

## The Power of Emotions

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### Introduction: Do Emotions Rule Your Life?

- A. Often decisions are made on the basis of what we think *and* how we feel.
- B. Sometimes emotions should have no part in our decisions (**Isa. 5:20; 55:8-9**).
- C. Yet, for many people emotions are not secondary, but the *primary* force in life.
- D. How do you deal with *your* emotions?
- E. Depending on how we handle our emotions will determine our success or failure in life, our ability to help or hurt others, and even our salvation.

### I. Emotions are Powerful!

- A. Our ability to experience emotions comes from God (**Gen. 1:27**).
  1. Examples of emotions we have in common with God (**Ps. 104:31/ 2 Jn 4; Ps. 78:40/ 2 Cor. 2:7; Exod. 32:10/ Eph. 4:26; Jn 2:16-17 / Rev 3:19**).
  2. Similar to the power seen in God's emotions, the feelings we have can also be powerful, whether for good or evil (e.g., **Gen. 4:5ff; Act 5:41-42**).
  3. Examples of emotions that we do not share with God (not exhaustive list): Fear/ Afraid **Mat 8:26**; Anxiety **Lk 12:26**; Despair/ Hopelessness **Job 3**.
- B. Emotions can cause us "to move."
  1. Definition: Emotion: from the root word motere, a Latin verb meaning "to move," the prefix "e" gives it the meaning "to move through or out"
  2. Each emotion we have can cause us to move or act a certain way (e.g., **Acts 12:14; 2 Cor. 7:10; Mark 3:5; Acts 16:29**; c.f. **John 11:35**).
- C. Emotions can overpower reason
  1. When emotions run high, they can rule over reason (**Jas 1:20; Pv 27:4**).
  2. How we feel about a situation can be far from reality (e.g., **Gen. 37:35**).
  3. Emotion can lead to inaccurate judgment of others (**1 Sam 17:24**) and impulsive, foolish, and irrational behavior (**Prov 1:16; 14:17; Mt 25:25**).
- D. Emotions, if uncontrolled, can be very destructive (**Prov. 14:12**).
  1. Anger unleashed can lead to many horrible, hurtful words and deeds.
  2. Intense joy can deceive us to think something is right when it is not.
  3. Sadness or depression can impair our judgment severely.
- E. The powerful emotions of others can greatly affect us, for good or bad.
  1. Do we understand just how "contagious" the emotions of others can be? (e.g., **Rev 3:16 cf. Rev 3:19; / Prov. 22:24-25 / Eph. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:3**).

### II. Emotion vs. Reason

- A. Emotions are important (e.g., **Phil. 4:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; Mark 3:5**).
- B. Yet, emotion is not our guide in religion, "reason" is (**Isa. 1:18a; Eph. 5:17**).
  1. Even the Holy Spirit leads us by reason or God's word, not by our emotions as some suppose (**1 Tim. 4:1; Rom. 8:14; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**).
  2. Those who follow their emotions and turn a deaf ear to Scripture are *fools*, no matter how zealous they are! (**Prov. 12:15; 15:21; Rom. 10:2**).

### III. How Emotions can be a Blessing and not a Curse.

- A. Be honest about how you feel (self-awareness of emotions as they occur).
  1. This is the key to understanding whether we are walking by faith or feelings, whether we have a good attitude or a bad one (**2 Cor. 13:5**).

2. If we constantly deny our true feelings, we will be at the mercy of our feelings influencing us to behave in ways that may be ungodly or wicked.
3. God will help us look at ourselves honestly (**Ps 139:23-24; Heb. 4:12**).

**B. Manage your emotions appropriately**

1. Continual negative emotions makes for a miserable life (**Prov. 17:22**).
2. There are things we can do to increase “positive” feelings or have emotion which is appropriate (**Prov. 12:25; e.g., Phil. 4:8; Ps. 19:8; Ps. 42:5; Phil. 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:8-9; Rom. 14:19; 1 Tim. 4:8a; 5:23**).
3. We need to develop the fruit of self-control (**Gal. 5:23; 1 Cor. 9:25**).
4. We must *hold back* the emotions that may hurt others (e.g., anger - **Acts 26:11; Prov. 14:29; 29:11**; “pity-parties”, irrational fear, etc.).
5. Important for unity and peace in the home and church (**Eph 4:1-3; 5:33**).
6. No disciple of Jesus has a *right* to feel how ever he wants to (**Mk 8:34**).

**C. Choose your emotions (Emotions don’t “just happen”!)**

1. Certainly, there are a number of factors that influence the way we feel (e.g., diet, exercise, sleep, medicine, weather, personal temperament, etc.).
2. If emotions were not a matter of choice, then why these commands of God? (e.g., **Eccl. 7:9; Eph. 4:31; Isa. 41:10; Mat. 10:28; Phil. 4:4, 6**).
3. We don’t just wait for the right emotion to come; *we can choose it!*
4. Despite our circumstances in life (**Prov. 18:14; Phil. 4:11-13**) or bodily desires (**Rom 8:6; 1 Thes 4:3-5; Mt 26:41**) we can choose our emotions.
5. We do not have to be a slave to our emotions! (**Jn 8:31-32; 2 Pet 2:19b**).

**D. Empathize or respond to the feelings of others.**

1. By being observant and considerate of the feelings of others, we will be able to communicate and help one another (**Prov 15:13; Jas 1:19; Lk 7:13**).
2. By paying attention, we can grieve or rejoice with others (**1 Cor 12:26**).

**E. Seek to influence others for good by the emotions you *choose* to have.**

1. Your attitude or the emotions you display does affect others! (e.g., **Phil. 2:17-18; James 4:8-10; Mark 3:5; Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:15a**).

**IV. The Gospel is the Greater Power That Guides Christians.**

**A. The gospel is *even more* powerful than our emotions (**Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12**).**

1. God’s word is the foundation of faith, not “good moods” (**Rom 10:17**).
2. It is God’s word that will keep us strong and build us up (**Acts 20:32**), not great motivational speakers or pep rallies that can stir up our emotions.

**B. We are to follow God’s will, *no matter how we feel about it* (**Eph. 5:15-17**).**

1. There are commands we must obey, responsibilities we must fulfill despite our emotions (**1 Thes 5:17; Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 13:4-8; 2 Cor 4:13**).
2. By putting our faith in the Lord and obeying His will, in time, the proper emotions or feelings will follow (e.g., **Mat. 5:10-12**).

**C. Our eternal salvation depends on obedient faith to the gospel, not on how we feel about our salvation (**Acts 2:36-38; Phil. 2:12; Rev. 2:10; 1 Tim. 4:16**).**

1. Our ability to rejoice in salvation is based on God’s promises and our faithful response to Him, not our personal feelings (**Rm 15:13; 1 Pet 1:3-7**).

**Conclusion: Emotions Can be a Blessing When We Exercise Them with Care and Make God’s Will the Number One Rule of Life.**