



Liar! Liar! Pants on Fire!

Follow Your Heart

Selected Scripture

O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you,
avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing
arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”— which
some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.

1 Timothy 6:20–21

1. The Lie

Follow your heart!

- Do what seems right to you.
- Do what makes you happy.
- Do what feels like the right thing to do.



Foreword by Rod Dreher

THE RISE AND TRIUMPH
of the MODERN SELF



Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism,
and the Road to Sexual Revolution

CARL R. TRUEMAN

The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self by Carl Trueman

The “psychological man”

- Each person views himself in primarily psychological terms – how do I feel?
- My well-being is directly tied to how I feel about myself.

In previous times, most people saw themselves in relation to God or to others . . .

“In the world of psychological man, however, the commitment is first and foremost to the self and is inwardly directed.”

“That which hinders my outward expression of my inner feelings—that which challenges or attempts to falsify my psychological beliefs about myself and thus to disturb my sense of inner well-being—is by definition harmful and to be rejected.”

—*The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* by Carl Trueman

“For my grandfather, oppression was a matter of not being able to find work, of not being paid, of not being able to provide for his family. For today’s psychological self, oppression is a far broader concept with far less tangible, stable content. Oppression involves making people feel bad about themselves, less than fully human, or preventing them from being outwardly that which they are inwardly.”

—*The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* by Carl Trueman

How can believers be influenced by this thinking?

- “Choose a job that you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”
 - ❖ What underlies this statement?
 - ❖ Is the purpose of work my personal enjoyment?
 - ❖ Am I putting my feelings as my first priority?




What role do your feelings play in your Christian life?

- We must avoid an **overemphasis** on emotions.
 - If I don't feel like obeying God, doing so would be hypocritical.
 - If I have a peace about something, it must be from God.
- We must avoid an **underemphasis** on emotions.
 - Emotions are unimportant in the Christian life.
 - Our belief and behavior are what matter to God, not our emotions.

2. The Truth

A. You cannot trust your feelings (avoid overemphasis)

Jeremiah 17:9–10: The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?
“I, the LORD, search the heart,  I test the mind,
Even to give to each man according to his ways,
According to the results of his deeds.

- **Heart:** includes the thoughts, motives and emotions
- **Mind:** literally “kidneys”; considered the seat of emotions

Depravity of man includes the corruption of a person's thinking

- Sinful man has been corrupted in every aspect, including the reasoning, desires, and emotions
- **Noetic effect of sin:** Our minds have been corrupted by the fall; our reasoning is not faultless and cannot always be trusted

Titus 1:15: To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

What a person may think is right, is not necessarily right.

Judges 21:25: In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Proverbs 14:12: There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

Just because you think or feel something is right does not mean that it is right.

B. Your emotions are a gift from God and should be brought in submission to Christ (avoid underemphasis)

We may hear statements like this:

- “I know I don’t feel like obeying God, but that is not important. I need to do what is right and ignore how I feel.”
- “God demands obedience in my behavior, not how I feel about it.”

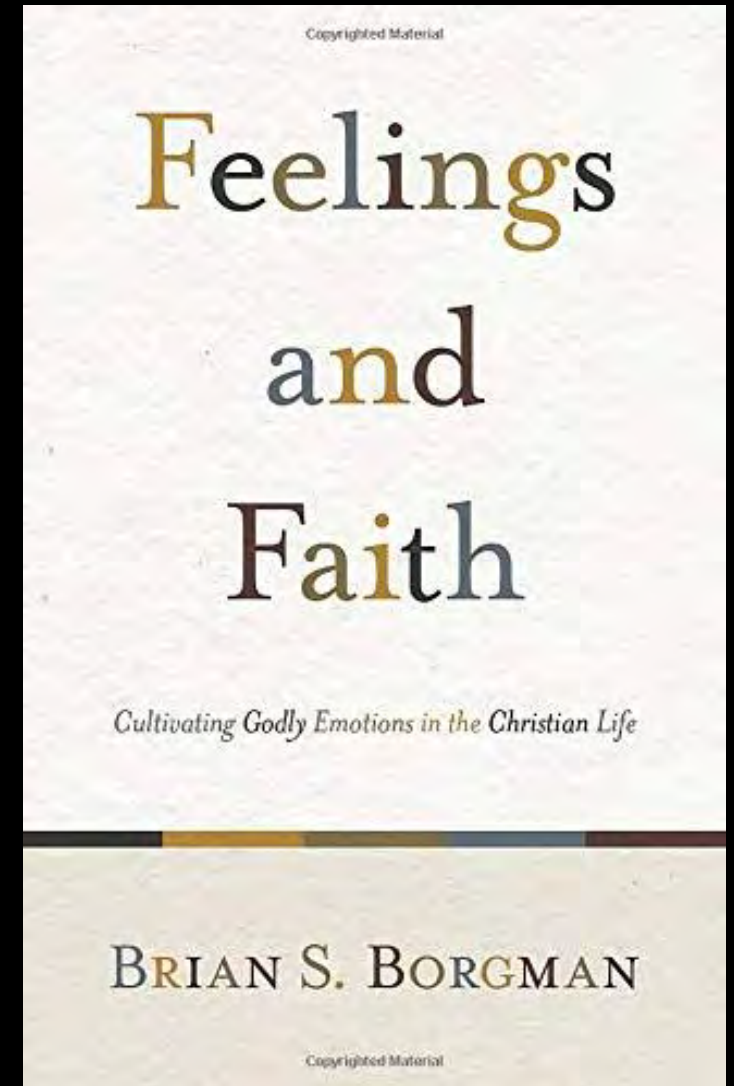
God demands obedience from every part of you!

