

8 Things You Need to Know About the Season You Are In

I remember back in the years of 2007–2009 and running into many people who shared what they thought I should do and where I was headed.

I would hear so many words spoken regarding how amazing those years were going to be, that they would unveil tremendous fulfillment and breakthrough. These things were said to me and they were often preached in church.

This was wonderful, and I fully agree with the motives in those words spoken. Yet at the same time, I was frustrated, because those three years were the absolute hardest years of my life.

Looking back, no one ever sat down with me to talk about the realities of the season I was in—a new marriage, child on the way, no stable income, completely new course of ministry, starting new friends, shaking off the toxicity of old relationships and more.

There are very few mentors out there that can recognize a season someone is in and maneuver through it effectively. We have a lot of people that can tell you how to go from “A to Z”, but very little about how to walk in “B to Y.”

Something’s missing when we do not carry the wisdom to recognize the season that a person is in.

There are themes that God is working on in the body of Christ as a whole, but at the same each individual person has to connect to the unique season God has them in. If you don’t, then you will jump into principles out of context, get easily discouraged and lose the value of what God is doing in your particular season.

So here are some things I have learned that have not only brought me great peace, but also set me up for tremendous seasons of growth.

1. Everyone is in their own unique season. We need to be aware of the season we are in and relate to others out their season.

When we do so, we align ourselves with God's heart over that person. I had many great prophets speak to my life, all speaking powerful things over me. Yet it was a little known prophet who never met me and said in 2008, "Mark, its just not time yet." It was the most empowering thing I could have heard, because I had so much piled up in my heart to release, but was frustrated that the opportunities were not showing up.

What's going on God? Is there something wrong with me? Something I am missing? Please show me! Yet it is the recognition of seasons I am in that help me to gain the greatest fruitfulness in my life. So many people are waiting for the next chapter of their life, while they scorn what's in front of them, thereby sabotaging the next stage.

I recommend you get into the Bible and find the person who you connect to the most. Find the one that matches the season you are in the most. Put yourself in their story. Extract every bit of revelation you can from their life.

Maybe you connect to doing right but getting the short end of the stick, like Joseph. Maybe you are afraid to step out like Gideon. Maybe your mouth keeps getting you into trouble like Peter did. Find the connection and stay there until you become one with what they carried.

2. Do not compare your season with any other human being. This will kill the vision of God over your life. Comparison is a deadly trap that will lures us into enemy thinking. All it takes if for you to compare your family or marriage to someone else's and you will be hating on yourself, your wife and situation. I have talked to scores of pastors who fall into

depression, simply because they see another church growing, while they themselves can't get any movement going. A neighboring business is flourishing while you can't seem to even get by.

To fathers and mothers, do not despise the seasons of parenting you are in, where you may not be able to give out as much as a single person or someone who's kids are all grown up. You will lose the value of what you can pour into your children in the formidable years of their life. The No. 1 regret of parents with grown children that I hear is, "I wish I was more present when they were younger." They missed the season God had them in by being ambitious about something shiny they wanted.

3. You need to connect to the theme that God is working on in this season of your life. Comparison is a joy-stealer, and it will distract you from remaining focused on what God is doing in YOUR life. It is my conviction that God has a theme He is working in every believer's life. Give me 20 minutes and I can help you pull it out. It's really not that hard. It can often be boiled down to one or two sentences.

The more we pour into that theme, the greater growth and fruit we see. When we compare ourselves to others or focus fully on someone else's theme, we lose traction and get burned out. One person may be learning to walk in stillness and peace while another is learning to break out of passivity and aggressively step out. Some are in planning stages while others are in the implementation stage.

4. Don't be lured into thinking someone else has it all together. With the rise of online platforms and social media, it's a greater common problem today to think that others are doing so well while we are doing so terribly. We compare our backstage with someone else's front stage life.

I run into so many people that are blessed by my pictures and

posts of my marriage and family. They compliment our investment in the home, which is awesome. But underneath their words is a self-rejecting mindset that says, "I wish my family was like theirs and it's not." They don't realize the struggles, agony and battles we have. They have a perception that Melissa and I don't argue, our kids don't get rebellious and we have perfectly smooth days.

We have to end the lure of comparison by remembering, *no one has it all together* and no one is without tremendous battles. No matter what people of any position present, behind the scenes there are deep battles, struggles and broken areas that challenge them to the core. I am not saying everyone's life is a mess. Well, maybe. My point is that we all have issues. Stop thinking someone else doesn't or you'll make the mistake thinking that if you had someone else's husband, parents or financial status, you would be so much better.

5. Get happy about the season you are in. Besides comparison, the greatest mistake you can make about the season you are in is to loathe it. To hate on where you are at is to hate on your life. One of my morning declarations states, "I love my life." Every day I want to create an imprint in my heart to love where I am as I walk forward.

Loving where you are doesn't mean you want to remain stagnant. It means you focus on what you grateful for and appreciate each stage of your life. If you do not love where you are, don't think for one second love will just show up the moment your circumstances change. This is why people who gain fame and fortune overnight are some of the most miserable people.

6. Respect the season other people are in. If you don't, then you'll push someone into something that is not in their timing. Pastors, don't push someone into a ministry role that goes against the season they are in, just because you need to fill a position. Friends, don't give advice to someone without recognizing the season they are in.

Years ago, I was helping a pastor make some healthy steps toward change during a difficult season of his life. Because I recognized he was struggling with depression, I gave him coaching and steps that honored what he is working through, while giving him strategy that could take him from where he was, to where he needed to be. When you recognize where someone is at, you position yourself to be the greatest encourager and it stops you from rushing other people to get somewhere out of timing.

Sometimes when we get a breakthrough revelation, we immediately share it with as many people as we can. We then shake our heads, wondering why other people are not getting it like we are. That's because at the stage they are presently in, they are not processing things as you are. This is where patience comes into play.

7. Patience is always needed. I believe patience is the greatest key when it comes to addressing the season you are in. Without it, we miss one of the greatest pillars of love. Patience gives us the ability to firmly and calmly walk through the season of our life and gain the greatest amount of growth from it. In fact, the book of James says that when patience has its work in our life, we become complete, lacking nothing. Wow! I want that!

In a world that thrives off of quick changes and fast results, we must remain grounded in the kingdom of God's timeline, which works methodically, yet also on a different timeline. We love to read the "and suddenlies" of the Bible, but we neglect to see the decades of patient living that led to those moments.

If you add patience to the narrative of your life, you remove a yoke of pressure and begin to accelerate your ability to learn and grow by paying attention to what is in front of you. Do not gaze out the window while neglecting what you need to address inside right now.

8. I can't shorten a slow season, but I can prolong it.

Everyone has slow seasons and more accelerated seasons. During the drier ones, sometimes called wilderness experiences, we begin to doubt and allow stress to come upon our hearts. We make the mistake of trying escape the current season as quickly as possible, while ignoring the lessons we need to gain.

I watch people go around the same mountain thousands of times without stopping to notice they are falling into the same dysfunctional patterns. Many times, we don't move into the next season until we address our hangups the current season exposes. So instead of asking, "Why am I here?", begin asking, "What can I learn and overcome right now?" This changes the focus, turning you from a victim posture to an overcomer's heart.

Where do you need to be more aware of the season of life you are in? What about in others? {eo}

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encourage people in their journey of transformation.

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