

MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST

THE CHRISTIAN AND EMOTIONS (CE)

This course is part of the formation program of MFC. It is available to MFC members starting on their second year in MFC. It is an optional course for members and household leaders, but is a required course for unit and chapter leaders.

GOALS OF THE SIX TALKS

1. To communicate clearly the role of emotions in the life of a Christian.
2. To help people integrate their emotional life into their total life in the Spirit.

TOPICS OF THE TALKS

1. Emotions in our Christian Life
2. Christian Love and Human Desire
3. True and False Humility
4. Guilt and Repentance
5. Righteous and Unrighteous Anger
6. Fear

CONTENTS

For each of the topics, the following are provided:

1. Goals of the talk
2. Expanded outline
3. Scripture references
4. Book reference
5. Hand-out for participants

SCHEDULE

This course may be given in one day, or in two separate half-days, or over 3 nights (2 talks each), or finally over 6 sessions (one talk each). The course may be given by the MFC Pastoral Formation Office and/or the respective chapters.

A suggested one-day schedule is as follows:

8:00AM	Arrival/registration	2:00 PM	Praise Time
8:45	Worship	2:15	Talk #4
9:15	Talk #1	3:00	Break
10:00	Break	3:15	Talk #5
10:15	Talk #2	4:00	Break
11:00	Break	4:15	Talk # 6
11:15	Talk #3	5:00	Open Forum
12:00NN	Lunch/fellowship	6:00	Closing Prayers

MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST **THE CHRISTIAN AND EMOTIONS (CE)**

TALK #1: EMOTIONS IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE

GOALS OF THE TALK

1. To communicate the role of emotions in the life of a Christian.
2. To help people learn how to handle their emotions so that these support one's Christian life.

EXPANDED OUTLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Our present culture is preoccupied with emotions. "You are what you feel." Indeed, feelings are a very intimate part of one's personality.
2. Feelings are important, but should not be overemphasized. Otherwise they can take charge of our lives and lead to problems.
 - * E.g. - Angry, so not attend meeting.
 - Unhappy, so not celebrate event of objective significance.
 - Afraid, so not move on in personal relationships.

B. WRONG APPROACHES

1. Emotions are our enemies. Anger, anxiety, guilt, grief, fear, etc., are destructive and so must be avoided.
 - a) Various tactics:
 - * Repression (suppression) - unconsciously (deliberately) ignoring or denying a feeling that annoys us.
 - I do not admit that I have a problem.
 - I hope it will go away on its own.
 - Ostrich approach (burying one's head in the sand).
 - * Engaging in behavior that expresses the exact opposite feeling.
e.g. inferiority → so act superior.
 - * Directing an undesirable emotion against someone or something.
e.g. Boss berates, so angry → explode at wife; she at children; they at pets.
 - * Exercise of stern discipline. Willpower approach.
 - b) None of the above truly work. At best, they can only bring temporary relief. Eventually, they result in depression, frustration, etc.
2. Emotions are our masters.
 - a) Various approaches:

- * Driftwood approach - follow emotions wherever they lead. I allow things to happen to me. I fall in and out of moods. I allow my emotions to rule me.
 - * Focus-on-feelings approach. Communicate how you feel with complete honesty. Reflect on experience of the feeling and try to describe it as graphically as possible. Introspection. Preoccupation with feelings. Looking to “Encounter groups.”
- b) Something is wrong with the notion that emotions should run our lives. Our emotions do not always guide us well.
- c) Dangers: selfishness and wrongdoing.
- * Christianity is other-directed. The emotions-in-charge approach leads in the opposite direction.
 - * Emotions that are allowed to rule can push us to wrongdoing.
 - e.g. Anger → fights, killing.
 - Sexual attraction → fornication.

C. RIGHT APPROACH

1. Basic truth: Emotions are God-given and are good. They are designed for our benefit. Each emotion has a purpose.
 - a) Emotions work by agitating us. They motivate us to action.
 - * E.g. Anger → fight for justice
 - Joy → celebrate
 - Fear → avoid danger
 - b) Jesus showed a whole range of emotions. Paul also.
 - c) Basically good. Valuable assets for daily life.
2. Distinguish between a reaction to a given situation and a response to that situation.
 - a) An emotional reaction refers to the inner movements we experience when a feeling stirs in us. Our response is what we do or say under the influence of the reaction.
 - * e.g. When insulted, reaction is to feel angry; response may be to hit the other person, or just choose to keep quiet.
 - b) Emotions are primarily reactions. Reactions do not necessarily have to rule our decisions.
 - c) We can handle the situation according to our reaction or decide this is not the right response and handle it in a different way. We have a choice.