- **Proverbs 3:5:** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding.
- **Matthew 22:37:** 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

Coming to Christ as Lord and Savior means that every part of you was regenerated and every part of you must be sanctified.

“True faith, in other words, inevitably gives rise to godly desires and emotions . . . Regeneration always manifests itself in godly desires and emotions.”

—Mark Talbot, cited in *Feelings and Faith* by Brian Borgman



God commands the obedience of our emotions

Micah 6:8: He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

2 Corinthians 9:7: Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Hebrews 13:5: Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have . . .

Luke 12:5: “But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Colossians 3:15: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

1 Peter 2:2: like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

Ephesians 4:32: Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Philippians 4:4: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

God demands obedience in our affections, not just in our actions.

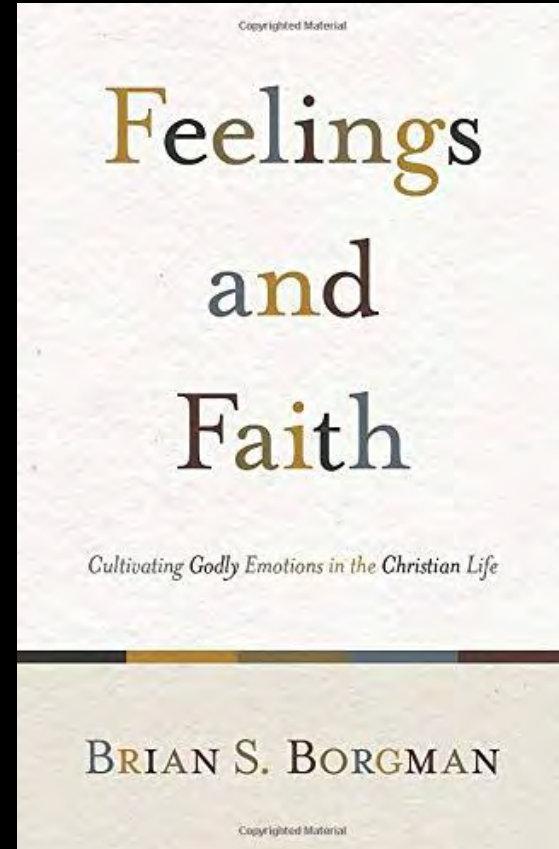
Two common objections:

1) “How can God command my emotions? I cannot control how I feel about something.”

“This is a wrong understanding because it effectively puts the emotions beyond the reach of sanctification and the biblical imperatives that would require change.” —
Brian Borgman in *Feelings and Faith*

2 Peter 1:5-6: . . . In your faith supply . . . self-control

Galatians 5:22-23: The fruit of the spirit is . . . self-control



Second common objection:

- 2) “If I don’t feel like reading my Bible or praying or going to church, then doing so would make me a hypocrite. It’s better not to do these things than to be a hypocrite.”

