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SESSION 1

## The nature of our emotions

Steve Midgley

#BCUK2020

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Why emotion?

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Why emotion?

- Because emotion is the currency of human engagement

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## An overview

- Talk 1 – The nature of our emotions
- Talk 2 – The purpose of our emotions
- Talk 3 – Emotion and God
- Talk 4 – The shape of our emotional maturity




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## What is an emotion?




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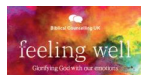
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## What is an emotion?



A fully personal (involving thoughts, beliefs and judgements made about the environment and oneself) and somatic response to internal and / or external experience, subjectively experienced as some kind variety of feeling, which prepares the body and mind for action.

Sam Williams, *Toward a Theology of Emotion*

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Feelings, emotions and affections



Less settled  
Less of me

More settled  
More of me



**Feelings**

**Emotions**

**Affections**

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Attitudes toward our emotions

1. Emotions need to be eradicated



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Attitudes toward our emotions

1. Emotions need to be eradicated
2. Emotions need to be expressed



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Attitudes toward our emotions

- 1. Emotions need to be eradicated
- 2. Emotions need to be expressed
- 3. Emotions are just best ignored




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Isn't God just interested in what I do?

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love.

Romans 12:9-10




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Isn't God just interested in what I do?

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. 1 Cor 13:3, ESV




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Two initial implications

1. Attend to our emotions for they reveal the desires and priorities of our hearts




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Emotions reveal...

Our emotional states are windows into our souls, revealing the allegiances of our hearts

Sam Williams,  
*Toward a Theology of Emotion*




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Too weak...

"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

CS Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*




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Two initial implications

- 1. Attend to our emotions for they reveal the desires and priorities of our hearts
- 2. Express our emotions, for they are the means to relational engagement




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Discussion Questions

- 1. Do you tend to be someone who is: i) suspicious of your emotions; ii) controlled by your emotions; or iii) out of touch with your emotions? What do you think are the chief spiritual dangers in each?
- 2. It's sometimes said that there are positive emotions (joy, peace, delight, etc) and negative emotions (fear, sorrow, despair etc) and that we should cultivate the positive ones and resist the negative ones. Do you think that's right?




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