

Harnessing Your Emotions

The Bible teaches us that our thoughts are the determining factor which controls our actions. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Romans 8:6 says, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Notice that carnal mindedness doesn't just tend toward death – it is death!

No one can consistently perform differently than the way they think; therefore, we cannot change our actions without changing our thinking. It's not just what we think about that needs changing, but we must change our thinking process. Our emotions are linked directly to how we think.

All people have a perception, or image, on the inside of them of what they are like. This image is not necessarily based on facts but on feelings. One negative experience can distort a person's perception of themselves for a lifetime.

For instance, some people who are beautiful may think of themselves as ugly or undesirable because of unkind words spoken to them as a child. Some who achieve great success still see themselves as failures, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

To a degree, psychology has correctly diagnosed this problem. Psychologists use terminology such as "self-esteem" or "identity" in relating these truths; however, today's secular wisdom is totally inadequate to help a person change the inner self image.

First, most people shift the blame for bad self-esteem, or self-image, to someone else. It has become popular to blame others for every negative thing in our lives. People often say, "I came from a dysfunctional family," "My problems came because I'm part of a minority group," "It's that woman you gave me" (Gen. 3:12). Other people are not our problem!

All of us have had negative experiences. The choice is ours whether we become bitter or better as a result of them. For every person who can claim some dysfunctional behavior because of a traumatic experience in their life, there are others who have had similar or worse things happen to them, yet they overcame their circumstances. Why? Because problems do not dictate failure; we have a choice.

Deuteronomy 30:19 says, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." God Almighty gave us a choice. God doesn't make the choice for us, and Satan can't make it for us. We have the privilege and responsibility to choose blessing or cursing.

Placing the blame on others is denying the real problem, and it will prevent finding a solution. If other people are my problem, I'm in trouble because God did not give me the ability to control other people. The devil will always send someone across my path who knows how to hit my hot button.

If the problem is within me, then there is hope because through Christ, I can change. This is freedom. Regardless of what others do, I can prosper through Christ.

After psychology tries to place the blame for your problems on someone else, they try to bolster your self-esteem by having you focus on the positive things in your self and minimize the negative attributes. That's not what the Bible teaches. Jesus said, "For without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34). Paul said, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea,

and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. 1:27-28).

The Bible teaches that there must be an end to self-esteem before true service can begin. Christians should not try and store up the feeble positive attributes of their personalities. That is like trying to stop the bleeding from an amputated arm with a Band-Aid; it won't work for long.

Regardless of how successful or talented we are in ourselves, we will eventually fail. If nothing else, we will get older someday and will not be as productive as before. If our self-esteem is rooted in our accomplishments, then it will ultimately fail. All the security we have found in ourselves will then come crashing down around us.

The Christian should have Christ-esteem. Just like the Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

The secret to victorious Christian living is not found in self-improvement but in self-denial so that Christ can live through us.

This does not mean that God wants us to have a bad self-image. It just depends upon which self we are talking about. You see, every born-again believer has become a new person in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). (Eph. 4:22-24).

The old man is corrupt and, at his best, is incapable of living the Christian life. This is the self that most people try to patch up and feel good about. Give it up! We have to die to this old self life with all its good and bad, and find a new identity in Christ.

The new man is exactly as Jesus is (1 Cor. 6:17)! That's right. We are a totally brand-new person in Christ. We have

everything that Jesus has, in our spirits (1 John 4:17). We have a totally new identity in Christ. Why then would we want to fix up our old selves instead of just living in our new selves?

If we let the new man dominate us, we'll walk in power and victory in every area of our lives.

How can you tell if your thoughts and emotions are coming from the new, born-again self or the old carnal self? God's Word is the key. Jesus says in John 6:63, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Any thought or emotion that agrees with what God's Word says about you is from your new man. Any thought or emotion that violates God's Word is from your old man or the devil.

If you are angry at someone, you're in the flesh (old man). Just repent and get back in the spirit (new man) where you have love, joy, and peace (Gal. 5:22). If you are afraid, you're in the flesh, "for God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). Instead of going to God and asking Him to remove the fear, just step out of the flesh and into the spirit where there is no fear (1 John 4:18).

This is so simple you have to have someone help you misunderstand it. The problem is that we have had a lot of help misunderstanding these simple, biblical truths, but we have a solution. {eoa}

*March 23, 1968, was the day that **Andrew Wommack's** life changed forever. God showed him just what supernatural love was really about, and Andrew's theology transformed. God was a loving father that accepted him unconditionally and desired genuine fellowship with him. Ever since that day, Andrew has been taking the love of God as far and as deep as he can. He has written nearly forty books and hundreds of lessons. He began broadcasting the Gospel of grace and healing through his*

Gospel Truth television program and expanded in the digital age with his internet television network and his website, . In 1994, he founded Charis Bible College. What started as a vision in a small building has grown to more than fifty campuses around the world and thousands of students learning to walk in the power of God. In 2016, he established the Truth & Liberty Coalition, an organization dedicated to mobilizing the church to engage in public discourse. Andrew and his wife, Jamie, have been married for nearly fifty years.

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