

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs
III. The Proverbs Themselves, Proverbs 10:1-31:31
L. God's Counsel For Our Emotional Health

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Emotions are a key part of being a human being. "Laughter produces pain-killing endorphins. It strengthens our immune system. It also decreases stress. 'When under stress, we produce a hormone called cortisol,' reports PsychCentral. 'Laughter significantly lowers cortisol levels and returns the body to a more relaxed state.'" (Tom Purcell, "The healing power of a belly laugh," Republican-American, July 20, 2026, p. A6)

(2) However, the need for emotional health is great in today's world:

(a) This need exists even among national political leaders: Ken Martin, the "Democratic National Committee chairman, furiously threw his phone at the desk of an aid in a fit of rage" last "month as he deals with mounting pressure over the DNC's financial woes, The New York Times reported . . . The unsettling outburst came ahead of the high-stakes mid-term elections as the remarkably cash-strapped DNC is relying on a \$15 million loan, its largest-ever off-year borrowing, that saw the committee put up its DC headquarters and other assets as collateral."

(Ryan King, "Dem Big's Anger Issue," The New York Post, July 27, 2026, p. 7)

(b) It is a great need for many people in extended family relationships: A recent "Dear Annie" column cited a letter by "Worried Mom in the Middle of the Mitten" (Republican-American, July 25, 2026, p. B12) that read, "My . . . daughter . . . has several cousins around her age . . . Over the years, we've been the ones reaching out to make plans, but the effort is rarely reciprocated . . . Recently, several of her cousins spent time together just minutes from our home. Our daughter happened to see them, and it broke her heart. She came home asking why she wasn't invited . . . I don't want her growing up wondering why she's never included or feeling like she has to earn a place in her own family . . . If our relatives ask why we're no longer attending every holiday or gathering . . . I simply want them to understand that I'm choosing to protect my daughter's heart . . ."

(c) It is a big need in a case involving the state attorneys who are representing the Department of Children and Families: "A man who says he spent more than two decades held captive inside a Blake Street (Waterbury) home is now accusing the state of hiding evidence that he could prove child welfare officials repeatedly failed to save him, according to court documents . . . The state argues the claim should be dismissed because it was filed years later, saying the deadline passed around 2008. (The man's code name is "S," and) S's attorneys argue their client was still locked inside the family's home at that time. 'The State fails to acknowledge that in 2008, S lived in captivity, as an imprisoned, malnourished and psychologically damaged 15-year-old child, who was legally incompetent to file a Notice of Claim until after he obtained his freedom. The concept (suggested by the state's attorneys) that S ever could have made a claim under these horrific conditions is preposterous,' wrote Attorney Brittany S. Cates of the Faxon Law Group of New Haven." (Bruno Matarazzo Jr., "Captivity survivor says state hid evidence," op. cit., July 22, 2026, p. A1)

Need: *So we ask, "In view of the apparent need today, what counsel does God offer for our emotional health?"*

- I. God's "wisdom," His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing, applies to many issues of human concern, including the need for emotional health.**
- II. We thus view proverbs as translated from the Hebrew Biblical text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica) in the Book of Proverbs that inform us about God's advice on attaining emotional health (as follows):**
 - A. As a first priority, God wants us to address our own personal emotional health needs (as follows):
 1. We need to nurture our inner man to preserve our emotional health:
 - a. Proverbs 15:15 teaches, "All the days of the oppressed are calamitous, but the wholesome in heart have a continual feast." Thus, nurturing one's heart keeps him from being afflicted even by oppressive trials.
 - b. Proverbs 15:13 adds, "A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but an injury of the heart crushes the spirit."
 - c. Proverbs 18:14 claims, "The spirit of a man sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit, who can bear?"
 - d. Proverbs 17:22 also teaches, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones" (where "bones" figuratively refers to physical health; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 912).
 2. We also need to set reasonably attainable goals to sustain our emotional health:
 - a. Proverbs 13:12 states, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."
 - b. Proverbs 13:19 adds, "A longing fulfilled is sweet to the life principle, but fools detest turning from evil."

