

Doing the right thing does not have to be burdensome

Nobody likes a complainer. And when we hear people complaining about doing the things God wants us to do, we are tempted to tell them that if they can't do what God asks without complaining, then they ought to just forget about doing it at all. Sometimes that advice might be appropriate — but we need to be careful not to leave a false impression. It is not as though the only two alternatives are either (1) doing the right thing and disliking it, or (2) not doing the right thing at all. There happens to be a third alternative, and God expects us to pursue it.

Doing the right thing does not have to be burdensome. We can learn to do what God wants and do it with the right attitude. We can be cheerful rather than grudging about obeying God's commands. We do not have to be at the mercy of our feelings. We have it within us to subject our feelings to God's will, so that we grow in our ability to love the things God wants us to do.

One measure of maturity is the ability to subordinate our feelings to our values. We understand, for example, the immaturity of the person who hears his alarm clock go off, rolls over in bed, and says to himself "If I can't get up and enjoy it, then I just won't get up at all." It is no less immature spiritually to do only those things that we feel like doing. Sometimes our values tell us to do things that are worth doing, even if we don't feel like it at the moment.

Certainly, the example of Jesus' submission to His Father's will should help us with our own obedience. Going to the cross was neither easy nor pleasant. Speaking of His death, He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!" (**Lk. 12:50**). But even when it was difficult, Jesus took delight in doing the will of His Father. "My food," He said, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work" (**Jn. 4:34**).

This week let's think of ways we can improve our thinking in regard to our feelings. Let's remember that feelings may fluctuate for many reasons, but our determination to obey God should remain steady. Because we love Him, we must say yes to His will — not only when it is easy, but also when it is hard.

Monday: Matthew 11:28-30

Key Idea: Jesus wants to make our burden lighter, not heavier.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean that Jesus is "gentle and lowly in heart"? What did Jesus mean when He said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light"? If we obey God, will life be easier or harder? In what ways is it easier? What are some ways it might be harder?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 25:18.**

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Key Idea: We should obey God cheerfully, not grudgingly.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean to do a thing “grudgingly” (NKJV) or “under compulsion” (ESV)? Is it hypocritical to do what is right when we don’t feel like it? If we don’t feel cheerful about doing God’s will at a particular moment, what should we do?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:19](#).

Wednesday: Psalm 119:14-16, 33-35, 46-48

Key Idea: God’s commandments ought to give us joy.

Questions for Family Growth: How can we learn to “rejoice” and “delight” in God’s laws? If God’s commandments seem unpleasant to us, where does the problem lie? Has God given us laws and restrictions on our behavior just to make us unhappy?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:20](#).

Thursday: Psalm 40:8

Key Idea: Obeying the will of God ought to give us joy.

Questions for Family Growth: What did David mean when he said, “Your law is within my heart”? What did he say about doing God’s will? What are some ways we can learn to find joy in doing what God wants us to do?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:21,22](#).

Friday: 1 John 5:3

Key Idea: If we love God, His commandments will not be burdensome.

Questions for Family Growth: According to this verse, what will we do if we love God? What does “burdensome” mean? If God’s requirements sometimes seem burdensome, what should we do? How does our love for God keep His commandments from being burdensome?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:23](#).

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