

Fickle feelings

By Corallie Thornton

Have you ever been irritated by someone? Chances are you have. You have felt the agony of sitting next to a person which makes your skin crawl. You have known that irritating person who just seems to bring the worst out of you, and no matter how hard you try, they always seem to bring the worst out of you.

This has been something God has been dealing with me about over the last few months, especially over the last few weeks. I was getting to the end of all my assessments, and I was feeling irritated with everybody. Everything seemed to irritate me. I just couldn't understand why all of a sudden, my emotions had seemed to get the better of me. I had previously thought to have 'conquered' this area of emotions, but God was showing me that I still needed a lot of work in this area. He shed a light on this issue for me, and made me see many things which I want to share with you. So it is with great pleasure and joy that I share this with you. I pray you will be blessed, and that you will gain something valuable from it.

Irritation

I'm sure everybody has felt the irritation of something not going your way. Maybe someone decides to drive slow in front of you. Or maybe someone decides to just make life hard for you, by doing the very thing you hate. They may not even be aware that they are doing it, or that it even annoys you.

Sometimes there are people who just get on our nerves. Maybe you are irritated because someone is mistreating you, and you don't think that it's fair. I know the feeling. I have been going through a lot of irritation lately, and it is not a nice feeling.

Irritation can make you react in ways which you really don't want to react. I find myself lately just almost literally having to bite my tongue, just from saying something rash because I am irritated. It can be very hard sometimes to keep your mouth shut when you are irritated because someone is rude to you or mistreats you.

But irritation doesn't have to rule your life. You can be irritated, and not react. Yes, it is possible, but how do we go about it? Well, the obvious answer to that question is to seek God. He knows the weakness of your flesh. He knows that certain people just *really* get on your nerves. He knows there are some things that just irritate you because they are unfair. But if you ask Him, He is more than willing to help you get over having to react when you feel irritation.

Irritation is an emotion which needs to be controlled by the Spirit of God. Failure to do so can result in your emotions taking over, and you doing things you don't want to be doing.

Emotions are not stable. They can change at any time, which is why we must not let them be the guiding force of our lives. Feelings are fickle and at times irregular. God's Word says to *Be well balanced (temperate, sober of mind)...rooted established, strong, immovable, and determined.* – 1 Peter 5:8,9 Amplified Bible.

For awhile now, I have been not been feeling myself. I didn't know what was wrong. I had been to a huge conference that weekend. It seemed that after that conference, something didn't feel right. I was easily irritated. I didn't seem to have any passion anymore. The cause of this was not the teaching at the conference. I really did get heaps out of it. The reason was the devil didn't like that I grew over that weekend, and that I had been literally soaked in the word. I had sat through eleven sermons in two and a half days. I had gained some valuable tools which would benefit me, and others, in ways I could never imagine. So of course the devil wasn't happy, and tried to steal them away.

So the devil began to throw feelings at me. I didn't know what was wrong. Up until the conference, my

feelings were stable. I was level headed and rational. But since then, I couldn't work out why, but I just felt like a big ball of emotions. He had me deceived for awhile that these feelings were my own.

There are seasons in our lives where God withdraws from us. He doesn't leave us, but He may withdraw the good gooey feelings from us. God does this in order to test our feelings. Will we bow down to our feelings and act on them, even though we know we shouldn't? Or will we do the right thing even when we don't feel like it.

Maybe you are feeling like God has left you. Maybe you feel like people have left you. Maybe you feel irritated because someone isn't treating you right. Maybe you just want to go and tell everybody about this person who isn't treating you right. To do so is to act on your feelings, which is the biggest mistake you can make. The less you react, the less it begins to hurt.

It could be that everywhere you go, you run into someone slow. You end up in the longest grocery store line. You are caught behind (or even between) some slow drivers. You have to wait for your breakthrough, even when it seems like ages, and you don't feel like waiting anymore. Maybe there are people in your life that just have some habits which just plain annoy you.

Would you believe, I had these all at once? For awhile, I thought God had left me. I was easily annoyed. I felt uneasy. I felt sad. I cried. I felt like a big ball of emotions, and I didn't know why. Normally I was a calm, steady person. But now I felt like my emotions had taken over.

But I finally realised that God was just testing my emotions. Would I react to them? Would I let them rule me? Or would I do what I know is right, even though I felt like a bundle of emotions.

It took me awhile to finally realise that this was a test. When I finally heard some teaching by Joyce Meyer on this very topic, my eyes were opened. I finally understood what was going on.

What I mentioned before about the devil throwing feelings at me. This is what was happening. That is why I was not 'feeling myself'. It was because they weren't my feelings. They were feelings that the devil was throwing at me, trying to deceive me that I was backsliding.

What is God's answer to fickle feelings? Simple. Don't deny the existence of feelings, but don't allow them to rule you. Don't act out as soon as you feel irritated. When you react out of emotions, you are not of a stable mind. An emotional mind is not a stable one. The only way to control it is through the Spirit and the Word of God. There is absolutely no other way.

Galatians 5:17 says: For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies, and this means that you cannot do what you want to do (Good News Bible).

I didn't want to act irritated or moody. It wasn't the way I normally felt. I normally felt pretty good. But now I was feeling something different. I realised that because I had grown, I was coming under an attack of my feelings. Maybe you are in the same situation too. You just feel like a ball of emotions, and you can't understand why. You're not normally like this; you're normally pretty stable. But let me tell you: this is a test. God is testing your feelings, to see if you will do what is right, even though you don't feel like it.

I know many of us pass through times like this. But having been through one now, and understanding why it is all happening, I come to you and share with you. I don't believe anybody should be left in the dark about feelings. If you have had a similar experience, and want to share it, please do so. I believe everybody has something to teach somebody else. It's not just the teacher who should do the teaching! God bless.