

Emotions – How are they Affecting Your Life?

Nehemiah 8:10 boldly declares, “...*the joy of the Lord is your strength.*” In this teaching, we are going to talk about joy and the other emotions that every one of us have and experience daily.

When we talk about emotions, we are not talking about the “emoji’s” you use in a text message. It’s easy to select a happy face, sad face, or a heart when sending a text. It’s just as easy to delete it. It’s not so easy with real emotions. Emotions help us connect to one another. We laugh together, cry together, and love one another. Our emotions help us to understand how someone feels so we can help them or comfort them. 1 Corinthians 12:26 (TPT) tells us, “*If one suffers, everyone suffers. If one is honored, everyone rejoices.*” We are the body of Christ, forever joined together in Him.

The Scriptures tell us about God’s emotions, among which are love, joy, zeal, compassion, sorrow, grief and sadness. God loves the people of the world, but hates sin and wickedness. These are contrary to His love. (Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven things God hates.)

God has emotions. We are made in God’s image; and as His children, He has blessed us with emotions. There is one main difference between our emotions and God’s emotions. His emotions do not ever control Him. God’s emotions never take over His judgment or wisdom. He never sinned in them. He could not. He is our sinless, holy God. Our emotions, however, can have a good or bad influence on us. Our emotions can help us draw nearer to each other, or away from each other. They can help us be more like Jesus, or less like Jesus. The question is “how do your emotions affect your life?”

We often give our emotions the power to direct or even run our lives. They take over. Uncontrolled emotions, even those emotions we consider “good” ones, can lead us in the wrong direction and take us down a path towards destruction. We have counseled so many people who mistook emotions for the will of

God. When emotions take control they can cloud our judgment, or hinder us from hearing the voice of God. They can cause us to sin. It is easy to be blinded by what feels good, such as lust, pleasure, greed or love of money. Perhaps you have feelings that you want to escape from like loneliness, fear, rejection, or jealousy. Emotions can destroy friendships or cause people to get into unhealthy relationships. People's emotions tell them they are in love, but everyone around them can see it is an attraction based on emotions, not on God's will for their life.

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Many years ago, we counseled a woman who thought she was in love. She met a man who was new to the church. It was plain to see that the only reason this man was in church was to find a wife. She was lonely. He saw that she was vulnerable and set his sights on her. He was a wolf in sheep's clothing. He was not good for her, and certainly not someone she should marry. They began to date. One day she wanted to meet with us to talk about her relationship with this man. After talking with us she decided that it would be best for her if she would end the relationship. A few days later we found out they had got married. She married him the day after we met with her. He moved in with her, beat her and used her. Two months later she was divorced. She had been totally blinded by her emotions. Our hearts ached for her.

A Decision Beyond Feelings

In another situation a beautiful young Indian woman in our church came to us. Her family had arranged a marriage between her and a prominent family in their town. He was a good man, handsome, with a good job – but he was a Hindu. She was under tremendous pressure to fulfill her family's promise to marry this man. It would bring great shame on the family if she backed out of the marriage. It was an emotionally devastating time for her. We spent a long time talking with her. We asked her one question that made her really stop and think about the decision she was

making. We asked her what would she do when they had children and the husband insisted they be raised as Hindus and not Christians. We did not know what her final decision would be, but she made the very difficult and heart-wrenching choice to refuse to marry this man. She did not follow her emotions that were leading her to please her family. She followed the voice of the Holy Spirit in order to please God. Several years later, the Lord brought a wonderful Christian man into her life, and to this day, many years later, they are raising a beautiful family that loves God.

Our choices in life cannot be based on what we feel. Decisions about our money, love life, job, where we live, how we spend our money, or where we go to church should not be based on emotions that rise and fall like the waves. As you know, how you feel can change at any given moment. Think about it. Emotions are good servants. They can bless our lives and are a part of who we are. But they can easily become bad masters when they direct our decisions and life choices. It is something we all have to be aware of. Will your emotions serve to enrich your life, or will they take control of your life?

- What can we do to keep our emotions in check?
- What can we do when emotions seem to be taking over and getting out of control?
- How do we replace uncontrollable carnal reactions with Godly actions?