- c. Proverbs 14:30 claims, “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy (that desires what someone else possesses but which the person who is envious cannot attain) rots the bones.”
- 3. We must associate with upright friends to sustain our emotional health: Proverbs 27:9 teaches, “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one’s friend springs from his earnest counsel.”
- B. After meeting our own emotional needs, we need to relate well to others in sustaining our emotional health:
 - 1. We must respect the emotional feelings of other people:
 - a. Proverbs 14:10 teaches us not to assume we know all about how others emotionally feel, but remain teachable in this matter, for “(e)ach heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy.”
 - b. Proverbs 14:13 adds, “Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy may end in grief.”
 - c. Proverbs 25:20 calls us to be sensitive to the feelings of others, claiming, “Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.”
 - 2. If other people around us are angry, we do well for our own emotional health to try to diffuse their anger:
 - a. Proverbs 15:1 states, “A mild, gentle answer turns away fury, but a word that hurts stirs up anger.”
 - b. Proverbs 19:11 calls us to avoid needless anger ourselves, teaching, “A man’s prudence gives him self-restraint; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.”
 - c. Proverbs 19:19 however shows the limit to our efforts to diffuse anger in others, for “(a) hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.”
 - 3. Finally, for our own emotional welfare, we need to say true and edifying words to others that nurture their whole inner man and even their physical health besides giving a framework for us to relate well with them:
 - a. Proverbs 15:4 claims, “The tongue (speech) that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful (tongue) crushes the spirit.”
 - b. Proverbs 16:24 adds, “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the life principle (*nepesh*, the spiritual, emotional and mental inner man; Kittel, *Bib. Heb.*, p. 1174; R. B. Girdlestone, *Syns. of the O. T.*, 1973, p. 56-59) and healing to the bones (where “bones” is figurative of physical health; *B. K. C., O. T.*, loc. cit.).”

Lesson: *For our emotional welfare, God counsels that we first care for our own emotional health and then relate to other people well. The spiritual enabling for both of these steps involves one’s trusting in Christ for salvation from sin and the reception of the Holy Spirit (Application “(1)” below) followed by relying on the indwelling Holy Spirit for His nurture and equipping (Galatians 5:16, 22-23; Application “(2)” below).*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we rely on the Holy Spirit for the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control we need to heed the proverbs on emotions.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

The transformation of human emotions by God’s power was evident in the Trans World Radio story of a recently evangelized Pygmy people in a remote area of the Central African Republic.

“It began with a simple device: a solar powered radio. Over three days, May 26-28, 2025, TWR personnel distributed radios among the Pygmy people . . . They communicated the message of Jesus Christ: his love, his sacrifice, his power to forgive and his call to a new life . . . Elders gathered under trees in the evenings. Families sat together after long days of hunting and gathering. The radio speakers told them of a God who knows every person by name, who is not distant, who entered human suffering, and who offers life that death cannot defeat. The message was unlike anything they had heard before, yet it resonated deeply. Men and women began to ask questions. Who is this Jesus who loves even the forgotten? Why does his message bring peace to our hearts? What does it mean to follow him?

Local believers and ministry partners traveled to these communities, answering questions . . . teaching from the Bible, and . . . explaining . . . repentance, faith and new life in Christ. Then came . . . December 30, 2025. Near a river that had long sustained the community, people gathered – young and old, men and women. One by one, they stepped forward. Some with tears. Some with quiet smiles. Some holding hands with their children. That day, 249 members of this Pygmy community publicly confessed their faith in Jesus Christ and were baptized . . . For many this was more than a religious event. It was a declaration of dignity, a proclamation that they are seen, loved and called by God.” (Abdoulaye Sangho, “New life comes to the rainforest,” *TWR Magazine*, 2026, Volume 47, #2, p. 11)

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we then rely on the Holy Spirit for the enabling needed to apply the proverbs on emotions.