

What Saith the Scripture?

<http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/>

Good Days, Better Days Or, Understanding Our Emotions

"But the path of the just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the Perfect Day"
(Proverbs 4:18).

by Tom Stewart
10-11-2000

Preface

Only Christians will live *happily ever after*, for only in God's presence is the "fulness of joy" (Psalm 16:11), and Christ's presence in Heaven is the Eternal Destiny of every True Saint. "2 In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). However, until the Master is ready to take us Home to Heaven by death or Rapture, we must understand our emotions, or stumble over them. "The entrance of Thy Words giveth Light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130). The pathway before us, in the meantime, has been designated by our God to be an ever increasing experience of growing understanding of Himself (most of all), ourselves, and even our emotions. "But the path of the just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the Perfect Day" (Proverbs 4:18).

Content in Christ

We most heartily agree, that "some days are better than others." At least, that is the way it feels. But, feelings do not necessarily reflect facts. "11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: **every where and in all things** I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:11-13). The Apostle Paul experienced the peaks and the valleys of emotions in his walk with Christ, but he professed to his being instructed how "to be content" (4:11) in "all things" (4:12) and always "through Christ" (4:13).

Our contentment with the love, mercy, and grace of the LORD Jesus must transcend our emotions and feelings, or else we will be content with God only when we feel like it. "As sorrowful, yet **always** rejoicing" (2Corinthians 6:10). Faith, then, must teach us to look beyond our emotions to Christ. "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of Our Faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Like the human example of Jehovah Jesus, Who was acquainted with grief, suffering, and pain, He saw by faith beyond the immediate sufferings to the joys surrounding the Throne of God-- as we should. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21).

For Thy Sake

The Good LORD has wisely ordained our labor and employments to be an efficient environment to sanctify us. "Cursed is the ground **for thy sake**; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:17). Only an All Wise God could plan from the foundation of the Earth how to use our daily pains and sufferings to perfect us, for even the humanity of our Divine Saviour was perfected through His sufferings. "For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of Their Salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). Because we understand that man is worse than a poor twig to lean upon, i.e., "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5), we can wisely trust our Benevolent God to choose out our daily circumstances as occasions to cause us to trust Him more, i.e., "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth" (2Thessalonians 1:3).

Love, Not Emotions Fulfill God's Law

But, back to our feelings. "Some days are better than others." Our 19th century friend and mentor, [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, made this comment that the extent of our moral obligation to God does not directly include our involuntary emotions.

"All the law is fulfilled in one word, 'love.' ['For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Galatians 5:14).] Now this cannot be true, if the spirit of the whole law does not directly respect intentions only. If it extends directly to thoughts, emotions, and outward actions, it cannot be truly said that love is the fulfilling of the law. This love must be good will, for how could involuntary love be obligatory?" (from Finney's "[Lectures on Systematic Theology](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.1.html#LECTURE 4> --).

Mr. Finney was merely pointing out that our emotions or feelings cannot be the basis of our obligation to God. God never demands us to feel holy. He commands us to be holy, i.e., "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1Peter 1:16). Never does God command us to feel lovely. He always insists that you "love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).

Controlling Our Emotions

Instead, our emotions or feelings are much like a vehicle or medium between our heart-- which is the seat of our moral agency, i.e., God says to man, "My son, give me thine heart" (Proverbs 23:26)-- and our outward self. Our outward body or countenance communicates to others how we feel. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (15:13). God has so designed us, that our emotions can only be indirectly controlled by our heart; so, when we voluntarily obey a direct Commandment to rejoice, we will only indirectly and eventually feel joyful. "Rejoice in

the LORD alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). If we should reverse the process, looking for the joyful feeling without first loving obedience to the command to rejoice, we will be sadly disappointed. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the Health of my countenance, and my God" (Psalm 43:5).

Conversely, a wide spectrum of emotions can be triggered by our environment and circumstances, giving us daily opportunities to choose to love and trust God even more. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (Psalm 56:3). It is important that we comprehend this, because our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion" (1Peter 5:8) understands this concept, as well. He must seek permission from the Father, i.e., "Jesus answered, Thou [Pontius Pilate] couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from Above" (John 19:11), before he can attack our emotions. But, our Heavenly Father has given even our emotions the benefit of the protection of the "whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). If we will resist the feeling or emotion through faith by a definite act of trusting in God, that undesirable feeling will indirectly, but certainly flee. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). This is the foundational reason for the Promises of God-- to give us a response of faith to every conceivable contingency of life. "3 According as his Divine Power hath given unto us ALL THINGS that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3-4). [The [Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html> -- section of the WStS website is designed to help the Saints with their daily sanctification.]

Healthy Christian Emotions

A healthy Christian life is controlled by the Spirit of God. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). By faith, we have been guaranteed that whatever circumstance or temptation allowed by the Father, is for our good, i.e., "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). But, regardless of what emotion is triggered by our environment, circumstances, or Satan, our Loving Father will not allow us to be tempted without a way to escape. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13). We should not tempt God by attempting to tie His hands in what emotions He allows to be triggered in us through our contact with our environment, for He knows what is best to develop and mature us. "Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm 100:3).

Instead, we ought to respond to every circumstance or emotion with an Exceeding Great and Precious Promise, e.g., if we feel doubt about what we should do, then we ought to claim in prayer the Promise of Wisdom for those who ask. "If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). If we just don't feel very Spiritual, then we ought to remember that we are still very special by virtue of The Gift of God's Own Son. "He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). **Any feeling or temptation has an appropriate Promise from God**

to sanctify and secure us. And, if none other can be found, use one of His trustworthy, general purpose tools, e.g., "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in Truth" (Psalm 145:18). "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Conclusion

Our emotions were given to us by our Creator to fully express what He is working out in our heart. "My heart is inditing a good matter" (Psalm 45:1). Because the "LORD hath done great things for us... we are glad" (126:3). Gospel Salvation, giving us the forgiveness of sins by repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross, is ample grounds to cause our emotions to soar in gratitude to God. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our LORD Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). At the same time, we must be careful that the devil does not take advantage of our emotions, causing us to doubt God. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance" (Psalm 42:5). If we will only react in faith to whatever range of emotions that may accost us, our emotions will only cause our hearts to be knit closer and closer to God. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (56:3).