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Becoming Spiritually and Emotionally Strong



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #169 ~

Our subject is emotions, feelings of fear, joy, anger, peace, sadness, hope, courage, etc. It's a vitally important subject, one that relates directly to our effectiveness for God. But the emotional part of a person is a bit mysterious. Where do emotions come from? How do they relate to our spirit, mind and soul? How are they affected by our personality, background, experiences, and relationships? I must admit, I don't have all the answers. What I do know is that God is an emotional being and He made us in His image, and so we are emotional beings. We have this emotional component that's part of our personhood, our humanness. But how can we be godly and have godly emotions? It's by having a relationship with God. John 17:3

When I was 18, by God's grace, I was born again, I became a Christian. I experienced the most amazing miracle and transformation – I became a child of God, a new person in Christ, a temple of the Spirit. Life for me was now different, dramatically, wonderfully, and eternally so. Without Christ, there was fear, guilt, loneliness, sadness, selfishness, emptiness, and emotions that went along with them, emotions that affected my mood and were heard in my words and seen in my actions. Knowing the truth about Christ and what He did for me, that I was saved, forgiven, and loved, greatly affected me. I began to know and experience the love, joy, peace, mercy, and presence of Christ. I had a personal relationship with God that influenced my relationships with people. By no means was I perfect, but I was changing and growing, with a love for God and people, new thoughts, new desires, and new emotions. John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 5:17

The key to all this is the truth and Spirit of God. Jesus tells us, *"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:32). Before being saved, I was a sad, lonely, quiet, and unfeeling kind of a person. But knowing the truth, that is, knowing Jesus Christ and the truth of the gospel, set me free from sin, and changed me, spiritually and emotionally so. Proverbs 23:7 says, *"As a man thinks, so he is."* I began to see that the key to not being led by circumstances and emotions was to be filled up and led by God's truth and God's Spirit. John 14:16-17

Here are some examples. Let's say a Christian is sad. Now I'm not saying he can't ever be sad, but if that's how he feels every day, if he's continually sad, then something's wrong, and he's not experiencing God's truth and power in his life. What he needs to do is think about the truth, that God is loving, kind, forgiving, sovereign, and has good plans for him – and knowing these truths will help take away his sadness. Let's say a person is lonely and feels lonely, and severely so. He needs to think about the truth that God is with Him, the Spirit is in Him, and that he knows God and can talk to God. And so, if there's

sadness, there can be joy; if loneliness, then fellowship; if hate, then love; if anger, then forgiveness; if fear, then courage; if worries, then peace; if grief, then hope. This spiritual transformation, being godly and having these Christ-like emotions, only happens by God's word and Spirit. Galatians 2:20

The truth in the book of Psalms is one way God wants to help you be a strong Christian. More than any other book, it talks about having a close relationship with God, and being spiritually and emotionally encouraged by Him. It's filled with stories about godly saints, their problems and emotions, and how God helped them when life was hard. Here are some examples:

Psalm 13 – *"Will you forget me forever?"* David felt like God had forsaken him, had left him, had hid His face from him. David felt all alone and had sorrow in his heart. But he trusted God, remembered his salvation, and believed God would show His love to him. Not only that, but David remembered how God had blessed him, and was determined to sing to Him. **Psalm 9**

Psalm 37 – *"Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious..."* David was thinking about the enemies' success, and how they were against him, and he was fretting, envious and angry. What he needed to do was trust in the Lord, do good, delight in the Lord, rest in the Lord, be humble, have God's law in his heart, believe that the enemy would be defeated, and believe the promise, that he would *"inherit the land,"* a promise for Christians too. **Psalm 67**

Psalm 42 – *"Why are you in despair, O my soul?"* David was in despair, his soul was troubled and disturbed, and he was *"mourning because of*

the oppression of the enemy." David knew God was his only answer, his only hope, and so he says, *"My soul pants for You."* He prayed to God, hoped in God, believing that He would once again show him His love. And he was going to praise God, for he says to himself, *"Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him."* **Psalm 43**