3. Emotions should be our servants. They should support us in righteous living.

D. ESTABLISHING HEADSHIP OVER OUR EMOTIONS

Four elements involved:

1. Do the right and loving thing in every situation.
 - a) Pattern our lives on God's standards. Follow this objective standard, no matter how we feel. How would Christ respond here?
 - b) Our emotions will follow and come into line.
 - * e.g. Irritated with wife because already late for a meeting. But choose to just worship during meeting. Irritation will disappear.
2. Exercise our authority as a son or daughter of God to bring order into our emotional life. We are under new management. We have already received the Spirit.
 - a) Put to death within us what works against the Lord. Gal 5:16,24.
3. Develop a set of strong, committed relationships as the context for personal Christian living.
 - a) Attention away from how we feel to how we behave towards others.
 - b) Structure of positive and supportive relationships.
4. Yield more fully to the Holy Spirit and expect Him to transform us and our feelings.
 - a) Emotions are gifts from God.
 - b) Changes come relatively unnoticed, the consequence of our relationship with Christ rather than result of deliberate steps we take.

E. CONCLUSION

1. As we go through the talks in this course, we may experience some kind of problem in each area of our emotions.
 - a) If you discover a normal problem, then learn the right steps to take and do them.
 - b) If your problem is serious, get help from our leaders.
2. It is important to take the right approach. Do not panic.
 - a) Accept the problems peacefully and with faith that God can and will help.
 - b) We must want to change.

- c) Believe that with the Lord's power, we can change. Many of us probably have such problems when we first came into MFC.
 - * May take time.
 - * Place the problem under the Lord's authority.
- d) The most important means of change is through our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Various scriptural commands involving some emotional response: Lk 12:5, 1 Pt 2:17, Eph 4:26, 1 Thes 5:16, Rom 12:10a, Rom 12:15

Paul expresses strong emotions: Phil 1:8, 1 Thes 2:17

Jesus expresses strong emotions: Lk 22:15, Jn 11:35,38, Lk 10:21, Mk 1:41-42, Mk 3:5, Mk14:33-34

The Holy Spirit has the power to change us: 2 Cor 3:18

Live by the truth: Jn 3:21

Conform our life to Christian truth: Eph 5:8-10

Give our lives completely to God: Mt 13:44-46

Bad relationships are a major source of emotional problems: Gal 5:13-15

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TALK #1: EMOTIONS IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE

Participant's handout

A. Wrong Approaches:

1. Emotions are our enemies.
 - a) Repression/suppression. Ostrich approach.
 - b) Stern discipline. Willpower approach.
2. Emotions are our masters.
 - a) Driftwood approach. Follow emotions wherever they lead.
 - b) Focus-on-feeling approach.
 - c) Introspection.

B. Right Approach.

1. Basic truth: Emotions are God-given and are good.
2. Distinguish between a reaction to a given situation and a response to that situation.
 - a) Emotions are primarily reactions. Reactions do not necessarily have to rule our decisions.
 - b) We have a choice in how to respond.
3. Emotions should be our servants.

C. Establishing headship over our emotions.

1. Do the right and loving thing in every situation.
 - a) Pattern our lives on God's standards. How would Jesus respond?
 2. Exercise our authority as a son/daughter of God to bring order into our emotional life.
 - a) Put to death within us what works against the Lord. (Gal 5:16,24).
 3. Develop strong, committed relationships.
 4. Yield more fully to the Holy Spirit.
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TALK #2: CHRISTIAN LOVE AND HUMAN DESIRE

GOALS OF THE TALK

1. To communicate the distinction between worldly desire and Christian love.
2. To establish the place desires should play in the Christian life.
3. To help people learn how to be free of worldly desires.

EXPANDED OUTLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Desire is a universal feature of human existence. Desire for food, drink, sex, success, possessions, honor.
2. Many Christians deal with desires in two extremes:
 - a) Stoicism.
 - * Desires should be uprooted.
 - * The ideal is detachment, i.e., indifference regarding gain or loss, health or sickness, success or failure.
 - b) Selfism.
 - * It is unhealthy to disregard or subordinate one's desires.
 - * Primary aim in life is to be self-fulfilled and well-adjusted, achieved through the maximal satisfaction of one's desires.
3. Neither extreme is the Christian approach.

B. WORLDLY DESIRES VS. GODLY DESIRES

1. Desires can be worldly or godly. A study of one N.T. word, "epithumia," reveals the biblical teaching on desire.
 - a) "Epithumia" literally means to set one's heart or soul on something. It refers to an exceptionally strong desire.
2. Worldly desires.
 - a) "Epithumia" refers to works of the flesh such as jealousy, enmity, covetousness, desire for illicit sex. Sometimes translated as "lust" or "passion."
 - b) Some Scripture passages: Rom 1:24; Jas 1:14-15; Ti 3:3; 1 Pt 1:14.

3. Godly desires.

- a) “Epithumia” sometimes describes a godly and commendable desire, experienced by angels, prophets, apostles, even Jesus himself.
- b) Some Scripture passages: Mt 13:17; 1 Pt 1:12; Phil 1:23; Lk 22:15; 1 Tm 3:1.

4. Conclusion.

- a) “Epithumia” or desire is not always evil. In fact, it is the right and proper response to that which is good, noble and intrinsically desirable.
- b) The Lord does not want to liberate us from all desires. Instead, he wants to free us from evil desires and fill us with holy ones.

