

Are You Embracing Emotionalism?

Having grown up in the church all my life, I have heard the challenge against “emotionalism.” This normally follows someone who is a young believer doing something that is out of order.

This “emotionalism” can be attached to a lot of unhealthy things that can happen in a church. I live in the wintry, upper Midwest of the USA where we are affectionately called the Frozen Chosen. We are definitely on the calm side of the calm/emotional spectrum.

But this idea of the calm/emotional spectrum leads me to a challenge that people in my neck of the woods struggle. has one of the definitions of emotionalism as, “undue indulgence in or display of emotion.” And those of us who have seen this in church say a hearty “amen.” Actually where I live, a hearty “amen” could be called emotionalism.

What if you move too far in the other direction? What if our fear of emotionalism causes us to disengage our hearts completely? If some of us expressed our love to our spouses with the same emotion that we express toward God, we would end up in marriage counseling. Jesus called us to love the Lord with all our heart and soul. I think that includes our emotions.

We can miss out on a lot if we do not engage our emotions. Charles Finney would go so far as to say that “excitements” are the only way for the church to grow.

David’s wife Michal was appalled at David’s dancing, and I can be in danger of becoming like her. The answer, as in most cases, is an internal look. Ask yourself, “Which end of the spectrum am I?” If you find yourself in an emotionless

religion, then you must find new ways to engage your heart.

It may be scary for a couple reasons:

- Engaging our emotions before God does not always feel safe to start with because we are not used to it.
- We may fear that our friends will charge us with “emotionalism.”

I want to challenge you that the journey will be worth it and may just bring new life to your walk with Jesus. It will also give us more grace for brothers and sisters who happen to slip into “emotionalism.” You may provide healthy models for others on how to express emotion in their seeking of God.

For thoughts on emotion and prayer, watch this, and if you want to engage your emotions and are having a hard time start here. {eoa}

Kevin Senapatiratne is head spiritual pyromaniac for Christ Connection. Kevin speaks around the United States, helping Christians find the fun of prayer. He is the author of *Enjoying Prayer*. You can learn more about his ministry at .

For the original article, visit .