

Your Emotions Are a Gauge, Not a Guide



Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13)

Your rest is coming. Sooner than you know you will receive your “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance” (1 Peter 1:4). And when it comes you will understand why your faith was more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:7). This is where Peter wants your hope to fully rest.

But today is a time for war, not peace. It’s a time for faith, not sight. It’s a time of grievous trials that test the genuineness of your faith (1 Peter 1:6–7). So it’s a time to prepare for the action of battle, to keep sober.

Your battle today will not be against “flesh and blood” but the deceitful forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12) and the deceitfulness of indwelling sin (Hebrews 3:13). And these two forces are going to try to use your emotions against you. So it might be helpful, by way of preparation, to remember the purpose of emotions so you can fight more effectively and know when to counter them.

God designed your emotions to be gauges, not guides. They’re meant to report to you, not dictate you. The pattern of your emotions (not every caffeine-induced or sleep-deprived one!) will give you a reading on where your hope is because they are wired into what you believe and value — and how much. That’s why emotions like delight (Psalm 37:4), affection (Romans 12:10), fear (Luke 12:5),

anger ([Psalm 37:8](#)), joy ([Psalm 5:11](#)), etc., are so important in the Bible. They reveal what your heart loves, trusts, and fears. At Desiring God we like to say *pleasure is the measure of your treasure*, because the emotion of pleasure is a gauge that tells you what you love.

But because our emotions are wired into our fallen natures as well as into our regenerated natures, sin and Satan have access to them and will use them to try and manipulate us to act faithlessly. That's why our emotional responses to temptation can seem like imperatives (you must do...) rather than indicatives (here's what you're being told). Just remember, that's deceit.

Emotions aren't imperatives; they're not your boss. They're indicatives; they're reports. That's why Paul wrote, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions" ([Romans 6:12](#)).

So get ready today. "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). He will make promises to and/or threats against you. He will likely try and tap into your weak areas of unbelief and you may find your emotions surging in the wrong direction.

When that happens don't be overly impressed. Remember that your emotions are gauges, not guides. Let them tell you where the attack is being made so you can fight it with the right promises. And go to a trusted friend for prayer, perspective, and counsel if you need to.

And remember that this "light momentary affliction is preparing for [you] an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" ([2 Corinthians 4:17](#)) and very soon, it's going to be over. And God, your Great Reward, will be all the inheritance you will ever want forever.

Set your hope fully on that.