We do it with the help of the Holy Spirit. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:23) By having godly, self-control, we can enjoy the blessings of emotions as God intended, without letting them take over. What steps can we take to make this happen?

Practical Steps to Overcoming the Power of Emotions

1. Prepare

If you have a difficult time with a day like Father's Day, or your birthday, or Christmas is coming, get ready. If you know you have to be around someone who pushes your emotional buttons, get

ready. Discover what, or who upsets you time and time again. You can prepare yourself ahead of time.

A. Pray in advance.

Find a quiet place to get alone with God.

- Yield to the Holy Spirit.
- Pray about that situation or pray for that person.
- Pray for the right words to say.
- Pray that the Lord put a guard on your lips and that the Holy Spirit puts the right words in your mouth when you speak.

Decide ahead of time that kindness is the best way to response. Proverbs 15:1 (CEV) says, *“A kind answer soothes angry feelings, but harsh words stir them up.”* We are to *“respond gently when you are confronted and you’ll defuse the rage of another. Responding with sharp, cutting words will only make it worse.”* (TPT)

My mother always told me, “If you don’t have anything good to say, don’t say anything. Proverbs 17:28 (NLT) says, *“Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent.”* Even a fool seems wise when he keeps his mouth shut. Think of it as having a roll of “spiritual duct tape” with us at all times.

B. Remind yourself of who you are in Christ. Put on the “new man.”

Colossians 3:12-15 (TPT) says, *“You are always and dearly loved by God! So robe yourself with virtues of God, since you have been divinely chosen to be holy. Be merciful as you endeavor to understand others, and be compassionate, showing kindness toward all. Be gentle and humble, unoffendable in your patience with others.” {13} Tolerate the weaknesses of those in the family of faith, forgiving one another in the same way you have been graciously forgiven by Jesus Christ. If you find fault with someone, release this same gift of forgiveness to them. {14} *For, love is supreme and must flow through each of these virtues. Love becomes the mark of**

true maturity. {15} Let your heart be always guided by the peace of the Anointed One, who called you to peace as part of his one body. And always be thankful.

C. Put on the whole armor of God.

Ephesians 6:11-18 (TPT) says to get prepared ahead of the battle. It says, *“Put on “truth as a belt... “Put on holiness” as a breastplate “that covers your heart. Stand on your feet alert... always ready to share the blessings of peace. In every battle take faith as your rap-around shield” to put out the fiery arrows from the devil. “Embrace the power of salvation’s full deliverance, like a helmet to protect your thoughts from lies. And take the mighty razor-sharp Spirit-sword of the spoken [rhema] Word of God.”*

Prepare to face the day. Pray! Remind yourself to watch what you say. Remind yourself of who you are in Christ; and put on your armor.

2. Recognize what is going on.

What if something happens suddenly and you cannot prepare in advance? The Holy Spirit lives inside all of us. He makes it possible to live a Spirit-led life, instead of an emotional-led life. Don't let emotions jump up and take over.

A. Be alert.

1 Peter 5:8 (TPT) says, *“Be...always alert, because your enemy, the devil, roams around incessantly, like a roaring lion looking for its prey to devour.”* As soon as you recognize what is going on, take a step back. Be led by the Holy Spirit. He may direct you to walk away, or take a break. If you are angry, do not continue the conversation.

- If you have placed yourself in a compromising situation, do not allow lust to take over.
- If jealousy tries to tempt you, reject it.

B. Pray in the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:18).

When your flesh begins to rise up and the fruit of the Spirit is nowhere to be seen, recognize that your emotions are heading out of control. This is the time to immediately begin to pray and ask God for His help. Ephesians 6:18 (TPT) says, *“Pray passionately in the Spirit.”* Once your negative emotions have taken control, it is difficult to turn them off. That’s why it is always good to walk away from an argument as soon as the level of the voices gets louder. Pause, pray, and continue the discussion when you can both talk calmly. Otherwise you just keep adding fuel to the fire and there will eventually be an explosion.

3. Redirect your thoughts and actions.

We all mess up. At times, we all get too emotional. That doesn’t mean that we give up when our emotions seem to be winning the battle. I heard a preacher once say, “When you mess up don’t give up. Just get up!” Once you recognize what is going on take the appropriate actions. Redirect your focus away from the emotions and turn them towards God. His grace is sufficient to help you move ahead. There are many ways to do this. (These are in no particular order.)

