

When Feelings Lead

Introduction:

1. The sermon last week was entitled "Facts, Faith, and Feelings."
2. A brief review of that sermon.
 - a. Facts Defined: "Something for which proof exists, or about which there is information," **Cambridge Dict.**
 - b. Faith defined:
 - (1) Biblically, Heb. 11:1.
 - (2) **Webster**: "strong belief or trust in someone or something. Belief in the existence of God."
 - c. Feelings Defined: "A physical or emotional experience or awareness," **Cambridge Dict.**
 - d. Stated that there is a correct order with regards to Facts, Faith, and Feelings.
 - (1) We must start with facts. Facts are always true; they are not changed by what people do, or believe.
 - (2) Faith, to be valid, must follow an examination of the facts. Rom. 10:17; Acts 17:11; I Thess. 5:21; I John 4:1
 - e. Stated that feelings, to be reliable, must follow Facts and Faith.
 - (1) We illustrated this point by citing the example of the eunuch from Ethiopia, Acts 8:30-39.
 - (2) We also illustrated this point with a picture of a train: the engine (facts), the coal car (faith), and the caboose (feelings)
3. From this illustration, it should be evident that proper feelings should result from faith, and that correct faith must be based upon facts. Feelings, apart from facts and faith, becomes a dangerous guide!

Discussion:

I. Thoughts about Feelings or Emotions.

- A. God Possesses Emotions! Such emotions as:
 1. Grief, Genesis 6:5-6.
 2. Wrath, Romans 1:18.
 3. Laughter, Psalm 2:4; 37:13.
 4. Vengeance, Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19.
 5. Hate, Prov. 6:19-19.
 6. Pleasure, Isaiah 53:10.
 7. Love, John 3:16.
- B. Being created in the image of God, Gen. 1:26-27, human beings are emotional beings.
 1. It is not wrong to have emotions or feelings; it is wrong to be **led by**, or to be controlled by our feelings, Eph. 4:26.
 2. Jesus had strong feelings, but He controlled His emotions, Heb. 4:15; I Peter 2:23.
 - a. It is fine to be emotional, but emotions must be controlled!

II. Bible History records many examples of people who sinned, because they were led by their emotions.

- A. Adam and Eve, motivated by the love of the world (I John 2:15-17; Gen. 3:6), ate the forbidden fruit.
- B. Cain, motivated by anger, killed Abel, Gen. 4:4-5,8.
- C. Abraham, influenced by fear, lied, Gen. 20:1-2,11.
- D. King Saul, influenced by jealousy, tried to kill David, I Sam. 18:8-9.
- E. David, influenced by lust, committed adultery with Bathsheba, 2 Sam. 11:1-4, and then had her husband killed in order to cover up his own sin, 2 Sam. 11:14-15.
- F. Judas, motivated by greed, betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, Matt. 26:14-16.
- G. Peter, moved by fear, denied Jesus, Matt. 26:69-75.
- H. Demas, having loved this present world, forsook Paul, 2 Tim. 4:10.
- I. Diotrefes, loving preeminence among the brethren, refused to receive faithful brethren, 3 John 9.

Note: All of these had a divine standard to follow (which, if followed, would have prevented sin in their lives), but each of them allowed emotions or feelings, to lead them astray.

III. In modern times, influenced by emotions or feelings, Multitudes give way to sin. Cf. Jas. 1:13-15.

- A. Lust leading to pre-marital sex. I Cor. 6:18; 2 Samuel 13:14.
- B. Husbands and wives violating their wedding vows.
- C. Many examples of murder and mayhem because of pent up, uncontrolled anger, Eph. 4:26.
- D. "Road rage" on the highways because of anger.
- E. Robberies, fraud, theft, etc. because of greed and covetousness, Ex. 20:17; Eph. 5:5.

F. Political corruption because of greed and covetousness, Acts 26:27.

IV. It is not wrong to Be Emotional.

A. Jesus possessed strong emotions.

1. He wept, John 11:35; Luke 19:41; Heb. 5:7.
2. He experienced anger and grief, Mark 3:5.
3. He had compassion, Matt. 9:36.
4. If He was tempted in all points like as we are, Heb. 4:15, then He experienced every righteous emotion common to man.

B. Paul Possessed strong emotions.

1. Affection, Phil.1:7-8.
2. Joy, Phil. 2:17.
3. Contentment, Phil. 4:11.
4. Heaviness or sorrow, Rom. 9:2.

C. But it is wrong to be led by emotions (apart from facts and faith).

1. There is a way that seems right, but it leads to death, Prov. 14:12.
2. A man who trusts in his own heart is *"a fool,"* Prov. 28:26.
3. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..."* Jer. 17:9.

V. Yet Many churches are more driven by emotions than guided by the Bible.

A. In order to get an "emotional high," they:

1. Build beautiful buildings, with crosses, stained glass windows, specially designed art work in order to "create a mood."
2. Engage in certain rituals, lighting of candles, dimming lights, etc., to create a "special mood."
3. Special music, involving singing groups, instrumental music, to create a "special mood."
4. Provide opportunities in "worship" for personal testimonials, encourage hand waving, and hand clapping to create excitement and a special "thrill," and feelings that tingle the spine!

B. In so doing, they forget the biblical purpose of worship, which is:

1. To honor and praise God, Heb. 13:15
2. To provoke one another into *"love and good works,"* Heb. 10:24-25.
3. To teach and admonish *"one another,"* Eph. 5:19.
4. To preach the word and to continue in *"the apostle's doctrine,"* Acts 20:7; 2:42.
5. To worship God *"in spirit and in truth,"* John 4:24.
6. To edify one another, I Cor. 14:26.
7. Worship, scripturally engaged in, will produce wholesome emotions.
 - a. Songs, ably led, and sung *"with the spirit and with the understanding,"* I Co. 14:15, naturally produce strong emotions. Cf. Amazing Grace.
 - b. Prayers, wherein God is reverently addressed and petitioned, produce strong emotions.
 - c. Sermons setting forth the great love of God, or which describe the glories of heaven, and the horrors of hell, etc., produce strong emotions.
 - d. Comments at the Lord's table reflecting the wisdom of God's plan of redemption, and the agonies of the cross, produce strong emotions.
 - (1) And as we partake of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, while examining our own selves and looking back to the sacrificial death of Jesus and forward to His glorious return, I Cor. 11:23-28, we will naturally experience strong emotions – emotions which God wants us to experience, but which are grounded in biblical facts and genuine faith.

Conclusion:

1. It is not wrong to be emotional. God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the angels in heaven, all possess strong emotions.
2. But it is wrong to be more led by emotions than directed by the Scriptures. If we, through studying and rightly dividing the word of God, learn to love what God loves and hate what He hates, our emotions will please to God and be profitable to us.
3. If there are those in the assembly who need to obey the gospel, we hope you are experiencing the same emotions which characterized many of the Jews on the day of Pentecost! Acts 2:37.

--Bobby Witherington, Dec. 6, 2015

