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Strategies for Stressful Times

5 Things to Remember When Your Life Changes

Everything is constantly changing. It's part of life. Some changes we like; other changes we don't like. And then sometimes change is so rapid and relentless, it leaves us reeling. It can make us feel like we're in limbo and unable to get on with life.

That's why I want to give you some practical guidance from God's Word about how to trust God during seasons of change.

Here are five things to *remember* when you are overwhelmed by change:

1

Change is unavoidable. No matter how hard you try to stop change from happening, things will continue to change—for good or bad. The Bible says, *“As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night”* (Genesis 8:22 TLB).

2

Change is not always good, but God uses it for good! The Bible says, *“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28 NIV). What does *“all things”* include? It includes every circumstance you face, choice you make, consequence you feel, and change you experience.

3

God's purpose in every circumstance is to make you more like Jesus. The best picture of Jesus is found in Galatians 5:22-23: *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”* (NIV). God produces these qualities in you by putting you in the opposite situation, teaching you joy in the middle of suffering and peace in the middle of conflict.

4

God can even use human error and sin. Whether you're overwhelmed from a bad decision you made or someone else made, God will use it for his good purposes. This happened to Joseph in the Old Testament after his brothers sold him into slavery. Instead responding in bitterness, he responded with grace and said, *“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives”* (Genesis 50:20 NIV).

5

Every change is always a test of your faith. Faith during times of change is like a trapeze act. You must let go of something to grab on to the new thing God has planned for you. The Bible says, *“The purpose of these troubles is to test your faith as fire tests how genuine gold is. Your faith is more precious than gold, and by passing the test, it gives praise, glory, and honor to God”* (1 Peter 1:7 GW).

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5 Things to Do When You're Stressed by Changes

Some seasons in life are filled with unwanted changes. These changes can make us feel like we're treading water and can't get on with our lives. The good news is, God's Word gives us some practical steps for how to navigate the many changes—good and bad—that come our way.

Here are five things to *do* when you're overwhelmed by change:

1

Invest more time alone with God. Instead of fighting changes you can't control or looking for an easy way out, spend time alone with God. It's the great stabilizer and re-energizer in your life. The Bible says, "*[The LORD] never grows weak or weary . . . He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint*" (Isaiah 40:28-31 NLT).

2

Ask God to help you see his perspective. Anybody can be informed today, but only wise people seek God's perspective on current events. It's the difference between information and wisdom—and God wants you to handle change with wisdom. James 1:5 says, "*If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask him*" (TLB).

3

Ask God, "What do you want me to learn?" Every situation is an education. So instead of focusing on why your circumstances are changing, focus on allowing God to develop your character. The Bible says, "*We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation*" (Romans 5:3-4 NLT).

4

Focus on what never changes. When going through change, let the unchangeable be your anchor. Thankfully, there are three things that will never change in life: God's love for you, God's Word, and God's plan and purpose for you. The Bible says, "*His plans endure forever; his purposes last eternally*" (Psalm 33:11 GNT).

5

Keep telling God: "I trust you no matter what." When you feel like you're being attacked from every angle, tell God you're going to trust him, regardless of what's happening all around you. The Bible says, "*Even if a whole army surrounds me, I will not be afraid; even if enemies attack me, I will still trust God*" (Psalm 27:3 GNT).