

**What Is the Pathway to Being Wholehearted?
A Bible Study on Wellness
By Deaconess Janet Nicol**

**Isaiah 45:7 “I form light and create darkness;
I make well-being and create calamity;
I am the Lord, who does all these things.”**

Session 3 Emotional Intelligence

“The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved--loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves.”

“The pain I feel now is the happiness I had before.”

“There can be no happiness if the things we believe in are different from the things we do.”

--Victor Hugo (1802-1885)

Hopefully, after session two, we have a better understanding of the components of wellness and how Scripture helps us to understand it from a Christian perspective. In this session, we will take a close look at emotional intelligence and how it intertwines with all of the other components of our well-being. We will look at a few Bible figures and discuss their emotional intelligence.

According to the Mental Health America website: Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to manage your own emotions and to understand the emotions of people around you. EI has five key elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. People with high EI can identify how they are feeling, what those feelings mean, and how those emotions impact their behavior and other people. It's a little harder to “manage” other people's emotions--you can't control how someone else feels or behaves. But if you can identify the emotions behind their behavior, you'll have a better understanding of where they are coming from and how to best interact with them. Fortunately, we can improve our EI with thoughtfulness and practice. One excellent way is to study some Biblical figures and how they handled situations. We will begin with Moses.

- Read Exodus 15:22-25.
- Read Exodus 16.
- Read Exodus 17:1-7.
- Read Exodus 18:13-26.
- Read Proverbs 19:20.
- Read Numbers 12:3: *“Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.”*

These passages from Exodus tell us that in the leadership of the Israelites, Moses dealt with quite a bit of grumbling, even after they had witnessed the miracles of the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. The Numbers passage gives us a personality trait of Moses that is very important.

- 1) How does the trait of meekness help in a leadership position?**
- 2) What does it mean to be self-aware?**
- 3) How did Moses show self-awareness?**
- 4) What was key in how Moses dealt with the grumbling?**
- 5) Based on the example of Moses, how can you develop self-awareness and gain the quality of meekness in your own leadership positions?**

Now look at Hannah.

- Read 1 Samuel 1 and 2:1-11 and 18-21.
- Read Psalm 40:1-3: *"I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord."*

Hannah was the mother of the great prophet Samuel.

- 6) What does it mean to be self-regulating?**
- 7) What were some of the emotions Hannah experienced?**
- 8) How did Hannah display self-regulation?**
- 9) What are some ways to become better at self-regulation in your own life based on Hannah's experience?**

Next, we will discuss Nehemiah. It would be of benefit to read the entire book of Nehemiah to understand the whole story; however, in the interest of time, let's look at one chapter.

- Read Nehemiah 4.
- 10) What does it mean to be motivated?**
 - 11) How did Nehemiah show motivation, and what was he motivated to accomplish?**
 - 12) What was a driving force for Nehemiah?**
 - 13) How can you become more motivated to accomplish what you need to in your life when you use Nehemiah as a model?**

Ruth and Boaz are good examples of empathy. Reading the whole book of Ruth would be helpful, but let's concentrate on some key passages.

- Read Ruth 1:15-18.
- Read Ruth 2:8-13.
- Read Ruth 4:1-12.

- 14) What does it mean to have empathy for others?**

- 15) Is empathy the same as sympathy? Why or why not?**
- 16) How did Ruth show her compassion toward Naomi?**
- 17) How did Boaz show his compassion toward Ruth?**
- 18) Why are these actions signs of empathy, and how can you develop a better understanding of it in your own relationships?**

An interesting story in the Old Testament is that of Abigail in 1 Samuel. Let us discover her emotional intelligence in social skills.

- Read 1 Samuel 25.

- 19) What are some examples of good social skills?**
- 20) What skills did Abigail utilize when dealing with her husband?**
- 21) What skills did she use when dealing with David?**
- 22) What skills can you hone or develop that will improve your social skills like Abigail?**

Summary

It goes without saying that Jesus is the ULTIMATE example of emotional intelligence in all areas. Yet it is worth our time to study others throughout the Bible as well. These things were written for our learning and edification, after all. Here is a list of others who are worth examining: Joseph in Genesis, chapters 37-50; Gideon in Judges 6-8; Daniel; Samuel; Peter and Paul in the New Testament. There are many others. It's also worth noting that there are plenty of examples of people not using their emotional intelligence skills as best as they could, which offers comfort to us as we blunder through our mistakes as well.

- 23) Can you name a few examples of those who did not use the best emotional intelligence skills?**

Closing Prayer: Lord, we praise and thank You for the great cloud of witnesses You have provided in Your Word. We know these things were written for us to learn, and we ask that our hearts are opened by You to the great wisdom given to us in order to help us to build resilience and become a beacon of Your light to others in our lives. Daily remind us of who You are and to whom we belong. In Jesus' name, Amen.