

Building a Biblical Faith
Lesson 3 - Choose to Let Faith Control Your Emotions
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Introduction: Emotions play a powerful role in our lives.

- A. The Bible has much to say on this subject because God created us with the ability to experience emotions.
 - 1. There is a proper time and place for the fully array of emotions we can experience. **(Ecc 3:4,8)**
 - 2. One has said that it is "our emotions that put us in motion."
 - 3. Emotions in their proper role are a blessing to our lives.
- B. We need to see our emotions in the place God has put them.
 - 1. Emotions often are a by-product of something deeply believed. **(Acts 2:36-37; Gen 37:31-35)**
 - 2. It is possible to by-pass reason and appeal directly to our emotional side! Consider the actions in a pep-rally or in some Pentecostal churches.
 - 3. The Lord has given us an objective standard to communicate His will to us. While there are many emotions we may experience, God tells us to believe in and stand in the truth! **(Gal 2:4-5; 2:14; 3:1)**
 - 4. If Jesus is to be my Lord then I must choose to follow His will by a reasoned appeal to the truth. If I place emotions above revealed truth then I am following the flesh! **(Col 2:18-19)**
 - 5. The false teacher appeals to our emotion side apart from the truth and can lead us anywhere he wishes if we follow our feelings! **(2 Pt 2:18-19; Jude 1:16.)**
- C. We are witnessing a society that is increasingly placing feelings above reason in most areas.

- 1. Consider an article by John Leo titled: "Feelings, oh those feelings."

"This was the period .in which America was busy switching to a feelings-centered morality. Since the self was more important than society, values created by the self (feelings) took precedence over any social or traditional values, which are the encrusted remains of other people's feelings and biases If we are open to experience, wrote the famous therapist Carl Rogers, "doing what feels right proves to be a competent and trustworthy guide to behavior which is truly satisfying."

"In contrast, anyone can produce feelings, and because they all are personal and self-created, they can't be challenged, like old-fashioned arguments used to be."

- 2. When this happens there is no longer an objective standard and every man becomes his own god. No wonder we are seeing many embrace New Age movement religions. **(Prov 12:15; 21:2).**
 - 3. When we build a biblical faith we can see the truth and stand in it.

I. Seek to see and do the things God has revealed

- A. **Because of the love of God I can have the courage to see life as it actually is. (Heb 4:12-13)**

1. I must be willing to see and be rebuked before God can do anything with me.
 2. Many are simply unwilling to see what they need to see because of a fear of the pain of change. These people do not trust God! (**Mt 13:15**)
 3. I must be willing to start where I am and let God help me. (Ex. Fear of the doctor)
- B. By faith I need to only take the responsibilities God has given me. (**1 Jn 5:3**)
1. Without God we often take on things that we cannot change! This is the height of folly. (Ex. Would you try to move Red Mountain with a tea spoon?)
 2. What are some things we cannot change?
 3. Our faith in God will give us wisdom to know what we should give to Him in prayer and what we should take on as our responsibility. (**Matt 11:28-30**)
 - a. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."
 - b. Faith in God allows us to realistically look at our problems without self-deception!
 4. Consider Paul's understanding concerning the work of preaching the gospel in **1 Cor. 3:5-7**. What was Paul's duty? What was Apollos' duty? What was God's part?

Class Discussion:

1. Make a list of things that we cannot change.
2. What happens when we try to change these things that are beyond our control?
(**Jas 1:6-8**)
3. How does this truth help us in our married life?
4. Why do we tend to be stubborn and refuse to give these things to God in prayer?
(**Jas 4:2-3**)

II. Always challenge what you feel by what God has said

- A. We must realize the danger of giving in to "emotional reality." (**Prov 14:12; Jer 10:23**)
1. Our emotions can instantly give us strong impressions that we know things that we really do not know! (Ex. You walk into a room and a group of people laugh!)
 2. When we judge others on feelings and not on facts we are guilty of unrighteous judgment. Many are carried away by this approach! (Jn 7:24)
 3. How many of you have been victimized by those who though they could read your mind by their emotions?
 4. By walking by faith we can come off the roller coaster of "emotional realities."
 5. Walking by faith will require more effort and time!
- B. Stop playing the blame game.
1. The "Blame Game" is our attempt to look away from our responsibilities by focusing on the faults of others (Real or Imagined).
 2. It is always wise to understand why something has happened so we can wisely act in the future.

