



SESSION 3

Emotion & God

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#BCUK2020

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The story so far



Our emotions....

- Are the currency of human engagement
- Reveal the desires and priorities of our hearts
- Connect us with God

2

What kind of emotional people should we be?



3

What kind of emotional people should we be?



Emotion in the image and likeness of God

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God rejoices

As a young man marries a young woman,
so will your Builder marry you;
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you.
Isaiah 62.5



5

God grieves

How often they rebelled against him in
the wilderness
and grieved him in the wasteland!
Psalm 78.40



6

God feels anger

Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.
Exodus 32.10



7

God feels compassion

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;
Psalm 103.13



8

God loves with an everlasting love

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.'
Jeremiah 31:3



9

God is jealous

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God
Exodus 20.5



10

But does God really feel?

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him
Psalm 98.1



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But does God really feel?

The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, 'I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created – and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground – for I regret that I have made them.'
Genesis 6:6-7



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But does God really feel?

Isn't this emotional language just a way of speaking?

(Anthropopathic, in technical terms!)



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But does God really feel?

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But then what would 'God loves you' actually mean?



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But does God really feel?

"The price is too high. You may then rest in God's sovereignty, but you can no longer rejoice in his love. You may rejoice only in a linguistic expression which is an accommodation of some reality of which we cannot conceive, couched in the anthropopathism of love. Give me a break."

Don Carson, *The difficult doctrine of the love of God*



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The (difficult) doctrine of divine impassibility



God cannot be manipulated, overwhelmed, or surprised into an emotional interaction that he does not desire to have, or allow to happen.

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How God feels



Impassible **and** impassioned

Rob Lister

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God, emotion and us

- 1. Emotions are good – God wants us to feel them



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God, emotion and us

- 1. Emotions are good – God wants us to feel them
- 2. We will never experience emotion in the way God does
 - Because of sin
 - Because we are not God



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God, emotion and us

- 1. Emotions are good – God wants us to feel them
- 2. We will never experience emotion in the way God does
 - Because of sin
 - Because we are not God
- 3. Imitate the emotional life of the perfect image bearer – Jesus Christ



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The complexity of the emotional life of Christ

He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.'

Mark 3.5



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The complexity of the emotional life of Christ

The series of emotions attributed to our Lord ... in their variety and their complex but harmonious interaction, illustrate...this balanced comprehensiveness of his individuality. Various as they are, they do not inhibit one another; compassion and indignation rise together in his soul; joy and sorrow meet in his heart and kiss each other.

B B Warfield, *The Emotional Life of our Lord*



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God, emotion and us

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Discussion Questions

1. In the past, would you have tended to think about God's emotions as 'just the same as ours', or 'completely different to ours' or something else? How do you view it now?
2. How does the idea of imitating the emotional life of God sound to you? Exciting? Intimidating? Incomprehensible? Or something else altogether?



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