



Emotional Accounts

Select a reader and begin with three minutes of silence. Share something of your 'happy' moments from the week. (20 minutes)

Emotional accounts

The question underlying all we do is 'Am I growing in my relationships?' Or, more specifically, 'Am I loving God from a more real and trusting place in myself? Am I sensing a wider acceptance and pleasure in my self-love, and am I loving my fellows with greater compassion and understanding?'

These questions are answered by our emotions. As we have seen, these emotions or feelings are neither good or bad, but are informing us of our inner attitudes and assumptions and of the way they interpret our experiences of relationship. Our relationship may be stunted in places because of our inability or our unwillingness to take our feelings seriously by owning them or acting on them.

In Psalm 32, David says 'When I kept silent, my bones wasted away . . . my strength was sapped . . . then . . . I did not cover up . . . (then I could) rejoice in the Lord . . . and sing.'

John, in Rev 3, says that God would that his people were either hot or cold, because being luke-warm makes them repulsive. Much of our problem lies in not keeping our emotional accounts up to date. Often for fear of opinions or repercussions we avoid saying what we really feel in various situations. Alternatively, a pride complex may keep us from revealing our true motives and feelings about a matter. We may feel hurt but not be able to show it or work with it. We may then find ourselves living on a double level, a visible one where we are doing the 'right things', and a hidden one where we live a lonely and unhappy life with our unresolved feelings and issues. These masks and frozen smiles slowly kill us.

'Speaking the truth in love' is taken in different ways. Some of us keep our true feelings hidden and repressed because of the pain or hurt we fear causing, which we think would be unloving. Others of us may go out and try to say what they feel, this being an 'honest' telling of the 'truth'. Much of this 'truth' about the other may, however, be subjective projections which may cause much unnecessary confusion and pain.

Owning our feelings is a good place to start. If I can say what I feel in a situation, including the pain and how it leaves me, without blame or recrimination, I will have made a first and very significant start to becoming more true. I will then leave the other person free to respond out of their perceptions and experience, which will open the interaction to going further together.

Reflect on your various relationships and on the level of 'honesty' at which you have been able to reveal your feelings to the other.

- What makes you happy in any particular relationship?
- How do you make the other happy?



Sergio Milandri has a Masters in Personal Formation and has been a relationship mentor in South Africa for over 25 years. He and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Hout Bay, Cape Town, and run the Sans Pareil Retreat Centre from there. **For more material visit www.relating.com or email sergio@relating.com**



Journal and share as usual. (20 minutes)

End with prayers for courage and love to face your relationships more truthfully.

At home, work through 1 Corinthians 13 slowly.

- Reflect and pray through your relationships in the light of what you have seen.
- Practice being a little more honest and real about your feelings and remember to journal any significant experiences.
- If possible, speak to some of the people in those relationships about what has been happening in you. Ask them how they see the relationship.



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