

EPHESIANS: THE CHURCH FROM START TO FINISH
"Part XII: Bringing Our Emotions Into Productive Alignment"
(Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16-17)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Finding proper emotional expression is a task today. Consider the following facts:

- (1) Many people partake of alcoholic beverages to feel "in" with a certain crowd or to "loosen up" and "have a good time". However, alcohol often controls and leaves disorder and sadness in its wake:
 - (a) Alcoholism in the United States is 5 times more prevalent than cancer, three times more prevalent than tuberculosis, and one hundred times more prevalent than polio. By 1966, the U.S. led the **world in *per capita*** consumption of alcoholic beverages.
 - (b) It can produce a loss of friends, deep remorse, anxieties, numerous marital and family problems, social problems and incredibly low self esteem (Hendricks, Chr. Counsel. For Contemp. Problems, p. 157-158).
- (2) Over-eating is another problem often caused by emotional problems. Some people over-eat to keep others away so that they won't be abused, and some suffer great verbal abuse because they are overweight through over-eating. In fact, it is fast becoming the number one health problem for American children!
- (3) We can talk about drug abuse as well:
 - (a) According to a Protestant chaplain in a large penitentiary, in all of his contacts with nearly 1,000 incarcerated drug addicts, not one had a normal home life. **This is particularly evident in a bad relationship of the incarcerated party with his FATHER!** (Ibid., Hendricks, p. 229)
 - (b) Problems arising from drug abuse are emotional and physical dependence leading to crimes to support the drug addiction.
- (4) Other vices emotional mismanagement vices include sensual based music expressions and sexual addiction.

How can we effectively address such emotional vices?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Vices like alcoholism, drug abuse, lewd music and over-eating are often caused by mismanaging our emotions. However, we ARE emotional beings, God made us that way. How can we find a fulfilling, fruitful outlet for our feelings?!"

- I. **God EXPECTS Christians to OVERCOME the vice of alcoholism through the filling or CONTROL of the Holy Spirit, Eph. 5:18:**
 - A. The order of v. 18a is to **stop** what is **in progress**, for the imperative is in the present tense with a subjunctive negative adverb, UBS Grk. N.T., p. 675; Dana & Mantey, A Man. Gram. of the Grk. N.T., p. 301.
 - B. In **stark contrast** to the intoxicated state **in progress** (the adversative **alla** is a strong one, Ibid., UBS Greek New Testament), the believer is to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18b.
 - C. Well, since **every** believer is **sealed** at **salvation** with the Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30), this "**filling**" here means one is to be **controlled** by the indwelling Spirit as **opposed** to being **controlled** by alcohol!
- II. **Thus, ALCOHOLISM is not a DISEASE, but a MORAL problem reversible by the following steps toward Spirit-filling & control:**
 - A. First, one **obtains** the Holy Spirit by faith in Christ for salvation from sin, Jn. 7:38-39; Eph. 1:13-14. As long as he relies upon the Spirit, he is controlled by that Spirit to live above alcoholism, Gal. 5:16, 19-21.
 - B. However, **if** (or **when**) he disobeys Scripture, he acts independently of the Spirit, operating by his sin nature, Gal. 5:17. In such a state, alcoholism **controls** one who is weak in that area, Gal. 5:16, 21!
 - C. Thus, he must confess to God thru Christ (1 Tim. 3:5) his intoxication as sin (1 Jn. 1:9) to be returned to control by the Spirit, Gal. 5:16-17.
 - D. In this state, he must consciously **lean** on the Spirit's **controlling promptings** to live above alcoholism, Gal. 5:16, 22-23.
- III. **Now, such Holy Spirit CONTROL impacts one's capacity for EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION for productivity thru the ARTS!**
 - A. When Paul critiqued alcoholism in Eph. 5:18, he complained that it was "**asotia**" ["debauchery" (NIV) and "excess" (KJV)]. A better term is "emotional mismanagement", or more of "wild and disorderly rather than extravagant or voluptuous living", T.D.N.T., v. 1, p. 507.
 - B. This emotional mismanagement was evident in the songs of drinking orgies, Simpson & Bruce, Ephesians and Colossians, p. 125.
 - C. Well, **opposite** such **mismanagement**, one **manages** his **emotions** in expressing Christ's truths through music, Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16-17.