3. Both children and adults play this game too. (Example: The "Green Bomb")
4. Sadly some have found that running from their problems will give them a short term "peace". Consider some common responses:
 - a. Deny there is a problem. (Ex. Alcoholic)
 - b. Blame another person(s).
 - c. Admit it but do nothing.
5. Three Areas We Must Stop Blaming.
 - a. God - (James 1:13)
 - b. Others (2 Cor 5:10)
 - i. This puts us in a position of judge. "I did this but you are to blame!"
 - ii. In fact the "Blame Game" is nothing but a cop-out. How many times has someone said: " I would have , but you did

 ”
 - iii. It often is a cover for our selfishness and pride.
6. Faith teaches us to:
 - a. See the wrong you have done.
 - b. See what you can do.
 - c. Always confess the wrong you have done.

C. Slam the door on self-pity.

1. Have you ever felt this way? Have you ever reasoned like this: "People are talking about me. Nobody understands my feelings! There is no one on earth who has suffered as me. Nobody cares. I do not deserve this."
2. Consider the children's song: "Nobody loves me, everybody hates me. I'm going out and eat worms."
3. Great men of faith temporarily gave in to self pity. (**1 Kings 18:38-19:10; Psa 142:4; Jonah 3:10-4:3, 8**)
 1. Self-.pity can gain control of our thoughts during stressful times.
 2. There is something much worse than the difficulties of life we may face. That is to experience adversity and then walk in self-pity as a way of life!
4. Consider the fruits of Self Pity

Self Pity does not:

But Rather

Give us respect-----Wipes out respect.

Free one from the past-----Enslaves one to the past

Help you face the future-----makes you live in the present with dread and fear.

Give you strength to achieve-----it demoralizes you!

In fact self pity is self destruction! It is the slowest and most painful form of suicide I know of.

- a. Self pity leads to depression.
- b. Self Pity mars relationships with others. (Ex. Preacher and lady)
- c. Self Pity is the one attention "getter" that will eventually get you no attention! (Ex. Playing golf with my competitive friend.)
- d. Self Pity stops progress, brings life to a standstill and causes you to sit on the sidelines of life sulking and doing nothing.

Class Discussion:

1. Has self-pity ever done anything good for me?
2. Has self-pity ever changed what has happened? (Ex. "This is the worst day of my life.")
3. Has self-pity ever made you feel better?
4. Has self-pity ever made you feel more loved?
5. Has self-pity ever built love and self respect in you and others?
6. Has self-pity helped you to achieve and accomplish?
7. Has self-pity brought you closer to others?
8. Has self-pity brought you closer to God?
9. Has self-pity allowed your wounded spirit to heal?
10. Has self-pity helped you to understand others?

5. Use your faith to stop self-pity.
 - a. Spot it quickly for what it is, selfishness. It is a product of one centering in on self and then only on the bad things.
 - b. Exercise your faith in God to do something about it. Battling self-pity is truly like waging a war. Do not give up. **(Rom 12:1-2)**
 - c. Look on what you have, not on what you have lost. Consider the three "L's" of self pity: What I have Lost. What I Lack. How I am Limited.
 - d. "I complained because I had no shoes until I met someone who had no feet." Through God's word take inventory. **(Phil 3:13-14; Rom 8:18, 31)**

III. Learn to purge the heart of uncontrolled anger

- A. Anger has a God-given place.
 1. Jesus **(Mark 3:5)**
 2. God and Jesus **(Heb 1:9)**
 3. You and I **(Eph 4:26-27)**
- B. Unchecked anger can cause us to lose our soul.
 1. Many brethren treat this as a "small" fault. a "fleabite" so to speak. Some joke and laugh about their anger. **(1 John 3:15)**
 2. These things will cause one to be lost. **(Gal 5:19-21)**
- C. It takes a strong faith to keep anger in its God given place.
 1. Who is a strong man? **(Prov 16:32)**
 2. How many strong men have destroyed themselves by anger? Example: Woody Hayes, Billy Martin, those with drug and alcohol problems.
 3. The fall of Moses **(Psa 106:32-33)**
- D. Consider the terrible fruits of uncontrolled anger and bitterness
 1. We act and speak foolishly. Reason is forsaken! **(Prov 14:29,17)**
 2. The effects of uncontrolled anger on the family are great. **(Eph 6:4)**
 3. The anger of one person can in time affect the entire church. **(Heb 12:15)**
 4. Uncontrolled anger will in time destroy my life. .
 - a. I constantly live with the one I hate.
 - b. My "evangelism" is reduced to talking about my hurts.

