

Joyce Meyer: The Problem With Feelings

I've learned from experience that feelings are fickle. One day they can be up; one day they can be down; and other days they are just all over the place!

God gave us feelings, and they are not wrong in and of themselves—they are an important part of enjoying life. We don't need to deny that we have them, but we do need to prevent them from controlling us.

In 1 Corinthians 3:3a (AMPC), the apostle Paul is talking to new Christians, and he says, "For you are still [unspiritual, having the nature] of the flesh [under the control of ordinary impulses]."

The flesh is our desires—what we want, think and feel. And Romans 8:8 says that "those who are living the life of the flesh [catering to the appetites and impulses of their carnal nature] cannot please or satisfy God, or be acceptable to Him."

The Bible is saying that always doing what we feel like doing will hinder us from doing what God wants us to do. We need to get to the place in life where we are not controlled by our emotions, so we won't miss out on His good plan for our lives.

I realize that some people are more emotional than others. However, with God's help, we can get to the point where we obey God and do what His Word says to do—regardless of our feelings.

Let me give you an example. I was sexually abused by my father for years. My mother eventually found out but never confronted him because she was afraid of him. Needless to say, the abuse and pain I endured as a child deeply affected me, and it took

years for me to experience the emotional healing I desperately needed to truly forgive my parents.

When they reached a point where they needed someone to help take care of them, the Lord spoke to my heart that He wanted us to bring my parents to St. Louis, buy them a house and take care of them until they died. I shared it with Dave, secretly hoping he would resist the idea. But he said, "If you think this is what God is leading you to do, then we better obey Him."

We didn't have a lot of money in the bank, and it was going to take most of it to do what God was asking. But the more I prayed, the more the Lord made it clear He wanted us to take good care of them and treat them as if they had been the best parents in the world.

So we moved my parents to a house just eight minutes away from us, bought them a car and furniture and met their every need. My father showed some appreciation, but he still remained the same mean and cranky man he had always been.

But one morning, three years after we had moved them to St. Louis, my mother called to say my father had been crying all week and asked if we could come over. Dave and I went, and that day my father asked me to forgive him for what he had done to me as a child. He also asked Dave to forgive him.

We assured him that we had forgiven him and asked if he wanted to ask God to forgive him and begin a relationship with Jesus Christ. He said yes, and we all prayed right there on the spot. Ten days later, I had the great honor of baptizing my father at church!

I can truly say that for the next four years, prior to his death at age 86, I saw a true change in my father. I know without a doubt that he's in heaven. My mother had asked my forgiveness years before this, and I had the joy of knowing her last years were peaceful.

Now, when the Lord asked me to help my parents, I certainly didn't feel like doing it. I had a choice to obey Him and do what I knew was right or follow my feelings and miss out on what He wanted to do in their lives and mine in the process.

I want you to take a moment and think about this: Are your feelings preventing you from doing something God has asked you to do? In the moment, it may seem that getting "your way" is more important or that you'll be giving up too much if you go along with God's plan.

But the truth is while you can't always control how you feel, with God's help, you can control what you do. And when you obey God, He always rewards you beyond anything you can imagine.

I encourage you to pray and ask the Lord for strength in this area. Ask for His help to choose His will over what you want, think or feel in the moment. Because you'll never regret making good decisions and doing things God's way. {eoa}

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