C. HUMAN DESIRES AND CHRISTIAN LOVE

1. The problem with human desire:

- a) The first problem concerns the object of desire. As a consequence of the fall, human desires have become twisted and distorted so that we commonly desire things which are both harmful for us and displeasing to God.
 - * Gal 5:17-21
 - * Desire is not the problem; it is the object of desire.
- b) However, in another sense, desire itself is the problem.
 - * The fall led to a disorder in the nature of desire itself. Desire became unruly, ungovernable, determined to dominate us.
 - Ti 3:3; 2 Pt 2:19b; Eph 2:3.
 - * Even with righteous desires, it is wrong for them to rule and govern us.
 - Phil 1:22-25. Paul subjects his holy desire to be with Christ to the higher standard of love, i.e., to build up the church.

2. Desires can be a major hindrance to living for the Lord.

- a) Desires that have a sinful object.
- b) Desires that are neutral, i.e., intrinsically neither good or evil.
 - * E.g. Accepting a job that requires lots of traveling and overtime which prevents one from caring properly for his family.

- c) Even desires that are holy and virtuous.
 - * e.g. Love for prayer that results in neglect of one's responsibilities at work.
- 3. For us to maximize the good and minimize the evil in our desires, we must begin by accepting a crucial and fundamental truth: desires should be servants and not lords! Desires should not become the criterion of our conduct.
- 4. The Christian's criterion of his conduct is love for God and for others (Mk 12:28-31). A Christian is to be guided by love rather than by his desires.
 - a) This love is not a desire or an emotion. Rather, it is a commitment to serve others. It is servant love. Jn 13.
 - b) Jesus is our model.

D. STEPS TO POSITIVE CHANGE IN DESIRES

- 1. Set your heart on the Lord.
 - a) Grow in your personal relationship with God.
- 2. Surrender to God's will completely and from the heart.
 - a) Conflict between God's desires and ours sometimes indicates that we still hold a tight grip on certain areas of our life: we are unwilling to abandon ourselves totally to God.
 - b) Trust in God.
- 3. Be honest.
 - a) Acknowledge wrong desires. Avoid false shame.
 - b) Be honest with ourselves, with God, and with our brothers and sisters in Christ (especially with our pastoral leader in MFC).
- 4. Work for change.
 - a) Discipline and self-denial.
 - * Paul in 1 Cor 9:27.

E. CONCLUSION

Desires are a gift from God. They can easily get Christians into trouble, but they also can be an aid in loving and serving the Lord. God's intention is not to root them out, but to work in Christians' lives so that more and more they desire what He does.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Importance of love: 1 Cor 13:1, 8:1

God is love: 1 Jn 4:8

God's command to love: Jn 15:12-13

God's love in us: Rom 5:5

Love of enemies: Lk 6:27-28, 32-35

Passion related to death: Jas 1:15

Passion and bad behavior: Jude 16-18; 2 Pt 3:3

Love is fulfillment of the law: Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14

Love of God is obedience to him: Jn 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10

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TALK #2 : CHRISTIAN LOVE AND HUMAN DESIRE

Participant's handout

A. Desire is a universal feature of human existence.

Many Christians deal with desire in either of two extremes: Stoicism or selfism. Neither is the Christian approach.

B. Desires can be worldly or godly. "Epithumia."

C. Human desire and Christian love.

1. Problems with human desire:

a) The object of desire may be displeasing to God and harmful to us.

b) The desire itself may become unruly and tend to dominate us.

2. Desires can be a major hindrance to living for the Lord.

a) Desires with a sinful object.

b) Desires that, though neither intrinsically good or evil, prevent us from fulfilling basic responsibilities.

3. Desires should be servants and not lords.

4. The Christian's criterion for his conduct is love for God and for others. Be guided by love rather than by desires.

D. Steps to positive change in desires:

1. Set your heart on the Lord.

2. Surrender to God's will completely and from the heart.

3. Be honest. Acknowledge wrong desires.

4. Work for change. Have discipline and practice self-denial.

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TALK #3: TRUE AND FALSE HUMILITY

GOALS OF THE TALK

1. To communicate the meaning of true Christian humility.
2. To help people develop a healthy self-image.
3. To inspire people to take on a humble life of service.

EXPANDED OUTLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Phil 2:1-4
 - a) Important elements of community life: love, unity, service (Phil 2:2,4)
 - b) The key is humility (Phil 2:3)
2. Common misunderstanding of this teaching on humility.

B. FALSE HUMILITY

1. Wrong approach: consider everyone better than yourself (a misunderstanding of Phil 2:3).
 - a) Common interpretation:
 - * Low opinion of self.
 - * Feel bad about self
 - * Think oneself inferior to others.
 - b) Problems with this approach:
 - * You do not genuinely believe yourself to be such a wretched person.
 - * You see people who are not obviously better.
 - * You spend too much time in comparing.
2. This leads to an emotional problem: Lack of self-respect, self-worth and self-confidence.
 - a) Often at root of obstacles such as weight difficulties (e.g. Anxious → eat a lot), personality conflicts, sexual problems, etc.
 - b) Some manifestations:
 - * Aggressive striving for approval
 - * Depression. Self-pity.

- * Defensiveness. Difficulty in receiving correction.
- * Inability to receive praise and encouragement. “He is just trying to be nice.”
- * Self-condemnation.

