

GIVING GOD CONTROL OF YOUR EMOTIONS

Living for Christ requires having the kind of faith in God that gives Him control over every aspect of your life (Proverbs 3:5-7). One element of giving God control of your life is giving Him control over your emotions. This lesson will focus on some basics about what this should look like.

PROVERBS 25:28

In ancient times, the primary defense of many cities was its wall. The picture of this passage, then, demonstrates that a person without the proper control over his/her spirit (e.g. temper) is like this city whose walls have been broken down, making it susceptible to enemy attacks! Therefore, the person who is controlled by emotion rather than controlling emotion so that it is handled appropriately is inviting the enemy to come and wreak havoc on his/her life (physically, relationally, spiritually, etc.)! Although emotions (i.e. happiness, anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, disgust, surprise) have their good and proper place in God's marvelous design of the human mind, the challenge is not allowing these emotions to get outside their proper, God-given purpose. Of course, the devil loves to pervert what God has created to be so good (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 7:7-12). He certainly does this concerning our emotions. So, we must refuse to allow emotion to take control of our lives (Proverbs 29:11)!

1 PETER 5:8-9

The devil wants you to lose perspective that you are at war for your soul (1 Peter 2:11-12; Ephesians 6:10-13). He wants you to get distracted by the things of this life so that your mind does not properly focus on how he is working to manipulate and deceive you. One way he does this is by getting you to be focused and consumed by your own

emotions so that they become the driving force behind your decisions. When this happens, you are extremely susceptible to his attacks (often not even seeing them coming) because you stop processing information and making decisions with a clear focus on what God wants you to do (like trying to see through the water when the dirt has been stirred up). Sobriety is key to overcoming this. Sobriety goes far beyond just abstaining from intoxicating substances that would cloud your mind/judgment. It means that you must fight to keep your mind clear and rational. Certainly, letting yourself become focused/consumed by emotion will make you irrational. A good example is found in 2 Kings 5, whenever Naaman refused to do what he was told so he could be healed because of his anger (vv. 10-14). Therefore, you must be firmly grounded in the word of God so you do not allow yourself to make decisions based on irrational emotions!

MATTHEW 10:26-33

The Bible teaches how God wants people to respond to various emotions. For example, the emotion of fear is a useful thing that helps people stay safe. Yet, Satan will try to use this emotion to overpower the faith God expects His people to have. He did this with the Israelites whenever they refused to enter the land God promised to give them because they were afraid of the people in the land (Numbers 13:26-14:9), resulting in God punishing that generation. However, Jesus reminds us that we must fear God above people. People are limited to this physical realm in how they can harm you, but rebelling against God results in eternal consequences! When you live in faith, you will recognize that there is no reason to fear what people can do to you (Hebrews 13:5-6; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Romans 8:18)!

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

There are two emotions to consider from this text. First, consider joy and happiness. While many want to equate joy and happiness, the Bible helps us see they are different. For example, the emotion of

happiness can come and go depending on earthly circumstances (Ecclesiastes 3:4). However, the blessing of joy is rooted in your relationship with Christ and does not depend on your earthly circumstances (Acts 5:40-42)! Second, consider anxiety and peace. Although many things happen in life that provoke the emotion of anxiety, you must not let it consume and control you (Matthew 6:25-34). Instead, God teaches that you must give your concerns to Him in prayer, as He cares about you (1 Peter 5:7)!

EPHESIANS 4:26-27

Anger has an appropriate, God-given place in our lives. However, it is important to understand where the anger you experience comes from. Jesus's anger would come from a place of committed service to the Father and be directed toward sin (Mark 3:5). However, anger often comes from something that is focused on yourself instead of God (i.e. something you have experienced in your past, something you are insecure about, some way you perceive you have been mistreated, etc.). Regardless, you need to properly process your emotion of anger rather than just giving full vent to it (Proverbs 29:11) or being quick-tempered (Proverbs 14:29; Ecclesiastes 7:9). So, this passage instructs that whenever you experience the emotion of anger you make sure that you do not respond to it in sinful ways (i.e. speaking rashly, revenge, violence, etc.). Furthermore, you must not allow the anger to stew in your heart – as it will continue to eat at you and give Satan a much greater opportunity to influence you.

CONCLUSION

Giving God control of your emotions will impact everything you do in response to your emotions. While many emotions are experienced in life, letting God mold your emotions will cause you to make sure each response is according to the teachings of Scripture and pleasing to God. Therefore, you must humble yourself to accept and obey these and all of God's instructions about your emotions.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

How is failing to control your emotions like a wall around an ancient city being broken down?

How does Satan try to pervert the good use of your emotions?

What does it mean to be sober-minded?

How can emotions negatively impact your sober-mindedness?

What role should God's word play in determining how to handle your emotions?

How does God teach you to handle fear?

How does God teach you to handle anxiety?

How does God teach you to handle anger?

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Written by Eric Krieg

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