

Desiring GOD study

RETHINKING THE EMOTIONS

 **mpc bible teaching weekend review**

1. Feeling **Like God**

1.1 Finding a place for emotion

What common fears do people have about misuse of “the emotions”?

1.2 God’s emotion

Since the time of Greek philosophers like Aristotle, it has been commonly thought that God is “beyond” emotions - that he remains “unmoved” by the things he created. Even Christian theologians like John Calvin have taught that God only “appears” to be moved. What are your reactions to the idea of an “emotional God”?

Read Exodus 34:6,7. As God introduces himself here, what do we learn about his nature?

1.3 A prophet’s portrayal

From Hosea 11:1-11, what do we learn about the “emotions” of God?

2. A **Jealous God**

2.1 The green-eyed monster

In the second session, Richard Gibson spoke about the “Jealousy of God.” Jealousy was described as “love mixed with anger.” Are you comfortable with thinking of God in these terms? Why, or why not?

2.2. The LORD proclaims his name

Take a look at Deut. 4:24. What do we learn about God’s nature here?

2.3 The LORD the jealous covenant partner

Richard reminded us that God’s “covenant relationship” with his people is like the relationship between husband and wife. If that is the case, what’s the problem with “idolatry”? See Exodus 20:5, 6; and Deuteronomy 4:24, 25

Because jealousy is a mix of anger and love, God does not stay angry with his beloved people, but shows them compassion. (See Joel 2:18)

2.4 Jealousy like God’s in the Bible

Richard pointed out the term translated from the original Greek as “zealous” is the same as the word for “jealous.” Take a look at the example of Jesus in John 2:13-22.

2.5 Jealousy like God’s in us

We were reminded by Richard that “jealousy” is quite appropriate in marriage, evangelism and ministry. How, and why?

3. Following the **Perfect Man in (re)action**

3.1. In search of the perfect man

Plato claimed that the “perfect man” was the one who was unchanging in mood. The Stoic philosophers claimed joy and desire, grief and fear were all signs of weakness and imperfection. These ideas have made their way into Christian thinking, and into the upbringing of many of us. Have you been encouraged to suppress emotions? What impact has it had on your life?

3.2. In the form of God...born in human likeness

Take a look at Mark's portrait of Jesus in Mk 1:41, 3:5, 8:2, 10:14,21... just some of the passages Richard identified. Was Jesus “unmoved”?

3.3 Jesus' love for a friend

From John 11:17-44 (the story of the death of Lazarus) we saw that Jesus was deeply moved. He loved, he was angered, he wept... which means the “Stoic” view of the perfect man is very different to the Christian view. We are called to grow into the likeness of Jesus!

4. Imitating Paul's **Passion for People**

4.1 Dealing with feeling

Feelings can be faked... sentimentality can become manipulative. Emotions can so easily get out of control! And yet as we watch the apostle Paul in action, he's passionate! Emotions are not to be avoided, but to be valued! If we think we can “love one another without feeling anything” we're badly mistaken!

4.2 An apostle in action

What emotions do you see Paul expressing in 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11?

4.4 Emotional intelligence?

Can you think of times when you have experienced from others (or demonstrated yourself) self-protective distance, or “professional detachment”?

5. Engaging with each other **in love**

5.1 What is this thing called love?

“Love” has a million meanings. Our world reduces love to “eros” - sensual love, love that “feels good.” Christians traditionally reduce love to “agape,” or “self sacrificial love.” But what is the danger of “reducing love”?

6. Learning to **complain**

6.1 Psalm 6 (and many of the other Psalms) provide a model for lament. What can we learn from this?

6.2 Emotions are a measure of what we're really passionate about! They are an indication of our “core values.” Do you care enough about the glory of God to be “jealous” of his reputation? Do you value the fellowship of your church family enough to generate any kind of “emotional response”?

6.3 What can we do to care for each other in this area? What parts of the weekend “touched” you?