

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Introduction: A definition of “emotions”

I. Misconceptions About the Emotions

- A. They are bad and need to be suppressed
- B. They are irrelevant and unnecessary and need to be ignored
- C. They are so powerful that they govern and control us

II. A Biblical Foundation for Understanding at Our Emotions

- A. The Character of God
- B. The Character of Jesus Christ
- C. The Character of Scripture

III. A Biblical Anthropology Regarding our Emotions

- A. Man in his pre-fall state
- B. Man in his fallen state
- C. Man in his regenerate State

IV. Biblical Sanctification and our Emotions

- B. Our emotions are a part of us that need to be sanctified and brought under the authority of the Word of God.
 - 1. The Bible authoritatively commands our emotions
 - 2. We are also commanded to exercise self-control
 - 3. We are commanded to be “sober-minded”
- B. The foundation of truth
- C. A sound theology of Christian experience
- D. Biblical examples of how the emotions are controlled through truth

V. Mortifying Ungodly Emotions

- A. Understand yourself and your emotional make-up
 - i. Rom. 12:3
- B. Be quick to confess and repent of un-Christ-like emotions. - Proverbs. 28:13
- C. Be willing to mortify ungodly emotions
 - Recognize different levels of sinful emotions, different levels of response.
- D. Case Studies/Examples of ungodly emotions

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Biblical Perspectives on Anger

- A. Anger is an emotion (internal and displayed in a variety of ways)*
- B. Anger is an internal problem, not a circumstantial problem - Mk 7:21-23*
- C. Anger begins with wrong thinking processes, which percolate in the emotions.*
 - 1. Anger can come from sinful pride. - Proverbs. 13:10*
 - 2. Anger can come from believing we deserve something/rights. Jas. 4:1-2*
- D. Anger can be manifested through blowing up or pouting*
- E. Anger is often denied or justified*

Biblical Response to sinful anger

- A. What the Bible teaches us concerning anger*
 - The first murder in the Bible was because of pride and anger (Gen. 4:3-8)
 - The Proverbs 14:17; 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:19; 22:24; 29:11; 29:22
 - Matt. 5:22
 - Gal. 5:19-21
 - Eph. 4:26-27
 - Jas. 1:19-20
 - Eph. 4:31-32
 - Col. 3:8
- B. We must confess and repent of our anger*
 - Proverbs. 28:13
 - We must put off anger (Eph. 4:31-32; Col. 3:8-10)
- C. We must put on tenderness, compassion and kindness*
- D. We must be transformed in our thinking*
- E. We must control angry emotions*
 - We must control our spirit (Gen. 4:7; Proverbs. 16:32; 25:28)
 - We must be slow to anger (Jas. 1:19)
 - We must trust God when real injustices, mistreatment, etc occurs (Psalm. 37:1-11)
- F. Through the Word, prayer, meditation and dependence on God and His Spirit, we can be changed and mortify ungodly anger.*

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

A Biblical Perspective on Fear, Anxiety and Worry

1. *Defining our terms (there is tremendous overlap between these words, Isaiah. 41:10)*

A) Fear: a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc, whether the threat is real or imagined.

B) Anxiety: full of mental distress or uneasiness of mind caused by fear of danger or misfortune.

C) Worry: to feel uneasy, or anxious; torment oneself with or suffer from disturbing thoughts.

2. *Examples of FAW*

A) Legitimate fear - it keeps us from killing ourselves!

B., The fear of others

C. Proverbs. 29:15

D, The fear of the future

E. The worry of the world and life (Mt. 13:32; Luke. 21:34)

3. *FAW never accomplishes anything other than sin, multiplied sin and stress*

Luke. 12:25-26

Proverbs. 12:25

Psalms. 37:8b

Isaiah. 57:11

4. *FAW is forbidden in God's Word*

Fear - "Do not fear" 52 x // "do not be afraid" 46x

Isaiah. 41:10, 13-14; Rev. 21:8

Mt. 6:25-34; Phil. 4:4-6

5. *FAW finds its sources in unbelief*

Not fearing God, not trusting God, not believing He is for you, will work out all things for your good,

Mt. 6:26, 28-30

Isaiah. 57:11

Biblical Responses to Fear and Anxiety

1. Recognize that FAW is contrary to what God has made you in Christ and what He has provided for you in this life!

What God has made us in Christ - 2 Tim. 1:7

What God has provided for us in this life - Proverbs 18:10; Rom. 8:28

2. Realize that proper thinking is the way to overcome FAW

Psalms. 94:17

The promises!!

