

The Bible and Emotions

- A. **Psalm 139:2** – “You know when I sit down and when I stand up; You understand my thoughts from far away.”
- B. One of the most emotional scenes in the Old Testament is the account of Joseph’s response when he sees his brother, Benjamin. **Genesis 43:30-31** – “Joseph hurried out because he was overcome with emotion for his brother, and he was about to weep. He went into an inner room to weep. ³¹ Then he washed his face and came out. Regaining his composure, he said, ‘Serve the meal.’”
- C. **2 Peter 1:3** – “For His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.”
1. Throughout the pages of the Bible we have accounts of people and their emotions.
 2. Some of these emotions are good, as in the case of Joseph, and some are accounts of how people violated God’s law because they weren’t in control of their emotions.
- D. In this study let us examine five things:
1. Biblical examples of harmful emotions.
 2. The emotions of God.
 3. The emotions of Christ.
 4. The emotions of Paul.
 5. It is okay to be emotional.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF HARMFUL EMOTIONS

A careful study of the following Biblical accounts reveal the consequences of negative emotions which became sinful or harmful.

A. **Anger**

1. Genesis 4:1-8
2. Cain killed his brother because of uncontrolled anger in his heart.

B. **Fear** . . . Being afraid

1. In Genesis 20:2, 3, 11, Abraham lied to Abimelech about Sarah because he was afraid of losing his life.
2. In Exodus 2:11-15, Moses fled Egypt because of fear.
3. Job 4:13-16. Eliphaz entered a period of fear and trembling because of a vision he had.

C. **Jealousy and Envy**

1. 1 Kings 21:1-14
2. King Ahab caused the death of Naboth because he was jealous and envious of Naboth’s vineyard.

D. Terror

1. Daniel 5:6-9
2. King Belshazzar of Babylon couldn't control his knees from shaking when he saw part of the hand that wrote. October, 539 B.C. Last night of the Babylonian Empire.

E. Lust

1. 2 Samuel 11:1-5
2. David let the emotion of lust lead him into sin by committing adultery with Bathsheba.
 - a. He Stayed - 11:1
 - b. He Saw - 2a
 - c. He Sought - 2b
 - d. He Sent - 3
 - e. He Summoned - 4a
 - f. He Sinned - 11:4b, 5
3. **James 1:13-17** – “No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God.” For God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn't tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires. ¹⁵ Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death. ¹⁶ Don't be deceived, my dearly loved brothers. ¹⁷ Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights; with Him there is no variation or shadow cast by turning.”

F. Hatred

1. 2 Samuel 13:2-20
2. Amnon had strong sexual desires (lust) for his half-sister, Tamar, which led him to rape her, and afterwards hate her.

G. Greed and Covetousness

1. Joshua 7:16-21
2. Achan brought defeat upon Israel because of his greed and deception.

H. Depression

1. 1 Samuel 28:15-25 (Read)
2. King Saul became very depressed when he received God's message from Samuel that God had rejected him as king.

I. Guilt

1. Matthew 27:3-10
2. Judas killed himself because of the guilt he felt after betraying Christ.

J. Resentment and hatred

1. Saul (known later as the apostle Paul) persecuted the Lord's Church because he resented and hated it.
2. Acts 9:4-9
3. Acts 26:9-12

4. Galatians 1:13

K. **Pride and arrogance**

1. 3 John 9

2. Diotrefes was a trouble maker in the early church because of pride and arrogance.

L. **Selfishness**

1. Acts 5:1-11

2. Ananias and Sapphira lied to God because of the selfishness in their hearts.

M. **Sorrow**

1. Mark 10:22

2. The rich young ruler, because of sorrow, turned and walked away from an opportunity to follow Jesus.

THE EMOTIONS OF GOD

We must not overlook the many emotions God ascribes to Himself in the Bible. God uses language we can understand to teach us that he is not an unfeeling being.

A. The **heart** of God is mentioned in **Genesis 6:6** – “The LORD regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”

B. **Grieved.**

1. The rebellion of Israel in the wilderness grieved the Lord.

2. **Psalm 78:40** – “How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert.”

C. **Wrath** and **displeasure** **Psalm 2:5** – “Then He speaks to them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath.”

D. **Laughing.** **Psalm 2:4** – “The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord ridicules them.”

E. **Anger**

1. Jeremiah 7:18-19

2. The anger of Jehovah is mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah

F. **Joy**

1. Isaiah 6:2-5

2. The joy of God is referred to by the prophet Isaiah.

G. **Love.** John 3:16

H. **Vengeance**

1. Deuteronomy 32:35

2. God brings vengeance upon evil doers.

I. **Hate**

1. Deuteronomy 16:21-22

2. God hates graven images that are set up to represent Him or take His place.

J. **Pleasure**. In Isaiah 53:10, God is referred to as having the ability to experience pleasure.

THE EMOTIONS OF CHRIST

- Philippians 2:5-8 (Read)
- **Hebrews 4:14-15** – “Therefore since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to the confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.”

The Bible makes it very clear that Jesus took upon Himself the nature of a servant (man, in the flesh). This is why He understands our emotions..

Nonetheless, he guarded His emotions and never allowed them to carry Him into sin. He is the perfect example of how good and controlled emotions benefit our lives. He was emotional on many occasions, but His emotions were appropriate and always under control. The point is this . . . It’s okay to be emotional if we handle it like the Lord did.

