

How You Can Fall More in Love with Jesus During Your Trials

Many of us have heard Christian leaders saying the body of Christ has entered into a new season. In my pondering, the Lord brought to mind Ecclesiastes 3:1, which in the NKJV says, "To everything *there is* a season, A time for every purpose under heaven." There is then a list of different times we can experience in life both personally and corporately.

For the most part, I am one of those people who embraces change. I like to experience new things, go to new places, try out new technology.

Of course, when change is big and life-altering it can be scary and sometimes very painful. The loss of a loved one is a life-altering, painful change. So is long-term injury or illness, or the loss of a job, or going through a natural disaster. Even exciting, expected changes can be scary.

Graduating from high school and stepping into adulthood is both exciting and a little scary. Getting married, buying a house and experiencing an empty nest for the first time in decades can leave you wondering who you are anymore. We all go through small and big, life-altering times and seasons in our lives. Some of them seem senseless, others full of hope.

If we keep reading in Ecclesiastes 3, we reach verse 14 and discover why there are various times and seasons. King Solomon writes, "I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him."

Every new time and season in our lives comes about so that we will "fear him."

We learn in Proverbs 1:7 that "The fear of the Lord is the

beginning of knowledge.” Job tells us the fear of the Lord is wisdom (Job 28:28). Psalm 25:14 says, “The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.”

And Psalm 103:17 says, “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him.” Proverbs 14:27 tells us it is a fountain of life. Over and over again we are told of the amazing benefits of fearing the Lord. But “fear” of the Lord isn’t talking about dread or scariness that we often associate with that word. Instead it means to “revere the Lord,” being in awe of Him, a desire not to offend or disappoint Him in any way.

That tells me that any season is an opportunity for us to increase in the knowledge and wisdom of the Lord, to fall in love with Him more deeply, and desire obedience more fully. How can we do that in scary or painful seasons? The answer is trust.

Trust is an interesting word. It means to rely on someone, surrendering to them some control over the future. Trusting your teenager with the car means he or she has some control over whether you can drive it later. You are not there to remind him or her to stop at every red light, drive the speed limit or change lanes carefully. You trust.

Depositing money in the bank gives someone else control over whether you have that money to spend later. You do not tell them how to invest it, who to approve for loans or how to secure the funds at night. You trust the bank.

Trust is important. It is freeing and it brings peace.

Several years ago, I went through a significant job loss. After 22 years at a tremendous ministry, I was suddenly laid off. There was no human explanation for it. There were no external hints or warnings. But there I was, without a job.

I could have been fearful. Our health insurance and other benefits were at stake.

I could have been mad. I had served well through good times and bad.

I could have been depressed. I loved my work; it fit my passion.

But I knew God was in control, and in Him I trust. My life and family are in God's hands and He is good. I decided to trust God and embrace the new season He sprung on me as another adventure in Him!

Trusting God through that career transition made it amazingly peaceful. I had a secure anchor through the transition. I could clearly see His hand at work. Along the way, God gave me seven opportunities to trust that apply to most new times or seasons in life.

Hearing from God about a change or new season is the first opportunity to trust. God gave me a hint that change was coming. I sensed it in my spirit. Scriptures about change leaped off the page as I read the Bible. Sermons and prophecies about change kept coming my way. I didn't know what or when, but I knew for sure something would change. So, I kept my ears tuned to God's voice and trusted Him to make everything clear in His perfect timing. Things did not come into focus all at once, but I was comfortable with God being in control!

In Genesis God gave Joseph hints about big changes as well. He had two dreams hinting at his future as a ruler. Being one of the youngest sons in the family, there was no doubt something had to change. But Joseph could do nothing to bring it about; he had to trust God. Little did Joseph know just how much he would have to trust God through some pretty tough seasons along the way, but eventually God's promise came true!

Sometimes God flat-out tells us what to do. Consider Abram. The Lord told him, "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). Talk about an opportunity to trust! Abram knew what to do but had no idea where it would take him. He trusted God, heading into the unknown on God's Word alone.

Sometimes change happens without notice. Look at Job. His life dramatically changed in just a few days. He lost property, business, family and was riddled with painful sores. Through it all, Job trusted in God and in His character. At the end of Job's life, God blessed him more than in the beginning.

Families affected by hurricanes, floods and other disasters face circumstances like Job. Those who trust God in the midst of their losses come through tough times much better than those who get angry and bitter.

Ron, a widowed father of six, woke one bitterly cold night in New Jersey to find his house was engulfed in flames. He quickly got his children and elderly father outside. But of all their possessions, only a car, a computer and Ron's Bible were rescued. The family escaped with only the night clothes on their back.

Instead of being bitter, Ron rejoiced that God had saved the two truly important things: His people and His Word. Ron faced tough times ahead, but he trusted God and that gave him peace. Over time God faithfully restored what was needed, and more.

That tragedy was pivotal in their eventual relocation to Virginia, and our subsequent marriage. Trusting God through that difficult and unexpected transition led to a new life with new hope for the future. {eoa}

Jodie Chiricosta serves as the vice president of *Somebody Cares America/International*. Through her more than 25 years of experience in disaster response, humanitarian relief and development with *Operation Blessing* and *Somebody Cares*

America/Intl. as well as her continual involvement in a variety of community service and international outreach activities, she has long been an agent of positive change. Listen to Jodie's guest podcast episodes on A Word In Season with Doug Stringer on the Charisma Podcast Network.