



Is God offended when I do what He wants, but my heart isn't in it?

This is a question that came up in a recent Bible study. I love the question, because it's one that comes from a heart that really wants to honor God, but honestly admits that we don't always feel like doing what we know we're supposed to.

A couple questions I'd ask in "answer" to that question:

"Is your boss offended when you show up for work, even when you don't feel like it?" (No. They would be offended - and you'd likely be out of a job - if you didn't show up, just because you didn't feel like it.)

"Is your teacher offended when you show up for class, even when you don't feel like it?"

(No. They would be offended - and you'd likely get an "F" - if you only showed up when you felt like it.)

"Is the IRS offended when you send in your taxes - even when though you never feel like it?" (Insert laughing emoji here! No. They don't care how you feel, as long as they get your money.)

I could go on (and on) with examples of things we don't always feel like doing, but we do them anyone, just because we've made the commitment.

The problem is that we live in a "feelings-driven society" where it's easy to get the idea that we should only do things we feel like doing. And, if we do something we don't feel like, that we're being hypocritical.

I see the "feelings" test applied to things like "love" and "forgiveness" all the time. For example, we are taught that love is a feeling, and only a feeling, so when we don't "feel it" we wrongly believe we can't love.

But listen to what Jesus says about loving God in John 14:23-24

"Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching."

Jesus clearly spells "love" O-B-E-Y. No mention of feeling like it. Just doing it.

I hear people all the time who say, "I can never forgive..." because they have gotten the idea that forgiveness is a "feeling." But forgiveness is not a feeling. It is a conscious decision to "not take revenge, but rather to let it go" - even if you feel like getting revenge or like holding a grudge forever.

So, the short answer is: "Absolutely not. God is not offended when we do what He asks even when our heart isn't in it."

In fact, you will find something really "cool" happens when you keep on doing what God wants you to do - even when you don't feel like it: God has the power to change your "I have to do this..." feeling to an "I want to do this..." feeling!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net