- c. I loose courage. Because I do not want to be hurt anymore I will accept compromise. (**Heb 11:35**)
- d. Satan in fact does his work through me. (**James 1:20; 4:7**)

E. Let faith control your anger.

- 1. Be like Jesus. (1 Pet 2:21-23; 4:19)
- 2. Seek to be honest at all costs and admit any anger in your life.
- 3. Seek to forgive all those who repent. (Eph 4:30-32; Mt 6:12)
- 4. Release all desire for personal vengeance to God. (Rom 12:19-21)
- 5. Learn how to stop the escalation of anger. (Prov 15:1; James 1:19-20)

Class Discussion:

- 1. When does anger become a sin?
- 2. What is the key to overcoming bitterness?
- 3. Who suffers the most from uncontrolled anger?
- 4. Why have man

Conclusion: Let us choose to walk by faith and receive the abundant life God has for us!
(**Jn 10:10**)

The Bitterness of Shimei
Steve Wallace

Most have had to deal with the problem of bitterness at some time in their lives. You may have encountered it in another person or perhaps you were tempted to become bitter towards someone else. Bitterness generally does not exist by itself for long. Rather it leads to other sins. It is corruptive in nature. The problems that it causes in churches and relations between brethren in general are many.

David faced a bitter person at least once in his life. When he was fleeing Jerusalem in the face of Absalom's rebellion, a man named Shimei came out to curse him. The example of Shimei's bitterness helps us see both how one might be tempted to become bitter and the fruits of such bitterness.

2 Samuel 16:5-13

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody manAnd as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along of the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

His Bitterness

1. Based on false premises. According to Shimei, David's suffering came upon him because "the Lord hath returned upon him all the blood of the house of Saul" (v.8). The idea behind blood returning upon someone is that of one's bearing guilt and suffering consequences of murdering someone (cf. Matt. 27:25; Acts 5:28). Whether Shimei was implying that David had something to do with the death of Saul or someone of Saul's house, the Bible shows that his charges were false (1 Sam. 24:1-22; 26:1-25; 2 Sam. 4:1-12; 9:1-13). Shimei's bitterness against David was groundless! But is this not the case with bitter brethren today? They imagine insults or slights. In the event that bitterness is based on an actual occurrence, it often is the result of a deed that a brother either did out of concern for the bitter one's soul or a wrong of which he has repented and for which he has asked forgiveness (James 5:19-20; Matt. 18:21-35). Even when it is based on something that actually happened, bitterness is always wrong. There is no good reason to be bitter (Eph. 4:31-32).

2. Nurtured for years! A study of the book of 2 Samuel shows that Saul had been dead for at least twenty years at this point in the history of Israel! What a terrible comment this is on the heart of one of God's people! Instead of filling himself with worthy thoughts he has utterly polluted himself with sinful ones! (Phil. 4:8) Bitterness is to be "put away," not nurtured (Eph. 4:31).

3. Rejoiced at another's misfortune. David and all the people with him were weeping as they fled from Absalom's forces (2 Sam. 15:30). The perverseness of bitterness is so clear at this point: The Bible shows the Christian's responsibilities to brethren who suffer (Rom. 12:13-15; 2 Tim. 1:16-18). Bitter people like Shimei have neither room in their heart for nor the inclination towards doing good to the objects of their bitterness, which brings us to our last point.

4. Sets a terrible example. The picture of Shimei publicly cursing David and throwing stones at him shows the shameless conduct that can result in those who harbor bitterness. The results of years of private seething ferments and, finally, when a convenient excuse is found, boils over in a torrent of abusive language or perhaps even physical harm. Thus it can come to pass that not only the bitter person and his enemy are affected, but rather "many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15).

Conclusion

Shimei would later ask forgiveness of his sin against David (2 Sam. 19:16-23). If you have been guilty of harboring bitterness, pray to God that he will forgive you this sin (Acts 8:22). From this brief look at this sin I believe that we can all see that it is of the devil and needs to be treated as such.

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