

Emotional Intelligence

This is not a biblical term but it is a biblical theme and a useful way of studying emotions.

Prov 12:16 *A fool shows annoyance at once,
but the prudent overlook an insult.*

How good are you at impulse control?

What are your top 2 favourite emotions? Emotions are Gods invention. In life generally what are the 2 emotions that you actually experience the most?

EI covers the emotional side of biblical wisdom. Daniel Goleman was the first to pioneer research on the subject from a scientific view point. For the Christian we don't just develop EI ourselves but we have the Holy Spirit to help us overcome the enemy and to give us revelation about ourselves so we can grow in this area. So we as Christians should have a high EQ - but do we?

Research has shown that the emotional parts of our brain are highly involved and influential in our decision making process.

Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour.

At school we are only taught academia - processing knowledge but EI can be learnt - and should be taught. It tends to improve with age. The part of the brain that develops these skills is different from the part that develops academia.

The Israelites called the manna miserable food once they had been eating it for some time. They complained against the Lord and invoked His anger.

Num 21:5 *they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"*

Do we face times when the "diet of life" is not to our liking? How do we cope / react? How would you cope with the diet the Israelites had?

Was it an emotion that caused Annanias and Sapphira to be deceptive?

Was it an emotion that caused David to have Uriah to be murdered?

Coleman breaks EI down into 5 areas:

Self Awareness How aware are you that you are making emotional decisions? Are emotional decisions the best decisions? How aware are you of your emotions?

Self management How well do you cope with stressful situations? How well do you regulate yourself?

Motivation How well do you stay motivated when you are facing problems? If we experience high pleasantness and have high energy are we likely to be highly motivated?

Empathy How well are you able to understand how someone feels because you can imagine what it is like to be them? Women tend to be better at being empathetic. Men tend to be better at managing stressful situations - threats, confrontation etc.

Social skills How well are you able to interact with people. Are you able to "read" the signals that people are hinting at? Its time to: go, change the subject etc. How do you inspire other people with self confidence, persuasiveness, communication skills, coping with change, leading change?

Moses failed to enter the promised land because he became angry with the people and hit the rock with his staff twice.

Num 20:12 *The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."*

His lack of ability to control his emotions cost him the right to enter the promised land!

David was bold and fearless when he went to face Goliath. He would not entertain fear but chose to focus on faith instead. He had emotional intelligence - his emotions were so centred on trust that fear could not control him.

Paul showed similar trust during the riot at Ephesus. He wanted to go and speak to the crowd:

Eph 19:30 *Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theatre.*

How can we improve our emotions?

Prayerfully recognise the source of your problems. Think about what your emotions are and how they are influencing your decisions.

Speak to your self: **Ps 42:5** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him.*

Don't beat yourself up. Think about that you can do to improve your emotions.

Do things which the Father approves of. If we are doing those things we will feel His pleasure.