

# Is It Well With Thee?

Bringing our Brokenness and our Bad Habits to Christ

## IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE EMOTIONS - PART 3)

*This is part 36 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 couple of 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.

We found that emotions aren't just **EARTHLY** elements; they're **ETERNAL** elements. They aren't the result of a **FALLEN WORLD**; they are a major part of our **FUNCTIONALITY** that enables us to fulfill our two great purposes: (1) to love God and (2) to love others.

Initially, our emotions were designed to function as *connectors*. We were created to **DESIRE** and to **DELIGHT** in fellowship. Our emotions were given to us to aid in our relationships: on the practical side, our emotions were designed to **EXPRESS** our mind, and on the purposeful side, our emotions were designed to signal **SATISFACTION**.

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

When Adam and Eve sinned, our minds were **DARKENED**, and our emotions were **DISTORTED**. However, before we could consider how our emotions were **DISTORTED**, we had to consider the **TRANSFORMATION** that our emotions went through after the fall. When Adam and Eve plunged mankind into sin, our emotions took on another responsibility. They still serve as *connectors*, but now they also serve as *informers*. They show what is going on inside of us and they send up signals in response to what is going on around us.

We found that our emotions can be likened to a voice that communicates a **NEED** and/or a **DESIRE**.

**LOVE** communicates the desire for **COMPASSION**.

**FEAR** communicates the need for **PROTECTION**.

**SADNESS** communicates the need for **REFLECTION**.

**CONCERN** and **ANXIETY** communicate the need for **INTENTION**.

**ANGER** communicates the need for **ACTION**.

**GUILT** and **SHAME** communicate the need for **REDEMPTION** and **RESTORATION**.

In order to be heard in a very noisy world and to help move us in the right direction, our emotions had to be powerful. And they are! That's why the Bible often refers to our emotions as our *reigns*.

The word *emotion* comes from a Latin word that means "to move," and it fits because our emotions are designed to move us to action.

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 feeble-minded, 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 3)**

*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

Now that we have established the fact that our emotions by design are good and that since the fall of man our emotions serve as both *connectors* (express) and *indicators* (inform), we now need to emphasize the fact that what was initially intended to **PRIMARILY** be a **BLESSING** has now, since the fall of man, become one of our **PRIME PROBLEMS**. Our emotions are **GOOD**, but they want to **GOVERN** – something that they were not and something that they are not designed to do.

I like the way somebody put it: "Feelings live on the front row of our lives like unruly children clamoring for attention." And they're right...well, partially right any way. Yes, they want to be heard, but they also want to control the situation and they seek to accomplish that goal through **TEARS**, through **TERRIBLE ATTITUDES**, and through **TEMPER TANTRUMS**.

When it comes to our emotions, we need to understand that they want three things:

- (A) They want to **GAIN OUR ATTENTION**
- (B) They want to **GARNER** (acquire) **OUR AGREEMENT**
- (c) They want to **GAIN CONTROL OF OUR ACTIONS**.

We have established the fact that our soul has four components – a mind, a heart, a will, and a conscience. The heart (our emotions) was designed to work in tandem (together) with our mind and our will. However, with the entrance of sin into our world and the infiltration of sin into every aspect of our being, when it boils down to it, our emotions don't want to just send

up **SIGNALS**; our emotions want to **STIR US UP** and they want to **SUPERVISE** (be in control of) **OUR RESPONSES**. Our emotions want to **DOMINATE OUR MIND** and our emotions want to **DICTATE OUR WILL**. Our emotions want us to replace **FAITH** and **FACTS** with **FEELINGS**.

While feelings have their place and while feelings serve a role in our ability to function, they are to be a gauge and nothing more. They were never intended to be our guide, and especially not now that sin has become our struggle.

We see this illustrated in Genesis chapter 3.

Genesis 3:6 says, *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

The Bible is very clear here when it describes what happened inside of Eve, when she ate the fruit. It says that she saw it, that she desired it, and that she did eat it. The word *desired* here means “to covet, or to lust.” Can I say it this way? Eve allowed her **FEELINGS** to take over and when she did, she **FELL** into sin.