A. **Compassion**

1. Matthew 9:36
2. Jesus was a man of compassion. The Greek word here refers to being moved inwardly; feelings, emotions.

B. **Properly-controlled anger**

1. Mark 3:5
2. The word for anger is “orge.” It suggests a settled condition of mind, even though a strong emotion may be in one’s bosom.
3. The Greek word translated “wrath” is “Thumos.” It indicates a more agitated condition of the feelings, an outburst of wrath from inward imagination. This is not what Jesus had.
4. Jesus had “orge.” He was in control of His emotions and actions.

C. **Weeping**

1. Three accounts of Jesus having wept.
 - a. Wept at the tomb of Lazarus. John 11:32-35 (sympathy and sorrows of others)
 - b. Wept over the city of Jerusalem. Luke 19:41 (Over lost opportunities)
 - c. Wept in the garden of Gethsemane. Hebrews 5:7 (Weeping in battle)
2. The Greek word translated wept in John 11:35 is “dakruo,” and means to shed tears, and is only used in the New Testament with reference to Christ.
3. In Luke 19:41, the word here is “klaio” and refers not only to crying, but also every outward expression of grief, bewailing, mourning, etc.

D. **Agony . . . anguish**

1. **Luke 22:44** – “Being in anguish [agony], He prayed more fervently, and His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

2. This denotes an inward emotional contest which also touches the conduct of the body.” Jesus was truly weeping in battle.

E. **Love**

1. John 20:2

2. The love mentioned here is “Phileo,” and here refers to tender affection.

F. **Groaned**

1. John 11:38

2. Jesus groaned in His spirit.

3. The Greek word used here (embrimaomai) means to be greatly perturbed in mind, deeply moved. CSB translates it as angry. “The Jesus, angry in Himself, came again to the tomb . . . “

G. **Sighed**

1. Mark 8:12; 7:34

2. The original word, “anastenazo,” suggests a very deeply drawn sigh or groan from within because of feelings.

H. **Cried out**

1. Matthew 27:46

2. It is said that Jesus experienced every form of pain in His death on the cross.

3. Crying out was one of the ways He found relief from His pain.

I. **Sorrowful & Heavy in spirit**

1. Matthew 27:46

2. Jesus experienced such deep emotions. So much was at stake.

J. **Joy**

1. John 15:11; 17:13

2. The Lord wanted to share His joy with His people.

K. **Loneliness**

1. Matthew 26:40-46; John 6:15; Luke 9:18

2. This was not because of an inner weakness, or feeling of insecurity, but because of the agony that was before Him.

L. **Control of His emotions** **1 Peter 2:23** – “When reviled, He did not revile in return; when suffering, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to the One who judges justly. ”

Note: Jesus was not a stoic who kept Himself above feelings.

- **Isaiah 53:4** – “Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.”
- The song says, “Jesus knows all about my troubles.”
- We learn from Jesus that it is okay to be emotional . . . However, the challenge is to keep our emotions within healthy bounds.

THE EMOTIONS OF PAUL

Paul's emotions covered the spectrum from hate to love . . . from no compassion to compassion . . . from misguided zeal to controlled zeal, etc. From the day he met Christ, his life was never the same again . . . and neither should our lives be the same ever again. Time and time again in his writings he reveals his tender emotional feelings. He was a man of great self-control.

A. Deep emotional feelings

1. Philippians 1:7-8; 2 Corinthians 7:15; Colossians 3:12
2. Paul had deep emotional feelings, inward affection, for his brethren.

B. Suffering

1. Philippians 1:13, 2-30
2. Paul considered his suffering for Christ to be a blessing.

C. Joy

1. Philippians 2:2, 17
2. Note: Paul's joy was never determined by outward circumstances.

D. Humility

1. Philippians 3:4-10; 2 Corinthians 12:21
2. Paul was not puffed up by his own importance.

E. Contentment

1. Philippians 4:11
2. Paul had to learn to be content . . . and so must we.
3. This was a great contributor to his mind.
4. Note: Paul knew things are the way they are without because things are the way they are within.

F. Calmness

1. Acts 20:24
2. Paul was a clam man even in the face of persecution.

G. Right attitudes

1. 2 Corinthians 12:7-11
2. Paul had the right attitude toward his "thorn in the flesh."

H. Heaviness . . . sorrow

1. Romans 9:2
2. He felt for his brethren and their respective situations.

IT'S OKAY TO BE EMOTIONAL

A. We are not stoics . . . we are not zombies . . . If anything, Christianity puts real life and care into our feelings.

B. An old Negro spiritual describes the emotional challenges we face:

"Nobody knows the trouble I've see;

Nobody knows but Jesus.

Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down-

Oh yes, Lord!

Sometimes I'm almost to the ground.

On yes, Lord!"

- C. It is not always possible for a person to always be "high" emotionally; likewise, it is not desirable for him to always be on an emotional "low." God wants us to be in control of the emotions that can harm us physically and spiritually.
- D. Whether we are emotionally high, low, or somewhere in between, we should not permit our emotions to lead us into sin.

CONCLUSION:

- A. In this study we have learned:
 - 1. The Bible is full of examples that man is an emotional being.
 - 2. Man's emotions have gotten him into trouble when he hasn't kept them under control.
 - 3. Jesus is our perfect example of healthy emotions.
 - a. It is okay to be emotional . . . to express emotions in a right way.
- B. Paul was a man of many emotions. From him we learn that a person can change his emotions if he wants to.
- C. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**