

BEING EMOTIONAL FOR GOD – May 3, 2020

Your emotions, your feelings, your moods - this is today's subject, and it's an important one for Christians. Sometimes we dismiss emotions, and don't talk about them, but you can't do that, for they are a necessary part of your everyday life. They affect you and the people around you more than you realize. Let me read a few vss. from the Bible that show, that communicate emotions. Psalm 35:11-23, Psalm 145:1-2, Lam. 3:1-20

Now all of you had experience with emotions, whether that's in your own life or others. During the course of your life, you've heard people say things like: "He is really upset." "He wears his emotions on his sleeve." "He has mixed emotions." "She is in a bad mood." "She is in love." "She's really sad." "He hides his feelings." "He really got mad – he blew his top." "He's passionate." "She cries all the time." "He's stirred up." "She's a basket case." "He poured out his heart." "He can't control his emotions." "She really cared for him." We all get emotional, and to be honest, God made us emotional beings. We sure weren't made to be robots, which is a good thing. Can you imagine what it would be like if we were all robots, if people had no emotions, had no feelings, if everyone were bland? Emotions give color, personality, variety, and energy to our lives. Emotions are an integral part of our humanness, of our personhood, of our lives.

Here are some words that convey emotion: *anger, anticipation, anxiety, boredom, closeness, compassion, confidence, confusion, contempt, courage, depression, desperation, disdain, disgust, envy, excitement, fear, fulfillment, grief, guilt, happiness, hatred, helplessness, intimacy, horror, hysteria, jealousy, joy, loneliness, love, nostalgia, peace, persistence, pride, romance, sadness, screams, shame, surprise, terror, triumph, victory, weeping.*

The subject of emotions is a huge subject, and one that is quite complex and hard to figure out. But we need to understand it, at least to some degree, or we can't live rightly for God, we can't be all that God wants us to be. We talk about people who are led by their emotions. A person goes through the day, and he felt good about the day - he was in a good mood because there were no trials, work was good, relationships were good, the weather was good, and he was looking forward to a good meal. Most people's feelings and emotions are dictated by their experiences, circumstances and relationships, and it shouldn't be this way. God should influence and affect our feelings.

2 Cor. 5:7 says we are to walk by faith, not by sight, not by our circumstances, and not by how we feel. We are to be influenced by God and the truth of His word, and not be led by our emotions, our feelings. Most people live their lives circumstantially, experientially, not by truths and principles that are in God's word. Example of Saul vs. David – 1 Samuel

One of my prayers for Christians living in the end-times is that we are spiritually solid, mature, *“at the top of our game.”* And this means we have to be truth-based believers, emotionally strong believers. As we get closer to Christ’s coming, times will get tougher and tougher, and the Christians who are self-controlled, who control their emotions, who are temperate, will be most effective for God. This is one of the reasons I want to talk about our emotions, and how we are to have godly emotions. Titus 2:1-6, Rev. 12:11

Now you have whole books written on this subject of emotions, and I am not going to be comprehensive here, but I do want to share some general thoughts about emotions, and then make some statements about how you can be an emotionally godly Christian.

1. God made you an emotional being. You have a body, a mind and a soul, and your emotions are part of your soul. And so, you are an emotional being. Think about Jesus – He was a man of sorrows. He was angry, He had compassion, He cried, He agonized, He was determined. How about you? God wants you to be like Jesus.

2. Emotions are expressed through your words and seen in your actions and body language. Imagine a married couple talking, and the man raises his voice – that typically means he is being emotional. Then the woman raises her voice, and so she’s emotional. Then a little later, one of them suddenly walks out of the room - there’s a lot of emotion going on in this relationship. And as we know, facial expressions can show a lot of emotions, whether it’s raised eyebrows, a scowl, a wide-open mouth.

3. There is a direct relationship between how you think and how you feel, between your thought life and your emotions. *“As a man thinks so he is”* (Prov 23:7). This is important that you see this, that your feelings and emotions relate directly to how you think about something. And when your thinking isn’t good, then your emotions won’t be good. But if you have godly thoughts about someone, that will be seen in godly emotions.

4. Now I just said that your emotions come from your thoughts. But your thought life is affected by how you were raised, by your background, by your experiences, and by your circumstances in life, the kind of things you went through. Detasseling. Let’s say you’re going along some day and you start thinking about the past, and some situation you went through; well that thinking about the past can get you emotionally stirred up, resulting in sad feelings, pleasant feelings or angry feelings.

Your thoughts are also affected and influenced by your personality – you have heard of a person who is a choleric – he is more outspoken, more of a dominant personality. Another person may be a melancholic, one who’s more quiet, a little more serious and sober minded. And so, your emotions can be affected by your personality type.

