

Hello, my name is Charles Gordon and let me welcome you to the Spoken Word broadcast for the Third week in the month of January.

In this program we are going to wrap up our talk titled Emotional Stability. We will be pursuing the subject from a Christian perspective.

Stay tuned for more. I'll be back to continue the program right after this.

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Last week we ended the broadcast by referring to 3 elements of the lifestyle of emotional stability as:

1. Awareness that your behavior has influence on others: therefore you can't say anything and do anything you please
2. Addresses issues as they arise by setting boundaries and limits
3. Awareness that we have a finite span of control; there are some things over which you have zero controls

Let's tackle the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> elements as a unit.

We give expression of our inner emotions through our behavior and our behavior has a direct influence on people with whom we interact.

In articulating the ideal qualities of an overseer or deacon in 1 Timothy 3, Paul places emphasis on moral aptitude, skill with the word as well as behavior. Taking that into account, I believe that the idea of balance or stability should be central to every person of faith.

I heard someone mention once, and I'll put it in my own words, that the secret of many great marriages is that the spouses are not over familiar with each other. It sounds slightly counter intuitive. But let me say the operative word is "too". You should be comfortable, but never too comfortable. Let me say it this way.

We must never become too familiar with our spouses, parents and even children to the point where we believe or even assume that we can say anything and do anything that please us. We cannot allow the ups and downs that are part of life to lay hold of our behavior. Becoming too familiar, we lose awareness of the impact of our actions on others. I probably should clarify what I mean By becoming too familiar. It means losing a sense of a person's value and worth.

I'd like you to think about how you treat something that is very valuable or costly. We behave prima around people or will handle things that we perceive as valuable with greater care.

Great relationships are built on the notion of boundaries and limits. The boundaries and limits that we set should nurture. If the spirit of God is living within you, then you have the capacity to nurture.

One of the more pervasive emotions that often runs unchecked in our time-stressed North American society is anger. Anger is an important emotion. Like pain, it signals that something is wrong and serves as a sign that we need to take some form of corrective action in a relationship. We could say that it serves as a strong relational cue. In that it identifies an area of tension or even danger. Emotions were given for our benefit and the benefit of others.

Anger should always be expressed within specific boundaries. The book of proverbs and many passages within the New Testament are rich with instructions on specific attitudinal boundaries. Proverbs cautions that a fool is quick-tempered, but a wise person stays calm [or shows restraint] when insulted. That piece of wisdom comes from Proverbs 12:16, reading from the New Living Translation.

When faced with a situation that stirs anger, reach for a heavy dose of self-control. Out go the cutting remarks and in with reliance on the Holy Spirit to manifest an aspect of his nature or a fruit of the spirit called gentleness. I am convinced that we must make a decision and make a concerted effort to be aggressive in submitting to God, drawing on his grace and maintaining a listening ear to his perfect counsel.

Not only should anger be expressed with strong restraint but also within a specific time frame; keeping anger in or holding on to it leads to bitterness and even hatred. The Apostle Paul sets the time frame to a 24 hour period. That piece of wisdom is found in Ephesians 4:26

Proverbs 16:32 (NLT)

Better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city.<sup>1</sup>

I like the age old definition of self-control that says “Self control means you control yourself.” That said, self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Let me encourage you to make a decision to nurture people around.

When angry, let your no be no and your yes be yes.

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Emotional stability is built on an understanding that we have a finite span of control.

Michel de Montaigne in one of his essays states “Not being able to govern events, I govern myself.” Television often portrays the waging of war as series of well-time, and well

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<sup>1</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (2nd ed.). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

choreographed events by brilliant strategic minds. In truth war is a messy, chaotic process. Many veterans of World War 2 describe the allied landing at Normandy as chaotic. Yet, all things being equal, the army that has disciplined, focused soldiers will win.

Life is a messy process. No amount of planning and care can forestall negative events. Twila Paris, a very prolific song writer, wrote an excellent lyrical tune titled God is In Control.

The final verses of the chorus masterfully articulates the calling card of emotional stability “We will choose to remember and never be shaken

There is no power above or beside Him, we know

God is in control....”

I love what Psalm 46 points to: it reads

God is our refuge and strength,

always ready to help in times of trouble.

<sup>2</sup> So we will not fear when earthquakes come  
and the mountains crumble into the sea.

<sup>3</sup> Let the oceans roar and foam.

Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!<sup>2</sup>

The first verse has an implied condition. He is ready and we need to invite him or draw on His strength.

I like how the NKJV articulates Isaih 54:17

No weapon formed against you shall prosper,

And every tongue *which* rises against you in judgment

You shall condemn.<sup>3</sup>

Our emotions are important god given part of our human nature. The sin principle has bent and twisted our expression of this valuable commodity. I believe that our redeemer wants us to live a life marked by emotional stability. In this program we have looked at three simple ideas to help you move towards that mark. Stability in our emotional life is a prize to be possessed. For some, a poor diet, environmental insults, chemical imbalances or past habits hold a significant negative sway on their emotions.

Therefore, the road to emotional stability is one of healing.

I hope that I have stirred a desire to be an exemplar of stability. That's it for this week and for our discussion on Emotional Stability. I'm Charles Gordon and until next time Live Big in Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (2nd ed.). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

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[LIVING BIG IN CHRIST MINISTRIES – 3029 CLAYHILL ROAD PO BOX 20027, MISSISSAUGA ON L5B 4L7 –  
TEL: 1.800.806.7140]

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