

MASTERING
YOUR
EMOTIONS



ADRIAN
ROGERS

MASTERING YOUR EMOTIONS

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Arden and Rose Rogers, my wonderful parents and two of the most emotionally stable people I have ever known. They put into practice most of what is contained herein without the aid of technical study or conscious effort.

To Mom, whose wit and charm made her a joy to be around.

To Dad, whose positive attitude and warm friendship kept him perpetually young.

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Introduction

Ogden Nash said, “There is only one way to achieve happiness on this terrestrial ball, and that is to have either a clear conscience or none at all.”

While I would not agree with that premise, I would say that a guilty conscience and other negative emotions can surely turn out the lights on your happiness. And not only can negative emotions take life from your years, they can also take years from your life.

In a university study it was shown that continuing hostile feelings can lead to illness and early death. When researchers followed up on personality studies of 118 law students done in the 1950s, they found that the most hostile in the group were more likely to die prematurely—from heart disease, cancer, thrombosis, and congestive heart failure—than those who showed few signs of hostility.

Indeed, we need to remember: when we are right, we can afford to keep our temper; and when we are wrong, we can't afford to lose it!

Today's emotional pressures are gigantic. Coping with hostilities, competition, financial stress, family demands, traffic jams, health problems, violence, and crime puts staggering demands on fragile emotions.

There is no way we can make this emotional pressure evaporate, and one thing is for certain—either you will master your emotions or your emotions will master you.

This volume is to help you master such runaway emotions as insecurity, depression, stress, frustration, inferiority, doubt, bewilderment, and bitterness.

I've heard of a little boy who was given the opportunity to choose a puppy for himself from a litter of puppies. His excited eyes fell on one wagging his tail. “I want the one with a happy ending,” he said. And a happy ending is what I want for you. Read on.

INSECURITY



He that doth the ravens feed
Yea, providentially caters for the sparrow,
Be comfort to my age!

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

INSECURITY

All I Need—and More

During recent years psychology and religion have had a field day with self-image—positive thinking, imaging, possibility thinking, self-realization, fulfillment, and the like. In the process, all kinds of bizarre ideas have received ventilation.

What you think of yourself is exceedingly important. You can think too little or too much. A person can denigrate himself or deify himself. What is the proper slant? How should one feel about himself? I can remember when it was thought pious to run oneself down. “I’m no good. I’m just a dirty dog. I deserve hell. I’m the pits.” Many of the old hymns reflected this negative thinking. The problem is those Christians were focusing on the old life without Christ.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). “...There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6). But these applied to us before we found our new life in Christ.

Ephesians 1:1-6 is an inspiration to the believer who is seeking a positive self-image.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

A key phrase in this passage is “in Christ” or its equivalent. *In* is a small preposition, but a small key can open a vary large door.

The reason so many believers have a poor self-image is that they have never found out who they are in Christ. They remind me of the man who had an identity crisis and an energy crisis at the same time. He didn't know who he was, and he was too tired to find out!

But I want you to understand this: Christianity is not behavior modification. You see, God does not work from the outside in. God does not modify our behavior in order to change us. God changes us from within in order to modify our behavior. Sin is an inside job, and when God deals with sin; He works on the inside first. God changes the heart.

In Ephesians chapter one, Paul tells us who we are in Christ. Then in chapters two and three, he tells us how we came to be who we are in Christ. And, finally, in chapters four through six, he tells us how to live like who we are in Christ. Paul treats the *being* aspect before he goes into the *doing*.

If you personally turn that order around, you will fall into the deadly trap of legalism. It is frustrating to live contrary to an identity you do not have in your heart and mind.

Jesus declared, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The truth frees us, and what is the truth? The truth is what God says. And that truth is embodied in the Lord Jesus.

But the truth does not make you free until you know it. You must embrace the doctrinal before you can turn it into the practical. God’s truth is absolute, and it is absolutely true.

Once a marine biologist observed a northern pike in an aquarium. After a while, the biologist turned loose a bunch of minnows into the aquarium, and the pike gorged himself. Then a trick was pulled. The biologist dropped a glass cylinder into the tank, then put the minnows into the cylinder. The pike tried and tried to get the minnows in the cylinder, but he finally had to give up.

Then the biologist pulled out the cylinder and released all the minnows into the aquarium. They swam right past the pike’s mouth, and he never made a move for them. The fish starved with all of that food around him. What happened? He became a slave to false perception, just like many of us Christians. The pike’s false perception based on previous facts killed him.

The average Christian does not understand who they are in Christ. They have a first-class ticket but are riding in the fourth-class car. They don’t comprehend the riches that reside within. They are free in Christ but not liberated in the truest sense. They are thinking in the past tense, when they were bound by the old life. They protest, “I cannot succeed. I cannot be free. I am chained by a habit. I am bogged down. I am a failure, and I am hampered by my limited knowledge.” If they believe such, it might as well be true, for all practical purposes.