3. Trust God and His love and sovereignty

Psalms. 37:5-8; 55:22

Isaiah. 41:10

1 Pet. 5:7

4. Affirm God's presence with you

Psalm. 23:4

Heb. 13:5-6

5. Pray through the FAW

Phil. 4:6-7

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Understanding Depression (see Ed Welch, *Blame It on the Brain*)

A. Defining depression

1. Depression is described in the Bible
Deut. 28:65-67
Psalm. 42:5, 111 43:5; 77:7-9
Proverbs. 13:12; 18:14
Job
Elijah (1 Kings 19:4)
Jonah (Jon. 4:3, 8)
Paul (2 Cor. 1:8)
2. What do we mean when we say depression?

B. The Sources of Depression

1. Physical Sources:
2. The Spiritual sources

C. The Liabilities of Depression

1. Easy to move to self-pity
2. Patterned (e.g., the holidays, PMS)
3. Downward spiral, chain-sinning

II. Dealing Biblically with Depression

- A. Take care of the temple/Exercise
1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Tim. 4:7
- B. See a good doctor, not a drug dealer
- C. Deal with any known sin
- D. Practice Biblical Thinking
Jn. 16:33
- E. Follow the Biblical pattern of changing how we feel
Gen. 4:7
Isa 58:10-11
- F. Get help from a pastor, a close friend
- G. Be alert and look for warning signs

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: Jesus our Pattern

Introduction

1. The Necessity of Cultivation
 2. Cultivating Godly Emotions: An overview
- Remember our foundation: The Character of Jesus Christ

I. The Humanity, Sinless Perfection and Emotional Life of Our Lord

- A. The humanity of Jesus
- B. The Sinless Perfection of Jesus
2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26-27; 1 Pet. 2:21-22
- C. The emotional life of Jesus

II. The NT Teaching on Jesus as Our Pattern

- A. Avoiding moralism
- B. Conformity to the image of Christ is the great goal of our predestination
Rom. 8:29-30
- C. Conformity to the image of Christ is the great goal of our sanctification
Col. 3:10 (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19)
- D. Conformity to the image of Christ in one of the great present duties of the Christian life
1 Pet. 2:21-23
1 Jn. 2:6
1 Cor. 11:1

III. Conclusions

- A. Jesus Christ is a perfect human being, and thus perfect in His emotional state and His emotional displays.
- B. As Christians who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, we are to follow Him as our pattern and example in this life.
- C. Therefore, the patterns of Jesus' emotional life form the standard for our emotional life, and we need to consciously seek to be conformed to Christ in His emotions.
- D. Over the next few weeks we are going to be looking at Christ and His emotions and seeing what we can learn from Him who said, "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart."

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: The Devotion and Delight of Jesus

Introduction

1) Jesus Christ is the God-Man, which means in the language of our creeds, “He is very God of very God, and very Man of very Man.”

This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul {meaning human soul} and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted
(Definition of Chalcedon).

2) Because Jesus is perfect we have a perfect Savior! We can trust Him fully!

3) Conformity to the image of Christ is the great goal of our predestination (Rom. 8:29-30)

4) Conformity to the image of Christ is the great goal of our sanctification (Col. 3:10)

5) Conformity to the image of Christ is one of the great present duties of the Christian life (1 Pet. 2:21-23; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Cor. 11:1).

6) Conclusion: the patterns of Jesus’ emotional life form the standard for our emotional life.

7) Application: As we look to Jesus and His emotional life, we will be stirred in our love and devotion to Him; as we see the beauty of Jesus we will want to be more like Him. In this endeavor we need the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18).

