

Is It Well With Thee?

Bringing our Brokenness and our Bad Habits to Christ

IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE EMOTIONS - PART 5)

This is part 38 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.

Sin has distorted our perspective by narrowing our focus. Instead of us being focused on pleasing God and on being a positive influence, sin turns our focus inward (to ourselves) and limits our focus to the short-term. We live in the moment and in ways that benefit us, neglecting, and even ignoring, the **SPIRITUAL ASPECT**, the **LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES**, and/or the **SURROUNDING IMPACT** (others).

God created us to be **VALUABLE** (and we are because we were created in His image), but sin has made us **VULNERABLE** to both **DECEIT** and to **HURT**. While our emotions are **PURPOSEFUL**, **PROMPT**, and **POWERFUL**, our emotions also have the potential of pointing us in the wrong direction as well as trapping us in a prison cell of our own making.

We need to understand that our emotions weren't just given to us for **AFFECTION**; our emotions were given to us for **ACTION**.

To **DELIGHT** in connecting with God and others.

To **DIRECT US TOWARD** things that are right and that we should do,

To **DIRECT US AWAY FROM** things that are wrong and that we should not do,

To direct us to **DEAL WITH** the bad decisions that we have made and the wrong directions that we have gone in.

Our enemy wants to, and he works diligently to, utilize our emotions...

To **DIRECT US TOWARD** things that are wrong and that we should not do.

To **DIRECT US AWAY FROM** things that are right and that we should do.

To **DISTANCE US** and to **DIVIDE US** from others.

To **DENY** or **DEFEND** the bad decisions that we have made and the wrong directions that we have gone in.

God gave us our emotions to lead us toward **SATISFACTION**; sin has twisted that original good gift (emotions) and their design and turned them into elements that can be very **POOR GUIDES** and very **PAINFUL THINGS** especially when left **UNFILTERED**, **UNTRAINED**, and **UNGUIDED**.

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 5)**

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

In our last thought, I mentioned that we are going to be considering the three emotional "T's:" emotional **TYRANNY**, emotional, **TRAUMA**, and emotional **TRAINING**. In this thought, we want to consider the first emotional "T."

A) **EMOTIONAL TYRANNY**

I want to begin this thought with a statement that someone wrote. That statement was this: "Living in this world is a war of emotions." And they're right. This life is a war of and a war with our emotions. While it was not intended to be that way, it has become that way because of sin. We often make the statement that we are our own worst enemy, and that's true, but we could just as accurately say this: I am the creator of some of my greatest nightmares. Now, what do I mean by that?

Being my own worst enemy primarily has to do with something that I have or have not done, something that I am or that I am not doing, or something that I want or don't want to do. The thought itself is focused on my actions or the lack thereof.

Being the creator of some of my greatest nightmares, however, primarily has to do with what and with how I am feeling. You see, some of the greatest nightmares that we deal with have nothing to do with something that has happened to us or something that could happen to us; it has everything to do with an emotion or with emotions that have been stirred up inside of us. It's what we could aptly call the prison cell of our emotions and the reality is that we lock ourselves up in our own self-made prison cells.

Let me try to illustrate. How many of you have ever gotten victory over something that was a very real struggle to you, but what you found out was that the struggle on the inside of you was greater than the thing that you thought was the cause of your struggle. You started out with the thought "I can't," but you ended with the statement "That wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be." Sometimes our emotions prevent us from moving in a way that we could or in a way that we should, and sometimes our emotions move us in a way that we shouldn't and that we later wish that we hadn't.

In Job chapter 15, we find that one of Job's "friends," a man by the name of Eliphaz the Temanite, is giving Job some very wrong and very unhelpful advice (I don't think it was done intentionally, but nevertheless it is what happened) while Job is enduring the most difficult season of his life (physically, spiritually, and emotionally). However, while the advice that Eliphaz is giving is not entirely helpful or truthful, that does not mean that there aren't truthful statements made in what Eliphaz says. I'd like to draw your attention to one of those true statements.

