

Quietness of Soul (Ps 131)

'This is one of the shortest psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn.' C.H. Spurgeon



1. Picture of a Weaned Child (v1)

1. It is the picture of calm and quiet trust in mother's love! 'security' / 'restfulness' / 'satisfaction'
 - a. This is a challenging picture because we carry a lot of noise inside of us.
 - b. 'A child is in control of nothing, yet enjoys the greatest peace this world can afford.'
 - c. We find it difficult to find rest of this kind unless we feel we have a certain *sense of control* – which is nothing more than an illusion.
2. Hence, the confession of the psalmist in two negative statements of what David is NOT.
 - a. David confesses the attitude of his 'heart' and direction and his 'eyes' - not haughty (not proud) nor lofty (not vain). David fostered the attitude of humility, resisting pride. How many people can confess this? How many lives are ruined because of pride and vainglory-seeking?
 - b. This is further explained by his mental attitude in approaching (theological) knowledge; Or relinquishing the mental control over to God.
(i.e. clear line of our responsibility & God's responsibility).

2. Stilling My Begging in God's love (v2)

1. Living Bible Translation, 'I am quiet now before the Lord, just as a child who is weaned from the breast. Yes my begging has been stilled.'

The intensity of child's cry! Adults would probably faint from exhaustion if we do the same. Yet, we can carry the same silent cry in our hearts just as intense as the little ones.
2. Someone said, 'Remember, everyone is sitting next to the pool of his tears.'
 - a. Looking back on my life, I have come to realise that my incessant begging could be summarised in three words, each starting with a letter 'S'.
 - b. *What is most personal is also most universal.*
 - Security: sense that one is unconditionally loved.
 - Self-worth: sense of being valued.
 - Significance: sense of meaning and purpose in life.
 - c. Security, self-worth, and significance are the basic needs we are born with, which forms the basis of **Identity** (understanding of self-hood). There is a great struggle within everyone's heart to be whole, to find answers to our sense of insecurity, worthlessness, and insignificance.
 - d. We experience these most clearly in relationships:
On self-worth: 'I am not what I think I am. I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am.'
3. The Fall:
 - a. In the beginning, when human beings were in an unbroken relationship with God, these basic needs in us were fully met in God. We were secure, significant and worthy.
 - b. However, after the fall as our relationship with God was severed, there is left in our soul a *huge unfulfilled vacuum*. The basic needs that form our identity, our healthy intact self-hood, was shattered. We no longer were fed, fuelled and upheld by relationship with God, making us susceptible to shame, guilt, pride, meaninglessness, etc.

These fuel an unquenchable thirst in our soul which cannot be denied, whether it is consciously acknowledged or not.

- c. Our mind is also darkened from the fall, that we are looking to quench our thirst in the wrong places. We sub-consciously translate and project these 3 'S's into a set of goals. We seeking the meaning for our lives in secondary things such as personal achievement, wealth, education, fame, applause of men etc, rather than through our relationship with God alone.

