

## A Biblical Rationale for EQ

I would like to start by describing a couple of scenarios. Firstly, a man in my home group expressed awkwardness with the idea of having to communicate emotions. He described it as acting like a woman. Here is a second one, I was running a seminar the other day and went up to speak after being given a wonderful intro. I was greeted with silence as I took up my space, so I said to the audience, who were leaders of a very significant organisation, "This is where you guys start clapping." I then said, I guess this is why I am teaching on EQ. A lot of times we don't know what to do socially. Sometimes we feel awkward giving or receiving complements. All of this relates to our emotional intelligence. *John 11:33-35 "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled... Jesus wept."* We live in a world that has taught us, "cowboys don't cry", yet the King of the universe cried. We need to examine EQ God's way. *Luke 22:44 "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."* **Jesus could make Himself vulnerable by expressing emotion. If we want to be Christlike, we need to embrace this too.** If you study the science of likeability, vulnerability makes you more likeable. You don't have to always put your best foot forward. Who do you think is better at EQ men or women, according to research? On average women score better on the relational aspects of EQ whilst men have higher scores on the personal mastery aspects of EQ. By the way, it has been found that amongst leaders it is the same, meaning that the men who rise are often the ones who take EQ seriously. How were you raised? Many of us were raised in non-reflexive cultures hence we don't have words for emotions. Developing vocabulary for emotions helps to grow your EQ.

Years ago, I asked a group of smart people on a graduate programme what "the other stuff is" after having told them they could be overtaken by people with "the other stuff". They answered correctly, highlighting factors such as people skills, EQ, resilience, assertiveness etc. I told them that the problem with smart people is that is all they were rewarded for. They won academic prizes at school and developed the misbelief that their smartness alone will get them to the top. Two years into corporate work they realised that it doesn't work that way. Some of them are known as the brilliant jerk. This is someone who is hired because of their smartness but no one wants to work with them. Some of them develop a fixed mindset where they complain that they are being discriminated against because of their gender or skin colour not realising that others are getting the buy in of senior executives because of their high trust personal brands. Years ago, I asked some leaders in the construction industry whether they (mostly engineers) studied how to manage corporate politics whilst doing their engineering degrees. They said NO. I asked them whether they had studied how to manage their boss. They answered NO. I asked them whether they deal with these things on a day to day basis. They answered YES. This is why my leadership causes focus on these topics. It's because EQ can be learned. Some of you might think you are being fake if you try out some of the techniques I will teach you, but you are not being fake, rather you are still learning how to build that EQ muscle. A guy once came to me for coaching asking to get tools to connect with his wife at a deeper level, He said to me he was scared that his wife would divorce him as she said he was emotionally detached. I gave him some tools for question-asking when you want to bond at a deeper emotional level. He came back to me a couple of weeks later stating that it was working. Perfect practice makes perfect. Research has established a strong link between managerial and leadership performance and EQ. Research has shown the positive correlation between high EQ and occupational success, life satisfaction, improved psychological and physical well-being, and great workplace relations. Sadly, there has been a paucity of research on EQ in the church world in general and amongst pastoral workers in particular, yet we are dealing with emotions and people on a daily basis. Even in the

workplace, many people have a psychological contract that is impersonal. They have made an inner vow that they will be guarded and self-protective and not let anyone in. The reality is that it has been found that there is a positive correlation between performance and an emotional bond with one's manager. When you suppress your emotions continuously it will come out in other ways. **Whatever you resist will persist.** Sadly, we have limited high EQ with certain personality types. It is possible to have high EQ whether you are an introvert or an extrovert.

**Emotional Intelligence has been defined as the ability to recognize, manage, and enhance individual behaviour through emotional processing and regulation (Kozlowski et al., 2018),** According to research, Emotional Intelligence has been called a foundational life skill (Ruiz, 2014), a resilience tool (Hendron et al., 2014), and one of the most valuable professional tools an individual can demonstrate (Goldman, 1995). **EQ is the abbreviation for emotional quotient which is a measurement of a person's emotional intelligence.** EQ essentially has 5 factors that can all be backed scripturally: **Emotional self-awareness, emotional management, social awareness, relationship management and general mood and motivation.** In this series I will cover all five of these pillars, unpacking how one can grow in each of them and highlighting their importance. I will also show you how they are emphasised in scripture.

**1. Emotional self-awareness** (identifying one's emotions and awareness of impact on others), *Psalm 34:18: "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* *Ephesians 4:29: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

**2. Emotional Management** (Stress management, stress tolerance, impulse control and emotional containment). *Proverbs 16:32: "Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city."* *Proverbs 14:29: "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly."*

**3. Social Awareness** (Empathy) *Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."* *Philippians 2:3-4: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."*

**4. Relationship management** *Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."* *Proverbs 15:1: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* *Proverbs 29:11: "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end."*

**5. General mood and motivation** (i.e. optimism, resilience and happiness).

*Proverbs 17:22: "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."*

*Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"*

*Romans 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

*Psalm 27:13-14: "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."*

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. How comfortable are you with expressing your emotions, and what factors may have shaped your comfort level?
2. How does Jesus' example of emotional vulnerability challenge common cultural views on emotional expression?
3. In what ways do you think men and women differ in their approach to emotional intelligence? How can these strengths be balanced in leadership?
4. What emotional vocabulary do you currently use, and how might expanding it enhance your emotional intelligence?
5. Can you recall a situation where high IQ was not enough to succeed, and EQ made the difference? How did that experience shape your view on leadership?
6. How do you handle feelings of awkwardness in social situations, such as giving or receiving compliments, and how might EQ development improve this?
7. How do you manage stress and impulses in high-pressure situations, and how can biblical wisdom guide you in this area?
8. Reflect on your ability to empathize with others (social awareness). How do you balance focusing on your own needs with showing genuine concern for others?
9. In what ways have you experienced the benefits of strong relationship management skills, such as being a peacemaker or calming tensions with a gentle response?
10. How does your overall mood and motivation (optimism, resilience, happiness) affect your leadership, and what role does faith play in sustaining a positive outlook?