C. TRUE HUMILITY

1. Rom 12:3. Think with sober judgment.
 - a) Hold an opinion of ourselves based on “sober” judgment.
 - * Think accurately and truthfully. Don’t yield to unreasonable influences or unjustified extremes.
 - * We can fail to view ourselves with “sober judgment” in two different ways:
 - grand self-opinion inflated by alcohol when drunk;
 - depression when drunk
 - b) A truthful opinion, not a low one. The goal is clear thinking.
2. What is the truth about ourselves?
 - a) Neither of two extremes: pride and self-condemning.
 - b) Two basic truths:
 - * We are dependent creatures
 - we rely upon God in everything
 - only God’s resources of wisdom and power can genuinely change lives.
 - everything that we have is a gift from God.
 - * God loves and values us. (Eph 1:4; Gn 1:26; Ps 8)
 - we are creatures created in God’s own image and likeness.
 - we have been redeemed and made a part of God’s people.
 - Each of us has gifts and abilities to be used to serve God and brethren.
3. True Christian humility. Phil 2:3-4
 - a) Understanding hinges on the word “superior” or “better.”
 - b) Does not mean “superior in value, ability or virtue.” Does not connote inferiority. Refers rather to social position and the master-servant relationship. One’s “betters” are those “over” one in the accepted structure of society, those whom one was obliged to specially serve and honor.
 - c) Thus, to think of others as superior to oneself is to be a servant to others. Be at the disposal of others. Thus the truly humble man is one who is willing to take the lowest position, that of a servant.
 - d) Opposites of humility: Rivalry (selfishness) and conceit. Phil 2:3a.
 - * Rivalry or selfishness - Greek “eritheia,” i.e., self-seeking or selfish ambition. Striving for position and power with personal aggrandizement as a primary motive.

- * Conceit or empty glory. Acting out of a desire for one's reputation, so that others will admire you, honor you, pay attention to you.

D. HANDLING PROBLEMS

1. Desire for empty glory arises from two different sources:
 - a) Pride and ambition.
 - * Solution: Repent. Simply decide to change.
 - b) Insecurity and feelings of low self-worth.
 - * Solution: Grow more secure and confident, such to be sought and found in the love of the Lord.
2. Practical suggestions for overcoming problems of self-image:
 - a) Acknowledge the problem. Recognize the disorder.
 - b) Repent.
 - * For believing lies about ourselves.
 - * For yielding to self-pity or self-preoccupation.
 - c) Accept the truth about ourselves: God loves me. He thinks I am worthwhile.
 - d) Receive encouragement from our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Receive affection, love, respect and personal support, as well as evaluation.
 - * Necessity of active and open participation in a set of supportive relationships in MFC.
 - e) Be humble, i.e., focus not on self but on serving others, putting them first.
 - f) Be patient. Do not grow weary or disheartened if problem does not go away quickly. Need for perseverance.
 - g) Pray.
 - * Ps 145:18-19
 - * Pray for confidence, strength and boldness.
 - * Ask others for prayers.

E. CONCLUSION

Our Lord is the perfect model of true humility. Phil 2:5-11.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Contrast between God's greatness and our nothingness: Is 40:12-17

Our reliance upon God in everything: 1 Cor 1:30-31

Everything that we have is a gift from God: 1 Cor 4:7

God values us: Eph 1:4, Gn 1:26, Ps 8, 1 Pt 1:18-19

God loves us: Rom 5:6-8

Each one has a gift of service in the body: 1 Cor 12:7, 12, 14-22, 27

See ourselves with sober judgment: Sir 10:28-29

Timidity: 2 Tm 1:6-8

Confidence and boldness: 1 Tm 4:11-12, 14

Humility: Lk 14:7-11

The greater as servant: Lk 22:24-27, Mt 20:24-28

Follow Jesus: 1 Jn 1:6

Jesus' example of humble service: Jn 13:1-17

Christian freedom: Gal 5:1

Freedom fulfilled in Jesus: Lk 4:17-21

Set free to serve God: Rom 6:20-22

Set free to serve one another: Gal 5:13-14

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TALK #3: TRUE AND FALSE HUMILITY

Participant's handout

A. Phil 2:1-4

1. Important elements of community life: love, unity, service.
2. The key is humility.

B. False humility.

1. Wrong approach: Consider everyone better than yourself.
2. An emotional problem: Lack of self-respect, self-worth and self-confidence.

C. True humility.

1. Rom 12:3. Hold on opinion of ourselves based on “sober” judgment. A truthful opinion, not a low one.
2. Two basic truths:
 - a) We are dependent creatures.
 - b) God loves and values us.
3. Phil 2:3-4
 - a) To be humble is to be a servant, to be at the disposal of others.
 - b) Opposites of humility: Rivalry (selfishness) and conceit (pride).