I. The Devotion of Jesus

A. What is devotion?

B. Devotion to obedience

C. Devotion to submission

D. Devotion to godly zeal

Application

II. The Delight of Jesus

A. What is delight?

B. Jesus delighted to do His Father’s will

Heb. 10:5-7; Isa. 11:3

C. Jesus delighted in communion with the Father

D. Jesus was a Man of true joy

Lk. 10:21; Heb. 1:9 (Psa. 45:6-7); Jn. 15:11; Heb. 12:1-3

Application

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: The Compassion of Jesus

I. Introduction to the Compassion of Jesus

A. God is a God of compassion (Ex. 34:6; Deut. 4:31; Psa. 103:8; Jonah 4:2)

B. Jesus perfectly reflects the image of God and perfectly fulfills the commands to be like God (Heb. 1:3; Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48)

C. Thus, Jesus demonstrates in His life the compassion of His Father

Application

II. Defining and Understanding Compassion

A. There are six (yea, seven) biblical words used to convey compassion

1. *racham* - derived from the word for ‘womb’ or ‘belly’, a physiological term, denoting of course a deep feeling from inside.

Ex. 33:19; 34:6

2. *chws* - often used with the word “eye” or “look” (My eye had pity on you, look on them with pity, etc). Interestingly, this word is used most commonly in situations where pity or compassion should be withheld.

3. *chamal* - to spare, to show compassion, the focus here is on the action of showing mercy or compassion.

4. *splagcnizomai* - to feel sympathy, inward parts, entrails, the seat of the emotions from which flows affection and sympathy.

Parallel to racham as a physiological word.

eusplagcnoj (Eph 4:32)

polusplagcnoj (Jas 5:11)

5. *oiktirw* - to have compassion, to show compassion, “to show mercy and concern, with the implication of sensitivity and compassion” (Nida and Louw).

Lk. 6:36

6. *metriopaqea* (a hapax logomena, used only once)

Heb. 5:2 - have compassion; deal gently, the focus being on the act of compassion.

sumpaqew sumpaqhj - Heb 4:15

B. Compassion is an emotion

C. Compassion is an action

D. Some concluding definitions

1. John Frame, A sympathetic view of another’s distress, motivating helpful action.

2. Warfield, An internal movement of pity and an external act of beneficence.

III. *Examples of the Compassion of Jesus*

- A. Compassion on those in physical distress
 1. The blind (Matt. 20:34)
 2. The leper (Mk. 1:41)
 3. The hungry (Mk. 8:2)
 4. Death (Lk. 7:13; Jn. 11:35)
- B. Compassion on those with spiritual needs
 1. Sheep w/o a shepherd (Mt. 9:36)
 2. Those with spiritual needs (Mt. 14:14)
 3. The lost (Mt. 23:37-39)

IV. *Application*

- A. The Lord Jesus has compassion on His people in their distress
- B. The Lord Jesus has compassion on the lost
- C. We need to have Christ-like compassion

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: The Love of Jesus

I. The Lord Jesus Christ Perfectly Fulfilled the First and Second Great Commandment

A. The Great Commandments

Matt. 22:34-40 (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18)

B. The Lord Jesus Loved His Father

Jn. 14:30-31

C. The Lord Jesus Loved His neighbors

D. The Lord Jesus loved His enemies

Lk. 23:34-38

II. The Love of Christ is the Fountain of Love in Us

A. Some of the commands to love seem impossible!

B. The love of Christ is the fountain and pattern of our love

Rom. 5:5

1 Jn. 3:14-17

1 Jn. 4:7-11

Lk. 7:47

Eph. 4:32

Application

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: The Symmetry of Jesus

I. The Perfect Symmetry of Jesus

- A. The Perfect Humanity of Jesus
- B. Jesus responded perfectly to every situation
- C. Miscellaneous Examples
 - 1. The amazement of Jesus
 - 2. The anger of Jesus
 - 3. The sternness of Jesus

II. The Call For Emotional Symmetry in Our Lives

- A. Our problem - we are out of balance
- B. Our calling - to follow Jesus
 - 1. Remember the meaning of discipleship
 - 2. Revel in Jesus and His ways
- C. Our transformation (chiastic structure)
 - 1. Look to Jesus as our perfect standard
 - 2. Cry out to Jesus for forgiveness as our Redeemer, our Savior!
 - 3. Cry out to the Triune God to change your heart (Lk. 11:13)
 - 4. Look again to Jesus! (Heb. 3:1; 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18)

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Cultivating Godly Emotions: Renewing Our Minds

Introduction

I. The Centrality of the Mind in the Christian life and experience

A. Revisiting the role of the mind

B. Numerous theologians have decried the present thinking crisis within evangelicalism and called for better thinking by Christians

Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind* (1963); John Stott, *Your Mind Matters* (1972); Earl Radmacher, *You and Your Thoughts* (1977); John Woodbridge, *Renewing Your Mind in a Secular World* (1985); Os Guinness, *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don't Think and What to Do About* (1994); Jim Boice, *Renewing Your Mind in a Mindless Age: Learning to Think and Act Biblically* (2001).

