

# Is It Well With Thee?

Bringing our Brokenness and our Bad Habits to Christ

## IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE EMOTIONS - PART 8)

*This is part 41 of the Is It Well With Thee Sermon Series*

### SUMMARY

We live in a world of facades, false fronts, and covered realities. We want to be happy all the time and we want others to think that we are, but underneath the harsh reality is that the bad days, the difficult things, and the high level of stress are all weighing us down. Oftentimes, they leave us feeling discouraged, depressed, and like there is simply no hope, but **THAT ISN'T TRUE AT ALL**. While our enemy wants to use the realities of life against us, God wants us to bring our brokenness and our bad habits to Him so that in the midst of life's very real struggles we can still answer, "It is well."

### REVIEW

For a few weeks now, we have been considering the second component of our soul – the **HEART** (emotions). We began by establishing the fact that while the mind and the heart are two separate functions that are so intricately connected that they **INFLUENCE** and **IMPACT** each other.

#### 1) The **DESIGNING** of the emotions

We found that our emotions are a good gift from a good God for the purpose of helping us **ENJOY** right relationships (with God and others) and **ACCOMPLISH** a good purpose.

#### 2) The **DISTORTING** of the emotions

Our heart (emotions) was designed to work in tandem (together) with our mind and our will, but now, because of sin, our emotions want to **DOMINATE OUR MIND** and they want to **DICTATE OUR WILL**.

Our emotions want three things: to **GAIN OUR ATTENTION**, to **GARNER** (acquire) **OUR AGREEMENT**, and to **GAIN CONTROL OF OUR ACTIONS**. They want us to replace **FAITH** and **FACTS** with **FEELINGS**, and if we let them, our emotions will **RUN**, and they will **RUIN** our lives.

We're considering the three emotional "T's:" emotional **TYRANNY**, emotional, **TRAUMA**, and emotional **TRAINING**.

#### A) **EMOTIONAL TYRANNY**

This life is a war of and a war with our emotions. We are often our own worst enemy (actions), but we are also often the creator of some of our greatest nightmares (feelings). If allowed, our emotions will **DEFINE OUR PERSON**. That's **EMOTIONAL TYRANNY**.

When we make the **CHOICE** to yield **CONTROL** of our situation or our life to our feelings then our feelings will **CONFUSE** and **CORRUPT** our thought process which will in turn **CONTAMINATE** our actions and **CONTRIBUTE** to our downfall.

We need to understand that while we simply can't control when our emotions show or what emotions show up in our heart, we are responsible for how we express those emotions and for how long we entertain those emotions. Emotions are meant to be **MOMENTARY HELPERS**, not **LIFELONG MASTERS**.

#### B) **EMOTIONAL TRAUMA**

We have found that our emotions are very **VALUABLE** (they are good gifts from a good God for a good purpose), our emotions are very **VOLATILE** (they are unpredictable, unstable, not always accurate, and yet, they desperately want to be in control), and our emotions are very **VULNERABLE** (they are open to attack and are capable of being wounded or damaged).

Just because something difficult, painful, or bad happened to you does not mean that you are without **VALUE**, that you are without **PURPOSE**, or that you are without **POTENTIAL**. Grievous things may have happened to you in the past, but God has great things that He wants to lead you towards, if you'll trust Him.

Emotional trauma is more than just a **SITUATION** that an individual was involved in or that an individual had to endure over a period of time; emotional trauma is when a situation leaves its imprint on a person's **SOUL**. The reality is that there are a lot of things in life that have the potential of impacting us long after the incident has taken place.

These impact three of the elements that make up our soul: **INTELLECT**, **EMOTION**, and **WILL**. We found that emotional trauma impacts our **ATTENTION** (what we focus on), our **AFFECTIONS** (how we feel), and our **AMBITIONS** (what we desire to do or perhaps the lack of desire to do).

Last week, we considered how our emotions impact our thoughts and we looked at a few examples.

Unsatisfied, angry, divorced, and abusive parents have the potential to develop thoughts of **DEFICIENCY** (I'm not enough; I can't do anything right, I am the cause of the trouble, I won't quite do).

Abandonment, neglect, and being forsaken by others have the potential to develop thoughts of **DESERTION** (No one loves me, no one really cares enough about me to help me or to stay with me).

A lot of tough, terrible, and tragic things in life have the potential to develop thoughts of **DREAD** (bad things are coming – morning, job, sickness, financial failure, getting old, and death).

