

Mastering Our Emotions

Introduction.

1. We all know what emotions are, and we all experience emotions.

a. We experience...

* **Positive Emotions like...** Love, joy, happiness, contentment, admiration, affection

* **Negative / Unpleasant** – Loneliness, worry, grief/sorrow, anger, fear, disgust, hatred.

b. We know that **emotions can affect us physically.**

* **Red face** (anger or embarrassment)

* If you get **nervous** you get **Sweaty palms/hands.**

* **Feeling in the pit of the stomach** (fluttering in the heart of joy or happiness when that special someone walks into the room).

• **Anger:** Clenched fists or jaw, flushed face, rapid heartbeat, tense muscles

• **Fear:** Rapid heartbeat, shallow breathing, trembling, pupils

• **Sadness:** Heavy feeling in the chest, slumped posture, decreased energy, slowed heart rate

• **Joy:** Relaxed muscles, smiling, increased energy, butterflies in the stomach (positive connotation)

2. I say all of this to simply remind us that we are emotional creatures, we are used to seeing emotions in others, and experiencing emotions within ourselves.

THREE OBSERVATIONS:

3. First Observation: Emotions, in and of themselves, are not necessarily sinful.

a. **Emotions are just feelings** that we have as a result of events or actions, attitudes we see, words we hear, conversations we have.

b. **Jesus had emotions:**

1) Sorrow at the death of Lazarus (John 11) “Jesus wept” (11:35)

2) Compassion, sadness (“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...” Matt. 23:37-39)

3) Mark 3:5 – Looked upon them with anger and grieved at the hardness of their hearts.

“Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand.

2 And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. **3** And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” **4** And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. **5** And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

c. **Joy** – “the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying; keen pleasure; elation.”

1. Luke 15:5 – Man who found lost sheep rejoiced (joy in heaven over one sinner that repents.)

2. Acts 8 – Ethiopian obeyed the gospel – and went on his way rejoicing.

But of course, some emotions do lead to sin.

d. **Anger**

1. **Saul’s jealousy, anger, hatred** toward David (1 Samuel 18 ff)

* “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

2. **Anger, jealousy, Pride, desire for preeminence, power,** brought **Haman** to anger when Mordecai would not bow before him (**Book of Esther**).

6. 2nd Observation – Emotions are not a safe guide in decision making.

Emotions do not tell us the truth or error of something.

a. Your daughter comes home with a new boyfriend.

* His hair is down to his shoulders, smells like he has not bathed.

* Then you find out he is 25 – never finished HS, has never held a job for over a week, and lives in his parents’

basement.

- * He plays the drums in a night club, no pay, because he says, having fun is the highest goal in life.
- * “But daddy, he has such a cool car – and we like the same kind of music – and he has such dreamy blue eyes.”
- * **She is making her decisions based on emotions** – and emotions are not telling her the truth to the question, “Is this guy really good husband material?”

b. **Gen. 37** - The sons of Jacob lied to their father – and said they found Joseph’s coat with blood on it.

Jacob believed his son was dead. His **emotions** told him he was dead. **He sorrowed** as if he was dead. His emotions told him one thing – but it was not the truth.

c. Emotions are not a good way to make decisions about religious matters.

a. Salvation – how I feel or what the scripture says.

b. Instrumental music – “It sounds so good, makes me feel good to hear that pipe organ.”

c. The stain glass windows, and images, and large vaulted ceilings make me feel so spiritual; going to such a place just feels spiritual.

“If loving Thai food is wrong, I don’t want to be right.”

7. 3rd Observation -- We are called upon by God to control, master, our emotions and not allow them to lead us to sin.

MASTER YOUR EMOTIONS; DON’T LET THEM MASTER YOU!!

a. **NT teaches extensively concerning self-control.**

- 1) **1 Corinthians 9:25-27** – “And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they *do it* to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: 27 but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.”
- 2) **2 Peter 1:5-7** – “Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in *your* virtue knowledge; 6 and in *your* knowledge **self-control**; and in *your* **self-control** patience; and in *your* patience godliness; 7 and in *your* godliness brotherly kindness; and in *your* brotherly kindness love.”
- 3) **Galatians 5:22-25** – “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control**; against such there is no law.”

III. Five Steps to Mastering our Emotions.

A. Analysis (consider, think about, evaluate)

1. **Identify the emotions** which challenge you (temptations).

- * Anger?
- * Worry?
- * Discontent?
- * Fear?
- * Jealousy, envy?

2. Begin with **honest evaluation.**

(James 1:22-26)

“Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: ²⁴ for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. ²⁵ **But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.**”

LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR OF GOD’S WORD!

3. Ask yourself – **Why am I having this emotion?**

- * Why am I so angry?
- * Why am I envious?
- * Why am I not content, covetous?

* Why am I worried, fearful?

Illustration: Cain (Gen. 4.6-7)

“The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”

B. Study God’s Word on your particular problem, temptation.

1. God’s word is a lamp and a light! (Psa. 119.105)

** **Study about anger** / jealousy / covetousness / worry

2. → This study will **remind you how much God hates sin.**

3. → It will **help you see how “ugly” your sin is.**

a. Think of Ahab pouting, turning face to wall. Is that how I look to my wife when I pout? (Yep)

b. Unhinged anger like Saul!

4. Meditation upon God’s word will **help you see solutions** to your problem.

C. Focus on positive steps which can help you overcome a sinful emotion.

What is your plan of action? (Your game plan?) Manchester United, or Liverpool

1. **Lack of contentment? Envy**

* **“Count your blessings”** – name them one by one.

* 1 Tim. 6 – **brought nothing into this world**, and will carry nothing out.

2. Anger, impatience with others?

* **Study** about the love of God.

-- He loved us even in our sins.

-- Christ died for the ungodly.

-- God is patient, not wishing for any to perish.

* **Study about his mercy and grace.** ■

* **Look for the good** in others.

* **Walk a mile in their shoes** – sympathize with their struggles.

(Illustration of man on subway – kids were loud, running around, making noise, out of control... “Sorry my wife just passed away.”)

→ When kids are noisy in worship – be thankful that they come to church.

D. As for help from others.

1. **Gal. 6:1-2** – “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

E. Pray

1. **Philippians 4:6**

“In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving **let your requests be made known unto God.**”

2. **James 1:5** – If any **lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...**

3. Does God want you to grow? Put away sin? Be more self-controlled?

Conclusion:

1. **Emotions are normal, and they truly are a wonderful thing.**

2. **But emotions, if not controlled can become sinful. I must master my emotions, and not Allow them to master me.**

3. **Do you have sinful emotions?**

1. **Analysis (consider, think about). What am I challenged with in my life?**

*** Look into God's word**

2. Study God's word about your particular sinful behavior.

3. Focus on positive steps to help you overcome (what can I do to overcome?)

What is your plan of action?

4. Ask for help from others.

5. Pray