D. Practical suggestions for handling problems in this area.

1. Acknowledge the problem.
 2. Repent for self-pity, feeling bad, “nobody loves me” syndrome, tendency to justify oneself.
 3. Accept the truth about ourselves: God loves me.
 4. Receive encouragement from brothers and sisters.
 5. Be humble.
 6. Be patient.
 7. Pray
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TALK #4: GUILT AND REPENTANCE

GOALS OF THE TALK

1. To communicate the Lord's will concerning sin and wrongdoing.
2. To help people overcome guilt and self-condemnation.
3. To help people learn the right approach to repentance.

EXPANDED OUTLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. It is the Lord's will that we live righteously. Keep His commandments.
2. Since we are imperfect and we stumble, living righteously means repairing wrongdoing when it occurs.
 - a) Admit wrong
 - * Have I done an objective wrong that has damaged a personal relationship with God or others?
 - * Wrong approaches: blame-excuse approach and emphasis on intentions.
 - * If we have not done anything wrong, then we have no responsibility.
 - b) Renounce wrongdoing.
 - c) Ask for forgiveness.
 - d) Take responsibility for our wrongdoing. Make restitution.
3. God wants us to be sorry for our sins, but not to be self-condemning.

B. CONTRITION AND SELF-CONDEMNATION

1. There is a great difference between contrition (sorrow for sin or repentance or being convicted of sin) and self-condemnation.
 - a) Godly grief and worldly grief.
 - * 2 Cor 7:8-11
 - * Mt 26:69-27:5. Peter and Judas.
 - b) Contrition produces a repentance that leads to salvation; it leads to a change in behavior for the better; it derives from a concern for others; it is directed towards the wrongdoing; it is liberating.

- c) On the other hand, self-condemnation leads to no positive change in behavior nor to turning away from sin; it derives from self-concern; it is directed towards ourselves, not towards the wrong; it leads to self-hatred, self-rejection, discouragement, depression, self-pity; it takes away the ability to serve.
- 2. The Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin and genuine contrition. Satan brings condemnation. Both point out wrong but for different reasons and with different objectives.
 - a) Picture of a heavenly courtroom. God a judge, we as defendants, Satan as prosecutor, Jesus/Holy Spirit as the defense.
 - b) Satan wants to destroy us, and accusation is a favorite tactic. The Holy Spirit will bring us to contrition but never to self-condemnation.
 - c) Failure to distinguish contrition from self-condemnation can cause us to accept as virtue what in fact is the devil's tool.
- 3. The Lord wants us to repent for real wrongdoing, but not become overly scrupulous.
 - a) Wrongdoing is an act that we commit in either thought, word or deed which violates God's standards of righteousness and for which He holds us accountable.
 - b) Wrongdoing does not include temptations of feeling or thought, small faults, idiosyncrasies, mistakes, failures in performance and weaknesses.

C. RIGHT APPROACH TO PROBLEMS

- 1. There is no substitute for righteous living. No sin → no guilt feelings.
- 2. But many will fall into wrongdoing. In a given situation, ask: Am I guilty or not? If yes, repair the wrong.
 - a) Ask forgiveness. Grow in freedom to admit wrongdoing.
 - b) Don't let feeling rule you.
 - c) Treat feeling guilt like any other emotional problem. Base yourself on God's truth.
- 3. Avoid being over-scrupulous.
- 4. Expose self-condemnation for what it is, refusing to let it masquerade as a Christian virtue or as objective self-evaluation.
- 5. If there are guilt feelings, go through your past and clear up wrong that may be there.
 - a) Start with biggest problem and work down.

- b) General confession can help.
- 6. In MFC, what's important is the way we treat one another. We must not make one another guilty.
 - a) Be straightforward in dealing and talking with one another.
 - b) Learn to forgive. Set one another free.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Living righteously: Rom 14:17-18

God's people should not be subject to condemnation: Rom 8:33-34

Objective guilt: Lv 4:13-14

Hunger for righteousness: Mt 5:6

God loves righteousness: Ps 11:7

Jesus restores righteousness: Rom 5:18-19

Righteousness of man: Eph 4:22-23

Righteousness in Christ: Phil 1:9-11

Righteousness leads to strength, life and joy: Ps 92:12, Prv 11:28, Prv 12:28, Prv 21:21, Prv 10:28, Prv 29:6

Repentance and forgiveness: Lk 17:3-4

Pain of harboring wrongdoing: Ps 32:3-5

Renounce wrongdoing: Mk 9:43-48

Reconciliation: Mt 5:23-24

Restitution: Ex 22:1, 5-6, 14-15; Lk 19:8

Good conscience: 1 Tm 1:5, 18-19; 1 Pt 3:16

Obedience to God's law: Ps 1:1-2

Satan as accuser: Jb 1, Zec 3:1, Rev 12:10

Jesus as advocate: 1 Jn 2:1-2

Holy Spirit as advocate: Jn 14:16-17

Forgiveness: 1 Jn 1:8-9, Mt 18:32-35, Lk 15:20-24

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TALK #4: GUILT AND REPENTANCE

