

THE INEVITABILITY OF CHANGE

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Acts 6:8-11,14; 7:54-59

Humans resist, and even fear change.

We are creatures of habit that adapt to our environments and surroundings. (Brazen serpent.)

People can even become violent when confronted with change. We fear change, undermining our faith.

Throughout our lives change is inevitable. Look in the mirror.

“Change is the law. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” **John Fitzgerald Kennedy** (1917-1963)

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” **Margaret Mead** (1901-1978)

“If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we are not really living.” **Gail Sheehy**

Whether the changes are good or bad are within a tremendous amount of our control.

Our destinies hinge on our ability and willingness to deal with the changes that come in life.

You can't get where you want to go without change.

Successful people ride the waves of change to the top! They take advantage of the opportunities that change can offer. If you keep doin' the same old things, you'll keep getin' the same old results.

We believers will be given access to change for our betterment, but we must avail ourselves to the benefits of change.

God will bring change into our lives for our own good and to fulfill His purposes.

Elijah experienced change in the fulfilling of his destiny.

1Kgs. 17:5-9 *So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. :6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. :7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. :8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, :9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.*

God will give us instructions in the process of change. He tells Elijah to get up and where to specifically go. So, let's get up and go!

I. Be Willing To Change!

It is human nature to resist change. It is divine nature to inspire change.

A. When you quit growing and changing in Christ you have made the decision to fail.

1. What backslidden really means. Not progressing.

Hosea 4:16 *For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer:...*

2. The most important change in our lives is for Jesus to change our hearts.
 - a. We must allow the process to continue from there.
 Hebr. 10:39 *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*
 [1.] Having our minds renewed is transforming, or processional change.
 Rom. 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*
- B. There are three things you should know about the future:
 1. It is not going to be like the past.
 Josh. 3:4 *...for ye have not passed this way heretofore.*
 2. It is not going to be exactly the way we think it's going to be.
 3. The rate of change will be at a pace that is not of our choosing.
 - a. It will be both slower and faster than we imagined.
 - b. God will show you if you will listen.
- C. Always be prepared to change.
 1. If you are truly seeking God, and your destiny you will have the ability to know the future in advance and make the necessary adjustments to adapt to the changes.
 Isa 42:9 *Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.*
 Isa 42:9 TLB *Everything I prophesied came true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens."*
 2. If you are not changing you are not preparing for the future.
 - a. We should be moving from faith to faith and glory to glory.
 Rom. 1:17 *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*
 2Cor. 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

II. Learn To Discern Change Effectively.

- A. Not all change is for the best.
 1. Sometimes the, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," attitude is appropriate.
 - a. We should be cautious that we don't embrace change just for the sake of change.
 2. We can learn from even the bad changes that take place in our lives.
 Rom. 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*
- B. Failing to recognize and roll with Godly change can nullify God's power.
 Mark 7:13 *Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*
 1. Traditions of men make God's word ineffectual.

2. The Pharisees and others didn't recognize that Jesus was about to affect positive change so they fought against it.
 - a. Gamaliel, whom Paul respected, understood that change had to be properly discerned.
Acts 5:38-39 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: :39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.
3. The change that Jesus had brought was a blessing that they neither understood nor accepted.
Hebr. 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

III. Expecting Positive Change Is The Attitude Of Faith.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

- A. How can you believe for God's promises without expecting change?
 1. From sickness to health is change.
 2. Being born again is change.
 3. Spirit baptism is change.
 4. Prosperity is change.
 5. Seeing loved ones saved is change.
- B. Sometimes we pray and believe for God to do something great in our lives and forget that it will bring change.
 1. Israel cried out for deliverance in Egypt without fully realizing that their lives would be completely changed forever.
Exod. 2:23-24 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. :24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.
Exod. 3:7-8 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; :8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.
 - a. God moved them.
 - [1.] Changed their location.
 - [2.] Changed their social, political, religious and financial status.
 - [3.] Changed their circumstances and situation.

2. We want change without going through the process of change.
 - a. The process is, sometimes temporarily painful and scary.

Deut. 8:16 *Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;*

Gal. 6:9 *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

We shall all be changed.

1Cor. 15:52-53 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. :53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Rev. 2:17 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*

Dr. Richard Swenson said, "For millennia upon millennia change was slow, controlled, assessable; now it convulses at warp speed. Change is the name of the game for all of us. In 1978 in the average grocery store you had 11,767 items to choose from, today that number is 24,531. A single edition of the NY Times carries more information than the average 17th century British citizen would encounter in a lifetime. At times the change and choices can be overwhelming. When American astronaut Alan Shepherd was getting ready to head into space for the very first time, a reporter asked him "What are you depending on in this flight?" He answered, "I'm depending on the fact that God's laws will not change."

Consider: Shepherd is right that God will not change, his laws do not change, his word does not change, his love does not change. In the changing times we have a God who can be trusted to keep his promises. In the present, I am confident about the future, because of what God has done in the past. (Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, forever.)

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Pastor David Joe May

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