1 John 2:15-17 says, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*

Here’s the thing: all of these – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – all stir up an emotional response, if allowed to, that leads to that which is contrary to the will of God. Her emotions were stirred up with her to the point that she valued being wise more than she valued being with the One Who is wise, and her lust, her feelings, led to her walking in a way that was contrary to God. Lastly, see how her emotions motivated her to act. She ate the fruit. She didn’t hesitate; she acted. She didn’t consult with Adam or with God; she leaned on her own understanding, and she erred.

Proverbs 3:5-7 says, *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”*

Here’s the thing: our emotions go bad when the desires for things other than God begin to rule our heart, and then, they lead us not only in the wrong direction, but they lead us to do wrong and even wicked things.

Psalms 95:10 says, *“Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.”*

You see, when Adam and Eve sinned, something happened inside of them that had never happened before, they began to experience **NEGATIVE** feelings and they began to demonstrate **SINFUL** feelings.

Genesis 3:7-10 says, *“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”*

When they ate the fruit, we find that their heart was immediately filled with shame, with guilt, and with fear. All of those feelings are negative feelings, but all of them were good emotions for them to feel. Why? Because it indicated that something was wrong. However, those same emotions were allowed to motivate a wrong response – they disobeyed the Word of God, they hid themselves from God, and they blamed everyone else for their own wrong decision. That’s what living life according to our emotions will do. It makes us our own god and it causes us to be dishonest with ourselves because again we are bypassing fact, we are setting aside faith, and we are letting our feelings **RUN** and **RUIN** our lives.

The reality is that our emotions can be **ENJOYABLE**, but they can also be **MISERABLE**, and they can cause us to **MAKE POOR DECISIONS** that one day we will regret. When allowed, our emotions will take us on a wild rollercoaster of a ride. Why? Because our emotions can be corrupted, or as one writer put it hijacked, by sin.

Jeremiah 16:9-10 says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”*

The word *deceitful* means “fraudulent; crooked; confused; corrupted.”

The phrase *desperately wicked* means “to be frail; to be feeble, to be sick.”

Simply put, while our emotions have a purpose and a role to serve in our life, they are also very unreliable. They can and often are **MISLEADING**, **MESSY**, and **MISEARABLE**. Just like you can’t trust every thought that comes into your mind, you can’t trust every emotion that you feel.

Proverbs 23:7 says, *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”*

When our emotions run high, they interfere with the brain’s ability to process information appropriately and to reason or think clearly. This happens because of the **STRENGTH** and because of the **SPEED** of our emotions.

In my study, I found that this is a process that is called “amygdala hijacking,” As we all know, our brain is a very complex organ, but in regard to this portion of our study, we can divide the brain up into two primary regions: the **LIMBIC SYSTEM** (where our emotions are centered) and the **NEOCORTEX** (where our reasoning and impulse control occur).

The limbic system is located at the top of the spinal cord, and the neocortex is a little further away (think closer to our skull). Data enters the limbic system through the **THALAMUS** (which is like the reception area of an office). The thalamus then sends impulses to other parts of the brain, including the amygdala and the neocortex.

The **AMYGDALA** is like an emotional filing cabinet (it stores past experiences, emotions, and witnessed examples). Because of the way the brain is wired, data arrives at the amygdala a few nanoseconds before it gets to the neocortex, which is a few inches further away from the thalamus. If that data triggers intense emotions, the amygdala can take control of your mind, body and your mouth before your neocortex has time to process the data. That’s what they call *amygdala hijacking* and it typically results in the following process: a strong emotion which triggers an impulsive reaction that is typically quickly regretted.

To put this in simple terms, when emotions go up, reasoning usually goes down. We all have experienced amygdala hijacking. There have been times when my children did or said something to which I reacted or responded incorrectly, and mere moments later I felt a sense of deep regret for my actions. (Think Apostle Peter denying Christ three times).

Our emotions can be **TRIGGERED**, our emotions can be **TRAINED**, and our emotions can **TAKE OVER**. I know I said it before, but it needs to be said again. Emotions don’t get out of control; emotions have a tendency to get in control, and when they do, it often leads to great problems.