

How to Win a Spiritual Tug of War With Your Feelings

There are some people in this world who are extremely reliable. You can count on them for just about anything and somehow, they'll always come through. However, I've found that many people are not very reliable.

Maybe you know someone who is a nice person, but if you ask them to do something, you're just not sure if they're going to follow through. In other words, they're unreliable.

I've discovered that feelings are a lot like unreliable people—we can't depend on them to be what we want or need them to be all the time. Not only that, they aren't necessarily interested in what's best for us. And they always want to have their way.

Feelings get us excited about going shopping when we really don't have any money to spend. They entice us to eat cheesecake when we're trying to avoid extra calories and lead us to stay up late working or watching TV when we need to get up early the next day. Then after the damage is done, we have to deal with the consequences.

Our feelings are fickle—they change like the wind. Yet it's amazing how much we let them have their way in our lives. But as believers in Christ, we have something much better and more dependable to follow than our feelings—and that's the Word of God.

Conquering Confusion with the Truth

When we feel strongly about something in our heart, it's not always easy for us to determine whether or not we're really in agreement with God (see Jer. 17:9). Thankfully, God's Word doesn't leave us lost in confusion.

Hebrews 4:12 (AMP) says that the Word of God is “sharper than any two-edged sword ... exposing and judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

So if we really want to rise above our feelings, we must let the Word of God be the final deciding factor in our decisions. There will be times when we can't find a verse for the specific issue we're dealing with. But we can always pray and ask God for wisdom (see James 1:5).

In the meantime, we need to trust Him, be patient and keep on praying.

Remember that God is always available to help us live beyond our feelings and do what pleases Him.

Set Your Mind to Do What's Right

The first step toward managing our emotions is found in Colossians 3:2a. It says, “Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above ... not on things that are on the earth.”

There are many things in this world that could easily affect our minds and emotions—and we need to learn how to rise above them all. When negative thoughts are building up and trying to take control of your emotions, take a few minutes to set your mind on God and His Word.

It also helps to speak positively about whatever is bothering you. Have a chat with yourself that goes something like this: “My family may not be everything I'd like them to be, but I am thankful I have a family. My house is not as nice as I would like it to be, but it's still a nice place to live. I don't see how I'm going to get through this painful situation, but Jesus is with me, and He will help me overcome it!”

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Sometimes we want to ask God to instantly change our

circumstances when we're struggling. But the truth is until we learn to be content in every situation we face, we will continue to be tested.

Jeremiah 17:10 says, "I, the Lord, search and examine the mind, I test the heart, to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds."

There are a few different "buttons" the devil knows he can push to get an emotional reaction out of me, so I make a point to prepare myself before that happens with the Word. I love Psalm 94:12-13a. It says, "Blessed [with wisdom and prosperity] is the man whom You discipline and instruct, O Lord, and whom You teach from Your law, that You may grant him [power to calm himself and find] peace in the days of adversity."

You see, the more we discipline ourselves to say no to our feelings and yes to the wisdom of God, the easier it becomes to defeat them in a spiritual tug-of-war.

I want to encourage you to consistently take time to focus on what the Bible says. It will empower you to control those unreliable emotions and do what is best for you!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-CD series, "Managing Your Emotions." You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

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