

Week 3: The Need to Follow God's Heart

Lesson Outline

- **Recap from last week**
- Emotionalism isn't a personality problem, it's spiritual immaturity problem
- Sensual theology of postmodern evangelicalism confuses faith and feeling
- Spiritual lies about faith and feelings
- **Today's lesson**
- To govern the heart biblically, warning about emotionalism isn't enough
- We need to understand the role of emotion in the life of faith
- **Colossians 3:12-17, Romans 12:15**
- Love demands that we speak the truth, but love doesn't stop at words
- **1 John 3:16-** we lay down our life for the brethren
- **2 Corinthians 2:4-** loving actions are accompanied by appropriate affections and emotions
- As in everything, we look to God for our example
- **We can't project our preferences upon God**
- Q: What source do we look to inform us about God?
- Q: What about our experiences in walking with God?
- **2 Peter 1:16-21-** what do we learn about spiritual experience?
- A reminder- Scripture alone should tell us about God's emotions
- **Questions about the emotions of God**
- Q: Does God have emotions?
- **Psalms 7:11, Judges 2:18, Zephaniah 3:17, John 2:15, Matthew 9:36, John 11:35, Ephesians 4:30**
- So God has emotions just like ours, except He doesn't sin? Case closed?
- **Q's: Do forces outside of Himself cause Him to be angry one moment, grieved the next?** How would this impact the immutability of God? How would this impact His sovereignty?
- **Q: Can God suffer emotional pain and loss?** If so, how would this affect His aseity (His independence, self-sufficiency)?
- **Q: But if God doesn't have emotions, how do you explain all of those Scripture passages that refer to His emotions?**
- If God has no emotions, then He doesn't hate sin? He doesn't love us? He is indifferent to suffering and evil?
- Some points to keep in mind: Theology is the servant of biblical truth, not vice versa. The Scriptures must be allowed to form our convictions.
- **The Impassability of God**
- Impassibility means NOT subject to emotion, and in particular, NOT able to SUFFER emotionally.
- **The theological argument against God having emotions:** Passions and emotion implies "passivity" because the one experiencing emotion is being

“acted upon” by an external force/person. God can’t be passive because that would deny His immutability and His sovereignty.

- **The theological argument against God being able to “suffer” emotionally:** Emotional suffering implies loss of emotional peace, which means that the one suffering is vulnerable to the actions of others. God can’t be vulnerable or in any way dependent upon outside forces/persons for His emotional peace. Therefore, God can’t feel the emotion of grief.
- **Implications for us from that theological reasoning:** emotion doesn’t really have a role in biblical faith.
- **But is all that theological reasoning really biblical?**
- God displays intense emotion. **Zephaniah 3, Deuteronomy 9:8**
- God is immutable and sovereign. **James 1:17, Hebrews 13:8, Acts 17:26.**
- God’s sovereignty is the answer to the theological dilemma.
- God doesn’t change, but He ordains change.
- **Proverbs 16:4, Isaiah 45:6-7**
- Q: What about God suffering? **Genesis 6:6, Ephesians 4:30, Isaiah 53:3, Hebrews 2:17-18**
- The answer: **Romans 8:28**, the Fall, the suffering of Job, the crucifixion, **Genesis 3:15, Exodus 3:14**
- **So does God have emotions?** Scripture says He does.
- **Q: How do those theologians who say He doesn’t have emotions explain all of those scriptural references to emotion?**
- Anthropopathisms.
- Q: Why is that not sound biblical reasoning? **John 4:24**
- **The implications of a God who has emotions**
- We should not allow emotion to drive us, but neither should we disparage it or deny it
- The sensual theology of postmodern evangelicalism is found to be bankrupt
- We should delight in what God delights in. **Jeremiah 9:24.**
- We should take sin seriously
- Through the gospel, we come to understand biblical love. **1 John 4:7**
- **The necessity and nature of biblical love**
- There is feeling in love, and love is a choice, but love is also MORE.
- Q: How do we demonstrate biblical love for God? **John 15:14, Romans 6:17, Galatians 5:16**
- Q: How do we demonstrate biblical love for others? **1 John 3:17, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7**
- The spiritual gifts and the necessity of love. **1 Corinthians 12:7.** We act for the common good, not ourselves.
- Using our gifts is a sacrifice of love
- Without love, the greatest acts and giftedness is nothing
- Love in it’s eternal perspective. Which is the greatest? Faith, hope, or love? **1 Corinthians 8:13**