

Guard your heart

Many people believe that everyone's emotional expression is related to their birth, growth and education background. These do have some influence, but they are not necessarily determinative. A person who is born in a humble family, has never experienced any care and has only received basic education can also lead a healthy and happy life; he does not necessarily have to get angry and become cynical when things do not go his way! However, a person who is born into a noble family, is taken care of in many ways, and is well educated can also be unhappiest! Why? The key lies in the attitude he chooses to respond to the environment!

So, if your emotions have been influenced by your life encounters and you have no control over them, I have good news for you: when God created you, He has given you the ability to make choices. You can still have a happy life under any unfavorable circumstances! This is the teaching of the Bible - "Above all else, guard your heart, for out of it flow the well of life." (Prov 4:23) The key to what kind of life you want to have is your heart, not your encounters!

"My son, pay attention to my words, incline your ear to my sayings. They are not to escape from your sight, keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Rid yourself of a deceitful mouth, and devious speech far from you. Let your eyes look directly ahead, and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet, and all your ways will be established."

What do you discover from the above verses? What does God command us? Do you see that "obeying God" is the secret to a secure life? A person who listens to God will surely have a happy and stable life. No matter how many adversities, challenges, or even disasters there are around him, they cannot knock him down!

Jesus is the best example, let us look at His life! What emotional state does each item reflect?

- ✧ After fasting for forty days, Jesus went to the wilderness and was tempted by the devil. The devil tempted Jesus three times. Jesus must have been very hungry at the time, but He remained wide awake and knew his identity and value. Thus he overcame all temptations ~
Scripture: Luke 4:1-13
- ✧ Jesus and his disciples experienced a big storm at sea. The performance of the disciples

disappointed Jesus, but Jesus still used his authority to stop the storm and taught the disciples a valuable lesson; Jesus did not give up on the disciples because of their unbelief ~ Scripture: Matthew 8:23-26

- ✧ Jesus went to a sinner's house to eat and was criticized, but He did not retaliate angrily. Instead, he taught people wisely, "Sick people do not need a doctor..." ~ Scripture: Luke 5:27-32
- ✧ Before being arrested, Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. He told the Father that he did not want to drink the bitter cup. He felt very bad. However, He chose not to consider his own feelings, obeyed the will of the Heavenly Father, endured all kinds of suffering, and achieved salvation for us ~ Scripture: Matthew 26:36-39
- ✧ After Jesus was captured, he was mercilessly beaten and tortured by the soldiers. He said nothing and did not defend himself. He did not choose to use his authority to avoid all suffering. He persisted in suffering for our sins and loved every life that hurt Him, even causing Him to die ~ Scripture: 1 Peter 2:20-24 - Through His suffering, all the entanglements in our lives are released.

From the life of Jesus in the four Gospels, you can find many examples to learn from, teaching us how to respond to different situations according to the truth within us, the identity and mission given to us by God, and according to God's will, instead of being troubled by all kinds of negative emotions!

In addition to the model of Jesus, the Bible also records many other characters who set examples of this kind of stable life! When you focus on building up your characters of life, the lows, setbacks, or various people and things that influence our emotions in life will not be able to knock you down. You can even exert the power of God within you and "turn defeat into victory"!

The Bible also contains many examples of people failing. What were the reasons for their failure? Think about it!

- ✧ The jealousy and hatred between Cain and Abel eventually led to the first murder in the world ~ Scripture: Genesis 4:1-8
- ✧ King Saul was jealous of David and tried to hunt him down and kill him many times. Saul lost control and eventually even lost his throne ~ Scripture: 2 Samuel 18-19
- ✧ Aaron - A man who dared not say "no" - Aaron was the first high priest, and his position was so honorable; his biggest weakness was: he dared not say "no" and was easily manipulated by

others. The failure of his life was all due to him following others without any independent thinking and committing crimes with them! ~ Scripture: Exodus 32