Participant's handout

- A. It is the Lord's will that we live righteously. Since we are imperfect and we stumble, living righteously means repairing wrongdoing when it occurs.
1. Admit wrong.
 2. Renounce wrongdoing.
 3. Ask for forgiveness.
 4. Make restitution.
- B. God wants us to be sorry for our sins, but not self-condemning.
1. There is a great difference between contrition and self-condemnation. Godly grief vs. worldly grief.
 - 2 Cor 7:8-11
 - Mt 26:29-27:5. Peter and Judas.
 2. Contrition leads to salvation, to a change in behavior for the better. Self-condemnation leads to no positive change in behavior nor to turning away from sin.
 3. The Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin and genuine contrition. Satan brings condemnation.
 4. Repent for real wrongdoing, but don't become overly scrupulous.
- C. Right approach to problems.
1. No substitute for righteous living. No sin → no guilt feelings.
 2. But if fall into wrongdoing, repair it.
 3. Avoid being over scrupulous.
 4. Don't fall into self-condemnation.
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TALK #5: RIGHTEOUS AND UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER

GOALS OF THE TALK

1. To communicate clearly the nature of anger.
2. To help people learn when anger is righteous and how to use anger in the right way.

EXPANDED OUTLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Anger is a reaction familiar to all.
 - a) Many open and clear manifestations of anger: losing our temper, fighting, violence.
 - b) Hidden manifestations of anger: irritability, negativity, resentment, depression.
 - c) Endless advice: count to ten; let it out: punch pillow, scream; avoid.
2. Common wrong methods of handling anger:
 - a) Repression
 - * Some Christians feel that expressing anger is always sinful. Gal 5:20, Col 3:8, Eph 4:31
 - * Wrong because one will blow up eventually.
 - b) Follow your feelings.
 - * Express anger openly. Be honest. Confront those who hurt you.
 - * Expressing anger fails to resolve it. Worse, anger may increase when indulged in.
 - * Leads to grave emotional and spiritual problems: rage, resentment, hostility, broken relationships and domination by evil spirits.
 - * Cure is often worse than disease.

B. WHAT IS ANGER?

1. Anger is a natural response to obstacles put in our way. It mobilizes us to overcome such obstacles or to get through a functioning situation. It is a natural, God-given human response and it is useful to deal with obstacles more effectively.
2. Scriptural teaching.

- a) The wrath of God.
 - * God himself got angry and expressed it openly and with great forcefulness. Ex 32:7-10; Nm 11:33; Is 66:15.
 - * Jesus got angry. Mk 3:1-5, Jn 2:13-15, Mt 23
 - * Paul got angry. Gal 1:6,3;1, 4:21, 5:12.
- b) Thus it is possible to get angry without sinning.
 - * But how about Col 3:5-8? Also Eph 4:31 and Gal 5:20? Need context of other passages.
- c) But scriptures cautions about anger.
 - * Eph 4:26. Paul is not forbidding anger but is giving an admonition: anger is dangerous, handle it with care.
 - * Prv 16:32, Jas 1:19. Govern the use of anger rather than avoid it altogether. A person who easily flares up is a dangerous person and often his anger will not work toward the righteousness of God.
 - * Mt 5:21-22. Can lead to hatred, violence and malice.

C. WHEN IS ANGER RIGHTEOUS?

Anger is righteous when it is directed against wrongdoing and when it is expressed under control.

1. It is righteous when its object is unrighteousness or injustice or sin.
 - a) Most of us get angry because we don't get our way. Our anger is most often a selfish response.
 - b) From the Christian point of view, we don't get angry enough.
 - c) It is OK to discipline children when we are angry provided our anger is directed against what they have done wrong (sin, injustice).
2. It is righteous if it is expressed the right way.
 - a) Often our anger expresses rejection of another. Mt 5:21-26. The Lord wants us to get rid of this. Anger is righteous if it is the loving response in a situation.
 - b) We must not repress our angry feelings.
 - * Most of us do repress it because of fear of not being able to handle it or because of guilt.
 - * Often repression produces cold anger.
 - Hot anger: shout, throw things, etc.
 - Cold anger: withdrawal, cold shoulder treatment, you stop talking to that person, dirty looks.
 - Cold anger, though not as obviously wrong as hot anger, is worse because often the other person does not know how to handle the situation. Often he does not

even know what went wrong.

- c) The right way is to channel anger into constructive ways.
 - * Anger can strengthen Christian character.
 - * Between repression and explosion there exists a whole range of ways to express anger.
 - wrong ways: meanness, sarcasm.
 - right ways: patience, endurance and steadfastness, aggressiveness or the determination to work toward a solution.
 - * Constructive channeling of anger is not repression. Repression is purely a matter of willpower; channeling anger involves the Holy Spirit.

