



## What the Bible Teaches Us About *Negative Emotions*

With Bishop Ronald K. Powell

***“How can the Bible help me overcome my grief, anger, fear, anxiety, depression, etc.?”***

- *“What is emotional health?”*
- *“Are negative emotions inherently unhealthy?”*
- *“How easy is it to become emotionally healthy?”*
- *“Should emotional health be a goal?”*

### **Biblical Assumptions**

#### **Related to Emotional Health**

I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . And I heard a loud voice saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain . . .” (Revelation 21:1-4)

**-WE ARE DEEPLY BROKEN PEOPLE LIVING IN A BADLY BROKEN WORLD**

We know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also, we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:22-23)

## **-We should manage our emotional expectations realistically.**

*God can give us substantial healing in this life, but total healing comes only when Christ returns.*

### **-WE ARE ALL INHERENTLY PRONE TO CERTAIN EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

- SOME OF US HAVE BEEN DEEPLY WOUNDED & SCARRED BY TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES
- WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE RACKED BY PAINFUL CIRCUMSTANCES AS WE GO THROUGH LIFE
- COMMITTED CHRISTIANS WILL EXPERIENCE ADDITIONAL EMOTIONAL PAIN AS SOLDIERS IN A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

## **-Negative emotions are not inherently bad**

- THEY TELL US THAT WE & OUR WORLD ARE NOT AS THEY SHOULD BE
- THEY CAN MOTIVATE US TO SEEK HELP FROM GOD
- NOT HAVING THEM IS UNHEALTHY & DANGEROUS
- THEY BECOME UNHEALTHY WHEN THEY ENGULF, CONTROL, OR DEFINE US

*Our definition of & progress toward emotional health depends on our understanding of what it means to be human.*

### **-WE ARE DESIGNED PRIMARILY FOR PERSONAL LOVE RELATIONSHIPS**

Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves . . . So, God created people in his own image

. . . male and female he created them . . . The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him." (Genesis 1:26-27)

*God is a community of love relationships, & he designed us to live in loving community with himself & other people.*

Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:36-39)

## **-Relational deficiencies are the cause of most emotional problems**

- WHY STUDIES SHOW A POSITIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS & EMOTIONAL HEALTH
- WHY STUDIES SHOW A NEGATIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN SEXUAL FREEDOM OR MATERIALISTIC GREED & EMOTIONAL HEALTH
- WHY THE MEDICAL MODEL CANNOT PRODUCE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

## **-Emotional health is not the goal—it is the by-product of building personal love relationships with God & people.**

“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would ask him and he would give you living water . . . Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:10) (John 4:14)

- **ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BY RECEIVING CHRIST**

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard (about Jesus), so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. (1 John 1:3-4)

- **COMMIT TO SHARING GOD’S LOVE IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS**

“If you know these things, you will be fulfilled if you do them.” (John 13:17)

“It is more fulfilling to give than it is to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

- **EMBRACE A LIFESTYLE OF SELF-GIVING LOVE**
- **NOT: “I will be emotionally healthy when others love me the way I want to be loved.”**
- **BUT: “I will become more emotionally healthy as I learn to love others the way God already loves me.”**
- **EMBRACE A LIFESTYLE OF SELF-GIVING LOVE**

## **TRUTH-BASED (RATHER THAN FEELINGS-BASED) DECISIONS LEAD TO EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

- *Do our feelings give us reliable directions – or are they like a defective compass?*

Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” (Genesis 4:5-7)

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death . . . Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 14:12; 3:5,6)

You were taught . . . to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires. (Ephesians 4:22)

**-We cannot choose what we feel, but we can choose how we respond to our feelings**

- **UNCRITICALLY OBEYING YOUR FEELINGS WILL INJURE YOU EMOTIONALLY & ENSLAVE YOU TO CORRUPTED DESIRES.**
- **OBEYING THE TRUTH WILL SAVE YOU FROM EMOTIONAL INJURY & TRAIN YOUR DESIRES**
- *Which compass are you using to navigate through life - your feelings or God’s Word?*

## **Closing**

1. **WE ARE DEEPLY BROKEN PEOPLE LIVING IN A BADLY BROKEN WORLD**
2. **WE ARE DESIGNED PRIMARILY FOR PERSONAL LOVE RELATIONSHIPS**
3. **TRUTH-BASED (RATHER THAN FEELINGS-BASED) DECISIONS LEAD TO EMOTIONAL HEALTH**