And as you know, you can be affected by the music you listen to, and you all know this. You can be going along and all of a sudden you hear this song, and it puts you in a certain kind of mood. And you have all experienced this. But most importantly you need to be affected by your relationship with God, and the best book in the Bible that talks about this is the book of Psalms. Next week - Psalms

5. A person cannot always pinpoint how he feels, but it's not always necessary to know how you feel, "*to get in touch with your emotions*," as they say. Trying to figure out what you are or were feeling can be a very difficult thing to do. Some psychologist will ask a person what they were feeling like 30 years ago, and how can they know what they were feeling? Now it's true that talking about your feelings will sometimes help you to know what you were thinking. But you want to be careful to not be too introspective when it comes to your feelings. It's much more important to focus on your thinking than your feelings.

6. When it comes to your emotions, you don't want to say, "*That's the way I am.*" You don't want to say you feel a certain way because of your age, sex, race, color, ethnicity, or personality. You have to take responsibility for your emotions, and not blame it on anything or anyone else.

7. It's not wise to compare your emotions with those of another person. We're all different people with different backgrounds and experiences, and a different emotional make-up. God made you a certain way, and God has been sovereign over your life and over your experiences and relationships, and so always be thankful for who you are.

8. Our emotions are often connected to and intertwined with other emotions. You may be sad, lonely and depressed all at the same time. You may be angry and jealous at the same time. Matt. 24:8 – "*They left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy.*" 1 Sam. 18:10-12

9. Some people have a hard time separating how they are feeling from what they are thinking. You ask them what they are thinking about and they start talking about how they're feeling. But you need to be able to think clearly, and see the difference between the two, and how your feelings are influenced and affected by your thinking. Now on the other hand, you can't just separate your thinking from your feelings, for one leads directly to another, and they are intimately connected. And I am not saying your thinking and feelings are one and the same, but sometimes it sure seems that way, feels that way. And this is usually true more for women than men. Venus and Mars book

The point I want to make is that you as a person are a composite of your spirit, mind, soul (emotion), and body. That is, you can separate who you are into these four parts, but they really need to be seen as a whole, and that's how we need to see people.

10. Your emotions, more than you realize, affect the lives of people around you, in both good and bad ways, and you need to know this, and be aware of this.
11. If you are focused on yourself, if you are a selfish person, then that will result in unloving actions and emotions.
12. Emotions are like *"dash-lights"* that light up to warn you that something is wrong in your thinking. And if negative emotions keep popping up, are continually being seen in your life, then you need to ask God to help you diagnose the root problem. For example, if you are continually feeling sad, if you are continually feeling down, then ask God to help you figure out where and why your thinking is wrong.

We all have fleshly emotions, but how do we have godly emotions, how can we be Christ-like in how we think and feel? Let me share some things that will be helpful.

1. Know that God cares about you, about what you are feeling, and is concerned about your feelings, your emotions. God is a compassionate Father, one who really feels for you, and you need to know this. And we see this when Christ showed His compassion for people on earth. Psalm 103:13-14, Matt. 9:36, Matt. 11:28-30
2. Meditate on God's word, for this will affect your thoughts, words, actions, and emotions. Psalm 1:2 - *"His delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates day and night."* Daily thinking about, daily meditating on God's word is the single most important thing you can do to be a strong Christian with godly emotions. As I said, *"As a man thinks, so he is."* Godly emotions emanate from the heart of a person who is thinking about God's truth.
3. 2 Cor. 5:7 says you are to *"Walk by faith, not by sight,"* which means you are not to live by your feelings, but live by faith. And you will be living by faith when you're living by the truth of God's word, and this will result in you having godly feelings and emotions. And so, don't let your feelings run your life - let God, by His truth, run your life. That is, let God's word, not your circumstances, affect your feelings. Train with engine and caboose. *"Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials."* James 1:2, 1 Peter 1:5-9
4. Sing to the Lord. As you know, there is all kind of worldly and fleshly music out there, but God wants you to be singing godly music, truth-based songs. Doing this will have a tremendous effect on you spiritually and emotionally. When you are down, sing to God, and this will have a positive and godly effect on your soul and your emotions. I'm sure everyone of you have been encouraged, and emotionally so, by good music. Psalms, Col. 3:16
5. The most important emotion relates to loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Loving God is based on knowing the truth about God, and the more you know the truth about God, the more you will worship Him, and passionately and excitedly so. It is only logical for us to be extremely excited about God. And God likes it when are emotional when we are with Him, and when we are worshipping Him. *"I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High."* Psalm 9:1-2