1. Paul's Ephesians 5:19-20 section on musical expression is expanded in the "cousin" epistle's section of Colossians 3:16-17 to include the idea of using music to teach and admonish God's Word, cf. Guthrie, N.T. Intro., p. 492-499 on the relation of Colossians to Ephesians.
2. Thus, to broaden the application, Paul urged believers to be controlled by the Spirit so that their **emotions** would be *managed* so as to teach and admonish God's truths through **art** forms!
3. Applied to overcoming the emotional vices introduced in the sermon introduction above, we have the following operations:
 - a. In place of alcoholism, by control of the indwelling Holy Spirit, God calls believers to have their **emotions managed** by His Spirit to communicate God's Word in effective art forms.
 - b. **Similarly**, instead of drug abuse, lewd music and over-eating, by control of the indwelling Holy Spirit, God calls believers to have their **emotions managed** so as to communicate God's Word in **art forms** that edify.
 - c. Such **managed emotional EXPRESSIONS** will typify loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, wholesome, faithful, gentle and self-controlled expressions in the art form(s) used, Gal. 5:22-23!
 - d. Such **expressions** will be acceptable to God in His people!

Application: *If overcome by the emotionally mismanaging vices of alcohol or drug abuse, lewd music, over-eating, etc., (1) we can get HELP by trusting in Christ as Savior from sin and to become indwelt by God, the Holy Spirit, Jn. 3:16; 7:38-39; Eph. 1:13-14. (2) Then, relying on the Spirit's prompting the attitude toward love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, wholesomeness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, EXPRESS the resulting emotions through an ART form (public speaking, music, painting, drama, etc.) to communicate God's Word for edification (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17). (3) If we SIN, confess it to God in Christ's name for cleansing (1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5) and find the Holy Spirit back in control (Gal. 5:17). (4) Then, GO with His PROMPTINGS of the right ATTITUDE and minister God's Word as explained above!*

Lesson: *Emotions are God-created -- they MUST be expressed! However, their MISMANAGEMENT due in the vices of alcohol and drug abuse, lewd music and over-eating, etc. is to be OVERCOME by the Holy Spirit's control. Then God can USE healthy emotional expression in various ART forms to communicate His Word to others!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

(This **version** of the account differs from one I have heard and have shared before, but I believe this account is the more accurate one!)

In the autumn of 1873, Horatio Spafford and his wife and four young daughters planned a trip to Europe. They intended to visit friends and family, but were interrupted by a turn in Spafford's business.

Not wanting to deprive his family of their voyage expectations, Spafford sent his family on ahead, planning to join them when he could.

However, the ship Mrs. Anna Spafford and daughters Maggie, Tanetta, Annie and Bessie took struck another boat, and sank in 20 minutes off of Newfoundland. As the boat went down, Mrs. Spafford gathered her daughters around her and prayed with them.

In the end, all of the girls perished, and Mrs. Spafford was plucked from the sea near death by a lifeboat. Anna survived and wired her husband about the wreck. Her message read simply, "Saved alone."

Evangelist Dwight L. Moody, a close friend of the Spaffords journeyed from Edinburgh, Scotland to meet the grieving couple once they were reunited in England. Though in sorrow, the Spaffords testified to Mr. Moody, "It is well. The will of God be done."

Instead of turning to drugs or alcohol to drown out his sorrow as many others have done, Horatio Spafford later penned the words to a poem that spelled out his feelings on the event. Hymn writer Philip P. Bliss set it to music, and we have its following words in our hymnal: (Hymns Of Faith & Inspiration, Ideals, p. 20-23 by Pamela J. Kennedy)

**"When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul."**

In May of this year, Nadine and I heard the Torrington High band perform. It was the 1998 representative of Connecticut in a Washington, D.C. gathering. One of the tunes was that of this song. The performance with what we knew of the hymn's origin was quite moving. God thus used a 125 year old tragedy to minister great encouragement to believers two generations removed! **Similarly, God wants us to use the Spirit's power as did the Spaffords to counter the temptation to mismanage even mangled human emotions. Thus emotions are controlled and we bear lasting fruit for Christ!**