In Job 15:12, Eliphaz asks this question, "*Why doth thine heart carry thee away?...*"

The word *heart* here is being used for the emotions and the phrase *carry thee away* means "to seize and to take away." And so, the statement that Eliphaz is making is this, "Job, why have you allowed your emotions to take you captive." Now, there is a lot that we could say in answer to Eliphaz's statement and Job's situation, but what I am focusing on here is the fact that our emotions, when stirred, can seize control of us and take us in a direction that we ought not go.

I've already established the fact that our emotions want to **DOMINATE OUR MIND** and they want to **DICTATE OUR WILL**, but we need to take it a step farther. You see, if allowed, our emotions will **DEFINE OUR PERSON**. The reality is that it does not take long for our emotions to develop a reputation. We can become known as an **ANGRY** person, as a **BITTER** person, as a **JEALOUS** person, as an **INSECURE** person, as a **DESPRESSING** person, and the list goes on and on. We don't have to be those kinds of people, but all of us have the potential to become those type of people if we allow our emotions to take control of our life. That's what I am calling **EMOTIONAL TYRANNY**.

By definition, the word *tyranny* means "to exercise power or control over something or someone." What we need to understand about our emotions is that they don't just

want to show up in our life, they want to sit in the driver's seat of our life. 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.

James 1:14-16 says it this way, *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."*

All of us are going to experience emotions, and that's okay. Remember, our emotions are a good gift from a good God for a good purpose. 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. Why? Because our emotions can lead us to the right steps that are satisfying, or they can lead us into the struggles and sorrows of sin. For instance...

The feeling of **LONELINESS** can lead to sin (unhealthy reflection and unhealthy relationships).

The feeling of **FEAR** can lead to sin (a lack of faith in God, a lack of obedience to God, and a lack of action before God).

The feeling of **LOVE** can lead to sin (unhealthy connections, unholy attractions, and inappropriate actions).

The feeling of **CONTEMPT** can lead to sin (disdain, condescension, and hatred).

Some of our greatest battles are emotional ones. Why? Because of what we are told to do with our feelings. We're told to **GLOSS OVER** (deny) our feelings, we're told to **GET CONTROL** (which usually amounts to nothing more than "bottling them up," or suppressing them at least to the best of our ability) of our feelings, we're told to **GET OVER** our feelings, and/or we're told to **GIVE IN** to our feelings.

We have essentially made a god out of our emotions (feelings), allowing them to define and dictate our life. By the way, that's nothing new. It's a reality that mankind has dealt with since Adam and Eve fell in the Garden.

Philippians 3:18-19 says, *"(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)."*

Romans 16:17-18 says, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid"*

them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

The phrase *whose God is their belly* is not talking about individuals who were living to fill their bellies; it's talking about individuals who were living according to their emotions. The belly was considered to be the feeling center of an individual. In other words, these are individuals who were worshipping their feelings, and it was that very mentality that made them a hinderance to their own spiritual transformation as well as to the cause of Jesus Christ.

Numbers 15:39-40 says, *"And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God."*

In other words, don't make the decision to meander, or wander, according to your emotions because they will cause you to participate in those things that do not please God.

Throughout Scripture, we find that the feelings of **anger, fear, terror, envy, jealousy, lust, hatred, resentment, bitterness, guilt, depression, pride, arrogance, selfishness**, and **great sorrow** all come with great warnings that we are not to let them rule our life.

These emotions have the potential and probability of ruining our lives (weakness and vulnerability).

Proverbs 14:30 says, *"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."*

Proverbs 15:13 says, *"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."*

These emotions will prevent us from walking with God correctly and consistently (self over Sovereign), but it will provide an opportunity for our enemy to cause problems in our life.

Ephesians 4:27 says, *"Neither give place to the devil."*

These emotions will have a poor impact on our physical well-being (worried myself sick) as well as our social reputation (I just don't understand why I don't have friends).

Proverbs 29:22 says, *"An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. "*

These emotions will get more and more powerful the longer that they are allowed to remain in our heart or in control of our life.

There are too many people today that cannot get victory in the area of their emotions because they have fueled them for far too long. Their emotion has been allowed to become a passion that is one great big problem in their life and in the lives of everybody else that is around them.