

Grow Your Worship, Part 2 | Change What You Feel

I. The Dictionary Definition

- [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) defines emotions as “*An affective state of consciousness in which joy, sorrow, fear, hate, or the like, is experienced, **as distinguished from cognitive and volitional states of consciousness.***”
- The Medical Dictionary for Health Professions and Nursing is only slightly more helpful when they say, emotion is “*a strong feeling, aroused mental state, or intense state of drive or unrest directed toward a definite object and evidenced in both behavior and in psychologic changes, with accompanying autonomic nervous system manifestations.*”

II. The Disney Definition

- The entertainment industry, psychiatrists, social influencers, and — in fact — nearly the entire world believes that we should follow our heart.
- But if it’s true that we should follow our hearts regardless of “the rules,” then people who derive joy from lying, cheating, stealing, speeding, driving drunk, taking drugs, fornicating, committing violence, and murdering are perfectly fine because they are simply “following their hearts.” This is a perfect example of a Failure Philosophy that is destroying lives all over the world at this very moment.
- This nebulous idea of following one’s heart is intrinsically tied to an older philosophy that said, “If it feels good, do it.”
- Entire generations of people who’ve grown up being told that their emotions should be the guide for their entire existence.

III. The Divine Definition

- **What is the Heart?** Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 28:6; Ecclesiastes 11:9; Proverbs 3:21-24
 - It’s very important that we recognize that the ancient Hebrew and Greek understanding of “the heart” is different from our modern thoughts.
 - The heart was used to describe the core of the person. It could even be said that the heart was the person — as detached from the body.
 - Biblically speaking, the ideas of the heart, the mind, and the spirit are all synonymous. It’s the center of our being, the seat of our worldview, the determiner of our words, actions, thoughts, feelings, and the like. Instead of following our hearts, we need to follow *wisdom* and *discretion*. Only then we will truly be successful. We’ll have life, adornments, we’ll be secure, and we’ll sleep sweetly with no need to fear. We see here that wisdom and discernment actually *overcome* the emotion of fear.
- **What are Emotions?**
 - **Emotions are a gift.**
 - **Emotions are a gift to the individual.** Ecclesiastes 3:4; Romans 12:15
 - They were created to give humans a dynamic, passionate experience in this life and the life to come.
 - Both what we might call “positive” and “negative” emotions were created by God *for a purpose*. He wants us to worship Him with them — just like we are to worship Him with everything else — but Christ-honoring emotions are also to be enjoyed, and though we can revel in emotions like happiness, we can also appreciate God-pleasing grief.

- **Emotions are a gift to the body of Christ.** Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15
- **Emotions are also a gift to spouses/parents/pastors/counselors and other spiritual authorities.**
 - In the same way our children’s emotional responses can help us determine the best way to parent them, a spouse’s emotional response can help the other spouse know how best to minister to them. The same is true for pastors, counselors, teachers, friends, and any other disciplers.
- **Emotions are a tool.** I Corinthians 10:31
 - Do your feelings cause other people to think more highly about your God? Well, they should. In fact, they absolutely must.
- **Emotions are a Feelings Alarm.**
 - Rebekah Hannah says that emotions are a “gauge, not a guide.”
 - In the same way that a smoke detector in your house is there to warn you of a problem, your emotions can help you see when there’s a spiritual problem in your life.
 - If you are experiencing strong emotions in line with God’s will . . . all is well. Do you enjoy what God says is good? Are you angry about sin? Are you jealous for God’s glory? Then God is pleased.
 - But if you’re experiencing strong emotion out of sync with God’s will . . . there is a problem. Do you enjoy your sin? Are you angry about what God has brought into your life? Are you jealous for your own way? If so, your emotions are being used to worship yourself and need to change.
- **How Emotions Work**
 - Two people get on a roller coaster. The first person doesn’t want to be there, the second does. Both of them have adrenaline coursing through their bodies during the whole ride. The first person is going to act and speak and feel like they’re scared. The second person is going to act and speak and feel like they’re exhilarated. They both had the same experience, they both experienced the same physiological effect, and yet the outcome was very different. Why is that?
 - Unlike our actions and words that are simply motivated by our desires, our emotions are motivated *in part* by our desires. However, they’re also affected by our interpretation of the physiological changes in our bodies.
 - Emotions are a cyclical fruit. Here’s what I mean. If you had an apple tree, and you never picked the apples, and no animals ever ate them, the leaves and the fruit would fall to the ground each year. After falling to the ground they’d spend the entire autumn, winter, and spring being transformed into fertilizer for the tree. Therefore, much of the nutrients the tree will use next summer will come from its own fruit.
- **How to Change Emotions** Proverbs 3:21-24; Psalm 37:4
 - We need wisdom and discretion. We need to *think* right. We need to activate our minds, and that will guide our desires and — thereby — produce actions, words, and feelings that will be in line with our desires.
 - You are an emotional being. You have various chemicals and hormones floating through your body causing you experience various sensations. You’re also interpreting those sensations in habituated ways. And there’s a reason you’re an emotional being.
 - You need to understand why you feel what you feel. And of course, you need to understand that you’re not a slave to your emotions. Your feelings are a gauge of your spiritual state, they’re not a guide.