

Question: What does the Bible say about managing/controlling emotions?

Answer from GotQuestions.org: What would humans be like if we never became emotional? Perhaps we would be like "Mr. Spock" on Star Trek, as his responses to all situations seem to be purely logical, never emotional. But God created us in His image and God's emotions are revealed in the Scriptures; therefore God created us emotional beings. We feel love, joy, happiness, guilt, anger, disappointment, and fear, and sometimes these can be "false" feelings if they are based upon false premises. For example, if we falsely believe that God is not in control of the circumstances of our lives, we may experience the emotions of fear or despair or anger based on that false belief. True or not, emotions are very powerful and real to the one feeling them.

The Bible has much to say about the emotions we experience. Our emotions, like our minds and bodies, are influenced greatly by the fall of man into sin. As such, they are tainted by our sin natures. For the Christian, however, the Spirit of God who resides within us is capable of controlling our emotions and not allowing them to control us (Romans 8:9-11). From within believers, He directs, guides, comforts, and influences us, as well as producing in us the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The emotions we experience are then His emotions, produced in us so that we exhibit the benefits of His presence in our hearts "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Out-of-control emotions are the product of a heart which is not saturated with Scripture. The way to control our emotions is to control our minds, renewing them by the daily input of scriptural principles, the knowledge of God, and meditation on His attributes. Then the Holy Spirit, along with the Word of God, will bring about appropriate emotions based on truth. When we immerse ourselves in the only means of our sanctification "the Bible," we arm ourselves with the only effective weapon against out-of-control emotions. Then we can control our emotions instead of them controlling us. In themselves, emotions are not unbiblical, but they are indications of what is in our hearts (Luke 6:45).