

WHAT YOU FEEL vs WHAT IS REAL

I. How Do You Feel?

- A. How often do you think, "How do I feel about this?"
- B. Many times, we use the subjective, experiential, the feelings, and impressions to determine what we will accept as fact.
- C. We explain our daily choices by saying:
 - 1) "I feel good about this"
 - 2) "I had a bad feeling about that"
- D. We let our feelings tell us what is true, instead of letting the truth transform our feelings.
- E. Our culture tells us to:
 - 1) Follow your heart
 - 2) Do whatever makes you feel good, you deserve it
- F. We even approach our Christian faith this way...
 - 1) "God doesn't want me to be unhappy, so I'm going to" (Is this true? 1 Peter 1:5-7, Luke 9:23-24)
 - 2) We tend to ask God for more "experience" and if we get it, then we'll believe
 - 3) We tend to view worship this way. If we are moved in our emotions, then God was truly there. Is this true? Why not?
 - 4) We even do this with the Scriptures. If the Scriptures don't "move" us, then they aren't as significant. Who wants to take the time and hard work to study the Scriptures?
 - 5) We even let our feelings become the final authority, determining what we should do instead of the authoritative Word of God.
 - 6) When we do this, who is the authority? How does God respond to this? (James 4:6)

II. What Should Be Our First Response?

- A. We must first respond to the objective truth of God's Word, not "how do I feel?"
- B. We must be committed to believing and obeying God's Word, regardless of how I feel.
(John 6:66-68. Many leave Jesus because His teachings are "hard", but disciples stayed because they believed the truth.)

- C. We must learn to live our lives according to God's Divine Order.
- 1) Submit our lives to the truth - right feelings will follow.
 - (a) Do Right (think/act) - feel good
 - (1) Happy (John 13:17)
 - (2) Peace (Romans 2:10)
 - (3) Blessed (James 1:25)
 - (4) Lighter (Matt. 11:28-30)
 - (b) Do Wrong (think/act) - feel bad
 - (1) Sad (Psalm 32:10)
 - (2) Depressed (Romans 2:9)
 - (3) Guilty
 - (4) Hard (Prov. 13:15)
 - 2) These feelings will be reliable truth, because they are anchored in the truth
 - 3) The first question concerning truth is not: "What do I feel about this?", but "Do I believe it?"

III. "Talking to Yourself" instead of "Listening to Yourself"

- A. Alarm goes off
 - 1) Listening to yourself: "Make it stop! I don't want to get up!"
 - 2) Talking to yourself: "You need to get up, so you're not late for school"
- B. Spend Time in Quiet Time
 - 1) Listening to yourself: "You have way too many things to do. You don't have the time."
 - 2) Talking to yourself: "It's important for me to spend time with God. He is a priority to me."
- C. Break up with Boyfriend/Girlfriend, who is a Bad Influence
 - 1) Listening to yourself: "I don't want to break up. I really like them. And even though I probably should, I don't want to hurt them."
 - 2) Talking to yourself: "This relationship is not pleasing to God, and if my parents knew all that I was doing, they wouldn't be pleased either. I need to do what is right and break up."
- D. We can listen to ourselves and our constantly changing feelings about our circumstances, or we can talk to ourselves about the unchanging truth of who God is and how He came to set us free from this sinful life. John 8:32
- E. If you're anything like me, you do a lot of listening to yourself, instead of talking to yourself.

went in to my office on a Saturday and was progressing pretty well, when all of a sudden, my computer started acting up. I tried to save my paper and the computer locked up. As a result, I lost about the last page and a half of the paper.

< How do you think I responded in that moment? I wish I could say I acknowledged God's sovereignty and trusted God and thanked Him for teaching me patience.

< Immediately, the voice of my own feelings started to speak. "Oh great, now you're going to be here the rest of the day! Why is this happening? This is so not right. I can't believe this! You have a right to be mad."

< Fortunately, I didn't listen to that voice very long and I started talking to myself.
"You need to pray about this and ask God to help you respond correctly. Thank God that you have the time to reconstruct these papers. How does God want you to respond?"

< I was still frustrated. But talking to myself and reminding myself of Biblical truths instead of continually listening to my feelings, helped my frustration to go away sooner, and helped me keep motivated to do what I needed to do.

F. We need to continually remind ourselves of the gospel

- 1) Jesus Christ came to this earth and died to be my Redeemer, to set me free from sin.
- 2) I do not have to respond in sin
- 3) Jesus wants to help me, not because I'm sinless, but because He is merciful.
- 4) I can live to please God because of Calvary, even when circumstances come that I don't like. That was surely Christ's example at the cross, and that experience isn't anywhere close to my experiences.

IV. Putting Emotions in Their Proper Place

A. We are not saying emotions are bad; God has emotions

B. We are saying that we must not allow our feelings to guide our thinking; that should be the Word of God. (Psalm 119:105)

C. Think about the guy who allows his feelings to guide his relationship with his girlfriend. Is he headed for trouble? (Prov. 7:1-5)

APPLICATION

- 1) On what do you primarily base your decisions? (On what you feel or on the objective truth of God's Word?)

- 2) When you read God's Word, what is the conversation you have with yourself? "What do I feel about this?" or "Do I believe it?"

Questions for small group

- What do you typically do with your feelings?
(try to ignore them, allow them to control me, try to understand why I feel like I do, ask God what He is trying to teach me, etc)
- How do you typically allow your feelings to impact your faith?
 - Do you evaluate your relationship with God based on how you feel?
 - What would be a better way to evaluate your relationship with God?
- Do you think you can control what you feel? If so, how?
 - (think right-> do right-> feel right)
- When given a choice between how I feel and what God says, which do I usually listen to the most?
- Do you talk to yourself more or listen to yourself more?
 - What changes do you need to make?
- How can the gospel impact how you process your feelings?