C. Biblically speaking, there are numerous passages that deal with importance of the mind in the Christian life.

II. The Obvious Correlation Between Thinking Correctly/Biblically and the Emotions.

A. Right thinking about God produces and cultivates right emotions

Psa 16:8-9

Isa 26:3

Lam 3:19-24

B. Right thinking about Christ produces and cultivates godly emotions

C. Right thinking about spiritual things produces life and peace

Rom. 8:5-7

Phil. 4:8-9

(Psa 55:22; 94:19)

D. Right thinking about ourselves and others produces humility

Rom. 12:3

Phil. 2:2-5

E. Right thinking about suffering and eternity produces hope

Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16

F. Right thinking about Redemption holds in check ungodly emotions

Rom. 6:11

III. The Necessary Duty of Renewing our Minds in order to Cultivate Godly Emotions

See John Owen, Volume 7, *The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually-Minded (Thinking Spiritually)*;

A. Negatively -

We must watch what we put into our minds, because what we put into our minds can stir up ungodly emotions and desires.

Rom. 8:5-7; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:4-5

B. Positively

We must consciously be feeding our minds on Christ, on spiritual things, things above

Rom. 8:5-7; 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-4; Phil. 4:8

C. Logistics - The "How To" (Owen is so important!)

In many ways, the next few weeks will answer the "how to" of renewing our minds

The Word, prayer, worship, preaching, reading and meditation

1. Take inventory - What do I think about?

2. See the proper relationship between faith and thinking

3. Consciously put into your mind spiritual things

4. Exercise self-control and self-discipline

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Cultivating Godly Emotions: The Emotions and Worship

Introduction

My theses are these:

1. Worship in song is a vital part of our spiritual life (Jn 4:24). There are fundamental reasons why we must be singing people.
2. Worship in song engages both the head and the heart, but primarily the heart, thus worship in song always includes the engagement of the emotions.
3. Worship in song therefore is not only a mandate for the people of God, but it also functions to stir up and cultivate godly emotions in us.

I. We Worship in Song because we are made in the image of God

- A. Singing and the intellect
- B. Singing and the affections

“That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, lifeless wishes, raising us but little above a state of indifference: God, in His Word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good earnest! God has given to mankind affections, for the same purpose which he has given all the faculties and principles of the human soul, i.e., that they might be subservient to man’s chief end, and the great business for which God has created him, that is, the business of religion.”¹ Edwards

II. We Worship in Song Because God sings

- A. If we are made in the image of God, and our affections compel us to sing, then we can conclude that God sings!
- B. Psa. 105:43 RSVS he led forth his people with joy, his chosen ones with singing.

Zeph. 3:17 (KJV, NKJ, ASV, NIV, RSV)

III. We worship in song because of God’s greatness and glory

- A. The greatness and glory of God should stir the emotions, the natural response is joyful praise in song
- B. Psa 47; 48:1
Ps 59:16-17
Ps 66:1-4
Psa 95:1-3

IV. We sing because of God’s redeeming grace

- A. The preeminent act of the OT redemption led immediately to song
Ex. 15
- B. Personal redemption not only leads to singing, but can be said

to be the actual implantation of songs of praise in the heart

Psa. 40:1-3

Psa 51:14

Psa 96:1-3

C. Heaven itself will be filled the new songs being sung by all of His creatures, but especially His redeemed creatures!

Rev. 4-5

V. We sing because we are commanded to sing

Ex 15:21

Dt 31:19

Psa 30:4-5

Psa 33:1-3

God demands our praise!!

VI. We sing now because we will sing throughout eternity

It will be the business of heaven.