A. Worship.

This is my first choice when I find myself dealing with emotions that are out of control.

Psalm 100:1-3 (TPT)

*“Lift up a great shout of joy to the Lord!
Go ahead and do it—everyone, everywhere!
{2} As you serve him, be glad and worship him.
Sing your way into his presence with joy!
{3} And realize what this really means—
we have the privilege of worshiping the Lord our
God.
For he is our Creator and we belong to him.
We are the people of his pleasure.”*

As you serve him, be glad and worship him. Sing your way into

his presence with joy!

- Worship God for Who He is. Worship God for all He has done. Worship God for all He is going to do.
- Take your eyes off of yourself and put them on the cross and shed blood of Jesus.

This reminds me of the first time that worship helped me through a difficult situation. When my daughter was ten years old she was flying home from summer camp. Back in those days children often flew unaccompanied. You could walk right up to the gate and meet your child as they got off the plane. When we got to the airport to pick her up, they told us at the gate to check with an agent. We were advised that her plane had lost one engine and was being redirected to another airport. My ten-year old child was now on a plane with one engine, headed to an unknown destination. I was instantly very upset and worried. We were told to go back home and wait for an update. As we left the airport, my husband started softly worshipping God in the car. This was his way of gently reminding me that God was in control. It immediately redirected my thoughts away from fears and worries and towards God. I remembered that we had prayed for her safe travel that morning and my fear began to subside.

I do not have a great singing voice, but I still sing to the Lord about His faithfulness, His greatness, and my love for Him. It puts my focus on Him instead of my situation.

B. Read or recite the Word to yourself.

Declare who you are in Christ and say what God says about you. Joshua 1:8-9 (NKJV) says, *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (9) Have I not commanded you? Be*

strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

When we meditate on the Word of God and do what it says, we are promised success. We are to have courage because God is always with us. Colossians 3:16 (ESV) combines worship and the Word. It says, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”*

C. Call a godly friend who will encourage, comfort and direct you to a promise of God.

Allow this to be a teachable moment when you can learn something about yourself.

D. Finally, rejoice!

Philippians 4:4 (NKJV) says, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”* Scriptures do not restrict our rejoicing to the good days.

When something good happens, rejoicing in the Lord may seem like the natural, easy response. But the Scriptures do not restrict our rejoicing to just the good days. Paul was a prisoner when he wrote *“rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice.”* How is that possible? How can you rejoice on those days when you are faced with demonic attacks, sickness, or the betrayal of friends?

The Apostle Paul tells us, *“...when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties, see it as an opportunity to experience the greatest joy you can! {3} For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up power within you to endure all things.”* (James 1:2-3 (TPT))

Let’s not forget the other side of the coin. What about the “great” days when you are on top of the world and everything is going right in your life? How can you keep your focus on

rejoicing in the Lord and not on your personal victories? Let's look at some examples in Scripture and see why always rejoicing *"in the Lord"* is the choice we can all make as children of the Most High – every day, in every circumstance.

Jesus was in Capernaum, teaching and preaching in a house (Mark 2:1-2). The place was filled to capacity. Luke 5:17 says, *"the power of the Lord was present to heal them."* Four friends of a man who was paralyzed decided that whatever it took, they were going to bring their disabled friend to Jesus to be healed. When they got to the house where Jesus was, they saw that there was no way to get in. So they climbed on the roof, carrying their friend on his "bed," made a hole in the roof and lowered him down before Jesus.

Matthew 9:2 (NKJV) says, *"When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."* Everyone was shocked with these words. The man was brought to Jesus for healing and Jesus told him to *"be of good cheer your sins are forgiven you"* At that point the man was still lying on his bed, paralyzed. Why would that be reason for cheer?

We see another example in Mark 10:46-49. Blind Bartimaeus was sitting by the road begging. He cried out to Jesus for mercy. Mark 10:49 (NKJV) says, *"So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."* He was still blind, but was told to *"Be of good cheer."*

Why were the paralytic and the blind man both told to *"be of good cheer"* even before they were healed and their situation changed? They were still paralyzed and blind. We can find the answer to that question in Luke chapter 10.

