

The Professor's Theological Home Page

"...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Acts 16:31)

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Why do we get angry? – Part 3

We now conclude the final section of our article on anger, based on a story about a Houston mother who burned the face of her daughter with an iron in anger. We have been examining in part 1 and part 2 of our article how anger is an emotional sin, and that emotional sin has no part in a perfect God. Let us now examine how there is an anger that we can exhibit that is not sin.

Although we have been studying the emotional anger that is a sin, there is also a righteous anger that we can exhibit that would not be sinful. The difference that we must understand is that righteous anger does not have negative emotion involved with it. Instead, it is having an understanding of a negative situation with a clear mindset. Non-sinful righteous exasperation is a response to an unfair situation. Yet, this mindset continues to concentrate on a relationship with God.

We can become righteously indignant when we clearly understand a particular wrong, and yet, have no appreciation for it whatsoever. A good example of having an indignation that is righteous was when Jesus Christ clears the Temple and then turns the tables of the money changer (John 2:13-25). He also reflected a righteous indignation when he chastises and calls the Scribes and Pharisees blind, foolish and hypocrites (Mt. 23:13-36). Yet, in spite of these false proselytizers, the Lord gave his life in love as a ransom for them as well (1 Tim. 2:6).

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (KJV 1 Tim. 2:6)

The condemnation from the Lord to these false teachers was because they were teaching their self-righteous system of legalism to the multitude. The Lord had a clear awareness that this type of counterfeit teaching undermines accurate doctrinal teaching in the soul of believers. Also, there was no emotional sin associated with the Lord's righteous indignation. Since the Lord in his humanity was impeccable, he only reflected good emotion.

Good emotion will include such attitudes as having tolerance toward a particular individual or enduring some type of injustice or adversity. A reflection of good emotion is handling provocation or annoyance from someone as well as pain without complaining. In reflecting good emotion you simply maintain your composure without losing your temper or being irrational. A criterion for consistency in reflecting good emotion is to advance through the stages of our spiritual life. Our understanding of God's system of virtue for the church age believer is of utmost importance for good emotion to exist. Paul teaches that emotion does not sway virtue-love. Virtue-love is not an emotion but a system of thinking. Our emotions can appreciate virtue-love thinking, but is not in itself virtue-love (1 Co. 13:4-8).

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not

easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (KJV 1 Co. 13:4-7)

The normal function of emotion is to respond to the norms and standards that we have built in our frame of reference of our mind. Although emotion, by divine design, responds to the norms and standards of our thinking, they can function without thought, although improperly. Emotion without thought is going against divine design and is abnormal emotional activity. This type of abnormal activity is very unstable and is driven by our sin nature.

We must differentiate between normal emotion functioning as a good responder to the ideals of life and the sin nature function of our emotions when they react to life. God gave us emotion as a way to enrich our appreciation for what is proper and respectable in life. Yet, when our emotions go against God's design they, in turn, react to produce such things as sin and works driven by our sinful nature.

To maintain our stability in life will require not allowing emotions to be the criteria by which we live our life. Our emotion should always be under the directives of our intellect. Emotion without the command of the intellect cannot reason nor do they have any common sense. Living by emotion is the cause of so many bad decisions, especially in the area of romance and marriage. Emotional living is the source for much of the failure in the lives of believers today. Most don't have a clue of what makes up the spiritual life for the Church Age, much less how to apply it. Such believers, whether in ignorance or cognizance, end up making their emotion their god and are enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18-19).

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” (KJV Phil. 3:18-19).

The Epistle of James also deals with the problem of believers preoccupying themselves with earthly things (James 4:4).

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. (KJV James 4:4)

Therefore, in our present Church Age, God's plan for our life does not include going on what we feel, but on what we know from Scripture. Emotions should never be an acceptable standard for our motivation, nor our thinking and actions. Emotion without proper thinking will hinder our advancement in our spiritual life and hinder the development of capacity within us for life, love and true happiness.