

Understanding People - Chapter 11 - People are Emotional

1. It is it “okay to hurt” (pp. 172-174).

A. Reality: We live in a fallen world filled with the consequences of it being cursed along with those of our own sin and the sins of others. Therefore, living in this world will at best be less than what God intended, for something will be wrong with everything. “. . . *life in a fallen world presents almost continuous opportunity to have unpleasant feelings*” (pg 172). You should expect to have many negative experiences in this cursed world that will hurt you.

B: Maturity: Godly people should also expect to experience negative emotions. Greater maturity actually increases hurt because of the greater awareness of what should be, but is not because of the curse of sin - both general and personal. Disappointment in personal failure and in the failure of others can be profound.

C. Joy & Pain: “*Joy is distinctly an eschatological thing - it is rooted in the future*” (pg 173). We are to rejoice always (Phil 4:4) because of what Christ has done for us and promised us - but “*joy now is not to **replace** suffering and pain, it is to **support** us through it.*” Jesus is our example - Hebrews 12:2 - “*who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. . .*” Christians should embrace the range of emotions that are part of human existence which includes the negative ones such as sorrow, grief, anger, distress, disappointment, and pain. Christians are not to be stoics, and we are definitely not to be fake and act happy when that which is legitimately painful occurs. (What is the correct answer to the question, “*How are you?*” What is the reason for asking? Courtesy? Social expectation? You are actually interested?)

D. Necessity: “*Hurt is evidence of life*” (pg 173) because we live in a fallen world. The goal must not be to end / avoid the pain. The degree to which a person ignores / denies hurt (negative emotions) while reflect the degree to which they are disconnected from living life. Examples: Drug use hinders your ability to be aware and experience what is happening. Entertainment results in voyeurism and fantasy living instead of experiencing real relationships. Denial (a form of self-protection) results in the shallowness of superficial relationships with others - and God. You must learn to face and embrace the reality of even negative emotions in order to increase your thirst for God and desire to live for Him while living in a world in need of redemption. Learn to use your emotions to expose areas where improvement is needed or where deeper faith must be exercised.

2. Complexity of Emotions

Emotions can be complex, so there is danger in trying to simplify them in efforts to gain quick relief. Crabb gives four examples on the top of page 175.

*Bad behaviors cause bad emotions; so straighten up.

*Bad goals cause bad emotions; so redirect your life.

*Bad thinking causes bad emotions; so think right.

*Bad faith causes bad emotions; so get spiritual

While there is some truth to each of these, they are too simplified and do not produce the change that is actually needed. Simplified theories such as these seek to solve emotional problems without requiring an honest and passionate pursuit of God into absolute dependence.

Emotions are not sinful in and of themselves (pp. 176). Emotions are a response. What has caused them may be sinful and behavior done on the basis of them may be sinful, but the emotion itself is not sinful.

3. Constructive vs. Destructive Emotions. (pp. 175-183)

General: Whether an emotion is constructive or destructive depends on the individual's response to the emotion - (176). The factor that will determine the type of emotion will be the wisdom of the internal response to the event resulting in the emotion - (177-178). The individual determines the response. This is true of both pleasant and unpleasant emotions.

Constructive: A constructive emotion refers to a response to an emotion that evaluates the event & feelings in light of R-1 and R-2 (images and beliefs) striving to respond with a Biblical mindset. Emotions resulting from this process may range from satisfied desire to intense dissatisfaction; from legitimate warmth to profound disappointment; and include gratitude, righteous anger, painful concern or productive sadness.

Chart Page 179 - Flow chart of Emotions from Difficult Circumstances

Longing for Satisfaction → Unpleasant Event Occurs → Legitimate Pain of Unpleasant Emotion → either Wisdom or Foolishness

If wisdom → accurate R-1 & R-2 → Event perceived as Disappointed Desire → Emotion of Disappointment → Desire for Change:

If achieved → Gratitude.

If blocked → Righteous Anger.

If uncertain → Painful Concern.

If Unreachable → Productive Sadness.

If Foolishness → Inaccurate R-1 & R-2 → Event perceived as Threat to Survival → Emotion of Panic → Demand for Change:

If achieved → Proud Relief.

If blocked → Rage.

If uncertain → Worry.

If Unreachable → Depressing Inadequacy.

Destructive: A destructive emotion refers to a response that does not evaluate the event & feelings in light of R-1 and R-2 (images and beliefs) or strive to respond with a Biblical mindset. Emotions resulting from this process may range from insecure appreciation to apprehension to fear to dread and include pride, rage, worry or depression.

Chart Page 182 - Flow chart of Emotions from Enjoyable Circumstances

Longing for Satisfaction → Pleasant Event Occurs → Legitimate Pleasure of Pleasant Emotion → either Wisdom or Foolishness

If Wisdom → accurate R-1 & R-2 → Event perceived as Satisfied Desire → Emotion of Legitimate Warmth → Desire for Continuation.