Together, these feelings and thoughts, and others that we just didn't have time to get into have the potential to develop the thought of **DEFECTIVENESS** (I am broken).

The great news is that God wants to enable you to be triumphant over all of those thoughts and all of those feelings. Through the Word of God and through the Holy Spirit, God is able to heal your trauma and brokenness and help you to **CONTROL** and to **RETRAIN** your emotions.

And that's really where we pick back up.

## MESSAGE

1 Thessalonians 5:14-24 says, *"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the word of God, I want to draw your attention back to verse 23 where the Bible says, *"And the very God of peace sanctify...your whole spirit..."*

For a few moments, I'd like to begin to consider this thought: **IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE EMOTIONS – PART 8)**

*Disclaimer - I am not a doctor, and I am not approaching these topics from the standpoint of one. I am simply attempting to help us gain an understanding of what the Bible has to say about our mental, emotional, and physical health.*

- 1) The **DESIGNING** of the emotions
- 2) The **DISTORTING** of the emotions
  - A) **EMOTIONAL TYRANNY**
  - B) **EMOTIONAL TRAUMA**
- 3) The **DEVELOPING** of the emotions

Now that we understand that our emotions are a good gift from a good God for a good purpose that have been distorted by the entrance of sin into our life and that can be disturbed by the realities of our life, we have to consider what is perhaps the most difficult part of our emotions – what do we do **WITH** and what we do **ABOUT** them. And there seems to be a variety of voices on the matter.

- (A) There are those who say that you should **DISPLAY** them

They would say it this way: “You just need to let it out;” “Go blow off some steam;” Say whatever you feel like you need to say and do whatever you need to do just to get it off of your chest.” In other words, however you feel on the inside should determine what you say and what you do on the outside. As a matter of fact, there are those who will go as far as labelling you as a hypocrite if you don’t put all of your emotions on display for the world to see. Here’s the reality: the world is not a big enough platform for all of your emotions to be displayed.

- (B) There are those who say that you should **DEFEND** them (at all cost)

Those who cling to this idea have developed the idea that how you feel is the most important thing about you. You should always feel good, and so, anything or anyone that makes you feel any other way is a threat to your very existence and therefore must be eliminated. The truth of the matter is that if we defended all of our emotions, we would be defending things that are wrong, things that are hurtful, and things that are not pleasing to God.

- (C) There are those who say that you should **DENY** them

We’re told to bottle up, or suppress, how we feel. This is simply emotional dishonesty. While our emotions are not to be guides for how we live our life, our emotions are gauges that should be looked at to see what is going on in our life. When we deny

emotions, we're simply adding fuel to the fire that might not show up in the short-term, but that will definitely blow up in the long-term.

(D) There are those who say that you should **DEAL WITH** them.

The idea behind this is that we shouldn't be emotional about what has happened to us because our emotions are interfering with the life and work of those around us. They would say things like this: "toughen up," "get a grip," "just get over it already."

How many of us at some point in our lives have had individuals make statements to us or perhaps we have made statements to ourselves that fall within those categories? Yeah, we all have. So, which one is right? Should we display them, defend them, deny them, or deal with them? Well, that depends. You see, right emotions should be displayed, and they should be defended because they're right. However, the opposite is just as true. The simple reality is that not all of my emotions are right. As a matter of fact, some of them are absolutely wrong, and as such, should not be displayed, they should not be defended, they should be denied the opportunity to control my life, and I should be honest about them so that I can deal with them in a way that helps me move forward and that honors God along the way.

As a society, when it comes to our emotions, we have done two really bad things: we have given our emotions too much **POWER** and we have embraced the idea that we are not **PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE** for how we feel. Emotions are a **PART** of our life; they are not meant to be the **PRIMARY FOCUS** of our life.

This is where our third emotional "T" comes in - **EMOTIONAL TRAINING**. As we have already discovered, emotions happen, and while I cannot always determine what emotion will show up when, I can develop a **PERSONAL DISCIPLINE** and a **PRE-DETERMINED PROCESS** that I can rely on to stay in or to gain control of whatever emotion decides to show up next.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 says, *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."*

While I understand that this is dealing with the body, it is just as true when it comes to our emotions. We have to learn how to possess them. We need to develop them so that they can be used appropriately for our benefit and for our blessing.

The question now is how? How do we train our emotions? And that is what we are focused on this evening.