Conclusions

1. Worship in song is serious business for us as Christians and us as a Church!
2. Worship in song is the legitimate emotional outlet for our love and joy in God, as well as our contrition and repentance, and all other godly emotions.
3. Ask yourself these questions:
 - A) Is there is a song of praise in my heart because I have apprehended the glory of God, the grace of God and my calling as a worshiper, both in this age and the age to come?
 - B) Do I engage the mind when I am singing God's praise?
 - C) Do I engage my heart when I sing His praise? Is the truth stirring my soul?
 - D) Am I growing in my affections for the Triune God? Am I growing in my love for singing His praise?

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: The Emotions and Preaching

I. The Testimony of Preaching in God's Word

The revelation of redemptive-history demonstrates passion in preaching.

- A. The Woe oracles of the prophets drip with pathos.
- B. The invitations to salvation are filled with emotion
- C. Solicitations to comfort and consolation
- D. Commands to be joyful and happy!
- E. John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness
- F. The Son of God
- G. The Apostles
- H. Conclusion: All true biblical preaching must have the element of passion in it. Preaching must not only instruct the head, it must move the heart. It should run parallel with

II. The Danger and Abuses of Preaching and the Emotions

- A. The danger of emotional overload and manipulation.
- B. The danger of affectation

III. Cultivating Godly Emotions Through the Ministry of the Word

- A. Have a biblical view of preaching
- B. Preaching is primary God-ordained means of grace
- C. Have expectations of preaching
- D. Receive the Word Biblically (Lk 8:16-18)

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: The Word, Prayer and the Emotions

Introduction Thesis

A consistent life in the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and prayer, will, in general, produce joy and an overall emotional stability and strength in life.

I. The Word and the Fullness of Joy

John 15:11

A. The Lord Jesus had spoken many things to His disciples. He was giving them His Word, in a sense the final inspired discourse before His death.

B. In a summary type way He speaks Jn 15:11

C. There is a clear connection: I have spoken these things to you for your joy!

D. The Bible actually teaches us that God's Word is to be the source of our joy and happiness in God!

Psa. 119

E. Application

II. Prayer and the Fullness of Joy

John 16:24

A. Asking in Jesus' name

B. Ask and you will receive

C. So that your joy may be made full

D. Application

Conclusion

A Biblical Understanding of Our Emotions

Cultivating Godly Emotions: Reading, Meditation and the Emotions

Introduction

Psa 39:3; 77:11-12; Heb. 12:1-2; 13:7

1. R.L. Dabney on “Dangerous Reading”

Dabney argued that the “habitual contemplation of fictitious scenes, however pure, produces a morbid cultivation of the feelings and sensibilities, to the neglect and injury of the active virtues. The purpose for which fictions are read, and the drama is frequented, is to excite the attention and the emotions . . . The fatal objection to the habitual contemplation of these scenes is this, that while they deaden the sensibilities, they afford no occasion or call for the exercise of active sympathies . . . The beholder of these fictitious sorrows has his sympathies impressed, and therefore deadened, while those sympathies must necessarily remain inert and passive, because the whole scene is imaginary. And thus by equal steps, he becomes at once sentimental and inhuman” (Dabney, *Discussions*, II, 160, 161).

2. *My Heart For Thy Cause*, pastoral theology and preaching

3. My own experience

I. The Role of Meditation and Imagination

A. The persistent call to meditation

B. The use of the imagination

C. The connection between meditation and the emotions

Psa. 39:1-4

II. Meditation, Imagination and Reading our Bibles

A. Our Bibles were written to inform our minds and move our hearts

1. Much of Scripture is written not merely to inform us, but to move us (if only we would use our God-given imaginations in a sanctified manner!)

Gen. 45; 2 Sam. 18; Isa. 65:2; the Gospels

2. The use of vivid, descriptive, emotive language shows how God communicates!

B. When we read God's inspired Word, let us read

III. Meditation, Imagination and Reading Biography

A. The biblical rationale for reading biography

Heb. 11; 12:1-2; 13:7

B. Reasons to read Christian biography

C. How to read Christian biography

Conclusion

God has given us reading as a means of grace.

In reading His Word and Christian biography, in the right way, we can have our emotions cultivated for greater godliness and usefulness.