3. How our emotions Work vs Goal

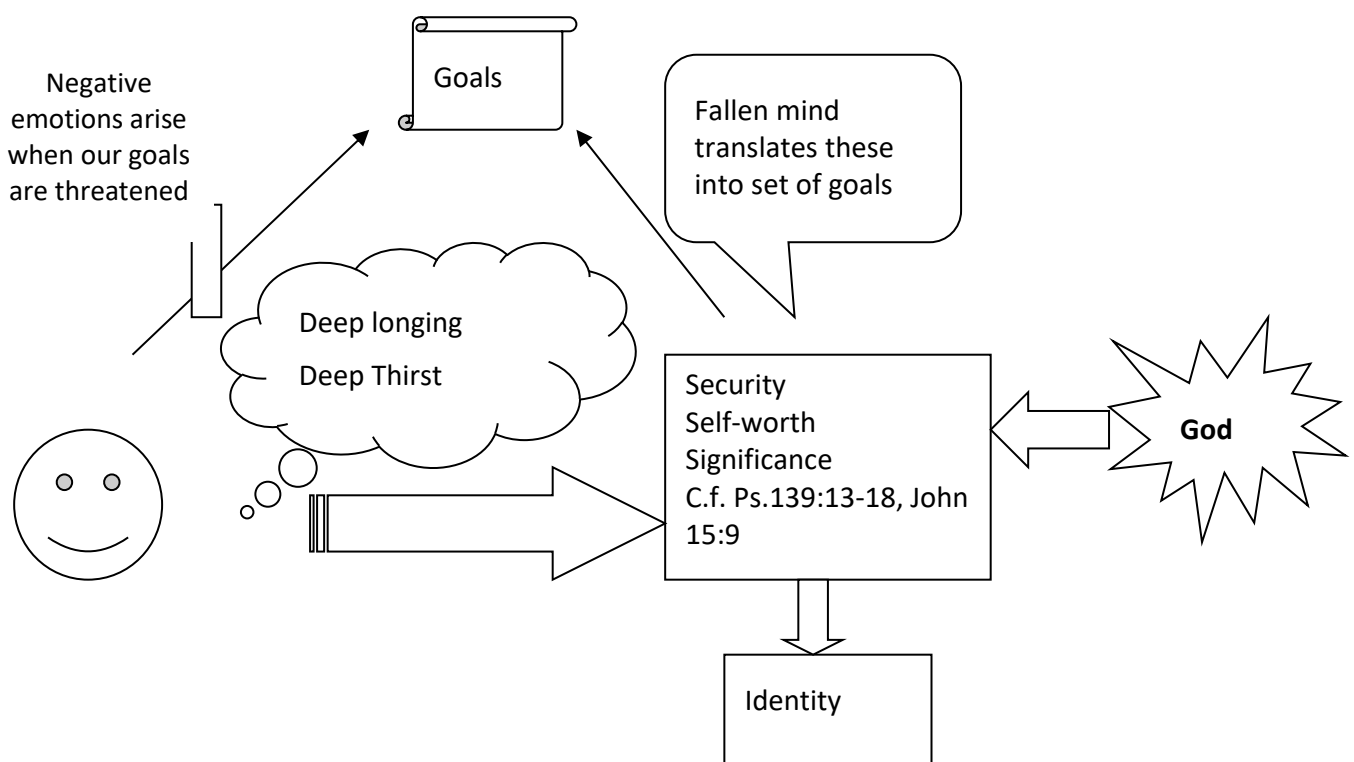
1. Negative emotions in 3 groups:

Group 1 – anger, irritation, resentment, frustration, contempt, etc. [Blocked Goal]

Group 2 – anxiety, worry, apprehension, pressure, stress, etc. [Unsure Goals]

Group 3 – Guilt, shame, embarrassment, self-pity, etc. [Unattainable Goal]

2. Negative emotions are usually result of some obstacle on the road to our goal – the goal we believe we have got to get to in order to experience personal happiness or fulfilment.



4. Three Things to Consider

1. There is nothing wrong with setting personal goals, but when a sense of personal 'integrity' or 'intactness' depends on it, we are misplacing our dependency.

C.f. Jer. 2:11-13. 'Are we drinking from a broken cistern?'

2. And it will inevitably lead to problems of:

- False sense of significance and pride OR
- Low self-esteem and inferiority complex
- These are just opposite sides of the same pride.

3. Reality of life

- a) Everyone is deeply thirsty within their souls.
- b) Everyone longs and seeks to have their thirst satisfied.

- c) Any attempt to satisfy that thirst outside of relationship with Jesus Christ will lead to problems.
- 4. 'We live dangerously when we try to find worth in what we do rather than in who we are in Christ. Our identity must be in God.'
- 5. Looking back, I would've been far more effective had I been on a personal level more secure and satisfied in my relationship with God and less dependent on the external.

'God is most glorified when we are most satisfied with God.'

- 6. My son as a baby before and after feeding!
 - a) Before – constant begging for attention, love, approval.
After getting milk – so satisfied and fell asleep.
 - b) Before being weaned, Mum = milk bottle, lunch box, rice cooker, the object of his satisfaction!
After being weaned, Mum = person. The child learns to enjoy his mother and relate to her as a person rather than seeing her as just means of fulfilling his own needs and wishes. (Ps. 139:13-18; John 15:9]