



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – January 29, 2023

To Know Christ...

Emotions can come in many shapes and sizes. Happy, sad, depressed, angry, ecstatic, jealous, peaceful, and even joyful ... just to name a few. What are some others that come to your mind? Emotions can easily be drawn from a fleshly mindset, and yet other emotions can be empowered through a spiritual mindset.

The English word "Love" can be an emotional self-centered response. We can love something because of how it makes **us** feel. We can even want to be around other people because they make us "feel" good, but when they no longer give us the "good feelings" we once had, our emotional love can grow cold. Is that Christ-like love? The answer is NO! Listen to some of the feeling words listed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Love is not jealous, it is not arrogant, and it does not rejoice in unrighteousness. All these emotions are on the negative side of things. When we let our emotions control our "love", we are **NOTHING** (v2) and our actions have **NO PROFIT** before God (v3). Do our emotions ever interfere with being obedient to the Lord's commands? Yes, probably more than we care to admit at times. Our emotions are easily drawn toward making evil responses. Why be so unloving? We just don't "feel" like it!

"The mindset on the Spirit is life and peace." (Romans 8:6b) The spiritual mindset shapes and tempers emotions to conform with Christ. The type of love that is a mere feeling will stop even while Christ commands us to continue onward. In other words, in self-centered emotional love, the emotions squelch out the Christ-like love of sacrifice. However, the spiritual mindset also has emotions. Think of the emotional words found in the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) Spirit-centered fruit is love, joy, and peace. Love does have a feeling, but we do not allow the feelings to control the distance love is willing to sacrifice. So, does the spiritual mindset even affect us on the emotional side of our being? Certainly, it does! But Christ-like love overcomes mere feelings of emotion and drives us to genuine joy & peace. We should no longer be strangled by our emotions when faithful in Christ, but we still have emotions that need to be harnessed under HIS control, surrendering our emotions to Him. This is where we find eternal life and a peace that overcomes hardships.

The culmination of the matter is this, we must have self-control in Christ. Self-control is empowered by the Holy Spirit in order for our emotions to no longer take charge over our lives. We have the strength to control our emotions through the Spirit God has given us. It does not mean we stop having emotions, but we have the power to control them. “**Be angry, and yet do not sin.**” (Ephesians 4:26a) We are commanded to control our emotions such as anger. Do our lives operate off of the mindset of the flesh or the mindset of the Spirit? Do not let it be an emotionally motivated decision but let’s continue growing upward into the spiritual mindset as Jesus did. Otherwise, our love will grow cold. (Matthew 24:12)

- Carey Terry