

SHEMA - AFFECTIVE CONVERSION –Psalm 139

Deuteronomy 2:3 God says - “*you’ve circled this mountain long enough. Now **turn** North*”

*Some of us have been following Jesus for 10 years or more.
But you don’t have a 10 year old faith, you have a 1 year old faith you’ve lived 10 times over.*

Donald Gelpi’s 5 conversions. He defines conversion as **turning**. Turning from something and to something.

Affective Conversion as *when a person steps into personal responsibility for their emotional healing and development.*

In Gelpi’s image of turning we are turning from neglect or even avoidance of our disordered emotions and toward the cultivation of a healthy emotional life.

This TURN happens when I realize that I can’t be spiritually healthy when I’m emotionally unhealthy. My spiritual maturity is tied to my emotional maturity.

READ - Psalm 139

Blue Planet II, Episode 2: THE DEEP

Attenborough: “*The deep ocean is as challenging to explore as space.*

We know more about the surface of Mars than we do about the deepest part of our seas.”

How much of “**the deep**” of your life goes unexplored?

Later in the episode we learn so much of life in the ocean – in fact 90% of it – lives in these largely unexplored depths.

And how many of us live with a **tip of the iceberg spirituality**.

Our reactions, habits, and scripts we operate from make up the 10% of what people see... but they are rooted in the 90% - the emotional wounds, the history, and the trauma and the 90% under the surface that go deep.

And the same Hebrew word that is translated as “examine” in verse one in Psalm 139 and “search” in the penultimate verse means to dig down to the depths.

Affective Conversion is this turning inward to go deep to engage with and heal that 90%.
It happens when a person steps into personal responsibility for their emotional healing and development.

“**Responsibility**” and “**emotions**” in the same sentence might seem odd at first glance.

But Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett spent 25 years of studying brain scans and physiology studies and more to study emotions. She’s shared her findings in articles, and Ted Talks. Her findings?

In her words: *Emotions aren’t built in. They are built.*

Emotions are “guesses” or primal predictions that your brain constructs based on past experiences and inputs done in a moment of sensation as billions of brain cells pop off in unison. Bottom line this means you have more control than you might imagine you do

And as Dr. Barrett says: **“More control... also means more responsibility”**

If you change the ingredients and input your brain feeds on you can slowly and gradually and sometimes arduously... transform your emotional life.

There are ingredients in life we don’t control.

Trauma. Abuse. A diagnosis. Violence – physical or emotional.

“The Body Keeps the Score,”

This book talks about the impact that trauma can have on one’s body. Namely your brain. But one of the revelations within the book is that brain mapping has shown that the brain has a natural neuroplasticity. Events and experiences shape our mind in profound ways. Not just negatively but also positively. And from medicine to therapy - over time - people can push toward mental and emotional health again.

Raj example (photo)

In 1st Samuel we see David’s teens and twenties were marked by traumatic events - emotional and physical assault, attacks with slander and attacks with spears, as well as various betrayals on both personal and national levels. The man had plenty of trauma to work through.

And yet in his writing, we see him inviting God into his Affective Conversion.

Psalm 139 opens: **“LORD, you have examined my heart.”**

Psalm 139 ends: **“Search me, O God, and know my heart”**

He uses the poetic tool of **parallelism** in this and other Psalms.

This sitting and rising is imagery in a parallel that has nothing to do with seating and chairs.

His parallel statement in the next verse speaks to his thought life and mental health:

“You know my thoughts even when I’m far away.”

The knowledge God knows intimately with sitting and rising isn’t about David’s status positionally, but David’s state mentally. At peace or agitated, calm or chaos.

David says: ***Even there your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast.***

3 P’s - acts that take responsibility for our emotional health...

PROTECT

The ingredients and experience in your life today will shape your brain and how it emotes tomorrow. What you feed on will bear fruit.

Philippians 4:8 - ***“Fix your thoughts on what is true, honorable and right and pure and lovely and admirable.”***

Proverbs 4:23 says – Guard your heart. In some circles this verse has been used to validate keeping emotions out: *Positive thoughts only. So in order to protect, we repress.*

Emotions make you MORE LIKE God. God is emotional:

Exodus 34:6 – God is slow to anger

Deuteronomy 30:9 – God delights in being good to his people

Proverbs 14:35 – God rejoices in wise servants and angry with those who disgrace Him.

John 11 at Lazarus' tomb – we see Jesus both weep and display anger.

We are made in the image of the God described in these verses - and declared GOOD.

“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Your workmanship is marvelous – how well I know it.”

POUR OUT

Psalm 62 - “pour out your heart to God.”

By some measures, David spends ½ to 2/3 of the Psalms lamenting.

And in other Psalms David rages on borderline uncomfortable levels.

“O God, if only you would destroy the wicked! Get out of my life, you murderers...”

Questions for maturely weighing our emotions:

What are they based on?

Jonah 4:9 “Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?”

How are they expressed?

Ephesians 4:26 (NKJV) – Be angry.

verse 31 – ***“Get rid of your anger...”***

Anger will happen. But ...you don't get to keep it.

I may catch feelings. But when I'm provoked to anger the Q is – what will I do with it?

What isn't poured out will leak.

Three channels for this outpouring: **Processing + People + Prayer**

I need theology. And I need therapy. It's part of me taking responsibility for my emotional health

PRAY

Tim Keller:

“There are other prayers in the Bible but no other place where you have an entire course of theology in prayer form, and no other place where you have every possible heart condition represented, along with the way to process that situation before God. Even the Lord's Prayer is more a summary of what we must pray—while the Psalms are a comprehensive program in how to pray it.”

“Wonderful Counselor.” What makes him worthy of wonder?

The reality with any counselor or therapist is they only know what we're willing to share.

The reality is that God knows us better than we know ourselves. His counsel is perfect.

Last two verses of Psalm 139: **Search me / Test me / Lead me**

“Search me”

Are there parts of my life I’ve avoided, neglected or kept from God?

Have I only given God the tip of the iceberg?

“Test me”

David wants to make sure his anxious thoughts aren’t rooted in lies and flawed thinking.

Your emotions are valid. The emotions you feel are real

BUT: What you believe to be true based on your emotions may not be.

Naming our emotions is powerful and good.

But identifying with our emotions = can be crippling.

Is what I feel based on my emotions true when tested?

“Lead me”

Erwin Mcmanus:

“you have to establish a principal that your emotions do not give you a right to your actions.”

I have to ask constantly: ***Am I being led by my emotions or the Holy Spirit?***

My goal is to have emotional responses that are spirit led.

That’s the endgame of Affective Conversion and a healthy emotional life.

But we are sons and daughters of God. We do well to remember that no matter what our emotions tell us.

“You place your hand of blessing on my head”

Why would he do that when I’m unworthy?

Because I’m his kid.

Home for our inner child – relationship with God.

WELCOME HOME MOMENT