In Luke 10:1-16 we read that Jesus sent out a large group of disciples to *"heal the sick"* and preach that, *"the kingdom of God has come near you"* (Luke 10:9 (NKJV)). In Luke 10:17-

20, we see the return of these seventy disciples Jesus had sent out. They came back rejoicing because demons were subject to them in the name of Jesus. Jesus immediately explains to them that this is not the right reason to rejoice. That doesn't make sense. Why wouldn't that be a reason to rejoice? Jesus explains to the disciples in Luke 10:17-20. In Verse 20 (NKJV), the Lord says, *"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*

In every case, the rejoicing was unrelated to the issues that would seemingly be the reason for joy. Why were they to rejoice? They were all told to rejoice because they had been called by Jesus and forgiven of their sins. 1 Timothy 1:15 (NKJV) says, *"Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners."*

Our lives here on earth are full of both difficult challenges and great victories. But they are all temporary. The focus on our rejoicing should be in the truth, the eternal perspective that we are saved. We are in right standing with God. We can hear His voice calling to us daily. We are forgiven and will spend eternity in His presence.

Trials and Challenges that Seem Too Big

What are you facing today? Are emotions ruling your life because of a trial or challenge that seems bigger than you can handle? Rejoice that you are His child and He is walking through it with you. Are you facing uncertainty or unresolved issues? Do you have a big decision to make? Rejoice, you are one of His sheep and you know His voice. He is calling to you. He has the answer to whatever you are facing. You were saved by His grace and His grace continues to be there every day for you.

Are you doing great things for God? Perhaps you are on top of the world because someone you prayed for was healed, or even raised from the dead. That is great. To God be the glory! This life should bring you joy. But your rejoicing should be founded on the

truth that He is with you and gives you the power to rejoice because you are His child.

Have you done well in business, or been successful on your job? Always remember it is God *“who gives you the power to get wealth.”* (Deuteronomy 8:18 (ESV)) It is God who makes a way for you to be successful. All your blessings come from Him. Proverbs 10:22 (TPT) says, *“True enrichment come from the blessing of the Lord, with rest and contentment in knowing that it all comes from him.”*

Throughout the Psalms we see that King David’s emotional reactions to both the difficulties he faced and victories he won were the same. He was consistent. In every situation, He declared his position of right standing with the Lord. Here is a sampling of David’s psalms from the New King James Version (NKJV) that reveal his heart:

Psalm 34:22: *“The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.”*

Psalm 36:10: *“Oh, continue Your loving-kindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart.”*

Psalm 37:39: *“But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble.”*

Psalms 18:35, 18:46: *“You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great.”* {46} *“The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.”*

Psalm 3:8: *“Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah.”*

When your trials and challenges seem to big, keep your focus on Jesus. He is the *“author and finisher of our faith.”* (Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV))

1 Peter 1:3-8 (TPT)

“Celebrate with praises the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has shown us his extravagant mercy. For his fountain of mercy has given us a new life—we are reborn to experience a living, energetic hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. {4} We are reborn into a perfect inheritance that can never perish, never be defiled, and never diminish. It is promised and preserved forever in the heavenly realm for you! {5} Through our faith, the mighty power of God constantly guards us until our full salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. {6} May the thought of this cause you to jump for joy, even though lately you’ve had to put up with the grief of many trials. {7} But these only reveal the sterling core of your faith, which is far more valuable than gold that perishes, for even gold is refined by fire. Your authentic faith will result in even more praise, glory, and honor when Jesus the Anointed One is revealed. {8} You love him passionately although you did not see him, but through believing in him you are saturated with an ecstatic joy, indescribably sublime and immersed in glory.”

Verse 8b (NKJV): *“Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,”*

Every day you have a choice. It’s not always easy, but it is your choice. Will your emotions control your lives, or will you allow the Spirit of God to direct you? You can decide, no matter what you face, to *“Be of good cheer,” “Rejoice in the Lord always,”* and *“Jump for joy.”* Why? Because your name is written in heaven and God is with you all the way there. *“Nothing will separate you”* from His love. (Romans 8:39 (NKJV))

Finally, Zephaniah 3:17 says, *“The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”*