

Repressing Emotions

The Human Soul – Divine Design

1. **Mentality** The ability to think, reason, logic and believe – to learn, grow & change.
 - a. Mind **nous** To evaluate & conclude
 - b. Heart **kardia** To store values; control actions
2. **Volition** The capacity to choose your own thoughts & beliefs
3. **Conscience** The capacity to learn values of right & wrong
4. **Self Consciousness** The awareness of self; ability to observe self in action
5. **Emotion** The ability to feel, appreciate, enjoy & hurt; taste buds of the soul.

1. Emotion Definition & Description:

Our emotions are our feelings that we experience in our bodies in response to what we think or feel - in our chest & abdomen.

Good love, joy, peace, happiness, pleasure, enjoyment, Righteous fear & anger
Bad sinful fear, worry, anger, hatred, bitterness, envy, laziness and discouragement

- Visual thinking: images we make and see in our minds
- Verbal thinking: self talk; inner dialogue

We think visually and verbally and either/both can evoke an emotional response

What we see & say in our minds causes what we feel in the immediate present or overall as a disposition or state of mind.

2. How our emotions work

What causes us to feel the way we do?

- **The Lazarus Theory** states that a thought must come before any emotion or physiological arousal.
 - In other words, you must **first think** about your situation before you can **experience an emotion**.
 - Wikipedia. “At the heart of Dr. Lazarus's theory was what he called appraisal. Before emotion occurs, he argued, people make an automatic, often unconscious, assessment of what is happening and what it may mean for them or those they care about”
 - Thinking always precedes Emotion.
- **Exception:** emotion is created by the brain and experienced in the body. Brain chemicals can misfire and the brain can become diseased or damaged causing emotion to occur without being triggered by thought.

EXAMPLE: Thought / Emotion - You are walking down a dark alley late at night. You hear footsteps behind you and you think it may be a mugger so you begin to tremble, your heart beats faster, and your breathing deepens and at the same time experience fear.

- **Event à Thoughts** (visual-verbal) interpret the event **à Feel** according to thought
 - **Events:** God is in control of all events according to His plan for your life

- **Thoughts:** we choose how we will interpret the events He allows – the choices we consistently make become habits of thought à habitual reactions
 - a. believe God’s plan is right for you – **positive emotions**
 - b. believe your plan must prevail – **negative emotions**

§ **Feelings** – respond to thoughts à habitual thoughts à state of mind

§ **State of mind** – happy, joyful, peaceful, hopeful – afraid, fearful, depressed

3. Emotions are morally neutral in themselves and only become good/bad or right/wrong in response to the thinking evoking them.

Fear – Godly fear caused by thinking NM thoughts related to God’s parenting

Fear – sinful fear caused by thinking OM thoughts independent of God

- You fear the loss of worldly, material gain of some kind – money, life

Anger – Righteous anger caused by hatred of sin/evil that harms those you love – Jesus

Anger – sinful anger as a reaction to losing something you consider rightfully yours

- Anger because of rejecting God’s plan that He allowed in your life

4. When events overwhelm our problem solving rationales and devices, we will numb or shut down our emotions to avoid pain - Col 3:21 – repression

(Col 3:21) Fathers do not embitter your children so they wont become w/out passion.

§ Embitter – **erethizo** – treat unfairly, parent with anger, discipline with anger

§ W/out passion – **a/thumos** – no passion, no emotion, become numb, stop feeling

- a. Parents embitter children by treating them unfairly, discipline with anger, sarcasm
- b. When parents are angry about life, they can take it out on children – hurts them
- c. Parents who punish attack the person instead of the person’s behavior – hurts the child’s self image causing them to devalue their own person.
- d. Children have no way of correcting parents or of resolving the unfair situation.
- e. The events create pain in the heart of a child – pain he/she can’t resolve.
- f. Overwhelming pain we cant resolve – defense mechanism – emotional repression.
- g. We go numb to stop feeling pain – shuts down our heart and our emotions
- h. When we go numb, we no longer feel the pain but we also can’t feel the good side.

5. The mechanics of repressing emotion – how we distance self from pain

(All emotion or change of emotion is caused by thinking or a change in thinking)

- a. The need for repression: some event(s) has been interpreted as hurtful to the soul and has not been resolved by reinterpreting the event from a divine perspective.
- b. The pain caused by the negative view of the event persists; person concludes the pain is too great to endure, must be diminished or eliminated at any cost, by any means.
- c. Person begins to block the events out of conscious memory, sees it as gone or at a distance; tells self to stop focusing on the pain, tells self to stop caring what the offender said/did or to stop caring about the person at all.
- d. The intensity of the pain is related to the trust & love we have for the person. As we lessen the level of trust & love for the person, it lessens the pain of their betrayal

§ We repress painful feelings by changing the way we view the event or the person involved in the event – we tell ourselves to stop caring, we don’t care and then we don’t.

6. Repressing emotion is a human defense mechanism that results in less emotional pain, but fails to resolve the real issue which is the way we think about the event(s) and the person(s) involved.

- a. **Human viewpoint:** Old Man Thinking: The event was unfair, should not have happened, was wrong for God to allow it, I should be protected from all sin and evil, my parents should have done better and I blame them, my parents were right and I blame myself
- b. **Divine perspective:** God allowed the event(s) and will use it for agathos good; I am under the same curses as the rest of the human race, my parents inherited a sin nature and built an Old Man belief system that motivated their actions, I forgive their sins.
 - i. Repressing emotions feels like resolution to those who are blind to the OM belief and behavior system – the pain is gone, forgotten the event(s).
 - ii. Repressing emotion leaves the unresolved issue in the soul as a wound that influences our whole perspective about life – life is unfair, love is not worth it, etc.
 - iii. Repressing negative, painful emotions alleviates pain but also represses all other feelings, including desirable feelings like happiness, joy, pleasure, etc.

7. Repressing painful emotions by reinterpreting events causes us to lose touch with the memory of the events and the unresolved issues so that we are unable to change our thinking to take off the Old Man belief system.

- a. Suppressing the feelings causes us to suppress the memory of the event.
- b. In order to resolve the issue, we must remember the event and change the way we interpreted the event, adopting the divine perspective of the event.
- c. To take off the OM beliefs that resulted from the painful events in question, we must reverse the numbing effects of repression and allow the repressed pain to surface.
- d. When we stop repressing pain, whatever pain has been stuffed down into the subconscious will emerge along with the memories of the painful events.
- e. Once we can recall the events, we can identify the wrong thinking we adopted based on the event and change the way we view what happened.
- f. When we adopt divine perspective about what previously caused us pain, we can see God's purpose for allowing it and use it for edification and God's glory.
- g. Taking off the OM, wrong thinking that caused us soul pain and replacing it with NM truth, the pain is resolved and replaced with meaning, purpose, gratitude and +H.