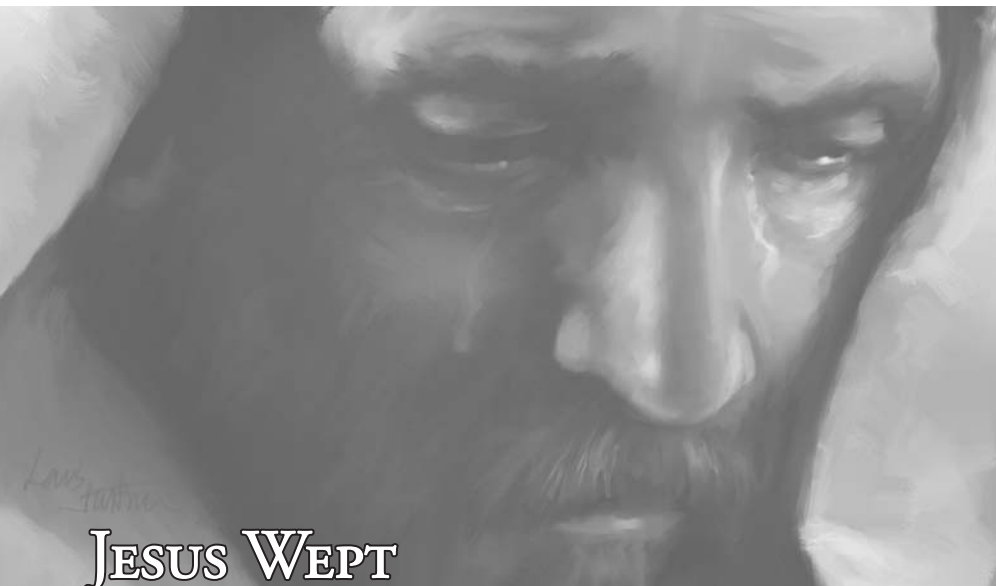
Editorial Assistant
Sharon Thomas-Crews

Pacific Press® Coordinator
Wendy Marcum

Art Director and Illustrator
Lars Justinen

Concept Design
Dever Designs

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JESUS WEPT

As humans, we are the most rational of all the world's created beings. Marvelous as they are, frogs, dogs, caterpillars, and donkeys don't have our capacity to reason. Yet, even with all our powers of logic and rationality, we're also emotional beings. One could argue, justifiably, that emotions rule our lives to a much greater extent than reason does or ever could.

Emotions are good; without them we'd barely be human. (What kind of person doesn't know love, compassion, sympathy, fear, or sorrow?) Robots might be able to function emotionlessly; we never could.

Of course, existing in a world of sin, our emotions often bring us great pain. Sickness, disease, war, poverty, natural disasters, economic uncertainty, family problems—how can these not cause the kinds of fear, sorrow, dread, and sadness that we all are so familiar with?

Look, too, at the emotional reaction our world evoked in Jesus! "Jesus wept" (*John 11:35*). "And when he [Jesus] had looked round about on them with anger" (*Mark 3:5*), Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death" (*Mark 14:34*). "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (*John 11:33*). "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (*Isa. 53:3*).

Well did Hebrews express this incredible truth about our Lord: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but

was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (*Heb. 4:15*). That’s the feelings of our infirmities, and, as we all know, the feelings of our infirmities can be pretty bad.

Sadness, pain, sorrow . . . these are not wrong, these are not sinful. We don’t show a lack of faith, a lack of trust, when we respond to life’s turmoil with such emotions. After all, Jesus responded with emotions.

We are, today, thousands of years from the “tree of life” (*Gen. 2:9*). The DNA is wearing thin. We’re damaged goods, and, contrary to the myths of evolution, we’re getting only worse.

It’s no wonder, then, that sin has taken its toll on our emotional health, as well. So often, instead of being in control of our emotions, they control us, even to the point of pushing us into radically wrong choices that cause us even more grief and sorrow. Fortunately, that doesn’t always need to be the case. The Lord has something better for us.

This quarter’s lessons look at human emotions and give us biblical principles on how we can understand our emotions and seek the power of the Lord to bring them under His loving sovereignty. We’ll look at Bible characters, focusing on their emotional reactions to whatever befell them, good and bad, and ask ourselves the important question: What can we learn from their experiences that can help us with ours?

Of course, some people—especially those whose emotional problems are caused by a physical problem, such as a chemical imbalance—need professional help when available, though in no situation should we limit the power of God to bring healing to any life.

It’s our prayer that this quarter’s lessons will, in the context of understanding our emotions, help us reach out to the Lord, who has bestowed on us the greatest emotion of all: love. Finally, no matter our emotional ups and downs, may each of us learn to bask in that love, especially in the downs, and then through God’s grace reflect that love to others. Because, in the end, no matter our sorrows, “love never fails” (*1 Cor. 13:8, NIV*).

Instead of being in control of our emotions, they control us. . . . Fortunately, that doesn’t always need to be the case. The Lord has something better for us.

Dr. Julian Melgosa is dean of the School of Education and Psychology at Walla Walla University.

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