

Enduring Gut-Wrenching Pain to Find Your New Beginning

“Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” (Is. 43:19).

That *rhema* word from Scripture nearly four years ago kicked off a season of change in my life that hasn’t quit. I’m convinced that I’ve seen more changes in my life over the past few years than many people see in two decades. I’m talking major life changes. Some of those changes produced immediate joy. Others produced prolonged pain before producing joy.

I’ve noticed a cycle, if you can call it that, where one change comes at the heels of another and then another—finally followed by the avalanche. Some of the changes are welcomed while others are gut-wrenching, even when you know it’s God’s will. I still don’t like change, but I’ve learned to embrace it because I’ve seen the fruit of faithfully following God through life’s transitions—and that fruit is good!

Facing Sweeping Changes

Maybe you are seeing sweeping changes in your life even now. Whether they are welcome changes, like getting married and having a baby, or unwelcome changes, like getting divorced and losing a loved one to death, change can cause confusion, stress, delight, anticipation, fear, joy—a whole range of fickle emotions that ebb and flow with what seems like the powerful rush of a rolling tide.

Before we go any further, understand this: The only thing that doesn’t change is God. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). Everything else—I said *everything else*—is subject to change. I won’t recite all the words of Solomon here, but suffice it to say that “to

everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

So if you are going through a season of change—especially gut-wrenching changes—how do you position yourself to walk worthy of your calling? How do you yield to God's will while resisting the enemy? How do you embrace the change that will produce more of the character of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit in your life—and perhaps in the lives of others involved?

Learning to Let Go

Keeping your eyes on God, who doesn't change, is the critical first step (Heb. 12:2). The Lord really is your rock, your fortress and your deliverer (Ps. 18:2). His hope is the anchor of your soul (Heb. 6:19). When you keep your mind on Him, you'll remain in perfect peace even amid the most stormy changes (Is. 26:3). When you keep your eyes on Him, you'll find that road in the wilderness and the rivers in the desert that Isaiah prophesied (Is. 43:19).

Next, you've got to be willing to let go of what the Holy Spirit is showing you to let go of. If you want that new beginning—if you want that new thing God has in store for you—then you must let go even if it feels like it's going to kill you; even if you have to do it through tears; even if other people don't agree with you; even if you can't see where to go next. When you let go, He'll show you what to do next, just like he showed Abram what to do when he left everything behind to follow God (Gen. 12:1-3).

The letting go part is probably the hardest part of the change process. I've written several articles—including "How to Forget Those Things Which Are Behind," "Burning the Bridges to Your Past," and "Are You Willing to Leave Your Baggage Behind?"—on this topic because it's a real pain point for people. I had to learn that lesson and learn it well, and you

should too.

Sometimes there are soul ties with people, churches or even things that you need to break. The pull you feel to keep going back to the same people and things God has told you to leave behind is often a soul tie. A soul tie is a deep emotional bond. When David met King Saul's son Jonathan, there was an immediate bond between them. The Bible says, "The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 18:1). That's intense. When you move on, sometimes you have to break soul ties, in the name of Jesus, before you can move forward full speed.

Pursuing the New Vision

Once you've let go of the people, places and things holding you back, ask God for a new vision. What does God have next for you? I assure you, He has a new thing in mind. God may even resurrect an old dream you thought was dead. You won't see this spiritual vision come to pass overnight—there is a time of transition between the old and the new—but with clarity, you'll have the discipline you need to keep pressing forward (Prov. 29:18).

During this transition time, pursue any emotional healing you need. We all suffer wounds from the words and actions of others, from the work of the enemy, from our own sinful mistakes, from disappointing life events and even from doing the work of the ministry. Sometimes we have to suffer for Christ (Phil. 1:29). It's easy enough to get resentful, bitter and unforgiving. But walking toward your new beginning means letting go of these things also. Be assured that God is using it all for good (Rom. 8:28).

Many men in the Bible suffered great losses on their way to greatness. Just look at Job, Joseph and David. But all of these men endured the enemy's best shot and took back what he stole—and then some. Each of them had a new beginning that

brought glory to God. They persevered, kept their eyes on God and waited on His deliverance. So while you are enduring gut-wrenching pain, take comfort in God's Word: "Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Is. 43:19). Amen.

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