If achieved → Gratitude.

If blocked → Righteous Anger.

If uncertain → Painful Concern.

If Unreachable → Productive Sadness.

If Foolishness → Inaccurate R-1 & R-2 → Event perceived as Demanded Goal → Emotion of Insecure Appreciation → Demand for Continuation:

If achieved → Pride.

If blocked → Rage.

If uncertain → Worry.

If Unreachable → Depressing Inadequacy.

Wisdom leads to constructive feelings and foolishness leads to destructive ones.

4. Source of Emotions (Pages 180-181)

Emotions arise from your perception of events - i.e. your R-1 and R-2 (images and beliefs).

Example: the woman's feelings about her husband bringing a gift home arise from how she views reality (R-2; images) and how she can achieve what she wants (R-1; beliefs).

Complexity of emotions: Emotional response begins with the information known about the event / circumstance which may or may not be accurate (emotions are often quickly changed when the truth is known). The understanding of that information is evaluated according to R-1 images, the effect the event / circumstance will have in fulfilling the desire for impact / significance and / or relationship / security, which in turn is founded upon the R-2 beliefs about the purpose of life.

5. Learning from Your Emotions (pp. 183-184)

	→ Wisdom	→ Constructive Emotions
Pleasant Event → Pleasant Feelings	→ Foolishness	→ Destructive Emotions
	→ Wisdom	→ Constructive Emotions
Unpleasant Event → Unpleasant Feelings	→ Foolishness	→ Destructive Emotions

Your emotions are an indicator light of your walk with the Lord. Whether your feelings are pleasant or unpleasant only reveals whether you perceive an event as enjoyable or distressing. Whether your emotions are constructive or destructive reveals whether you are walking a path of wisdom or foolishness.

The good news is that if your emotions awaken you to your foolishness, then you can repent and proceed on the path of wisdom that will also change your emotions. Emotions serve as a check on your maturity through self-examination that will affirm wisdom and expose foolishness. Are your images and beliefs according to truth or error?

6. Guidance for Emotions (pg. 184)

A. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Psalm 26:2 (LSB), *Test me, O Yahweh, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.*

Psalm 139:23–24 - ²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; ²⁴ And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.*

Jeremiah 17:9–10 (LSB), ⁹ *“The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can know it? ¹⁰ “I, Yahweh, search the heart, I test the inmost being, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his deeds.*

Romans 8:26–27 - ²⁶ *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

B. The Word of God

Psalms 19:7–14 (LSB), ⁷ The law of Yahweh is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of Yahweh are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, even more than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them Your slave is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. ¹² Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. ¹³ Also keep back Your slave from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Yahweh, my rock and my Redeemer.

Hebrews 4:12, ¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (LSB), ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.

C. The People of God

1 Corinthians 12-13 = The church, the body of Christ, each member a vital part for maturity

All the “one another” verses

7. What to do with your emotions (pp 185-188).

A. It is important to “feel” your emotions, for they can make you aware of your wisdom or foolishness and so enable you to pursue greater maturity. However, you must be aware of them and acknowledge them for them to be helpful to you. Seeking avenues of escape from your emotions (drugs, amusements, busyness, denial) will hinder or block you from the spiritual growth they would otherwise prompt. Pursuing avenues of escape may lead to increased foolishness.

B. While feeling emotions is part of the process for growth, the center of growth is repentance, belief and obedience. This requires you to evaluate and deal with acknowledged emotions.

C. How and when you should express your emotions

1) How: Without self protection, openly and honestly say exactly how you feel - but with calmness, though at times with intensity - and never with rage.

2) Motive: Open expression of your emotions with others is to be done in pursuit of their best interest. Expression of emotions is not to be an exercise in selfishness. Neither hold back out of fear of reprisal nor use them to try to intimidate (cause fear). Limit your freedom by your commitment for the true well-being of others.

3) When: While free to express every emotion, only express what will advance God's purposes. This includes thoughtfulness in the timing of what is expressed. Example: Telling your spouse that they have hurt you should only be shared at a time and in a way that will help

them become more godly. Ephesians 4:29! Timing includes factors such as being able to talk privately about private matters; talking when both are in an emotional state to respond rationally; talking when both have adequate time to talk; talking when both are alert (talking to someone who is tired, stressed out by other things, pressured to meet a deadline, etc., may well prove to be harmful, not helpful).

8. Three Principles (pg. 188)

A. Full experience your emotions. Feel them

B. Use your emotions; evaluate what they reveal about your beliefs and purposes.

C. Be free to express every emotion, but limit expression by the purposes of true love

9. Emotional Circles.

The emotional circle represents the capacity to feel.

A full emotional circle means the individual is consciously experiencing their emotions

An empty emotional circle indicates denial of feelings (not absence of them)

The size of the inner circle represents the degree to which emotions are acknowledged.