

“Cry, Baby, Cry! Make Your Mother Sigh!”

I am such a sap. There are days when almost every song I hear makes me emotional. Not every song, mind you, just the majority of them. And to further clarify, these are songs I am choosing to listen to, not songs that I just happen to hear on the radio, though those will sometimes hit me right in the feels as well. My daytime work routine is pretty simple: while I labor away over various things that do not interest me in the least, I listen to music. I listen to music in the car, to and from work. I listen to music at home, as often as I can. Sometimes it's difficult to listen to music when I want to because it's just one more level of noise competing against three energetic boys. Nevertheless, I persist.

Back to me crying. I see that I never actually said that music makes me cry, so I should probably clarify. I don't usually cry while listening to music. I get a little misty eyed and my eyes might even well up with tears. This is not an everyday sort of thing, but on the days it happens, I try to evaluate my response. “Why am I getting emotional listening to the Thor soundtrack?” “Did I really just cry listening to “Africa” by Toto?”

When the first song hits me hard, I figure I just really need to hear that particular song at that particular point in time – that happens every now and then to me. But then, the next song gets me even more worked up, and it's not one of the usual suspects that consistently break me down. It's some random song that I enjoy, but never respond to in an emotional way. (Case in point: “Africa” by Toto.)

So, on the days when music is turning me into a big man baby, what does it mean? Is there a deeper significance to it? I have no idea. Perhaps I am just really tired and everything is

going to hit me harder on those days. Perhaps I am more attuned to the emotional truth of each song and that is causing me to have a stronger reaction. Perhaps I should try to spiritualize this as much as possible and find out what it is about those songs that is causing me to act like all the women I know that watch *This Is Us*.

More than likely, this is all pretty easy to figure out. I am a sap. I cry at movies and TV shows that don't even cause my wife to blink. I cried the other night watching *Guardians of the Galaxy*. Leave me alone! If you don't cry when Groot sacrifices himself, you have no soul! I remember watching *Bridge to Terabithia* with my boys years ago and I was a mess at the end. I was so worked up by the film, that it sort of embarrassed me. I didn't want my boys to see me ugly crying over a kid's film. So yes, I am a sap and I cry. Maybe it's just that simple. I'm not sure though.

By now, you are probably asking yourself, "Why did he write this?" And more importantly, "Why did he decide to share this?" Two very good questions and I don't have very good answers for either of them. My gut reaction to all this is simple: On those days when what I listen to is provoking a strong emotional response, I think it's because sometimes, I need to feel things deeply. Most days I just coast through life. Not in a bad way. I'm not disengaged or anything. I think most people have very ordinary days most of the time. We don't get emotionally worked up most days. At least I don't, even though I am more apt to do that than others. I think on the days of strong emotion, I am being gently prodded to keep my heart open and a bit broken. Not just for my own good either. I think it's on days like these that if I allow song to do what they are capable of doing; I become more in tune with things of a spiritual nature. Maybe my emotional spells will allow me to be more empathetic with a friend or coworker, simply because my heart has already been laid bare. Perhaps, this is God's way of telling me to stop being so careful with

my feelings – to stop building walls around me. If my defenses are down and my heart is open, I am more likely to notice the needs of others. I am more likely to feel the needs of others and respond in a God-honoring way.[2. Galatians 6:2 and Philippians 2:4] Maybe these days are meant to stretch me – to grow me.

Or maybe I'm just a sap.