

The Burden of Emotional Baggage

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Our emotions exert a powerful influence over our lives. We hear about people being “*ruled by their emotions*,” “caught up in their emotions,” and even “*lost in emotion*.” Sometimes our emotional drives can be healthy, such as a new husband’s loving desire to care for and protect his wife. Other times, however, our emotions take a negative turn and work against our lives of faith and usefulness in God’s kingdom.

When we talk about emotions, we must realize that we have a choice: either our emotions will control us, or we will control them. When we allow ourselves to be governed by our emotions, the results will be painful and often devastating to our lives. Negative emotions place us in bondage—bondage to anger, fear, resentment, hostility, lust, jealousy, uncertainty, and unforgiveness, to name just a few. The heartbreaking fact is that most people are never even aware that they have been enslaved by these feelings.

The truth is, if emotions were visible, you would see people walking around with a tremendous amount of baggage strapped to their backs. This baggage weighs heavily on their hearts, leaving them frustrated and stealing the joy, peace, and contentment from their lives.

Not realizing the damage that is being done, many people continue to go about their daily lives with this emotional baggage firmly attached to their backs. Over time, these destructive feelings can become rooted in their personalities. If, for example, you lovingly stepped in and tried to relieve some of their load, they may feel as though a part of themselves were missing. If they have lived with unforgiveness, anger, or bitterness for a long time, they may simply not know how to live without it. Therefore, they continue on in their lives of bondage.

Obviously, this is not the life that God wants for us. He created us to exist in joy and contentment, even in the midst of adversities and trials. Bondage of any kind is contrary to His perfect will for our lives. [John 8:36](#) proclaims, “**If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.**” Likewise, the apostle Paul instructs, “**It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery**” ([Galatians 5:1](#)).

Our emotions are a beautiful gift from the Lord. However, because we live in a sinful world, that gift can be misused and abused as we interact with others. It is my prayer that you begin to see the beauty of your God-given emotions as you learn to set down the unhealthy baggage of negative feelings.