D. PRACTICAL ADVICE

1. A strategy for handling anger: Eph 4:26
 - a) Do not repress anger (“Be angry”).
 - b) Express it righteously (“Do not sin”).
 - c) Settle things quickly (“Do not let the sun go down on your anger”).
2. How to handle disorderly anger in our life, especially if it is a longstanding problem where I seemingly can’t get a positive response.
 - a) It stems usually from an area that we are keeping from the Lord. It’s holding on to things.
 - * Need to surrender to the Lord.
 - * Approach difficulties with an attitude of praise and thanksgiving.
 - 1 Thes 5:16-18. “Rejoice always....render constant thanks.” Even when wrong things happen. If there is something I can’t give thanks for, we face an area not surrendered to the Lord.
 - b) Resentment - holding a grudge against someone or something that we think has hurt us.
 - * Need to repent of this and put it away. Eph 4:31-32.
 - * Repair broken relationships by correction, forgiveness and forbearance.
 - * Actively guard our thoughts. Phil 4:8
 - c) Too much pressure - can cause irritability.
 - * For the overcommitted Christian who has a problem with anger, need to reorder and reduce his priorities.
 - * Accept lower standards if necessary. Be satisfied with good rather than best.
 - d) Fears and inhibitions - prevent one from acting confidently and decisively.
 - * Need to correct the emotional disorder giving rise to anger.
 - * Develop the determination to serve others ahead of ourselves.

- * Form right Christian personal relationships.

E. CONCLUSION

1. Anger is common. It is a God-given emotion. It can be righteous. It can lead to Christian growth.
2. Emotional well-being is the fruit of healthy Christian personal relationships. Develop these in MFC.
3. Call upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Wisdom re. anger: Prv10:12, 12:16, 14:17, 14:29, 15:1, 19:11, 19:19, 29:11, 29:22

Patience: Rom 2:6-7, Heb 6:11-12

Endurance: Heb 10:32-36, Lk 21:16-19

Aggressive response to sin: Rom 12:21

Paul's aggressiveness: 2 Tm 4:7

Yielding to the Spirit: Gal 3:2-5

Anger a sin against love: 1 Cor 13:5

Repentance and forgiveness: Lk 17:3

Forgiveness: Col 3:12-13

MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST
THE CHRISTIAN AND EMOTIONS (CE)

TALK #5: RIGHTEOUS AND UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER

Participant's handout

A. Common wrong ways of handling anger:

1. Repression
2. Follow your feelings.

B. Anger is a natural response to obstacles put in our way. It is a natural, God-given human response and it is useful to deal with obstacles more effectively.

Scriptural teaching.

1. The wrath of God.
 - God got angry. Ex 32:7-10, Nm 11:33, Is 66:15.
 - Jesus got angry. Mk 3:1-5, Jn 2:13-15, Mt 23.
 - Paul got angry. Gal 1:6, 3:1, 4:21, 5:12.
2. Thus it is possible to get angry without sinning.
3. But caution against anger. Eph 4:26, Prv 16:32, Jas 1:19, Mt 5:21-22

C. Anger is righteous:

1. When its object is unrighteousness or injustice or sin.
2. When it is expressed the right way, if it is the loving response in a situation.

D. Strategy for handling anger: Eph 4:26.

1. Do not repress anger.
2. Express it righteously.
3. Settle things quickly.

MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST

THE CHRISTIAN AND EMOTIONS (CE)

TALK #6: FEAR

GOALS OF THE TALK

1. To communicate clearly the nature of fear.
2. To help people learn how to respond correctly to fear and to overcome problems in this area.

EXPANDED OUTLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Every normal human being experiences fear. It is a reaction to danger.
 - a) Types of fear:
 - * Physical fear - fear of real physical danger due to famine, pestilence, robbers, etc.
 - * Today people deal mainly with social fear. Fear of not being liked, accepted or understood.
 - * Anxious concerns.
 - b) Fear is partly a matter of nerves, of glands and of thoughts.
2. Fear is intended by God to protect us and to serve us in life. Unfortunately, fear often is more of a burden than a benefit.

B. FEAR, A GOD-GIVEN EMOTION

1. Wrong attitude: fear has no place in the Christian life. Equate fear with cowardice.
2. Fear is a gift from God and is basically good, so long as it works in right order in our lives.
3. Fear can be good or bad, depending on circumstances.
 - a) Some kinds of fear are basically good in themselves. E.g., fear of God, respect for laws and authority.
 - b) Fear as an emotional reaction to real physical danger is good. Prepares us to handle the situation by fighting or fleeing.
 - c) “Chronic internal” fears.
 - * Social fears.
 - * Commonly expressed in habits such as caution or conservatism, timidity or

cowardice, insecurity and anxiety.

- caution: thinking prudently in advance in order to minimize the risk.
- conservatism: an inclination to avoid change or things new and different and to cling to existing ideas, institutions and ways of behaving.
- cowardice: fleeing when one should stand his ground.
- timidity: constant fearfulness; a wary approach to life, as if real danger were present at every turn; chronic low-level cowardice.
- insecurity: the fear that things we depend on for safety and success may fail us, or in the social area, that others won't accept us, care for us, or accord us the position we desire.
- anxiety: chronic uneasiness of mind over some anticipated misfortune.

C. THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

1. The Christian should be able approach life with certain God-given character traits that reinforce our freedom from fear in situations that are neutral and enable us to respond correctly when we experience fear as a result of real danger.
2. Marks of the Christian
 - a) Confidence
 - * Founded not on human strength but on the Lord himself. Prv 3:25.
 - * Since we trust in God's promises, we can be sure that things in life will ultimately work out, no matter how uncertain they seem now.
 - * Respond confidently in the various social situations we confront. Trust that others will respond well to us.
 - b) Boldness.
 - * Connected with righteous living. Prv 28:1.
 - * The Holy Spirit will give us boldness.
 - Phil 1:12-14. As a result of what has happened to Paul (he is in prison), others have become more bold.
 - Acts 4:27-31. Christians pray for boldness to spread the gospel and they do receive the power of the Holy Spirit for it.
 - c) Courage.
 - * A strength of mind and will that enables us to resist opposition, danger, hardship, to do what is right in spite of dangers and the fears that they arouse.
 - * Acting courageously does not mean we do not have fear. Rather, it means being willing to act strongly and uprightly in spite of our fears.
 - Dt 31:2-8. Joshua will lead but the Lord will be with him.
3. Qualifications of the above.
 - a) Sometimes fear is appropriate and sometimes it is not. Fear of the Lord, reverence for the Lord is good. Conservatism is often not good.

- b) Do not confuse traits or marks of Christian character with counterfeit or distorted versions. Presumption is not the same as confidence. Foolhardiness or recklessness is not the same as courage. Sometimes what we also call as prudence and wisdom are mere excuses for our excessive fears.
 - c) In this we need wisdom.
 - d) These qualities are more than what we do. They involve the kind of people we are. They are the very character of God Himself, imparted to His sons and daughters by the working of the Holy Spirit.
4. We are not to avoid all suffering.
- a) Suffering was part of Christ's life. We are called not to be fearful, but we are not called to be free from suffering.
 - b) We can be confident that God will give us the strength to deal with suffering. Thus we can face every situation with courage.

D. OVERCOMING PROBLEMS

1. Have faith.
 - a) Faith is an antidote to fear. The more we have faith and live in faith, the more we will be in a position to deal with fear.
 - b) Scripture stresses this.
 - * Ps 23: The Lord is my shepherd.
 - * Ps 27: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
 - * Ps 34:4-10; Lk 12:22-32; 1 Pt 5:7.
 - c) If we have a healthy fear of the Lord, all other fears and concerns in life will take on their proper perspective.
 - d) Anxiety is the opposite of faith. By faith we know God is caring for us.
2. Know that you can fight your fears. 2 Tm 1:7. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us of power.
3. Face reality.
 - a) Problem: either we don't face up to those things that are wrong and need correcting in our lives; or we blow the problems we see all out of proportion. The first group distorts realities about themselves; the second distorts realities about their problems.
 - b) We need to face up to our problems.

4. Deliberately shape your life environment to give you every possible advantage over your weaknesses and the attacks of Satan.
 - a) Right spiritual environment. Prayer, righteous living, service to God and brethren.
 - b) Our thought life. It is a mistake to allow inputs from the world equal standing alongside the truths that come from God.
 - c) Shape our lives such that we are not under unnecessary pressure to operate beyond our abilities.
 - d) Form strong, supportive, personal Christian relationships.
5. Have a fighting spirit.
 - a) Some problems do not go away easily. Especially in the area of social fears, problems go away the slowest. We need determination, drive, enthusiasm.
 - b) Our fears are not to be our masters. We do not have to accept weakness in our character.
 - c) Strike the right balance: rely on the Lord's strength, but also take an active, militant role. Faith and fight go together.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Confidence: Prv 14:26, Heb 13:5-6, Phil 4:13

Courage: 1 Cor 16:13-14

Non-avoidance of suffering: 1 Pt 3:13-18

Freedom from fear linked with righteousness: Lev 26:3,6,14-15,17, 1 Jn 4:18

Fear God not man: Mt 10:28-31

Faith, not fear: Mk 5:36, Ps 112:7-8

Anxiety: Phil 4:6

Live righteous lives: Rom 14:7-8

Set our minds on the Lord, not on the world: Col 3:2, Phil 4:8-9

Suffering: Rom 5:3-4

Faith and fight: 1 Tm 6:12, Ps 18

A fighting spirit: Phil 3:12, 1 Cor 9:26-27, 1 Tm 1:18-19, 2 Tm 4:7

MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST
THE CHRISTIAN AND EMOTIONS (CE)

TALK #6: FEAR

Participant's handout

- A. Every normal human being experiences fear. It is a reaction to danger.
- B. Fear is a gift from God and is basically good, so long as it works in right order in our lives.
- C. Character traits which reinforce a Christian's freedom from fear:
 - 1. Confidence
 - 2. Boldness
 - 3. Courage
- D. Overcoming problems in this are:
 - 1. Have faith. Faith is an antidote to fear.
 - Psalm 23
 - Psalm 27
 - Psalm 34:4-10; Lk 12:22-32; 1 Pt 5:7
 - 2. Know that you can fight your fears. 2 Tm 1:7
 - 3. Face reality.
 - 4. Deliberately shape your life environment to give you every possible advantage over your weaknesses and the attacks of Satan.
 - a) Prayer, righteous living, service to God and brethren.
 - b) Our thought life shaped by God's truths rather than the world.
 - c) Good order in pace of life and priorities.
 - d) Strong, supportive, personal Christian relationships.
 - 5. Have a fighting spirit.

(SG. Dec 9, 2019)