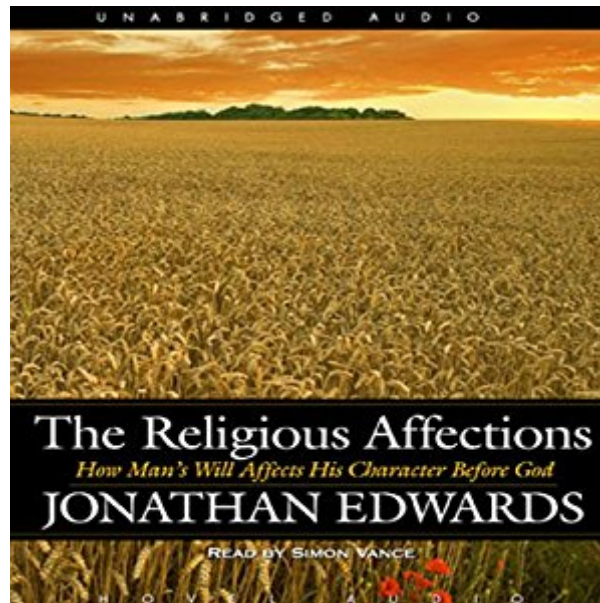


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# Religious Affections: How Man's Will Affects His Character Before God



## Synopsis

In one of the unsurpassed religious masterpieces produced by an American writer, Jonathan Edwards distinguishes between true and false religion by defining a believer's correct affections and explaining their importance. He further identifies the distinction between genuine-seeming and legitimate affections. A Christian preacher and one of the greatest theologians of the English-speaking world, Jonathan Edwards played a critical role in the First Great Awakening and oversaw some of the first revivals in 1733 at his church in Northampton, Massachusetts. His famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," remains a classic of early American literature, and *Religious Affections* constitutes essential reading for divinity students and students of American religious history. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 15 hours and 10 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: christianaudio.com

Audible.com Release Date: January 15, 2009

Language: English

ASIN: B001PU0V12

Best Sellers Rank: #5 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Theology #104 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Systematic #867 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Religion & Spirituality > Christianity

## Customer Reviews

This classic work can be difficult to get through because the author does not write in the short, snippy, cliché way in which most "spiritual writers" write today. Bro. Edwards makes the reader think; and think you will. After reading this book, you will ask yourself: just what are my affections? Sports? Politics? Fox News? My career? Possessions? My wife? What is in my wheelhouse after all? Christians would do well to stop listening to conservative media and their lukewarm pastors and delve into works like this for real meat for the soul and instruction in Godliness. The day is far spent.. What we do and who we are for God is all that matters. Bro. Edwards writes with an intensity that reflects this.

Written centuries ago, the style and flow of Jonathan Edwards' intellectual prose will be heavy sledding for modern readers who are more accustomed to 'ebooks' that can be read from start to finish in one sitting. I urge readers to stick with it, for Edwards shares his experiences, as well of those of his contemporaries, how we might determine whether our emotions ("affections") are truly being inspired by God, or by something else. In a nutshell, the key is this: have you a) stopped sinning AND b) begun producing good fruit (good works). Your emotion, experience, discovery or personal revelation is not to be taken as evidence of your good estate with God if you also have not stopped sinning, for that will tell you that Christ has not set you free yet. This book will show you several tricks that the devil uses to assure people that they are saved or not. If what I just wrote raises concerns about your relationship with Christ, then you need this book. May God and Jesus Christ bless you.

This may easily be the most important book written by Jonathan Edwards. I frequently use it as a source of quotes for reflections on the Holy Spirit. It is by far the best outcome of the first 'Great Awakening' in the 1730-40's. Read it and be amazed.

I was surprised to find how personal the implications of his observations were. That made this more than an abstraction or just information, I profited from it in unexpected ways. He is an extraordinarily engaging writer because of his passion and intellect.

James states that "pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (chapter 01, v. 27). Jonathan Edwards, in this well grounded essay, shows the biblical concept about true religion. The Scripture is his object of work. The Christians are his audience. His argument gives emphasis in the fruits produced by a Christian whose life belongs to Jesus. In order to recognize this, one has to be aware of the false prophets and must not trust in his feelings. "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremias, chapter 17, v. 9) Man has to search and develop the wisdom from above, with "is first pure, than peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy" (James chapter 3, v. 17). The author's exposition definitely succeeds in showing the meaning of true religion.

Edwards shows an amazing level of discernment in this book. Once you spend an hour or two reading and re-reading the first 20 or so pages to make sure you understand what he is talking

about the rest of the book flows a lot better. Keep in mind the context of what Edwards was addressing at this time in history and his points will make more sense as well.

The Religious Affections is probably the most profound analysis of spiritual experience ever written - and by the most brilliant philosopher/theologian to ever come from North America (and possibly the English language). Jonathan Edwards wrote this book after the Great Awakening with which he was closely involved. He wrote as both a friend, defending the authenticity of revivals - and also as a critique, warning against putting trust in things which were not certain signs of genuine Spirit-wrought affections. His treatise takes three parts. In part one he defines his terms and gives twelve reasons why genuine religion (i.e. Christian spirituality - "religion," in Edwards day, did not have the negative connotations that it carries today) consists much in the affections. The affections, for Edwards, are more than mere emotions - they are the strong and lively inclinations of the will, seated in the human heart. Part two discusses twelve things which are not certain signs of true religious affections. These are things which Edwards warned should not be trusted as evidences of grace OR discarded as evidences that the Holy Spirit has NOT worked in a saving way. They are not indicators one way or the other. Part three is the most lengthy and examines twelve things which are signs of a true work of the grace, wrought by God's holy Spirit in the heart. This is where Edwards is at his best - carefully, logically, biblically, and passionately describing the true evidences of regeneration. His analysis is keen, his thoughts clear, his argument orderly, his scholarship extensive, his knowledge of Scripture profuse, and his understanding of the human heart profound. This particular edition - produced by Yale and edited by John Smith - is the best critical edition in print. The introduction and notes on the text are very helpful, as Smith summarizes Edwards' arguments and backgrounds the Puritan writers and their books which Edwards quotes in Religious Affections. This volume also includes Edwards' related correspondence with Thomas Gillespie from Scotland - this being the first time the complete correspondence has been printed in the same volume with the Affections. This is not an easy book to read. Edwards takes getting used to. But it is very worthwhile. I'm currently reading it for the third time and I continue to find it useful. I highly recommend it for pastors and preachers and all Christians who yearn for a personal and corporate work of the Spirit in revival and spiritual awakening.

It was a very interesting book to read about one of the early church men in the United States. His writing gave historical back ground to one of the Great Awakenings. And how it was misconstrued by many people. Yet how many also faked what was happening so they would not feel left out.

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