

Jesus Wept: The Bible and Human Emotions

Lesson #1 for January 1, 2011

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 13; Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12-14; Luke 19:41-44; John 16:20-24.

1. Jesus wept! (John 11:35) Jesus Himself experienced many positive and many negative emotions. What is supposed to be the role of emotions in the life of a Christian? None of us would want to live a life without emotions! Who would want to be nothing but a robot?
2. Emotions can be powerful motivators for both good and bad actions. It is good to have emotions as long as they do not have you! The question is: How do we control our emotions?
3. For many human beings, emotions are a kind of roller coaster. There are ups and downs, and sometimes our emotions lead us to do crazy things! Those whose emotions swing too severely are diagnosed as having bipolar disorder. Do emotions have a direct impact on our faith? Even on the people around you! Emotions are related to your chemistry. Emotions are how you respond to things around you.
4. What emotions do we see displayed in the life of Christ? Look at the creatures that He created. You will have to admit that God has a great sense of humor! Jesus never lost control of His emotions. He had compassion, pity, sorrow, anger or "righteous indignation," and gladness. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He was so stressed that He "sweat" drops of blood!
5. Unfortunately, as human beings, we are sometimes led by our emotions to do very foolish and unwise things. Read 2 Samuel 13. Amnon could not control his sexual desire for his half-sister, Tamar. But, after tricking her into coming to his bedroom and then forcing her into bed with him and raping her, he hated her. Tamar was overcome with fear, anger, shame, embarrassment, humiliation, loss of self-esteem, and finally, grief. No doubt, Amnon's father, David, was embarrassed, saddened, and angry at the behavior of his firstborn son whom he loved. Absalom, Tamar's brother, was filled with vengeance and hatred for his half-brother, Amnon.
6. This is a story of unbalanced and uncontrolled human passion. As a result, Amnon was killed, Absalom was killed, David lost the moral high ground, and Tamar lived like a widow for the rest of her life.
7. Have you experienced any of these kinds of emotions? How did you respond? Have your emotions ever led you to do something crazy? Some people such as paramedics, emergency-room workers, etc., are trained or have the experience to control their emotions.
8. Sometimes, our emotions can leave us all confused and twisted up. Perhaps, this is partly because of the confusion in our own language. 1 John 4:8 says, "God is love (*agape*).\" Is that an emotion? To many in our world today, love is primarily an emotion. Certainly, God is not just an emotion! There are four words for love in Greek: *Phileo*(v.)/*philia*(n.) which means "filial love;" *epithumia* which means "passion;" *eros* which means "sexual passion;" and *agape* which means "principled love"-loving someone who is unlovable because it is the right thing to do. Does *agape* love have anything to do with emotions?
9. Are there good emotions and bad emotions? Think back over your own life. When have emotions caused you real grief or even caused you to do something foolish? In what ways

have emotions enriched your life? Or, are there only good and bad responses to emotions?

10. What kind of physical responses do you notice from either positive or negative emotions?
11. It is almost incomprehensible for us to think of a child or youth whose emotions were so well-controlled as were the emotions of Jesus. How did Jesus develop such control?
12. As a child, Jesus manifested a peculiar loveliness of disposition. His willing hands were ever ready to serve others. He manifested a patience [69] that nothing could disturb, and a truthfulness that would never sacrifice integrity. In principle firm as a rock, His life revealed the grace of unselfish courtesy. (*Desire of Ages* 68.3) [Do you know any children like that?]

Neither gain nor pleasure, applause nor censure, could induce Him to consent to a wrong act. He was wise to discern evil, and strong to resist it. (*DA* 72.1)

He hated but one thing in the world, and that was sin. He could not witness a wrong act without pain which it was impossible to disguise. (*DA* 88.1)

Of the bitterness that falls to the lot of humanity, there was no part which Christ did not taste. There were those who tried to cast contempt upon Him because of His birth, and even in His childhood He had to meet their scornful looks and evil whisperings. If He had responded by an impatient word or look, if He had conceded to His brothers by even one wrong act, He would have failed of being a perfect example. Thus He would have failed of carrying out the plan for our redemption. Had He even admitted that there could be an excuse for sin, Satan would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost. This is why the tempter worked to make His life as trying as possible, that He might be led to sin. (*DA* 88.2)
13. Many read the stories of Christ's two attempts to cleanse the temple and believe those were examples of Christ's anger. (See John 2:13-17; Matthew 21:12-16) Do you believe that Jesus was angry on those two occasions? After the first time, the leaders determined among themselves that if He ever tried that again, they would not run! But, the second time was no different! How do you explain the responses of the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the money changers in contrast to the cripples and the children? Did Christ lose control of His emotions? Not at all! One look at those piercing eyes of His and the guilty could only think of running! But, the children and the cripples and those who were seeking healing did not see any reason to run. If Christ had been really angry, the children should have run!
14. Did God intend for us to experience both positive and negative emotions? Or, are negative emotions in response to the sin problem? Have you ever experienced a pounding heart, tense muscles, a dry mouth, cold sweat, "butterflies" in your stomach, or some other physical manifestation because you were feeling love, excitement, joy, hatred, worry, fear, rage, jealousy, or some other emotion? Will we have negative emotions in heaven? Will we be sad if a friend or relative is not there?
15. There is a new branch of psychology called "positive psychology." Its aim is to study ways to produce a positive emotional environment in a person's life. There is considerable evidence that people who have more positive emotions live healthier and longer lives. Are negative emotions always destructive?
16. Read Galatians 5:22. Are we to understand from this verse that part of the fruit of the Spirit

is a positive emotional state of mind?