A) We need to **IDENTIFY EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS**

All of us are more prone to certain emotions than others, but we all have emotional triggers that stir up the emotional tyrant that lives inside of us (anger, anxiety, worry, etc.). These triggers can be anything and everything – a sight, a sound, a sensation, a

smell, a situation, the list goes on and on. These are elements that produce an immediate and intense emotional response.

Now, I want to be very clear about what I am saying and what I am not saying. These elements are to be **IDENTIFIED**, not necessarily **ELIMINATED**. Here's the reality: not all of your emotional triggers can be eliminated, nor should they be. We can't always get rid of what makes us feel bad. Sometimes, we just have to learn how to trust Christ to give us the peace through and the strength over the emotions that are triggered. If I am going to gain victory over my wrong emotions, then I first have to gain an understanding as to what and when they are triggered so that I can be prepared with a pre-determined response when they show up.

## B) We need to **IDENTIFY EMOTIONAL TENDENCIES**

### (1) When our emotions are triggered, we tend to **RUN** and **HIDE**

We often react the way a wounded animal does, we instinctively try to get away from where we are and find a place where we can hunker down for a little while and lick our wounds. Studies show that wounded people often quit the good things that they have been doing and they often attempt to push away the people who truly love and want the best for them.

### (2) When our emotions are triggered, we tend to **RAGE** and **HOWL**

First, we need to understand that some people have a bad temper that has nothing to do with a wounded heart. They just need to repent of their heart that is hard and that is full of anger and change the way that they interact with people.

Second, those who have a wounded heart often react the same way that a wounded animal that is found does – they strike, and they bite, even when that person is trying to help them. It has been correctly said that “hurt people hurt people.”

Third, a person with a wounded heart tends to lose control of their tongue. Much like a wounded animal will growl and do their best not to let someone look at their wound. A wounded heart often says things that they don't really mean, and they often say it in a way that they normally wouldn't.

### (3) When our emotions are triggered, we tend to **REEL** and **HOLD ON TIGHT**

We allow whatever was done and whatever was said to consume our thoughts and conversations. It's all we think about and it's all we talk about. In addition, we allow it to increase. What I mean by that is that everything hurts, everything is an attack, and everyone is out to get us. We become hypersensitive to everything. We become hyper-focused on ourselves. We will begin to think thoughts of **RATIONALIZATION** and **JUSTIFICATION**.

C) We need to **UNDERSTAND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

While it is wrong for others to be disrespectful and treat us wickedly, it is just as wrong for us to blame everyone else for how we feel. While individuals and circumstances can indeed serve as emotional triggers, we are responsible for the emotion that we allow to remain. The only person responsible for your emotions is you. You can control them and you can change them, but you have to make the choice to do so.

*Ephesians 4:20-24 says, "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."*

D) We need to **ESTABLISH A PERSONAL PLAN**

To refuse to plan is to plan to fail. You cannot tackle your emotions head on in the moment. As we have discovered, they are too quick, and they are too strong. So, if you want victory, then you need a plan – a plan that includes a process.

(1) **PAUSE and BREATHE**

As we discovered earlier, when our emotions are triggered, our immediate tendency is to run and hide. Now, while certain situations require you getting to a safe location and should absolutely be done, a lot of the time, we simply need to take a moment to pause and breathe. Don't act immediately or impulsively. Give your thoughts a moment to catch up to your emotions to see if the actions that your emotions are pushing are needed or right.

(2) **PRAY**

The battle is bigger than you which means that you need to take your situation, including how you feel, to the One that is far wiser than you and far bigger than what you find yourself confronted with.

*Matthew 11:28-30 says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* Breathe

*Psalms 91:1-3 says, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence."*

Psalm 61:1-2 says, *"Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."*

### **(3) POUR YOURSELF INTO THE WORD OF GOD**

As we have already discovered, our emotions are deceitful. They're not always right. So, we need a sure foundation that we turn to that we can trust to always be right. That foundation is the Word of God which is absolutely and always true regardless of what we think and or feel.

Romans 15:4 says, *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*

### **(4) CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS and RESTRAIN WRONG EMOTIONS**

We cannot allow our lives and actions to be dominated by our feelings and emotions. The way that we change our emotions is by changing our thoughts.

Philippians 4:8 says, *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

### **(5) PARTNER WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

A wounded heart will often push away people. However, what you need is to know that you are loved, and you need to be loved on. We weren't meant to go through life alone, nor were we meant to handle emotional stresses and stressors alone. Don't fight and bite those that God has brought into your life to help you heal and improve.