

Emotions 4 hours

(Galatians 5, Colossians 3, 2 Samuel 13)

Introduction: Does the Bible seem to be a good place to learn about human emotions? Consider [Galatians 5:22-23](#) which says that the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and self-control." How many of those fruits are either emotions or closely connected to emotion? Anyone who has read Robert Whitaker's book, *Anatomy of an Epidemic*, has serious doubts about consulting science to cure emotional and mental problems. His book describes the fact that in the United States we have a huge increase in the number of emotionally impaired people which began with the development of drugs to treat mental problems. His thesis is that using the current drugs is like throwing rocks into a sophisticated machine. Drugs simply make the problem worse. Whether or not science has the answers I am not qualified to say, but let's jump into our series of studies to see what answers are in the Bible!

I. Your Role in Positive Emotions

A. Read [Galatians 5:16-17](#). Do you suffer from emotional conflict? Are your emotions sometimes out of control or not what you would want them to be?

1. What kind of conflict does Paul teach us is the experience of every human?(Paul tells us that our sinful nature wants to do one thing and the Holy Spirit wants us to do another. The two are in conflict so that we find ourselves doing what we do not want to do.)

2. What is the key to right living? (Living a life led by the Holy Spirit.)

B. Read [Galatians 5:19-21](#). In this list of what Paul calls "acts of the sinful nature," do you find any emotions? (Yes.)

1. What does this mixture suggest?(It suggests that negative emotions are part of our natural, sinful nature. We get these without requesting them! Second, it suggests that negative emotions have some sort of connection with negative actions.)

C. Read [Galatians 5:22-25](#). We discussed in the introduction that these are emotions or are closely connected with emotions. Are these positive emotions, emotions that you would like to be a part of your life?

1. How do we obtain these emotions? Or, are they completely beyond the power of choice? (Choice is a factor. First, it is a factor in our choice to "live by the Spirit." Second, Paul tells us that we can "crucify" our sinful nature.)

2. How many of you have difficulty living by the Spirit and crucifying your sinful nature? (If you are like me, your hand is raised. I'm not sure that success is easy, but I am sure that the Bible teaches us that choice is a factor in our human emotions.)

D. Read [Colossians 3:5-10](#). How many negative emotions do we find listed in these verses? (Several.)

1. What influence do we have over these negative emotions? (Paul tells us to "rid" ourselves of them.)

E. Read [Colossians 3:12-14](#). Again, we see some positive emotions and the suggestion that we have an influence over our emotions. What specific actions do these verses suggest that we can take? ("Bear" and "forgive.")

1. Are these choices?

2. Notice that Paul says "love" will bind us in perfect unity. Can we choose to love? Or, is that an uncontrollable emotion?

a. Let's assume you do not love someone, but you want to pretend to love them. How would you do it? (You would be nice to that person. You would be generous. You would treat

that person as you would want to be treated. That sounds like "bear" and "forgive," doesn't it?)

- i. Is this a Biblical prescription for treating emotional problems? (If you are like me, some of my happiest times are when I help someone and they appreciate it. Being kind and loving to others is jet fuel for positive emotions. Being kind and considerate is a decision. It is not outside the realm of free choice.)

II. A Biblical Example

A. Read [2 Samuel 13:1-2](#). Is Amnon suffering from an emotional problem? (Yes. It made him physically ill.)

1. Read [Leviticus 18:11](#). What does it say about Amnon's desires? (That he could not marry Tamar.)

B. Read [2 Samuel 13:3-6](#). Does Amnon have a choice to make here about feeding his negative emotions?

1. Is there a parallel here to your life? Do you wrestle with negative emotions that you feed by your poor choices?

C. Read [2 Samuel 13:9-11](#). Up to this point what bad choices has Amnon made? (He has lied to get Tamar into his bedroom. He has sent everyone out so he is alone with her. Now he seems to be forcing her to have sex with him.)

D. Read [2 Samuel 13:12-14](#). Is this sin an accident? Has Amnon been fully warned of the nature of his sin? (Amnon has been running all sorts of "red lights" to come to this low point. He has let his unchecked emotions become terrible behavior.)

1. Re-read [Colossians 3:5](#). What could Amnon have been doing instead? (Paul says that the emotions which led up to this are subject to our choice. We have the ability to "put to death" these emotions.)

E. Read [2 Samuel 13:15](#). Is Amnon suffering from emotional problems?

1. To what extent can we now see that these problems are connected to his bad decisions?

F. Read [2 Samuel 13:17-20](#). Is Tamar suffering from emotional problems?

1. Is there anything that she could have done differently to avoid her current emotional problems? (No.)

- a. What do the situations of Amnon and Tamar teach us about emotional difficulties? (Some are the results of our poor choices, and some come through no fault of our own.)

G. Read [2 Samuel 13:21-22](#) and [2 Samuel 13:28-29](#). Is Absalom suffering from an emotional problem?

1. Is this his fault?

2. What could Absalom have done to avoid letting his emotional problem get to the point of murder? ([Galatians 5:20](#) tells us that hatred is part of our sinful nature, and living by the Spirit is a cure for our sinful nature.)

III. Jesus' Commentary on Emotions

A. Read [John 16:20](#). In our Bible study we have seen a connection between good emotions and living a life led by the Holy Spirit. What does this text suggest about that connection? (The world, which presumably does not live by the Spirit, is rejoicing while those led by the Spirit grieve.)

1. Scan the context of [John 16:20](#). What light does it bring to Jesus' statement? (The reason for grief is that Jesus will soon be arrested and crucified.)

a. What does this suggest about the Christian and human emotions? (That circumstances outside our control will cause us grief - while the world rejoices in evil.)

B. Read [John 16:21-22](#). What is the ultimate hope for our emotional difficulties? (They are temporary. They are worth-while in light of the fact that Jesus is coming again to bring joy!)

C. Read [Matthew 26:36-38](#). What emotion is Jesus suffering?

1. When we consider that Jesus suffered negative emotions, what should we conclude about emotional problems and sin? (Emotional difficulties seem much like many other difficulties. In general, living a Spirit-led life brings positive emotions. Living a life led by our human nature brings negative emotions. However, we live in an evil world with evil people - and they can cause us to suffer emotionally. Not until the return of Jesus will our problems, including our emotional problems, be cured.)

D. Friend, will you determine today to improve your emotional health by asking the Holy Spirit to lead in your life? Why not ask right now?