

## THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS EMOTIONS

**I**f we are to believe what we are being bombarded with in the Christian book stores, we are nothing but a victim of the sum total of all of our experiences. If you came from a "dysfunctional family", then you will have to spend some time in therapy in order to sort out all of your issues. If you don't, you will never reach the true potential that God has for you. This is what I call, "substituting bologna for the meat of the Word of God."

I was raised in a family where the siblings had five different last names. There were seven different parent combinations. I never met my biological father. My mother and step dad were divorced when I was 13 years old; so naturally I have a lot of unresolved issues and a lot of hostility, right? **Wrong!!** Did I get therapy? Did I form a group of people in a similar situation? Did I purge my feelings by beating drums, roll playing, did I find some other release for all of my pent up hostility? **NO!!** How can this be? It can be, because I have a Savior who delivers me from all sin. I have a Lord who said, "***Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your soul.***" (Mat. 11:28+29). So I did, and He did. End of subject. I exchanged the bondage of the mind for the freedom of the Spirit.

The problem with a lot of Christians today is that they get caught up in the bondage of this psycho-babble and never experience the freedom of life in Christ. More often than not, it is not emotions or feelings that are the problems, but it is sin. I will try to give you examples.

Let us say that you are discontented about something. Your spouse has become a disappointment to you, your kids are driving you crazy, you don't like your house, you are fed up with your church. You don't need a shrink. You don't need to join a group of others who are miserable, where you sit in a circle and verbally regurgitate on each other and see who has the worst situation so the others can feel a little better because someone else is more miserable than they are. Your problem isn't your feelings or your discontentment. Your problem is **SIN!** Yes you heard me right! You may be reaping the results of the sin of ingratitude. You may say, "that is not a sin." The

Bible says, "***in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.***" Eph.5:18

Again in I Tim. 2:1 we read, "***First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.***" You see, it is hard to find fault with something, or someone, that you are thanking God for. So what should you do about your sin problem? Your answer is found in I John 2:1+2. "***My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.***" So now that you know that your problem is your sins, you can confess them all to Christ, ask Him to forgive you of those sins, and repent, which means that you won't commit that sin any more. A simple way for you to help change your habit of ingratitude is to start a list of things for which you are truly thankful. If you have been critical of your spouse, make a list of things about them for which you can be thankful. Start with only one thing. Each day add one thing more. Each day give thanks to God for all of the things on your list. You will be surprised at the results of your confession and repentance.

If you have become discontented with your home, car, or other possessions, you may be guilty of the sin of pride or covetousness. Exodus 20:17 "***You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.***"

You may be guilty of the sin of envy, which is very much related to covetousness. Gal. 5:26 "***Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.***"

You may be one of those who say, "I know that God has forgiven me but I just can't forgive myself." You are guilty of the sin of unbelief. Heb. 3:12 says, "***Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.***" If you know that Christ has forgiven you then you should know that He has removed all condemnation from you. Why do you want to heap condemnation back upon yourself? Romans 8:1+2 says, "***There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of***

**death.**" Either you believe that or you call God a liar. If you have no more condemnation then you certainly do not have any need to forgive yourself. In fact, if you think you need to forgive yourself then you are setting yourself up as God and you are also guilty of idolatry.

There are other sins that Christians engage in that keep them from living a victorious life. One of those sins is tale bearing. Talking about others in an unflattering way. Proverbs 18:8 says, "***The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.***" The problem with tale bearing is that it effects both the one who tells the tale and the one who hears it. If someone brings a tale to you, you should ask the person if they have gone to that person and talked to them about the problem. If Christians would do this, it would stop a lot of discord in the churches. There are the people who say, "There are a lot of people that think that you should do such and such." and when you ask who they are, the person says, "I can't tell you that.". This is just nonsense, but it upsets some people. These people should repent of their sin of sowing strife among the believers. Proverbs 6:16-19 says, "***There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.***"

With God, judgment and mercy are twins. We are admonished not to judge others, Mat. 7:1+2 says, "***Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the same way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.***" This is sobering, God will judge us using our standard. If we are harsh and legalistic in our judgment of others, He will use the same method when He judges us. How can we say that it is unfair? The same thing is confirmed in Romans 2:1-3 which reads, "***Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?***" In the 12th chapter of II Samuel we see this played out in the life of David, as Nathan confronts him with his sin. If we are to err, let it be

on the side of mercy. James says in chapter 2 verse 13, "***For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.***" In proverbs 11:17 we read, "***The merciful man does himself good, But the cruel man does himself harm.***" Isn't it interesting that the writer of the proverb contrasts "merciful" and "cruel" as opposites?

There are other sins that we are guilty of that we just don't think about. We would never think of stealing something from someone, but we steal other peoples time. What about leading a sales person on to think that you are interested in buying something when you have no intention of doing so and thus use their time. How about talking to people at work and taking time that your employer has paid for? Are we not hypocrites when we confess sins that we have no intention of forsaking? The problem is identified for us in Jeremiah 17:9 where we read, "***The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?***

So what is the point? The point is that we need to order our lives according to the Word of God and not the latest psycho-babble fad. They can not deliver you but they only bring bondage. Christ is the only one who can deliver from sin and its affect on our lives. To live in freedom we must keep short accounts with God. When we sin we need to run immediately to Him and confess our sins and repent of them and ask for His forgiveness. In Micah 6:8 we read, "***He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?***

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