17. Read Colossians 3:12-14. What is the relationship between *agape* love and emotional love? Is love the most dominating factor in your life?
18. Where are we supposed to learn to exercise true love? We should learn it in a wonderful Christian home! How many true Christian homes are there today? How are we supposed to learn to control our emotions? When we are experiencing negative emotions, should we try to avoid making decisions? Do those emotions prevent us from thinking clearly?
19. Look at some verses in the Gospels describing the emotions of Christ: Matthew 26:37,38; Mark 3:5; 8:1-3; 9:36; 10:21,22; Luke 19:41-44; John 11:32-38. In these verses we see Christ experiencing sorrow, anger, love, gloom, compassion, and weeping. Would you consider these positive emotions? Or, negative emotions?
20. Read Mark 10:13-31. In these verses we see Jesus reaching out to young mothers and their children, blessing them, and making them happy. A certain rich young ruler saw what Jesus was doing and longed to have that same kind of experience. Why do you think Jesus told him to sell everything he had and come and follow Him? Did Jesus require the disciples to sell everything they owned? Judas thought Jesus had made a terrible mistake when He sent that rich young ruler away. (DA 719.3) They believed that if you were good, God would bless you; if you were bad, God would curse you. Therefore, the rich were “good” people!
21. Leprosy was a dreaded skin disease. Probably no condition was so feared in ancient times. But when lepers came to Jesus, He had pity on them and reached out and touched them, healing them instantly. (Mark 1:40-45; 6:34) Certainly, the pity and compassion of Jesus was a wonderful positive emotion. Was Jesus contaminated by touching the men with leprosy?
22. Probably the strongest emotional response that Jesus experienced during His ministry is described in Luke 19:41-44. Jesus was describing the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred a few years later in A.D. 70.

All eyes turn upon the Saviour, expecting to see in His countenance the admiration they themselves feel. But instead of this they behold a cloud of sorrow. They are surprised and disappointed to see His eyes fill with tears, and His body rock to and fro like a tree before the tempest, while a wail of anguish bursts from His quivering lips, as if from the depths of a broken heart. What a sight was this for angels to behold! their loved Commander in an agony of tears! What a sight was this for the glad throng that with shouts of triumph and the waving of palm branches were escorting Him to the glorious city, where they fondly hoped He was about to reign! Jesus had wept [576] at the grave of Lazarus, but it was in a godlike grief in sympathy with human woe. But this sudden sorrow was like a note of wailing in a grand triumphal chorus. In the midst of a scene of rejoicing, where all were paying Him homage, Israel's King was in tears; not silent tears of gladness, but tears and groans of insuppressible agony. The multitude were struck with a sudden gloom. Their acclamations were silenced. Many wept in sympathy with a grief they could not comprehend. (DA 575.3)

Try to imagine the immense grief and sorrow that Jesus felt as He looked upon the city filled with His children that He loved who were about to reject Him for the final time.

23. Will we have emotional responses in heaven? What kinds of things bring joy to heaven? Read Luke 15:7. "In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent." (GNB) We can make heaven rejoice simply by witnessing to the truth as we know it in Jesus.
24. Read John 11. Jesus knew that He was in the last few months of His life. He knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees in Jerusalem were determined to catch Him and put Him to death. He also knew that His friend Lazarus was sick. He could have gone and healed him, but He did not. He could have healed him simply by saying the word from the other side of the Jordan River where He was preaching and healing! But, He waited until Lazarus had been dead four days before arriving at the home of Mary and Martha.
25. Jesus knew that there were those among the Jews who believed that the soul of a person stayed near the body for three days—waiting for possible resuscitation. He planned to resurrect Lazarus, and He wanted to make certain that there would be no question in anyone's mind that Lazarus was dead. When He arrived at the gravesite, the paid mourners, family members, friends, and the curious from Jerusalem surrounded the tomb. The Bible says that Jesus wept. (John 11:35) Why do you think Jesus cried on this occasion? He knew that He was about to raise Lazarus back to life. He knew that raising Lazarus to life again would be the supreme miracle of His life. He also knew that it would result in the Sadducees—who did not believe in resurrection—becoming very aroused and ready to cooperate with the Pharisees to destroy Him. Is that why He wept?
26. Did He weep because He knew that just a few weeks later, some of these very same people would be shouting for Him to be crucified? Jesus wept, but not for Himself. He felt the pain of the entire human race.
- Looking down the years to come, He saw the suffering and sorrow, tears and death, that were to be the lot of men. His heart was pierced with the pain of the human family of all ages and in all lands. The woes of the sinful race were heavy upon His soul, and the fountain of His tears was broken up as He longed to relieve all their distress.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 534.2.
27. What can we learn from Isaiah 53:4 about the emotions of Jesus? Why does Isaiah say, "All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God" (GNB)?
28. Read John 16:20-24. Why is it that the world seems to prosper while often God's people suffer? We have the promise of Jesus that someday soon, all our grief and sorrow will be turned into gladness. All past sins and pains will be forgotten, and no one will be able to take away our joy.
29. What is the best way to teach children how to control their emotions? Are "timeouts" a punishment or a form of "positive behavior management"?
30. How can we learn to have control of our emotions as Jesus did? Is it possible for us at this point in human history? How can we learn from Him how to do it? Does understanding the great controversy over God's character and government help?

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