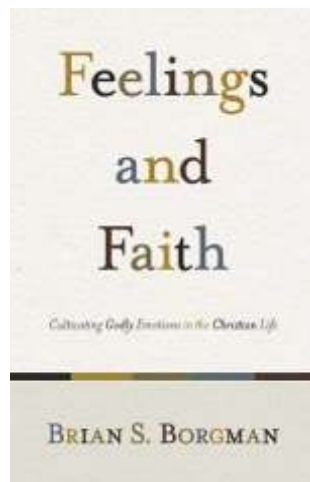


## Full Atonement Made

"My sole hope lies in the full atonement made upon Calvary's cross" C.H. Spurgeon

# Feelings and Faith

June 10, 2009 in [Books](#), [Theology](#) | Tags: [Book Review](#), [Emotions](#), [Faith](#)



Another book I read this past week on vacation was [Feelings and Faith](#) by [Brian Borgman](#) (You can read an interview with Brian on the book [here](#)). I have read a few books on how the emotions play a large part in the Christian life, such as the Emotionally Healthy Church and Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. It is not up for debate in my mind that the emotions play a larger role in our spiritual growth than many churches and pastors seem to acknowledge. And while the other books on this topic were helpful, this book is far and away the best book I have read on this subject, which I readily admit is not many. However, I am glad that this book came to me early in my life rather than later.

The book aims to help its readers cultivate godly emotions through laying a biblical-theological foundation and putting forth specific applications of the theology in four sections. In the first part, Borgman lays a foundation through exposing “the most common misconceptions about the emotions, the cultural clutter of unbiblical thinking” and “provides a working definition of the emotions.” Borgman accomplishes his mission in Part 1. He begins by laying a biblical-theological foundation for understanding emotions by discussing the character of God, Jesus, and the Bible. He closes this section with a biblical theology of humanity (anthropology) that seeks to prepare us to receive the grace of God to conform our emotions to the Bible and the image of Jesus Christ. One subject that is touched upon here is the impassibility of God, which is a doctrine that takes up the discussion of whether God has passions (emotions) or not. While he only briefly writes about this doctrine here, the first appendix takes up the subject with help from Bruce Ware, DA Carson, Charles Hodge and JI Packer. While some have commented that he does not understand this doctrine, I believe his appendix proves he does and provides a helpful balance to what divine impassibility means and how it is a glorious doctrine.

Part 2 focuses on how our emotions and the process of sanctification. Borgman challenges the common assumption that the emotions cannot be changed or governed, so God cannot tell us how we feel.

However, he exegetes the many Scriptures that show us that God does care about our emotions and even commands us how to feel. He goes on to talk about how the theology of Part 1, namely “the sovereignty, faithfulness, love and goodness of God not only bolsters our faith, but it gives us emotional equilibrium and joy, peace, and a whole host of other godly emotions that can sustain us.” This section ends with a quick overview of how the biblical writers handled their emotions in the Psalms, Lamentations and in the New Testament.

The second half of the book looks at mortifying ungodly emotions (Part 3) and cultivating godly emotions (Part 4). The first half of the book was well worth the price of the book, and the second half was just as excellent, if not more so. In fact, I believe Borgman wrote the first half of the book so well, that the second half just fell into place and was easy to read, meditate on, convicting and helpful. So many books start well, finish well or don’t do too much well at all, but this book was biblically solid, theologically sound, and pastoral practical through and through. Ungodly emotions such as anger and anxiety, unforgiveness and fear are taken up in Part 3 with a view towards killing these ungodly emotions in the life of the believer. Part 4 two chapters on how Jesus is our pattern for cultivating godly emotions because he perfectly possessed and displayed “the full spectrum of human emotions, without any darkness” and we see in Him “the goodness of emotions and the godly pattern of emotions.” Part 4 is an extremely helpful section to close the book because it is thoroughly Christ-centered in its focus and practical in its application. I especially benefited from chapters 17 and 18, The Emotions & Worship and The Emotions & Preaching.

This is a book deeply rooted in the pages of Scripture that works itself out in practical theology and incisive application. The emotions are a very personal subject and they play a large role in our lives, so it is crucial to understand what the Bible teaches about the emotions and the Christian life. Borgman helps us understand the emotions, carefully provides help in mortifying ungodly emotions and gracefully encourages the cultivation of godly emotions. I recommend this as a great resource for the church and its families.

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