



**Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
the Southern United States**

**The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
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How to Deal with Moody Persons

One's mood is naturally reactive to the daily events without being blunted, yet this reactivity must be average and must not impair one's emotional stability and social functioning. There are also some developmental life stages that are characterized by a swinging mood like adolescence and midlife stages. Nevertheless, there are some people who are described to be moody because their mood swing became a genuine constitution of their personalities and an evident manifestation in their transactions with the people surrounding them. Here it applies the verse from St. James epistle saying, "*He is a*

double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).

Characteristics of a moody person

- He swings between two opposites like the sea waves. He is sometimes gentle, kind, lovely, and forgiving, and some other times he becomes avoidant, hot-tempered, tough, and impatient.
- It happens sometimes that he is smiling and relaxing and suddenly he becomes angry, frowning, and his words turn to be few and hurting.
- He is also unstable in his judgments and opinions. He sometimes evaluates certain things to be convenient, accepts them and becomes excited about them, and some other times he rejects these same things and even fight against them. He may take a certain decision, then after a short time he changes his decision without clear logical reasons.

Why is it hard to deal with a moody person?

This shifting pattern of one's mood puts a heavy burden on the surrounding people especially if they are forced to deal with him. This moody person can be one's husband, wife, son, daughter, father, mother, work supervisor... etc

Difficulty in dealing comes from many reasons:

- Confusion regarding the ideal way to deal with such moody persons. One may find himself forced to swing with the mood swings of the moody person. He sometimes feels angry with their unpredictable behaviors during the periods of their bad mood, and some other times feels guilt and piety toward them when they see their kindness and exemplary behaviors when they are in good mood.
- Feelings of insecurity and fear of betrayal as a moody person can turn in a moment from being like a calm cat to become like a tyrant untamed monster.

- Feeling of loss of control due to the unpredictability of the moody person's behaviors, opinions, or decisions regarding a certain matter.
- The moodiness of a swinging person may turn to be a way of pressure on and control of the surrounding people. They are forced to submit to his demands to avoid his hot-temper. This in turn leads them to feel oppression and bitterness.

Solomon realized the harmful consequences of moodiness on interpersonal relationships. He, thus, gave us a precious advice saying, *“Do not devise evil against your neighbor, for he dwells by you for safety's sake. Do not strive with a man without cause, if he has done you no harm”* (Proverbs 3:29–30).

How to deal with a moody person

- (1) An honest self-evaluation in an atmosphere of prayer and repentance is a must. You may be the moody person who forces surrounding people to

swing with your mood swings. If the Holy Spirit pinpoints this weakness within you, then know that the most effect remedy of this moodiness is the calmness of mind by making it always preoccupied with God through continuous prayer. A swinging thing can be stabilized by fixing it to another steady thing. The same happens when one's thoughts and emotions becomes steady through unity with God who *"with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning"* (James 1:17). It applies here the psalms' verse saying, *"His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord"* (Psalms 112:7); and also, *"Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established"* (Proverbs 16:3).

(2) Stabilize your reactions and behaviors. Do not swing with the moody person's swings. The more you remain firm and steadfast the more this person's swing calm down and the more your calmness is transmitted to him.

(3) Do not take it personal. Know that the whole matter has to do with that person himself and not

with you. This would help keep your love to him and would protect your self-confidence and self-esteem from being harmed by his mood swings.

(4) Keep healthy boundaries with the moody person and do not allow him to use his moodiness to force or control you.

(5) Do not try to change him by giving him advices or criticizing him. This would trigger his anger and harden his stubbornness. Instead of that, you need to always pray for him and to calmly accept his moodiness knowing that he usually returns to his baseline quickly. Always remember that, *"Love will cover a multitude of sins"* (1Peter 4:8).

(6) Avoid arguing with him when he is in bad mood. Leave him until he calms down. Such arguments are unfruitful and usually end up with bad consequences. Remember that, *"A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished"* (Proverbs 22:3), (Proverbs 27:12).