

**TITLE: EMOTIONALISM IN RELIGION**

**INTRO:** ‘Emotion’ & ‘religion’ seem to go hand in hand. But there are disagreements, even among members of the church, as to the proper place of emotion in worship & the life of the Christian. Is emotion wrong? If so, should the alternative be cold, meaningless stoicism? There are extremes to which one can go in either direction, but what is right in God’s sight?

**I. THE EMOTIONALISM GOD FORBIDS:**

- A. Emotion that results in disorder (in worship)
1. Through the Word, God equips us for **every** good work. This obviously includes worship. Everything God wants the church to do in worship will be found in the New Testament (**2 Tim 3:1-17; 2 Pet 1:3; John 4:24 w/John 17:17**).
  2. But emotionalism has resulted in: rolling in the aisles, clapping, dancing, swaying, lifting hands – these are results of emotion (& sincerity – we don’t doubt the sincerity of this person). But only one of these is ever commanded by God.
  3. “*Lifting hands*” is commanded in **1 Tim 2:8**
    - a. But this is not about literally lifting up hands. It’s about an appropriate offering to God through prayer.
    - b. This is to be done by men only – “*I will that men (masc. gender) pray everywhere....*”
    - c. The figurative *hands* to be lifted up are also to be *holy* (pure; undefiled by sin – Thayer). Emotionalism tends to ignore this requirement!
  4. “*Let all things be done decently (properly) & in order*” (**1 Cor 14:40**). *Worship must be according to spirit and truth (John 4:24)*. This is foundational for true worship, but emotionalism replaces this foundation with feelings!
- B. Emotion that results in disobedience
1. The Gnostic extreme – the general approach that my spirit (my heart) is good, so my actions can be rationalized.
  2. The perversion of the plan of salvation
    - a. So many have been taught to simply say a prayer to be saved. They do this, feel emotional about it, then stop there.
    - b. When taught the truth, they say, “I know I’m saved because I feel it!” In other words, “I feel saved, therefore I am saved.”
    - c. But it’s salvation (forgiveness of sins) that brings about emotion, not the other way around. Emotion is not evidence.
    - d. My wife & I just made our flight reservation to Europe and are very excited about it, especially considering the problems we had booking it! But our excitement about the trip is *not* the evidence that we’re booked. (What would happen to that emotion if we found out that our reservation actually hadn’t gone through?) The evidence is the confirmed reservation we have printed, and this brings about the subsequent emotion.
    - e. This emotion is all he has (because he doesn’t have scripture to show he’s saved). So he relies on this emotion, and it results in continued disobedience to God’s simple plan of salvation!
    - f. He’s sincere in this emotion, but sincerity isn’t enough. Paul was sincere, yet sincerely wrong. **Acts 23:1**- “*I’ve lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*” **26:9**- “*I thought...I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus...*”
    - g. **Emotion is the result of salvation, not the evidence of it!**
  3. O.S.A.S. (goes along with the Gnostic extreme) – one’s extreme emotion of believing he’s saved causes him to accept the false idea that he can never fall.
- C. Emotion that results in nothing (no action)
1. Whether in or out of “worship,” one claims to have great love & emotion for Jesus. But there’s no evidence of this in his life.
  2. No Bible knowledge, no pursuit of righteousness, no sorrow for sin, no focusing on others and removal of greed from his life.

**II. THE EMOTIONALISM GOD REQUIRES:**

- A. Necessary emotions – those emotions that are grounded in God’s word (in faith, which comes from the Word – **Rom 10:17**):
1. Love – **1 Pet 1:22**- *love one another with a pure heart fervently*. Love is *more* than an emotion, but it is an emotion!
  2. Joy – **Gal 5:22**–Fruit of the Spirit; **Ph 4:4**–*Rejoice in the Lord always!* **1 Pet 4:12-13**–When you’re tried w/ fiery trial, rejoice!
  3. Hope – **Rom 12:12** – rejoicing in hope; **Heb 3:6**–*If we hold fast the confidence & the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*
  4. Sorrow – **2 Cor 7:10** – As opposed to worldly sorrow, *godly sorrow* is a requirement! Clearly sorrow is a required emotion!
  5. Hate - **Pro 8:13** – *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil*. So we love the sinner, but hate the sin!
  6. Fear - **Mt 10:28**–*Fear him who is able to destroy both soul & body in hell*. **Heb 4:1**–Fear, lest we come short of the promise.
- B. The results of emotion – these emotions are required for a reason – to produce the proper (biblical) results:
1. Sorrow for sin:
    - a. Sorrow for your own sin results in repentance (**2 Cor 7:10**)
    - b. Sorrow for the sin of the world (righteous indignation) results in evangelizing the lost, & reproving/rebuking the saved.
  2. Hatred for sin results in ceasing it in your own life, & hatred of it in the lives of others. **Rev 2:6** – “*But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*”
  3. Love results in obedience (**John 14:15; 1 John 5:3; 2 John 6**). You can’t say you love God or Jesus, if you don’t obey them!
  4. Joy results in giving of yourself – **2 Cor 8:2** – *in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy & deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*” Many claim joy in the Lord. But can the same liberal giving be seen in them?
  5. Fear results in obedience in our own life & evangelism of others. **2 Cor 5:11**–knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men
  6. Hope results in patience – **Rom 8:24-25** – *If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*. Patience is *not* an emotion! It is an active endurance of what this world hits us with, knowing that Heaven will be worth it!

**CONCLUSION:** **2 Cor 13:5** – “Examine yourself...” not “just go by your feelings...” **1 John 5:13**– “*these things have I written...that ye may know you have eternal life*” – not “you’ll know by your feelings!” But a certain amount of emotionalism is obviously appropriate. Having our sins forgiven ought to elicit emotion! (**Lk 7:47**– “*to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*” - he thinks he has little to forgive, so he loves little). When we recognize how much we’ve been forgiven, we are extremely thankful, and we love more. This is appropriate emotion. But it must result in proper actions, as we’ve seen. How much emotion do you have during worship? How much do you have as a Christian in general?