Plastic surgeons report that many people are still dissatisfied with themselves after nose jobs, tummy tucks, facelifts, and cosmetic surgery. Doctors reveal that many radiantly beautiful women cannot stand their bodies or their faces. That is often true with handsome men, as well. The anorexic thinks “I’m fat,” even though emaciated and starving to death. Self-perception!

Christian, perhaps you have misread yourself. You are letting the abundant life swim on by. You are emotionally and spiritually hungry, but you will not eat the hidden manna God has for you.

There are three qualities you want, whether or not you admit the fact: You want significance. You want sufficiency. And you want security. You need those as much as you need food and water.

I want to dwell on three positive statements which will enable you to have the self-image God intends for you. First of all,

RECOGNIZE YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul wrote to “the saints which are at Ephesus” (Ephesians 1:1). There are only two kinds of people—the saints and “the ain’ts.” You are either fully saved or not saved at all. There are no special categories of Christians. Every blood-bought, born-again believer is a saint, whether or not he feels like it. *Saint* means a “set-apart, sanctified person”—one God has made righteous and set apart.

We ought to affirm it. “I am Saint Adrian.” “I am Saint Joe.” “I am Saint Joyce.” “I am Saint Mary.” And we have every right to call ourselves *saint*. People have remarked, “How arrogant!” No, it is not. We have the righteousness of God within our lives.

More Christians have mock humility, and it can be disgusting. They ought to quit making alibis. We confuse stooped posture for humility. No wonder we have trouble convincing people they ought to become Christians. True humility is through Christ. Mock humility is laid upon us by none other than the devil.

It is tragic, but many will never accept their sainthood. A while back there was a fad for believers to make comments like, “I’m saved, but I’m not a Christian.” Then the person would explain, “Well, I’m not worthy to call myself a Christian because I’m not living like one.” That is preposterous!

Let me nail it down. You are the next of kin to the Trinity. You are a prince or a princess. Why? Because you are a child of the King. Since you are a part of God’s family, Jesus is not only your Lord and Savior, but He is your Friend and Brother. “You’ve no other such a Friend or Brother; Tell it to Jesus alone.”

True humility is not thinking negatively about yourself. It is agreeing with what God says about you. The grace of God will exalt a person without inflating him and will humble a person without debasing him. When you see who you really are, you begin to confess it.

I am what I am—a saint. Therefore, I have significance. I am a VIP in Christ. I am going to reign and rule with Him, and I am reigning with Him now.

No, in this life you are not going to be sinless. But as you deal with sin in your life, you can come closer and closer to being free from sin. Sinless no, but blameless yes. As you confess and stay prayed up, you can be blameless.

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Ephesians 1:4)

When God the Father sees the blood of His Son upon you, He sees you as perfect. In Ephesians, Paul writes about the grace of God. In Romans 4:4 he says, “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”

If we could earn our salvation, God would be in debt to us. But the reverse is true. “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

Romans 4:6 refers to David describing the blessedness of the man to whom righteousness is imputed. The word *imputed* means “to put that on your account.” So what has God done? He has put the righteousness of the Lord Jesus on your account. Today we use the word *charge*. We have various purchases put on our account.

How am I righteous? How are you? And why are we? Because the Lord Jesus has laid His righteousness on us. Romans 4:6-8 makes it crystal clear:

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Notice the contrasts of the word *impute*. In Christ we will have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Those outside of Christ will have the ledger of sin imputed to their account. If you are child of God, you are righteous in His sight.

Now follows one of the most amazing truths concerning our righteousness and how it was secured: “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus was made the embodiment of sin itself on our behalf in order that we would become righteous in Him.

You will not behave as you should until you have the biblical concept of who you are and how you ought to respond. It is a proven fact: children and adults who have a poor self-concept tend to act on the bad feelings they have about themselves. In fact, our jails and prisons are crammed with people who have poor self-esteem.

So many speak of themselves as “a sinner saved by grace.” In the technical sense that may be true, but the Bible definition of a saint is “the righteousness of God in Christ.” But someone argues, “If you

don't keep reminding someone of his sinfulness, he will be careless concerning sin." Oh? Let me ask you this question: Who is more afraid of dirt—a man in grimy overalls or one in a white tuxedo?

We are so experienced in confessing our sins, but when are we going to learn to confess our righteousness? It is ours—bought and paid for by the shed blood of Christ.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

How could we possibly be ashamed of such a costly gift? Yet the Spirit will help us keep our feelings in balance. D. L. Moody commented, "The more one talks about his own holiness and righteousness, the less holy and righteous he is." When we confess our righteousness, we must make it known: it is His righteousness given to us as a gift of grace.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)

If you would have a healthy, positive self-image, you must recognize your righteousness, and your righteousness does not relate to your works at all. Augustus M. Toplady who wrote "Rock Of Ages" said it so beautifully:

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.