

“R E E D” – TAKING YOUR EMOTIONS TO GOD

Emotions puzzle many Christians. Sometimes Christians regard emotions as defects within their being, especially because emotions can be so wild and painful or have been tagged as “wrong.” On the other hand, Christians can sometimes regard their emotions as the core or essence of their beings, directing all of life. Both of these views of emotions are unbiblical and contradict the example of Jesus Christ, who felt and expressed a full range of emotions, all in an appropriate, godly balance and without sin.

By taking a close look at the Psalms, a pattern appears for Biblically handling emotions. The psalmists recognized and acknowledged their emotions and expressed them openly and honestly to God. The thoughts and beliefs behind the emotions were evaluated, and decisions were then made to align thinking and behavior with God’s perspective on the given situation.

We are using the acrostic “R E E D” in order to easily remember the Biblical pattern of the psalmists. For example, read Psalm 55 and notice the following:

Recognize: David recognized his emotions of fear, restlessness and despair. (v. 2,4,5)

Express: David expressed his thoughts and feeling of frustration to God. (v. 1,4-11, 16,17)

Evaluate: He realized that his emotions were tied to his enemies’ pursuit of him and the rejection of a close friend. (v. 3,12-14)

Decide: David made a decision to call upon God to save him, believing God would hear and answer his prayer. He chose to cast his burden on God, trusting God to sustain him. (v. 16-18,22-23)

Another good example in Scripture is Psalm 73.

On the reverse of this page is a worksheet that can be used to help you when you are faced with a strong emotion. Or, recall an event you’ve found upsetting and go through the worksheet with that event in mind.

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RECOGNIZE: Acknowledge your emotions; don't suppress them. Ask God to help you identify what emotions you are feeling.

EXPRESS: Write out to God how you feel.

EVALUATE: Consider, and ask God to reveal to you, what your emotions tell you about your thinking on the issue at hand. How do your behavior and feelings reflect what you are thinking and believing? What false beliefs about yourself and God are your emotions indicating? How does what you think and believe compare with God's Word?

DECIDE: Choose to agree with God's truth on the issue at hand. Then, choose to act on that truth, knowing that the Holy Spirit will empower you. For example: "Father, I feel anxious about my husband possibly losing his job. It's hard for me to trust you in this area when I think of our family's needs. Thank you for listening and caring about how I feel. I know you promise to meet all our needs (Philippians 4:19), so I am casting all my cares on you (1 Peter 5:7). Therefore, I choose to go about my life, not focusing on the potential problem, but trusting you to work this out for the good and to meet our needs in your way and in your timing."

EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH GOD

1. Is God emotional? When you think about how emotional God is, what do you usually think? After you are clear on what you think, look up each of these passages and jot notes about what each says concerning God's emotions.

Genesis 6:5-6

Exodus 32:10

Psalm 25:6

Psalm 145:8

Isaiah 62:5

Jeremiah 31:20

Mark 10:21

Luke 13:34

Luke 22:44

John 11:35

Hebrews 5:7

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

How do these passages compare or contrast with your sense of God's emotions?

2. How does God feel about your emotions? What do you think his opinion is about how you feel? Once you've thought that through, look up the following passages and make notes about how God responded to/accepted people's emotions.

1 Samuel 1:12-20

Psalm 51:17

Psalm 55:16-17, 22

Psalm 56:8

Matthew 11:28

Matthew 12:20

John 20:24-28

Hebrews 4:15-16

1 Peter 5:7

How do these passages compare or contrast with how you usually think God feels about your emotions?