

Sense and Sensibility

Joe Slater

Do you remember Mr. Spock, the half-human/half-Vulcan character on the old Star Trek program? (Leonard Nimoy, who portrayed Spock, passed away just a few months ago.) Among other memorable features, Spock lacked emotions (feelings). Everything he thought or did supposedly sprang from pure logic, uninfluenced by grief, joy, anger, affection, et. al. To him, feelings were a sign of weakness; Vulcans had “evolved” beyond them!

Due to our tendency to go to extremes, both logic and emotions have gotten a bad rap of late, especially in spiritual matters. Let us realize that they are not mutually exclusive; we need not choose one and reject the other! No one’s logic was more sound than that of Jesus of Nazareth (just ask the Scribes and Pharisees He debated)! Yet His tears, His tenderness, His joy, and His fury shine forth to complete the picture.

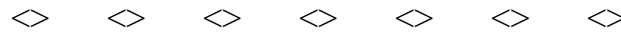
Nowadays, emotions have come to the forefront. Feelings rule the day! Even our vocabulary demonstrates it. People routinely ask, “How do you feel about” some particular issue (rather than, “What do you think about it?”) Way back in 1977, Debbie Boone’s hit song, **You Light Up My Life**, concluded: “It can’t be wrong when it feels so right.” This erroneous sentiment only grew for 20+ years until LeAnn Rimes re-recorded the song.

While emotions are God-given, they are not the standard for deciding what is right and what is wrong. Our culture insists that we must get in touch with our feelings, looking within ourselves for the answers to life’s perplexing questions. To the contrary, God said through Jeremiah, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*” (Jeremiah 17:9). The same prophet wrote: “*O Lord, I know the way of man is*

not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (10:23). Long before, the wise King Solomon had written, “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*” (Proverbs 16:25). Right and wrong, truth and error, then, are determined by God through His word, not by our feelings one way or the other.

I’m glad we’re not like Mr. Spock! God has emotions; being made in His image, we have them, too. God’s emotions, however, do not rule over His reason. To the contrary, His feelings are the result of His reasoning with the facts. God said, “*Come, now, and let us reason together*” (Isaiah 1:18). He did not say, “Come, now, and let us get in touch with our feelings together.”

Let us reason carefully and correctly with God’s word. Believing and obeying it will result in the most wonderful feelings we have ever experienced!



Dealing With Controversy

A cartoon showed an old man in a rocking chair. As he rocked, he heard loud, annoying squeaks. After several attempts to get rid of the squeaks, the angry man took his shotgun and blew the chair to splinters.

In the final frame, the old man is walking away, but he still hears the squeaks - they are coming from his knees!

Sometimes the problems that exist in the church are in ourselves. Before we start destroying everything else, we need to determine whether we are part of the problem.

--via Bulletin Digest

One-Talent Lament

I’m just someone to pity, Lord,
A poor, one-talent soul;
My fears and doubts took hold of me,
And so I dug a hole.

The talent that You gave to me
I hid beneath the earth;
You know I’ve not what others have,
I’ve naught but dirt and dearth.

Those with more should bear the load,
And put their gifts to work!
But me, a poor one-talent soul?
I’ve every cause to shirk!

My little matters little, Lord,
There’s not much I can do;
I think I’ll sit and rest my bones.
I’ve dug my hole – I’m through!

What’s that you say? I’m wicked, Lord?
A slothful servant too?
You’re taking what I have away?
Now what am I to do?

Forgive me, Lord! And give me strength
To use what e’er I’ve got
To focus on Your will for me,
And not on what I’ve not.

--Dalton Key (via *Old Paths*)