

REMAIN CALM IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE

by Sarah Bowling

How well do you handle change? Does it invigorate or intimidate you? Can you maintain your joy when the status quo is the status quo no longer?

Change is at the heart of life. In fact, change is necessary for a healthy life to continue. Physical growth is a form of change. Positive emotional change leads to maturity. Education occurs through intellectual change. Without change, our survival is at risk.

More importantly, radical change (the transformation of the spirit of man) is central to salvation! Then, salvation leads to more change. When God brings His life to the human heart, the natural man is altered: by love.

SO...WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH CHANGE?

If change can be so beneficial, why do we resist it so routinely? We pray for change when we are unhappy, but fight God's "adjustments" tooth and nail when they conflict with our agendas. Unsolicited change threatens us because it reminds us of an unyielding truth: we are not the ones in control.

Actually, that's good news! As believers, we have been relieved of the need to be in control. We have a heavenly Father who controls everything perfectly. He knows our limitations long before we discover them, and He offers us the benefits of His omnipotence.

Change is not necessarily chaos. With God at the helm of our lives, all things work for our benefit (see Romans 8:28), and every change can be a change for the better.

ROOM FOR ADJUSTMENT

While He discourages stagnation, our heavenly Father never overwhelms us with change. He takes us deeper by increments—with sensitivity, gentleness, and order.

We can see a visual parallel in Ezekiel 47:3-5:

"...The man...brought me through the waters; ...up to my ankles. Again he... brought me through the waters; ...up to my knees. Again...up to my waist. Again...and...the water was too deep, water in which one must swim..." (NKJ).

During this vision from God, Ezekiel is not led straight across the river, but down and across in stages—ankle-deep, knee-deep, waist-deep, and so on.

That's how God leads us through life. Take Peter. He had so many experiences with Jesus—some "successes," some "failures." Through ALL of them, he kept growing with God. Eventually, his very shadow would bring healing as it passed over people.

IN WHOSE HANDS ARE YOUR TIMES?

Change is unavoidable. You can walk along the river, but you can't dictate its ebb and flow. Instead, you can adapt. When the waters get rough, God will give you the grace to persevere. When the waters are still and you want to sail more swiftly, He will give you patience to wait for the wind to rise.

Growth and change go together—but so do maturity and stillness. You can't avoid change, and you can't force it. God's perfect plan comes—not with our timing—but His. David learned that as Saul hunted him down year after year. Although David had been anointed as king, Saul remained on the throne and did all he could to destroy David.

David experienced discouragement, but his words show His faith in God's timing: *"But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hand..."* (Psalms 31:14-15 NKJ).

The best place to be is in God's hands. Here are some tips on staying there through all the seasons of your life:

- *Be Spirit-led, not self-led.*
- *Allow God to orchestrate timing for you.*
- *Stay connected to God through prayer, Bible reading, church, and cell-group attendance.*
- *Allow change to spur you to improvement.*
- *Trust God's judgment and embrace the changes with which He entrusts you.*