

*One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek Him in his temple.*

*Psalm 27:4*

My daughter, Kim, and I were talking about how tired we are of this weather; cold one day and hot the next day. You never know what to expect. We are so ready for the warmth to return. I wonder if you are too? That conversation got me to thinking about the temperature of my soul.

When I first encountered Jesus, I was on fire. I was filled with excitement and the desire to get to know more about Jesus. I wanted to spend time fostering the relationship and I couldn't wait to hang around other friends of his. And that, of course, showed in my life. People called me a Jesus Freak. There was no denying my love of God.

Since then I have experienced both highs and lows in my relationship with God. I know He has never been far away, but my own response has not been as consistent as His. You might say I have been both hot and cold. Somedays I am totally invested and other days I am self-focused and distracted.

It was then that the irony struck me. I was complaining about how much I dislike the fluctuations in weather. No consistency. I never know what I can count on day by day. How sad, it seems then, that my faith is as inconsistent as the weather in Texas. God must get very tired of the constant up and downs of my walk. How one day He can count on me to speak truth and fight against the evil powers of this world with an enthusiasm that can't be quenched and then the next day I am more concerned about myself and some small issue that I have encountered. How He must long for the day when my focus will be totally on Him and no longer pulled here and there.

I am striving to hear the words from Joel with new purpose and clarity:

“Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping; and with sorrow; tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD your God, for He is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive.”

I pray that throughout this Lenten journey as we travel to the cross with Jesus, you too will take the opportunity to look carefully at those places where we have fallen short of the glory of God and in doing so we don't quite receive all Christ has in store for us.

The truth is that we cannot control all the circumstances in which we experience Christ, but we can take seriously the scripture in which we are told to be transformed by the renewal of our mind (Romans 12:2). Perhaps this Lent you will choose to be intentional in your faith along with me. And while we are at it, let's ask the Lord to put a new and right spirit within us.

*After thought: I am so glad that Jesus uses these moments of realization to convict and never condemn. As soon as I finished the article, I was reminded of a little-known fact about Mother Teresa. She experienced a wilderness time in her life when she could not hear from God as she once had. She even talked to her priest about this difficult time. It lasted several decades. Friends, spiritual giants have struggled through wilderness times before us and have remained faithful. We can too! Because all things are possible for those who love the LORD. Matthew 19:23-30.*