Wrong + Wrong
≠
Right

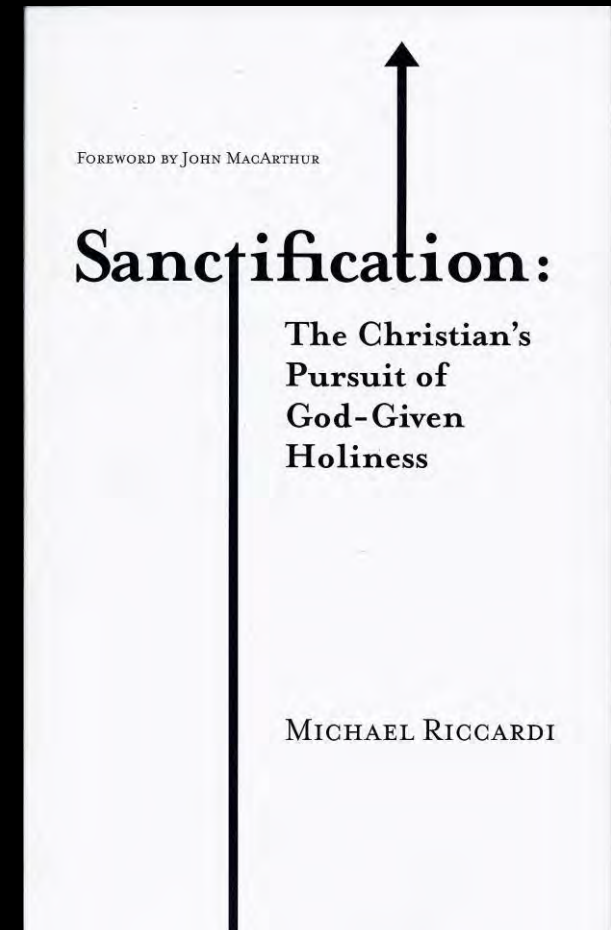
Response: A failure in desiring to obey (sin #1) should not be compounded by a failure to obey (sin #2).

What do you do when you don't feel like obeying God?

Wrong response: *“Obey God and don't worry how you feel about it.”*

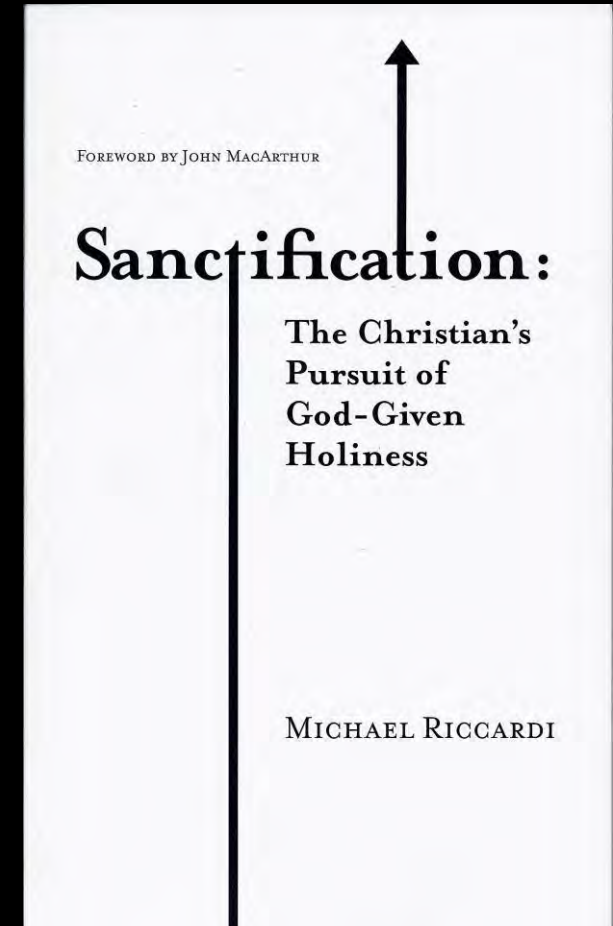
- Such thinking puts emotions outside of God's call to sanctification.

“In the truest sense, you haven't obeyed until you've “felt like it,” because God commands us not only to behave righteously, but also to be holy.” – Mike Riccardi



Right response: Confess your lack of godly desire as sin, pray for God to change your heart, and move forward in obedience.

“When you don’t feel like obeying – that is, when you don’t have the holy frame of heart to do the duty with the joy with which God commands you to do it, you are to go to the Word of God, believing that the sanctifying glory of Christ is revealed there. And, while confessing and repenting of your not feeling like it, you are to let the joyful prospect of beholding God’s glory compel you to disciplined pursuit of Christ.” – Mike Riccardi



3. Your Response

A. Instead of “following your heart” . . .

1) Follow God’s Word

Psalm 119:1–3: How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart. They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.

Psalm 119:105: Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

2) Seek godly counsel

Proverbs 12:15: The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

B. Instead of disregarding sinful emotions . . .

1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- **Confess.** Confess to God that you have a self-centered heart that is lacking in love for Christ.
- **Pray.** Pray that God would give you godly desires and joy in obeying Him.
- **Walk.** Walk in obedience, trusting that God will transform your heart so that you will find joy in this obedience.

C. Instead of considering it impossible to change your emotions . . .

1) Pursue Christ

Matthew 13:44: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

1 Peter 1:8: . . . though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

2) Fill your mind with truth

Colossians 3:15–16: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

3) Pray for God's work on your emotions

Ephesians 1:18: I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.