

# **SANCTIFICATION (PART 17)**

## **A BOOK REVIEW OF *TRUE FEELINGS***

### Introduction

*Two concerning errors in True Feelings:*

I. Misnames the emotions

II. Misplaces the emotions

*... above other faculties (as a leader)*

*... beside other faculties (as an equal)*

*... before other faculties (as an end)*

1. "Emotions are not the final authority on what is true or worthy of value. Rather, they tell us what we think is true, what we value. Our emotions don't necessarily tell us the facts about the situation; rather they tell us our interpretations of the facts. Likewise, our emotions don't always tell us what the right values are, but they tell us how much we are concerned about certain things." (49)
2. "If happy emotions aren't always right, and unhappy emotions aren't always wrong, then how do we know if we feel godly or not? It's quite simple really: *godly emotions arise from godly beliefs and values*. In other words, godly emotions spring from beliefs and values that correspond to the truths and values of God's Word. By the same token, ungodly emotions flow from ungodly beliefs and values. The money question is this: Do we believe what God says is true and do we value what God says we should value? If so, we will have *true feelings*." (64)
3. "While it's true that we can't change our emotions directly, we can change the beliefs and values that fuel our emotions. This is how we obey with our feelings. When we understand that emotions arise from beliefs and values, we can go after our emotions at their source. We can target the beliefs and values that lead to ungodly feelings. We can cultivate beliefs and values that lead to godly feelings. Change our beliefs and values, and we change our emotions." (67)
4. "Emotions not only tell us about ourselves, but they also tell us about other people and the world around us. Our feelings can help us navigate relationships, make decisions, and even discern problems. For example, let's say we feel unsettled after a conversation with a friend, and, upon reflection, we remember making a comment that may have been misunderstood. So we take action to clear the air. Or a mother may have a nagging feeling that something is wrong with her child, even before she knows all the facts. Her emotions prompt her to question her child, revealing a fear her child was hesitant to share. In both cases, emotions alert the mind which in turn guides the will... While a woman's intuition is not infallible, it should not be ignored. God created us with emotions that are finely tuned to detect problems and discern wisdom for those we love." (48)
5. "The apostle Paul commended the Christians in Rome not only for their acts of obedience but also for the godly emotions: '[you] have become obedient from the heart' (Rom. 6:17)." (61)
6. "Prayer is also a primary way that God changes our emotions. Prayer is sometimes one of the last things we *feel* like doing, but our lack of feeling is the very reason we need to pray!" (131)
7. "When our emotions and our minds work together as God intended, they serve as 'a sort of internal system of checks and balances'... Sometimes emotions take the lead, alerting us to a problem or concern and moving us to action, and sometimes our logic and reason are confirmed by our emotions. Whatever the decision, our goal is to put all the faculties to work in the quest for biblical wisdom." (48)
8. "Feelings of compassion move us toward the sufferer; they move us to open our arms to embrace, to cry tears of sorrow, and to serve in practical ways. Fear hurries us through a

deserted parking lot or keeps us back from trying something new. Righteous anger drives us to defend the child who is being bullied. Human beings are not programmed machines that move in response to a line of code... Their primary purpose is to turn us away from ourselves and toward God and others in love."

Still, many of us buy into the misconception that to be moved by emotions is a bad thing. As Christians, we are fond of telling each other, 'Don't be led by your emotions.' This is partially true: we should not be led by our emotions into sin. But emotions *are* supposed to move us. God gave us emotions to move us toward himself in love and obedience... Emotions are not to be stifled or stamped out, but rather they are to propel us to God and godliness... And so we should remind each other: *do* be led by your emotions... back to God." (50-51)

9. "As the two of us have studied emotions over the years, we've been surprised to discover that a lot of commonly accepted truisms about emotions actually have pagan roots instead of biblical foundation. Plato and the Stoics—not Scripture—promoted the idea that emotions are unruly, irrational, the enemy of virtue, and the weakest part of us. These philosophers believed that the mind and will are vastly superior and should rule over the emotions. Sadly, much of today's popular wisdom about emotions is rooted in this ancient tradition. Even some of the 'wisdom' that gets passed around in Christian circles owes more to Stoic philosophy than biblical theology." (24)
10. "Because Christ restores our emotions, they can work the way God always intended, in harmony with our other faculties... We must not live only to feel, but we should appreciate and apply our minds and wills in equal measure." (40)
11. "God created our emotions to work in harmony with our other two most fundamental faculties: the mind and the will. Just as our minds enable us to think and our wills enable us to choose, so our emotions enable us to respond. Our faculties are designed to function together, 'properly and proportionally,' in balance with one another, to make us fully human. God wants us to put our emotions to work in equal measure with our minds and our wills." (32)
12. "Emotions give us the gift of insight. They tell. They report on the contours of our world, the sharp turns of trouble and adversity and the vibrant vistas of blessing and beauty. They make us perceptive to what pleases or pains another person, and—most wondrous of all—they enable us to more fully know and experience the immense love, boundless joy, stunning sovereignty, and glorious wisdom of our God." (138)
13. "Godly feelings are a powerful defense against sin, moving us away from the heat of temptation; but they go on the offense as well, driving us 'further up and further in' toward the glories of Christ." (139)
14. "Scripture has been written to implant, renew, and revive godly affections and emotions in our hearts... We're so used to being told that we should read Scripture *regardless* of how we feel, and this is true, but the end goal is not to check another box off our Bible reading plans. Instead, as

we come to God's Word, feeling an emotional flatline, we can expect his Word to spark fresh feelings in our hearts... So, as the saying goes, let us 'take up and read' to feel... We should not only *read to feel*; we should *read until we feel*." (129)

15. "Jesus told us to pray in order to feel: "Ask, and you will receive, that you joy may be full" (John 16:24). Through prayer we have access to the one person who can change our emotions. And when we ask, he does just that... Prayer changes our emotions, and so we should pray to feel." (131-132)

16. "One of the main reasons we should go to church each Sunday for worship, preaching, and fellowship is to refresh and revive Christlike emotions in our lives. 'And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near' (Heb. 10:24-25). We go to church to 'stir up' in one another godly emotions such as 'love,' which move us to godly actions: 'good works.'" (132-133)

17. "Why does God call us to sing 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' when we gather together (Eph. 5:19)?... God created music for this purpose: to stir up our emotions for God and express our affections to God. This is why we worship." (133)

18. "Many of us think of preaching as the cerebral portion of the meeting, but the true intent of preaching is also to stir up our emotions for God." (134)

19. "Fellowship with other Christians on Sunday and throughout the week is a main and vital source of emotional sustenance." (134)