Psalm 73 – *"I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked."* Asaph was a godly man, but he still had troubles. Then he saw the wicked and proud, those who seemed *"successful"* and were *"at ease,"* and he became envious and bitter. But Asaph came into the *"sanctuary of God"* and realized that God was with him, would keep Him safe, guide him, and bring him to heaven, whereas the wicked would not be blessed, but would perish forever. **Psalm 1**

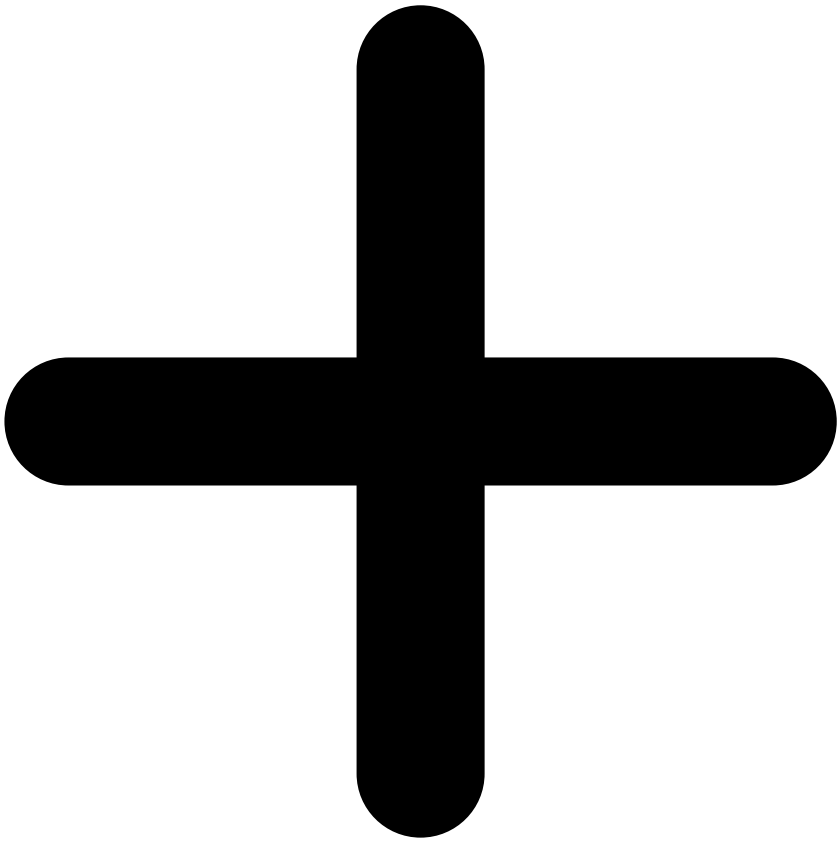
Psalm 88 – *"My soul has had enough troubles… darkness is my closest friend."* This is a very dark Psalm, for the writer has no friends, and feels forsaken, afflicted, rejected and cut off from God, like he's *"about to die."* And the only answer given is that he cried out to God. Sometimes praying and waiting on God is all we can do, knowing that only He can help us. **Psalm 100**

The Psalms is such an important book, one that we need now, one that is particularly helpful to Christians in the end-times. Times will get tougher, for birth pains will continue, the Antichrist will come, and there will be great tribulation. Read and study the Psalms, for in the difficult days ahead, they will bring comfort, peace, hope, and strength to your soul. **Psalm 23**

In all this, I am not telling you to focus on how you feel, on your emotions, but I am saying you should focus on loving and obeying God,

on being filled with His Word and Spirit, for then you will be spiritually and emotionally strong, and will be what God wants you to be, with the result that great glory will be given to Him. *“I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever… And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.”* **Psalm 145**

P.S. When we talk about our emotions, we need to think of God’s love for us, and here’s an article that speaks about that – *“The Father’s Love for His Children.”* And here’s a previous post that talks about our love for Jesus – *“The Rapture, A Love Story.”*



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