
EMBRACING THE CALL
You & Titus 2 Newsletter
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Faith + Feelings

It is a sad reality that many women treat Christianity as an emotional aspect of their lives. It is described as a warm fuzzy feeling. I hear women evaluate their church life based on how frequently it produces an emotional experience. Experiential evidence of Christianity is anything but authentic evidence of a true commitment to Christ as Lord. Feelings are prone to come and go according to circumstances or state of mind.

I'm not trying to label emotions as bad or something to be avoided. In fact, I think emotions are a beautiful part of the Christian life when kept in check under God's authority. When my husband officiates a wedding, he often says that love is not the variety of feelings that brought the man and woman to the altar, but it is the life-long commitment they are making at the altar. He is identifying the difference between emotional idealistic feelings and the deeper richer commitment of unwavering love. If they do not embrace this greater commitment rather than their own untrustworthy feelings, they are certainly headed toward confusion and disappointment.

Disillusioned people who once called themselves Christians (in name only) are walking around disappointed by a church experience or an encounter that evoked negative feelings. Their commitment was never to the Lordship of Christ but to the lordship of self and the selfish desire for validation through feelings. Psalm 1:3-4 compares a person of faith to a tree yielding fruit in contrast to those who "are like chaff that the wind drives away." Faith is not validated by feelings but by fruit. Jeremiah used the same illustration for a person who trusts the Lord rather than the heart.

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit." The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Jeremiah 17:7-9 ESV

The healthy tree has roots that go deep nourished by the stream. It is undisturbed by heat or drought. The passage does not suggest that these hardships will never come, but when they do, this tree will remain green and bear fruit. A woman who trusts in the Lord does not trust in feelings of the heart because it can be deceitful and desperately sick (Jeremiah 17:9). As a Christian, we can be tempted to operate in our feelings, we must be mindful of this pull and focus our attention on God's Word and His loving authority in our lives.

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Learning about Faith over Feeling

It is possible to be part of a church that teaches sound doctrine, attend all the classes offered, and still be weak and unequipped to overcome the strategies of the evil one. Paul explains this to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:6-7, "For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth." It is interesting to note that the target is weak women who are "learning." There are two problems which make them so vulnerable. They are burdened with sins, and they are led astray by their own passions. Feelings can be the channel through which these passions manifest. Sins are often justified because, "It just feels right." Basing our life choices on feelings rather than faith in the Truth of God's Word is a dangerous way to live. Women who have lived in faith can help their younger sisters in Christ to forsake feelings that would lead to disobedience. Often an older woman's wisdom comes from the heartbreak of experience. God is serious about our allegiance to His will out of love for us. He knows what our feelings can steal from us. Even when a woman's feelings are not on board, it is always eternally best to follow God's authority.

Jeremiah 29:11 ESV

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you believe women trust their feelings to make major life decisions? How can Jeremiah 29:11 help us to reject any feeling that would cause us to compromise God's Word in our lives?
2. Read Ephesians 4:11-15. What is the difference in this passage between maturity and immaturity (like "children")? How does the fruit bearing tree (Psalm 1:3-4, Jeremiah 17:7-9) contrast with a wave "tossed to and fro"?
3. What fruit have you seen in the life of a woman who has honored God with her choices?
4. Read Philippians 1:9-10. Describe what Paul is praying for in your own words. How is his prayer different from common phrases like, "Follow your heart," or "Do what makes you happy"?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:57-58. What rationale does Paul give for a steadfast and immovable faith? Why is knowing "in the Lord" better than anything our feelings could persuade us to do? Victory is through Christ and not our feelings. How have you experienced this in your own life?

Trainer's Prayer List

Pray that they will beneficially love their husbands

Pray that they will beneficially love their children

Pray for their self-control

Pray for their purity

Pray for their work at home

Pray for their hearts to show kindness

Pray for wisdom in following their husband

