

11. Destroying the New Testament Pattern with New Words: Emotion(s).

Innovations hide behind a demand for the congregation to show more emotion. In fact, this appeal is the rallying cry of those moving beyond the New Testament pattern in worship in the manner in which they worship.

Emotion(s)

What will they say? They will call for a display of *emotions*. This appeal to emotions is very similar to the appeal of those in denominations who advocated a heart-felt religion in times past. One preacher put it this way: "If you're standing, bowing, folding your hands, will your emotions show?" Another went further in speaking of Amos 5:21: "They were doing all the things they were supposed to; they were doing but their heart was not where it needed to be. It is not about what we do so much as where our heart is." In this logic, commands of the Lord take second place to the feelings and emotions of the worshipers. He added: "People who like to stand and hold up their hands have freedom in Christ."

The key phrase here is *people who like to*. The false teaching is that the worshipers' feelings (emotions) transcend the commands of Christ and the apostles and prophets. This same preacher completely undermined the scriptural acts of worship in favor of emotions: The preacher said: "David said to Solomon that a heart that seeks after God—God is going to let you find him. It is not the content of the worship that matters. It is the intent. It is what every body else needs." The religion of these innovators and change agents becomes emotionally driven for its authority in worship. It is *what everybody else needs*.

What does the Bible say? First, the word *emotion(s)* is not in the Bible. That should be the end of it, but the false teachers in their sophistry use Biblical words *heart* and *spirit* interchangeably with the word *emotion(s)*. The Bible warns that our heart can mislead us in Heb 3:10-12:

Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, "they always go astray in their heart, and they did not know my ways . . . they shall not enter my rest." Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

We must think to engage our hearts: "For as he thinks within himself, so he is." Prov 23:7. To take our feelings as our guide is dangerous indeed. Prov 14:12 instructs us: "12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." Just as the New Testament tells us what to do, it tells us how. Jesus said to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24). The innovators would have us think this use of the word *spirit* means *emotions*. We are told exactly what works of the spirit are in Gal.5:22-24:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The innovations of the day replace these characteristics of the spirit with worship designed to rouse the passions and desires of the flesh and to show it by hand clapping, arm waving, shouting, and leaping. Phil 4:4-9 describes the New Testament pattern for the spiritual attitude and acts of true worship:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Not only does Paul describe the proper spirit for worship but he also tells us what to do: "*The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things.*" There we have it—the New Testament pattern for worship.